GUIDE TO THE AM8 LAOTIANS FILE

/The Laotians file is a sub-file of the AM1 Indochina file. This means that the complete page-order text of most sources from which pages have been marked for the Laotians file will be found only in category 116 of the AM1 Indochina file, and the full bibliographic citations for these sources will be found only in category 111 of that file.

Because of this arrangement, a discussion of the AM8 Laotians file has been incorporated into an integrated orientation to the AM1 Indochina file and its three related sub-files, the other two being the AM4 Cambodians file and the AM11 Vietnamese file. For this integrated orientation, see the "Guide to the AM1 Indochina File" in category 10 of that file./

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2: Gourou--183 N-5 (1939 ?) 1945 Laotians
101, 361

[HD: The Laotian] population is composed of varied elements, in which the Laotians, who are a T'ai people, and Kha--the name given by the Laotians to the Indonesian populations--predominate. (1) It is dispersed in hamlets, each mustering a few

1. L'Annuaire Statistique de l'Indochine (Hanoi, Ideo, 1937) gives 665,000 T'ai and 247,000 Indonesians.

dwellings and a few dozen inhabitants.

5: Brodrick--198 S-3 (1939) 1942 Laotians
116, 101, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"There are plenty of possible 'sites' over the other side of the frontier into Laos, for the Laotians are scattered and few. Their rude statues of the Enlightened One, all features and no face, have not invaded many of the anfractuosities in the hills of the country that they hardly own, so full is it of 'Khas', that is, 'wild men', or Moi."

6: Goudal--5 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-1-4
116, 101, 161, 141, 463, 177.65 France
636.65

"The Tai are of Mongolian race. They came from China and formed various groups, including the Laotians (and the Siamese) and the predominant ethnical group in Upper Tonking. Their numbers are assessed at a million. They are of less than average height (1.59 metres). As a people they are very gay and hospitable. Like the Cambodians, the Laotians are Buddhists, but their religious sense goes hand in hand with very great moral freedom. They are indifferent farmers but engage frequently in fishing and hunting and are excellent boatmen. As traders they possess remarkable qualities.

For a long time the Laotian was considered as an apathetic creature, hating all effort and anxious only to enjoy the present without worrying about the morrow or without trying to improve his moral well-being or his material existence by persevering labour. It cannot be denied that this people, whose country was repeatedly laid waste throughout the centuries by invasions from the north and the west, seemed at the time of our arrival in Indo-China to be doomed to decadence. . . At the present time the country has roads and tracks, and its doors are open to commercial and industrial undertakings which have already done much for the development of the land and its mineral wealth. The local authorities have no difficulty in securing the very active co-operation of the inhabitants in the contruction of roads and tracks. . . The legend

of the Laotian as an idle creature, exercising passive resistance to any attempt to make use of his intelligence or his physical labour, had disappeared. Far from taking no interest in public welfare as was long asserted, the Laotians on the contrary seem to take a lively interest in it, and in particular in the progress of the development of the country and of the schools and medical institutions that are being established. (2)

2. Léon Archimbaud: Rapport au nom de la Commission des finances sur le budget général des Colonies (1928), pp. 88-89.
This point of view is confirmed by the following statement:

'It has been repeatedly alleged that the Laotian abhors work and does only what is strictly necessary to provide for his own needs and for those of his family. He is said to have two serious defects: a very idle mind and a hatred of effort. This view is mistaken. It is certainly true that there is a certain fundamental apathy and indolence about the Laotian but this can be quite naturally explained by his background and the circumstances

in which his material existence has so far been passed.

'Times have now changed, the country is entirely pacified and war and piracy are merely a memory. . . . Exports of raw materials which were practically non-existent a mere 15 years ago are now increasing rapidly and this is clearly proof that the Laotian worker is not, as has been said, indifferent to gain, but that he can collaborate effectively with the settlers.

'The whole question is one of making use of his services in a manner suited to his special mentality, customs, qualities and defects. It is essential to treat him fairly and kindly; his intelligence and his docility of character enable him to adapt himself gradually to modern working methods. The tin mines in the province of Cammon have for several years been employing Laotian workers who have proved completely satisfactory both for mining the ore and for its treatment.

'Similarly, in connection with road making, in Upper and Lower Laos groups of workers have been used for cutting down

6: Goudal--5 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-4
116, 101, 161, 141, 463, 177.65 France
636.65

trees and clearing away stumps and undergrowth in the heart of a mountainous country where conditions of work are difficult and resources are slight. Under the skilful direction of our administrators and engineers the use of Laotian labour has proved satisfactory in almost every case.' (M. Bosc: Rapport d'ensemble sur le Laos. Conference on Native Communities held at the International Colonial Exhibition, Paris, 1931.)"

7: Thompson--371 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 101, 174, 621

"The origin of the Laotian people is the object of much speculation. In all probability they were driven southward from Thibet and China in successive waves. They were and are to-day governed by petty chieftains and divided into families, each of which forms a community under the authority of the eldest son of its most ancient branch."

7: Thompson--363 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 101, 131, 621

"Laos is a ribbon of a country stretching from Cambodia to the Yunnanese frontier, and entirely dominated by the Mekong River. That great waterway is so imperfect a means of communication that the geographic diversity of the country and its peoples has free rein. Laos is covered with muongs or totally independent village groups. They have only been united under either a powerful neighbouring state like Siam or Cambodia, or when the two strongest among them--the principalities of Luang-Prabang and Vientiane--had kings energetic enough to achieve a confederation."

10: d'Orleans--275-276 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 101, 173, 197, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"They [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian.] are easily recognised as Laotians, but they appear inferior and weaker, though they are lively and prepossessing; they originally came from Ban Lasa (near Muong Ngoi), but they call themselves Khamouks, and count seven principal tribes of Kas; but their dialects differ, so that several of them cannot understand each other.

The Kasings (whose language approaches that of the Yaos).
The Khakos.
The Khabits. [276]
The Khakoos.
The Kahoks (who wear cotton drawers as their only garment).
The Khapais.
The Khamouks.

They say that they do not know anything of their history, but add: that the Laotians are their brothers, therefore the Kas had compassion upon them and retired to the mountains, leaving the plain and the young shoots of bamboo to them."

10: d'Orleans--302 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 101, 162, 563

"The inhabitants [LSS: of Luang Prabang] are Kas, Laotians, Lus and Meos, while there are also a few Chinese traders and shopkeepers. The Kas, divided into seven tribes, according to the information obtained by Holt, Hallett and Neis, are four times more numerous than the Laotians."

10: d'Orleans--316-319 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 101, 173, 197, 771, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"The Meos live upon the eastern frontier of the kingdom, close to the Pouons plateau. I never met any in the town, but I had an opportunity of [pages 317 and 318 contain illustration] [319] conversing with one who was employed by M. Counillon, the French consul. He was a man of small stature, but well proportioned, with very pale complexion and regular features, and he told me that the Meos originally came from China and could make themselves understood by the caravan-men from the Yunnam. I gathered from his expressions that the Meos dialect is very like that of Van Bou, the word Meos, being rather the Laos designation, while they call themselves Mongs. I do not know whether this name has any connection with that of the ancient empire of the Mongs and the Möns of Burmah, but, according to the man with whom I conversed, the tribes to which he belongs have no religious creeds, though there is a word in his language which denotes the Deity."

23: Franck--270-271 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians -1-2
116, 101, 291, 301, 481 Ethnic subgroup

"I had known the Miao, or, as the French call them, the Méo, in southwestern China, though there my acquaintance had been mainly with the 'Flowery Miao' in their extravagantly colorful dress. These were 'Black Miao', a much more independent tribe, and with almost no color in their black or dark-blue garments, sometimes set off by a dull red or purplish wine-colored scarf about the waist. Both men and women, often riding on horses, were a wilder tawnier type than their flowery relatives, their sturdy independence as plainly to be seen as their bare feet; for none of them, of either sex, had ever tortured their feet with shoes. Their sunburned hair and eyes were more nearly brown than black, and both sexes wore the hair long. Most of the men had carelessly wound turbans of dark cloth, a few of them wore Chinese skullcaps and dressed their hair Chinese fashion, old Chinese fashion, more exactly, for the majority still had queues, often hanging unbraided loosely about their shoulders. Another custom among these sturdy mountaineers is the wearing about their necks of heavy silver rings of all shapes. These are evidently concerned with their tribal superstitions as well as being their idea of combining adornment with safe banking. All silver money that falls into their hands is turned into rings; men, women, even the children, all wear them, large and small, from mere twisted silver wire to veritable horse-collars, some with open ends, some fastened with silver padlocks. Sometimes there are as many as half a dozen on a single neck, even of men on their way to work in the jungle. The richest

of them clanked like perambulating pawnshops whenever they moved.

A critical observer might have wondered why they do not spend for shirting some of the silver dollars they turn into neck-rings. For the men wear a shirt or jacket that covers [271] everything except what a shirt is most expected to cover, leaving bare a foot or more of the waist, with the navel as its central point of departure. But to every race its own ideas. The girls are not prudish, yet not at all forward. For their jackets, open almost to the navel and giving frequent half-glimpses of the breasts, were plainly designed for comfort rather than coquetry, as were their plaid skirts reaching hardly to their bare knees. The women walk with a powerful yet not ungraceful swing of the hips and a saucy flirting of their short pleated skirts, of which they are perhaps quite unconscious. Some of the men wear the tatooed blue panties ending in ruffles just below the knees that are common in Laos and the Shan States, but this is evidently due to extratribal influence, just as are the flowered silk gowns a few of the well-to-do among them wear after the fashion of the Chinese."

23: Franck--302 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 101, 161, 634

"Laos has eight divisions, of which Luang Prabang is the largest and the only one still boasting a king of its own. A century ago most of it belonged to ethnologically related Siam. I have already mentioned that this greatest division of French Indo-China, about as large and of much the same shape as Italy, has fewer inhabitants than Detroit. This is largely because it was so often sacked, and its people killed by the Chinese, who wanted the land, or carried off by the Siamese to populate her sparsely settled regions along Menam."

23: Franck--331 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 101, 567 Ethnic subgroup

"The Kha are a hill people who made complete submission to the former rulers of Luang Prabang, admitting themselves slaves, and now they accept the present monarch as king and are loyal to him, lending help of this kind upon royal demand, though one could not hire them as carriers in the ordinary way."

23: Franck--352 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 101, 634

"I trust that the reader has not confounded Laos with Luang Prabang, which is merely the largest and most western division of it, its lone king decidedly subordinate to this lean and competent Frenchman whose palatial Résidence I had occupied in Vientiane. Besides Luang Prabang and the 5me Territoire that goes with it, and spacious Tranninh of Xieng Khuang, there are half a dozen other divisions in this sparsely settled territory ruled over by my déjeuner host across the plain board camp-table."

25: Brodrick--91 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 101, 619

"The Laos hate being so called; they, as the Shans, the Siamese and the Thos, profess themselves Thais, but the Laos name is one given by neighbours, and the French when they came to know and to govern the land of the Laos, called it just 'Laos.' Therefore, another designation had to be found for the people, so the bastard term, Laotians, was coined and it has now become classic."

25: Brodrick--94-95 S-3 (1939) 1949 Laotians
116, 101, 304

"It is said that of the Laotian-speakers more than half live in eastern Siam and not in the Laos, but the Siamese distinguish the two sorts of Laotians as Lao Pong Dam, or Black Belly Lao, and Lao Pong Kao, or White Belly Lao, that is to say, their own Lao who are tattooed and the Laotians of Laos who are not, at least not to the same extent. But even the Laotians of Laos are generally tattooed, though the tattooing is confined to the men. [95]

There are, here and there, traces of tattooing in several parts of Indo-China, but the Laotians are the only civilized people to have preserved the custom. It is clear that the Laotians are connected with the Thai-speaking peoples who extend still up into the Chinese provinces of Yünnan and Kwanghsi, and also probably with the non-Thai-speaking peoples known under a variety of names and making up the medley of population in northern Tongking and northern Laos--Yaos, Meos, Kaws, Lus and others. And nearly all these peoples share the same general characteristics of cheerful contentment, kind-heartedness and love of laughter and music. And they are all tattooed."

28: Crawfurd--219-220 G-3 (1821) 1830 Laotians
116, 101, 131, 563 Éthnic subgroups

"The Kariang, the Lawá, the Ká, and the Chong, are wild and migratory races. The first and second of these are the same people who inhabit various portions of the Burman dominions. They are confined to the mountainous parts of Lao. The Ká, a term which in the [220] Siamese language means slave, but who are called by the Kambojans, Panong, inhabit the mountains of Lao, bordering upon Kamboja."

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68: Mouhot--137-138 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 101, 361, 643, 651

"Were they not restrained by fear of the Siamese, and their horror of the jungles so prolific of death, this principality [HD: i.e. Luang Prabang] would soon fall into the hands of the Annamites, who now dare not advance nearer than seven days' journey off. A beautiful stream, 100 metres wide, unites [138] with the great river to the north-east of the town, and leads to some Laotian and savage villages bearing the name of Fie. These are no other than the tribes called Penoms by the Cambodians, Khu by the Siamese, and Moi by the Annamites,--all words simply signifying 'savages.'

The whole chain of mountains which extends from the north of Tonquin to the south of Cochin China, about 100 miles north of Saigon, is inhabited by this primitive people, divided into tribes speaking different dialects, but whose manners and customs are the same. All the villages in the immediate neighbourhood are tributary; those nearest to the town supply workmen for buildings erected for the king and princes, and these are heavily taxed. Others pay their tribute in rice.

Their habitations are in the thickest parts of the forests, where they only can find a path. Their cultivated grounds are to be seen on the tops and sides of the mountains; in fact, they employ the same means as wild animals to escape from their enemies, and to preserve that liberty and independence which are to them, as to all God's creatures, their supreme good.

68: Mouhot--137-138 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 101, 361, 643, 651

Yesterday, and the day previous, I was presented to the princes who govern this little state, and who bear the title of kings. I know not why, but they displayed for my benefit all they could devise of pomp and splendour."

/i/ PREFACE

All that we know of the origin of the peoples of the Thai race 114
and of their political and social evolution has formed the object of 101
laborious research and fragmentary studies which are set forth in
works of which the reader will find a list at the end of this volume.

Taken all in all, our knowledge is quite limited, and the history of the Laotian populations is still rather obscure and little known if we compare it to that of the other races which inhabit the Indo-Chinese peninsula. We possess abundant documentation on the Annamese, the Chams and the Khmers, and on their migrations and conquests, their arts and industries and the monuments which they have erected throughout the ages. But we have a great deal less information regarding the tribes, some of which tradition represents as having come from the /ii/ southern provinces of China and the others from the Malayo-Polynesian archipelagos, and which fixed their habitat at an undetermined date in the territories which today we call French Laos and Siamese Laos.

The explorations of Mouhot, of Francis Garnier, of Doudart 114
de Lagrée and of the Pavie mission, and the labors of the École française d'Extrême-Orient as well as those of eminent Indianists and Sinologists, have largely cleared a terrain which was covered by a thick vegetation of legends and fabulous traditions and have provided precious data on the principal events of which Laos has been the theater since the time when the mythical epoch came to a close, that is to say since the second half of the fourteenth century.

No work of synthesis had, however, been undertaken to establish the connection between events and the chain of happenings since that time when the Thai races came out of legend to enter into history. There were many scattered works of high value on the language, religion, mores and social status of the Laotian tribes, and on the upheavals and political crises which so profoundly troubled these populations which were almost constantly torn by /iii/ dynastic struggles or at war with neighboring tribes. But there were no connections between these essential events, and the tie which binds them was often broken. A crepuscular veil, if not a dark night, enveloped the national life of the Laotian principalities and the chronology of their sovereigns for many periods.

In a word, there was no complete and precise account of the history of the country over which France has exercised a protectorate since 1893.

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CHAPTER II
ETHNOGRAPHIC OUTLINE
PREHISTORIC HYPOTHESES

Laos is a geographical expression which does not correspond I
to any ethnographic reality. To be sure, within the last thirty L
years it has taken a place in the French Indo-Chinese Union, it 174
possesses an administrative life all its own, and a political status, /101/
although vague, which does not resemble that of any other country. But if one wishes to trace the main lines of its history, or more exactly to study the succession of peoples' migrations which resulted in the swarm of races which inhabit it today, one must abstract it from its present political limits and situate it in the whole of the Indo-Chinese peninsula. Its river frontier has, in /101/
fact, never constituted a genuine barrier in the west, for the basin of the Mékong is separated from that of the Ménam only by slight undulations. Thus the Laotian on the left bank and the Siamese on /10/ the right bank resemble one another like brothers.

The great obstacle is in the east. It is constituted by the I
Annamitic Chain which has divided the Indo-Chinese peninsula, L
from the point of view of race, religion and civilization, into 174
two distinct sides: the eastern slope, which is the domain of the 101
Annamites, a people of Mongol civilization; and the western /144/
slope which is occupied by Laos, Cambodia, Siam and Burma, "the abandoned rear guard of the peoples of Indo-European civilization" (1).

1. Cf. R. Meyer, Notice ethnographique.

Between these two ethnic zones "the antithesis is more striking than between the Germanic World and the Latin World. The one, the Chinese zone, contains the yellow, impenetrable world whose fabulous past has imposed on the people of Annam, crushed down as they are in their coastal plains, the sacred prestige of its 'characters' which are to it what Pali and Sanskrit are to the races of Hindu origin, and Latin and Greek are to European peoples. The other, the Indian zone, has nurtured the slow evolution of the gentlest peoples of the earth and favored the blossoming of the

I L 174 101

prodigious Hindu civilization" (2).

2. Ibid.

/11/ We should not, however, conclude from these premises that the Annamitic Chain has always constituted an insurmountable barrier and that these two worlds which are so dissimilar never communicated with one another. On the contrary, they had quite frequent and extremely violent encounters which partially explain the kind of Tower of Babel which the basin of the Mékong forms today.

"Long ago," as J. Moura has judiciously written in his Royaume du Cambodge, "Indo-China was the closed field where the civilizations of India and China and doubtless too those of the peoples of central Asia came to try themselves and do battle with one another. These Mongol and Tibetan migrations must have occurred before the Christian era and must correspond to the time when internal wars devastated these regions and resulted in an overflow of the peoples of the North towards the Occident, the Orient, and probably too towards the South. In resume, it may be said that Indo-China was once the theater of political struggles, the land of confusion of religious ideas and mixture of races. The difficulties which we have encountered in all our studies, in seeking a solution to the problems relative to this region, have no other cause."

I L 172

/12/ Which was the truly aboriginal race in Laos? No one can say, and at the very most all we can do is to suggest the hypothesis that the first inhabitants must have settled there at a time when present-day Indo-China did not yet exist, geologically speaking, and when a relatively large part of the Asiatic lands was covered by water. The interesting collections obtained in Luang-Prabang by Massie and Lefèvre-Pontalis in the course of their explorations in behalf of the Pavie missions show us instruments and weapons of the Polished Stone Age and the Bronze Age. "There existed, therefore, during this prehistoric epoch in the basin of the northern Mékong, human beings who had the same way of life, the same tools and the same methods of work as our own ancestors in old Gaul" (1). This

1. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos, 1911/

period, however, must have lasted much longer in the peninsula than in Europe, if we are to believe the "Imperial Annals of Annam" according to which bronze was still in use in the second century B.C.

115: Le Boulanger--21 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Shan-Thaï AL3

The Thaïs. The Thaïs came down from their Yunnanese mountains following the annexation of their country (Nan-Tchao) to the Mongol Empire, that is to say, after 1253. Noteworthy for their capacity for assimilation, they had long been infiltrating peacefully among their neighbors. The comparison has been made between a flood and "the march of this singular race which, supple and fluid like water, insinuating itself with the same force, taking the color of all skies and the shape of all banks but retaining in its diverse guises the essential identity of its character and language, spread out like an immense sheet over southern China, Tonkin, Laos, Siam and as far as Burma and Assam" (1). L S 101 175*

1. Cf. L. Finot (quoted by G. Maspero, ibid. /Un empire colonial français: l'Indochine/, p. 33)

"The Thaïs are spoken of," asserts Théodore Guignard (2)

2. Cf. Note géographique, historique et ethnographique. (Introduction to his Laotian-French dictionary, Imprimerie de Nazareth, Hong Kong, 1912.)

moreover, "as already occupying Yunnan and the region of the Two Kouangs more than two thousand years before Christ, but these /28/ were probably only resting places. . . . It was doubtless under the compulsion of that instinct in all races which takes them from the north to the south. . . and perhaps also under the influence of common misfortunes, epidemics, wars or famines, or as a result of important climatic changes, that the great Thaï race, which was to divide into multiple ramifications, undertook these successive migrations.

"Its role in these remote ages was not without splendor nor without glory, and it was perhaps one of the first policed races in the world. In any case, it had already organized and founded kingdoms at a time when many of the Occidental peoples were still complete barbarians. . .

"Of these kingdoms, one was formed by the eastern Thaïs. . . who mixed with the Chinese of the Two Kouangs or the Annamites of Tonkin. . . the others were inhabited by the western Thaïs, whose migrations formed all the Laotian principalities of the banks of the Mékong, the Shan States and later the kingdom of

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Siam and also populated a part of Burma. The eastern Thaïs underwent the influence of Chinese and Annamite civilization, and the western Thaïs chiefly and in large part accepted the civilizing influence of India."

/29/ Thaïs of the Ménam. As a result of this scattering the race included many groups, types or varieties, the main representatives of which today are: the Phou-Laos or Laotiens, the Phou-Eunes, the Phou-Thaïs (themselves subdivided into Thaïs-Khao, Thaïs-Dam, Thaïs-Deng and Thaïs-Neua), the Youns and the Lus. It was a Lu chieftain named Mangrai who, around 1262, brought the region of Xieng-Sen under his authority, founded the city of Xieng-Rai, conquered the kingdom of Haripunjaya (Lampoun) from the Mons in 1290-1292 and founded Xieng-Maï (Lan-Na). From a campaign which he waged all the way into Burma he brought back bonzes from Ceylon who converted his people to the Buddhist faith. To the south of Xieng-Maï a second state was formed in Sukhothaï (the Syam of Cambodian inscriptions) by Rocaraja, whose son Rama-Khameng (1283-1297) drove the Kmers out of the valley of the Ménam and formed a vast kingdom at their expense which stretched from Luang-Prabang to Ligor (Çri Dharmarajanagara) and from Vientiane to Pégou. But it was not until approximately 1350 that a prince of the Xieng-Rai family achieved true Siamese unity by founding, on the domain of the old Dvaravati, the new capital Ayuthya /30/ "which was to remain the metropolis of Siam for four centuries" (1).

1. Cf. R. Grousset, op. cit. /Histoire de l'Extrême-Orient/, pp. 590-591, after G. Coedès, "Documents sur la dynastie de Sukhodaya." (B.E.F.E.O. 1917, Vol II.)

115: Le Boulanger--87 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

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CHAPTER V

THE LAOTIAN PRINCIPALITIES FROM 1707 TO 1836

Political situation of the Indo-Chinese peninsula at the dawn of 175*
the eighteenth century. As of the date which we have now reached, the political map of the Indo-Chinese peninsula had undergone profound modifications in the last three hundred years if we consider the limits assigned to the various Thai kingdoms which issued forth from Khoun-Borom's partitioning. Under the impulse of dynastic ambitions, the latter tried in their turn to dominate their neighbors, and the most fortunate among them became surrounded with vassal principalities which, so to speak, served the purpose of buffer states and passed from one hand to another according to the whims of fortune.

Lan-Xang had had its life. Having lost its independence and its 633
unity, it was to disappear as a state which was the embodiment of 175*
great and powerful suzerainty and which had long been solidly based in the Mekong valley on the traditional alliance /138/ with the Kmer kingdom, then in full decline itself, and the Siamese and Annamites were to divide the spoils.

Tran-Ninh, which had endured the Laotian protectorate with 636
impatience ever since Souligna's expedition, was to profit by the 648*
circumstances in order to enter into open struggle with the kings of Vientiane. The latter would still be strong enough for another century to extract payment of their tribute by means of repeated expeditions, but the result of these perpetual hostilities would be to throw the princes of Xieng Khouang into the arms of the Annamite suzerain, who was to impose the most severe of dominations on them.

The Burmese empire was no more than a glorious memory. The 175*
land of the Irrawaddy, unified in the eleventh century, disjointed 101
in the thirteenth and regrouped in the sixteenth by Bureng-Naung, had since the conqueror's death again been divided into two enemy kingdoms, Burma in the north and Pegou in the south. With the same language, the same civilization and subject to the same influences, the two twin States were all the more eager to combat one another and no one could possibly have foreseen the end of this long duel even at the very moment (1710) when the Burmese hero Alompra was born, who was to reimpose unity and fill the peninsula with the clash of his arms in his turn.

175* /139/ Lan-Na (Xieng-Mai and its dependencies of Xieng-Khong
101 and Muong-Nan), an age-old battlefield and crossroads of all the Burmese, Laotian and Siamese expeditions, lived in permanent dread of new conflicts, and its princes owed their continued existence only to the multitude of competitors who vied with one another for an alliance with them.

The former Dai-co-Viet had given way to the kingdom of Annam, which was in full expansion to the south.

The lords of Hue had accomplished their conquest of the Chams. They had settled at Phan-Ri (1692), had gained a foothold in Cochinchina and had driven the Cambodians from Saigon (1698). Finally, their influence had crossed the mountains in the east ever since their troops had entered victorious with Ong-Hue into Vientiane, which was henceforth to owe them the tribute of vassaldom.

As for the Siamese of Ayuthya, who were favored by the accessibility of their territory to the sea and hardened by the desperate battles which they had waged for their existence, they were solidly established in the whole lower basin of the Menam. After striking a mortal blow at the power of Angkor and shaking off the Burmese yoke, they experienced an era of remarkable prosperity all through the seventeenth century. Encouraged by their kings, they
/177/ formed /140/ trade relations abroad, particularly with Europe, and were the first in the peninsula to undergo Western influence.

Their capital became covered with palaces, princely residences, vast gardens and sumptuous temples in the number of more than three hundred. The many travel accounts which have come down to us all mention the considerable growth of Ayuthya, which spread at this time over an island "seven leagues around." Wide, straight paved streets crossed numerous quarters which were peopled with Europeans, Malays, Chinese, Japanese, Hindus and even Pegouans. Vaulted bridges made of brick crossed the natural canals criss-crossing the city, which has justly been called the Venice of the Far East. The Dutch had a large trading office there which was supplied by their largest vessels. Across from them, on the opposite bank, the "camp" of Portuguese half-breeds formed a compact agglomeration. The strictly Siamese quarter was immense. Animated by a host of artisans and shopkeepers, it stretched around large squares which served as markets (1).

1. Cf. Nicolas Gervaise (1680) and Commandant E. Lunet de la Jonquiere, Le Siam et les Siamois.

000 If death had not placed a brutal term on his wanderings a few weeks later, the serious Mouhot might also have been the first man to question the impassive Buddhas on the mysterious past of this remote land, felt the infinite charm of its melodious nights when the khenes give voice to their moving chords, and -- who can say? -- sung the grace of the pretty girls with bare and gilded breasts who in their carefree way weave multicolored scarves under their flowered huts.

105 He contents himself with noting rapidly: "Fortunately this is not like Siam, and I can get help from the natives. . . . The /225/ Laotians are peaceable, submissive, patient, sober, trusting, credulous, superstitious, faithful, simple and naive. They naturally /685/ hold robbery in horror. The story is told that one of their kings had thieves fried in a cauldron of boiling oil, but since the ravages of the last wars a certain number of thieves are beginning to be found among them who have been driven to rapine by poverty or by the spirit of vengeance.

/685/ "Besides cultivating rice and maize the Laotians grow batatas, /241/ gourds, red peppers, melons and other vegetables. . . . They sell /438 the Chinese ivory and pelts from tigers and wild animals. They 434/ also trade gold dust, silver and copper ore, gamboge, cardamom, lac, wax, dyeing wood, cotton, silk and all the products of their soil for heavy porcelain, small glassware and other small commodities of Chinese industry.

"The Laotians are not made for war. Ever since the beginning they have been subjected to the neighboring kings, and have never been able to shake off this heavy yoke.

"They seem to be more industrious than the Siamese and to /101/ possess more of the spirit of adventure and trade. Although both peoples /226/ have many points of resemblance, both physical and moral, the Laotians can nevertheless be distinguished by their dialect and especially by their customs, which are simpler and more amiable.

533 ". . . Their music is very sweet, harmonious and sentimental.
101 Only three people are needed to make a melodious concert. One plays a bamboo organ, the second signs romances with the accent of a man inspired, and the third strikes strips of a sonorous wood together in rhythm, the clicking sounds of which have a striking effect" (1).

1. This praise of Laotian music should be compared with the

judgment which he pronounced in October 1858 on Siamese 533
music, in connection with a dramatic presentation at the 101
court of Bangkok: "Deafening music served as the overture to the play. The orchestra distinguished itself by a dreadful racket and a complete absence of harmony... the same musical phrase was played to us for five full hours by the clock, to the great content of the king and his courtesans. I can almost believe that the whole science of music in Siam is limited to this terrible melody, for the other presentations which I was condemned to attend elsewhere always used these unique and discordant notes."

He left Luang-Prabang on August 9 to continue his entomo- 000
logical research in the valley of the Nam-Khane. The fifteenth, "on a splendid night," he camped on the bank of the river, but no matter how "charming" the countryside seemed he felt "sad, pensive and unhappy." "I /227/ miss my native soil. I should like a little life. The continued solitude weighs on me."

On September 3 he reached the village of Na-Le where he killed a tigress and went on a rhinoceros hunt. He was recalled to Luang-Prabang on the 18th by an order of the "Senate" (he does not say why) and turned back on October 15, but after three days of march he had to stop for he was stricken by a violent access of fever. On the 29th he traced this supreme exclamation in the log of his route with a trembling hand: "Have pity on me, O my God!... ." On November 7 he fell into a coma which was intermittently broken by delerium, and on the 10th he passed away about seven o'clock in the evening.

His remains were buried on the following day, "in accordance 114
with the European ceremony," by his faithful servants Phrai and Dong. Three months later the latter brought back his collections, his effects and his papers, together with their account of their master's last moments, to the French consul in Bangkok (1).

1. Cf. the Ferdinand de Lanoye edition, published by Librairie Hachette et Cie., 1882.

Mouhot's tomb (1867). The pious homage deserved by this 000
precursor, this hardy pioneer who fell victim to his devotion to science, was paid to him in April 1867 by the leader of the expedition to explore the Mekong which was organized /228/ by Admiral

648* occupy, by force if necessary (2), the posts "improperly" held by the
175*

2. However, the governor general of Indo-China "recommended avoiding joining battle, insofar as possible. It was essential," he said, "to seek to gain the inhabitants' sympathy and always to prefer diplomacy and peaceful means to uncertain engagements." (Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos (Posthumous edition), Paris, 1911./, p. 16.)

Siamese as far as the left bank of the Mekong. The first column, under the command of Vice-resident Bastard and Captain Thoreux, had Stung-Treng and Khone as its objectives. The second, led by Dufrenil the resident of Dong-Hoi, who was seconded by the militia inspector Claude Garnier, crossed the ridge of Ai-Lao and advanced towards Muong-Phine. The third, which was placed under Luce, the resident of Vinh, and under Inspector Grosgurin, was given Cammon as its theater of operations.

By setting the farthest limit of its occupation at the bed of the great river, the /308/ French government clearly indicated its in-
/133 tention to regard the Mekong as constituting the natural line of
101/ separation between Siam and French Indo-China. Now throughout
● the ages, as we have seen, the Laotian principalities' territory had always extended over both banks, and over the whole of its course the Mekong had established close age-old ties "between the folk on the banks." The simplified formula of the "Mekong frontier" was therefore arbitrary and singularly incorrect, but no matter how many objections Pavie raised in this connection it was always retained because it seemed the clearest and most alluring solution to our interminable boundary difficulties.

The Dufrenil-Garnier column accomplished its mission without any untoward incident. In scarcely a month it had covered three hundred kilometers and was able on May 26 to force the eight Siamese garrisons, which had cut all the roads all the way from Ai-Lao, back to the banks of the Mekong opposite Kemmarat.

At Khone, on the other hand, after first withdrawing before the forces of Captain Thoreux without putting up the least resistance, the Siamese suddenly returned to the offensive, seized the captain, who was taking an unescorted convoy from Stung-Treng to Khone, by surprise and /309/ invested the outpost which Lieutenant Pourchot was defending. The island was not freed until July.

149: Reinach--1 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

[1] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER I

175 101 642 468

THE POLITICAL STATUS OF LAOS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO THE CAPTURE OF VIEN-TIANE IN 1827

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the territories situated in the basin of the Mékong River were designated by the name of Laos or Lao, and from the political point of view formed two autonomous States.

Their autonomy was much more apparent than real, and existed in fact only for the internal administration of the two kingdoms. As far as their foreign relations went, they were tributaries of the more powerful nations which surrounded them.

The kingdom of Luang-Prabang (or Lan-Xang--of the million elephants) was the northernmost of the two and bordered on Yunnan, Tonkin, Annam, Vien-Tiane (or Vieng-Chang), the Burmese States [2] (or Sib-Song-Pahn-Na) and the You-Êun States (or Lao-Xieng). It was supposed to provide China, Annam and Siam, either annually or every three years, with tribute consisting of certain valuable products and of precious metals, and called "Gold and silver flowers."

The other, or kingdom of Vien-Tiane, was the southernmost and was bordered on the north by Luang-Prabang, on the east by Annam, on the south by Cambodia and on the west by Siam. It was the tributary of Annam and Siam in the same right and under the same conditions as the first.

This state of affairs was profoundly modified in the beginning and middle of the nineteenth century by various events of capital importance.

175 648 726

At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth the Thai kingdom, or Siam, had often appealed to the Laotian princes for help in repulsing Burmese invasions or repressing the insurrections of Ngiéous, Shans and You-Êuns which were frequent at this time. The princes' devotion was ill rewarded. Around 1825, in fact, when the kingdom of Vien-Tiane seemed to want to shake off Siamese suzerainty, it saw its territory invaded by Siamese armies. After two years of war the land had been dismembered, depopulated

149: Reinach--105 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

This is doubtless due to the use of the brush, which does not make it possible to draw characters as fine and as purely rounded as with a dry point, a wooden stylus, a pen or a pencil, which are the only instruments used to write the other varieties of the Thai language. 212 197

Phouthai, like Laotian, is written in characters, but these differ in number and in form. The vowels are intercalated between the consonants, or are placed like accents above the line when the consonant stands alone, or may even always be placed above in the case of some vowels. This way of understanding the use of vowels can also be found in certain primitive languages.

In the regions where Phouthai writing is used the influence of the proximity of Annam and China has clearly manifested itself, and the alphabet has become syllabic. Scholars are able to learn by heart a certain number of syllables in which consonants and vowels are joined to form a single character, but those who have not learned Laotian cannot distinguish between the vowels and consonants nor use them separately. [101]

The Phouthais, who have the same basic spoken language as the Laotians but who have a different writing and religion, must either have separated from the primitive groupings before writing was created and have attained sufficient cohesion to create their own form of writing, or else must have learned it in a perfected state of development through some foreign current. It may also be said that when the Laotians adopted the Buddhist religion they lost their old Phouthai signs and took over those of the bonzes who had come to teach them the new faith. Then the brush was abandoned for the stylus and the point, which make it possible to write more rapidly and finely and to form a greater number of signs--these being necessary, moreover, to express and define the abstract ideas and subtle dogmas of the new religion. 177 795

[142] The Phouthai alphabet includes only twenty-three characters, almost all of which are syllabic.

The Siamese language. Of all the forms of the Thai language, Siamese, as we have seen, is the most complete and the most highly developed. Thus it will perhaps be of interest to give some notion, as rapidly as possible, of this language. 212 194

The alphabet is composed of forty-four letters which are divided into three classes, as follows:

11 letters on a rising tone, or high letters;
9 letters on a middle tone, or recto tono middle letters;

792
785

To dream of a woman and be awakened by the dream.
To covet the property of others.
To speak profanely of earth, wind, fire, water or anything whatsoever.

792
302
292

Ordained bonzes, like novices and students, shave their heads, eyebrows and beards carefully and repeat this operation every two weeks. Their clothing, which is the same for all and is of a uniform yellow color obtained by means of a jackwood dye, consists of a sarong, a kind of very full skirt which is worn folded in pleats and extends from the waist to the ground, and which is held in at the waist by a narrow sash. A half-tunic passing under one arm is attached to the opposite shoulder, and is split on one side. The whole garment is kept in place by a sash worn crosswise, and is covered with a kind of toga in the antique manner which is severely draped.

Ordained bonzes wear in addition a piece of pleated cloth on the left shoulder on which sacred characters and various formulas are inscribed.

Bonzes obey a code which was brought to them from India together with the sacred books, and a part of which has been quoted above.

The code requires that their clothing should not be made of one piece of cloth which is whole and of full width, but that it be made of unmatched pieces sewn together. Since the code does not in any way specify the nature of the cloth, one sees bonzes' garments [164] of silk and velvet as well as of cotton and flannel, depending on the generosity of the donors.

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668

Failure to keep the vow of chastity is very severely punished. The guilty person is marched through the village or city and seated backwards on a horse or carried on a wattle while a minor functionary proclaims the fault committed aloud and beats on a gong. Children and even adults utter hoots and throw filth at the guilty party and his female accomplice, who follows a few steps behind him. When he gets back to the pagoda the bonze is degraded from his rank and then handed over to the civil authorities if there are any grounds for so doing (1).

[101
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(1) This custom has fallen into disuse. Faults committed by bonzes are treated much more indulgently in Laos than in Cambodia.

149: Reinach--132 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

(Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

Besides these major holidays there are a certain number of others which are more religious than secular in character and which fall in between the ones dealt with above.

In the course of the sixth month (April-May), for example, a religious holiday is celebrated in memory of the first leaders of the Buddhist religion.

At the end of the eleventh month, on a date which is fixed in accordance with the rites and which varies from one year to another, a celebration takes place in the pagodas in honor of the men who first introduced Buddhism into Indo-China.

Finally, after the twelfth month (November or December), comes the feast of penitence which applies to all the faithful. During a [174] kind of Lent which lasts for nine days, true believers must abstain from certain foods and from all sex relations.

Since our establishment in Laos the province capitals and all the centers where Europeans live have celebrated the National Holiday on July 14 which the natives call Boun-Phi-Falang-Sete (Holiday of the French Genie) or, by onomatopoeia, Boun Ka-Tor-Yu-Yet. [C. A. M. Translator's note. The latter term seems to be an approximation of the French Quatorze juillet ("July 14").]

MORES AND CUSTOMS

By reason of their diverse origins and the relations into which they have entered with neighboring peoples, as well as by the cross-breeding which has taken place, the races of Laos necessarily have characteristics, costumes, dwellings and, in a word, mores and customs which differ to a greater or less extent from one race to another (1).

(1) On this question of mores and customs we shall have recourse from time to time to a notice entitled Le Laos français which was written by the Superior Resident in Laos and based on reports and local monographs which were provided by our administrators and are in consequence authoritative.

If we have consistently reproduced here extracts from the above work, this is because they provide an admirable summation

Tribal Tai

619 The Neua-Thais. The Neua-Thais differ very little, in all
361 respects, from their fellows. They generally live on higher ground than the other Thais, but they change the location of their village quite frequently. [241] [Illustration] [242] [Blank page] [243]

291 The women knot their skirts under their armpits, above their breasts, and always wear a very short jacket made of cotton, silk or velvet, depending on the season.

231 They engage in sericulture, and with the silk spin and weave brocaded cloth with harmonious colors.

779 At the same time as ancestor worship, the Neu-Thais practice an attenuated form of Buddhism. Pagodas are rare and the bonzes, few in number, serve several centers in turn.

461 Their character is docile. They do not have a very marked taste for trade and are content to be excellent farmers and livestock breeders.
276 Unfortunately, they are inclined to be opium smokers. This is doubtless due to the proximity of the Meos and Yaos who are the producers of the drug.

619 The Phou-Eunes. This branch of the Thai family is very close to the Laotians in mores and customs.

• 101 There are only a few modifications in costume and language, modifications due to the age-old proximity of the Annamites and the continuous relations which have existed between the two peoples.
[438] These latter may be explained by the fact that the territory long inhabited by the Phou-Eunes in the east and southeast of Tran-Ninh is situated on the Tonkin Gulf side, and that their produce naturally flows towards the ports on the Annamite coast (1).

(1) To be sure, there are several groupings of Phou-Eunes in the Mekong basin, in Tran-Ninh, to the northeast of Vien-Tiane and in Camkeut-Cammon.

361 The Phou-Eunes prefer to live in high valleys and on high plateaus where the climate is quite severe during the winter. They are more reserved in character than the Laotians, more industrious and less inclined to celebrations and festivities of all kinds.

779 Their religion is Buddhism, but the bonzes are less numerous than elsewhere. It is probable that the little taste which Phou-Eunes have for the religious life is due to the influence of nearby Annam, where the bonzes are a long way from being venerated and coddled as they are in Laos.

149. Reinach--179 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai

Men's and women's clothing varies little in [244] form from that of the Thais. Under their jacket, however, the women wear a breast-cloth attached to the neck and waist by cords, like the Annamite and Tonkinese women. 291

The Lus. Two centuries or so ago the Lus, who also belong to the Thai race, used to live in the "Shan states" between the Salouen and the Nam-Hon, where they were surrounded by a drifting population composed of Burmese, Kunes, Ngieous, etc. [Illustration alongside text here.] 619 175

Following emigrations, they came to Laos and formed two distinct agglomerations.

Some Lu families have settled in the course of this century on the territory of Luang-Prabang. Today these Lus form villages composed exclusively of people of their race, but live on good terms with the Laotians, whose language and customs they have adopted. [563]

In the old Lu kingdom of Muong-Sing, on the other hand, this people has retained its habits, that is to say its character and temperament are like those of the Burmese. 101

There the Lu is boastful, full of arrogance, a braggart and insolent, but a little firmness is enough to humble his pride. [105]

Lus have a clear complexion, delicate features, keen eyes and a swinging stride. The men are generally tattooed from the calf of the leg to above the navel, and they also have tattoos on their chest, [245] neck, shoulders and arms which are generally red and in the shape of squares with rounded corners. They have long hair rolled in a coil on top or slightly to one side of the head. This coil is wrapped in an enormous turban which they wear tilted over one ear. Many of them have a moustache. This they train upwards, a trait which gives them a conquering air, and to keep it up they smear it with wax. [Illustration alongside text here] 142 304 302

The men's costume consists of a pair of full trousers and a short jacket buttoned along the side. It is made of cotton and is dark blue, almost black, in color. The bottoms of the trousers, the edges of the jacket, the cuffs of the sleeves and the armholes are ornamented with three galloons (blue, white and red) which are quite narrow. Their holiday clothes are often made of silk in varied colors. 291

The women wind their hair into a heavy coil on top of the head and on the side of the coil they place a broad circular plaque of chased silver. They wear skirts like the Laotian women, but the stripes are very broad, run crosswise and are in bright colors. They [302] [301]

Tribal Tai
Kha

291 The men's costume is like that of the Laotians. A few, however, have adopted the Burmese costume, turban and all, in which case they let their hair grow and roll it in a coil instead of having a brush cut.

The women wear a very long skirt with broad stripes running across it which is fastened beneath the breasts. The bust is covered by a closed jacket or bodice which is cut straight and made of cotton or silk of varied colors. Their hair is rolled in a coil on the nape of the neck or is held in place around the head by a narrow band of cloth and allowed to fall freely down the back. Both sexes wear metal cylinders in their ears, like the Lus, and silver jewelry.

[302] [301]

The Youns are more robust than their fellows, and also more industrious. The women are perhaps less pretty than the Laotian women, but they are just as friendly and merry.

[142]

[251] Both men and women chew betel, and also "Mieng" (green tea, fermented and salted). They smoke tobacco in enormous cigarettes rolled in dried banana leaves. [Illustration alongside text here]

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The Youns are primarily farmers and livestock breeders. They excel in breeding and training oxen as draft animals.

We have seen that the Youns, although they speak the same language as the Laotians, have their own form of writing which is generally used for religious writings. Their bonzes, who are highly learned for the most part, are renowned for their expert knowledge of the rites of the Buddhist religion.

212 292

Marriage, divorce, polygamy, births, funerals, celebrations and festivities are all the same among the Youns as among the Laotians, except for a few minor differences in detail which we need not mention here.

101

THE KHAS

Before entering into detail about the mores and customs of the main Kha families, we shall again have recourse to the learned work by the Superior Resident in Laos in order to give a general sketch of this race which represents at least a third of the population.

619 181

[252] "They are to be found throughout the territory, and are divided into more than sixty families. As much as those who inhabit northern Laos are docile, manageable and respectful, so are those who inhabit the southern part of Laos proud, independent and warlike, particularly the tribes inhabiting the mountains which separate us from Annam.

149: Reinach--188 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

101 [261] [Illustration] [262] [Blank page] [263] As far as marriages, deaths, etc. go, we find practically the same customs among the Kha tribes of southern Laos as among their fellows in northern Laos.

231 It should be noted that the Rades breed a variety of small horses which are highly prized in Annam, Laos and Siam.

439 "These Khas love music and dancing. Their favorite instruments
533 are gongs and bells.

"A set of gongs consists of seven, nine or twelve single ones.
534 Made of copper and often very beautiful, these gongs take the shape of a cylinder from forty to eighty centimeters in diameter, only one end of which is closed by a vibrating plate. The cap worn by our judges and professors, although on a smaller scale, gives a fairly clear idea of the shape of these instruments. A few of the instruments are artfully cast and ornamented with much elegance. There is a solid ring about a third of the way along the gong's length which is part and parcel with the rest of the gong and makes it possible to hang it up on a side of the house, at about the height of a man's head, by means of a rattan thong fastened to the frame.

"The performers stand facing the battery and pummel it with their fists, taking care to strike the vibrating plate in the center so that it will emit a true tone. This procedure produces perfect musical notes, which are accompanied by the dull resonances of the tom-toms and the sharp sonorities of the bells made of a copper and tin alloy. The gongs bring a high price, and when it is a fine one a complete series is worth from 1,200 to 1,500 francs.

"In some villages the performers each take an instrument and hold it in a sling fastened to their shoulder, then form a column in single file. This Indian-style procession marches from the center of the house towards one of its extremities, striking more and more gently as it moves away from its point of departure. Then it returns to the center, unleashing a compensating crescendo. The maneuver begins again towards the other end of the house, and the musical promenade continues until the musicians are exhausted.

535 "When the Khas begin to play and perform the Kimlang (a very
272 stirring war dance) and the warriors grow excited from dancing and
579 from drinking rice wine, it is wise to make them stop as soon as they begin to pick up their weapons, for when drunk with alcohol and enflamed with ardor they are no longer masters of themselves.

714 "War dress includes feathers in the hair and a sort of cross of Saint Andrew formed of cloth rolled and crossed on the chest. Weapons, quivers, arrows, crossbows, bucklers, spears and swords complete their equipment.

149: Reinach--191 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Hill Tribes

595 There is polygamy among the Meos, and the Meo women do not enjoy any higher regard than the Kha women.

[101] The Yaos. The Yaos have the same origin as the Meos, and are strikingly like them in many respects. Their mores, their beliefs and their habits are identical.

619 As we have seen above, the Yaos are divided into three varieties, these being the Lantenes, the Khao and the Ao-Tchaine.

291 The Lantenes (blacks) wear broad trousers, a long smock buttoning
302 at the side and a turban, all made of black cottonstuff. They wear their hair long and either wound under a turban or braided in Chinese style.

[342] Their houses are like those of the Meos and shelter several families, each of which has its own quarters. They are generally clean and well kept-up.

593 The mores of the Lantene Yaos are patriarchal, and these folk are monogamous. The women are very reserved and do not let them-
562 selves be seen much by strangers. They enjoy a certain respect and are treated with consideration by their husbands.

231 The Lantenes are great livestock breeders, and cultivate the opium poppy in addition to rice and maize. They are skilled hunters of wild
241 animals, and each man owns a rifle from which he is rarely separated.
224 Besides a dialect peculiar to them, they speak Quoan-hoa (a
[212] Cantonese idiom), and many of them can write Chinese characters.
[198] The Khao Yaos are less outgoing than their fellows and do not
101 greet strangers with as much good will.

291 The men's clothing is like that of the Lantenes, [269] but the women are garbed in a different manner and wear their hair in a special way which has earned their tribe the name "Khao" (horns).

Over a pair of black trousers ornamented with colored embroidery and held in place by leggings, Khao Yao women wear a tunic which comes down to the knees but the flaps of which are fastened to the belt. This tunic also has colored embroidery on the chest, back, neck and cuffs, and is held shut with wide silver hooks.

302 Their hairdress consists of a coil which is smeared with wax and lacquer to hold it in place and in which a wooden socket is imbedded. A light bamboo framework is inserted into the socket, and over this is spread a red cloth or a black cloth embroidered in red. The women thus appear to have two horns on their head.

301 Silver jewelry, neckbands, bracelets and ear pendants are worn by the Khao Yaos.

the plants are replanted a few centimeters [360] apart in a second seed-garden for growth. This procedure increases the plant's productivity quite appreciably. 243

Since the nature of the terrain and the richness of the soil vary from one point to another, it follows that the yield from the ricefields is not uniform. By reason of these conditions and the varying amount of water which falls on the fields or is piped in, this yield varies from 40 to 90 parts for one part of seed, and from 15 to 25 piculs per hectare (1). The rice is harvested about four or five months after 243 312

(1) In Cochinchina the average yield is from 28 to 30 piculs, and in Tonkin 44 piculs. But one should not lose sight of the fact that Cochinchina and Tonkin are much better favored than Laos from the point of view of irrigation, and that the Annamites are past masters in the art of farming. [101]

transplanting.

2) Terraced ricefields. The soil is worked in the same way in these ricefields, except that in some cases the land is turned over with a spade instead of plowed. 243

3) Mountain rais. In the year following the one when the land was cleared, the soil of the rais is cleaned and weeded. Then in June the rice is sowed, either broadcast or else by dropping a few grains at a time into holes made with a kind of bamboo dibble.

The rais are harvested in October and even in September in some localities. In general the yield from rais is from 90 to 120 parts for one part of seed and from 10 to 20 piculs per hectare.

Maize is sowed directly in straight furrows about March or April, and is harvested in July.

TOBACCO. Tobacco (Ia-Doute) is widely consumed in Laos, where everyone smokes. It is also an excellent commodity for trade and export. It is cultivated on a large scale on the banks and islands of the Mekong from Pak-Lay to a point below Pone-Pissay. Production from the tobacco fields in these regions not only supplies local needs, but also those of all of Upper Laos and part of Lower Laos and provides tobacco for export to Siam and Cochinchina. 249 [439]

[361] In addition to the foregoing, almost the whole population along the banks of the Mekong and the lower reaches of its tributaries also grows tobacco for its own use and for the inhabitants of the interior. The tobacco which is most prized for its high quality, however,

249 either in the natural state or in the form of black, pasty, molasses-laden sugar.

There are several varieties, the chief of which are the heavy, green cane which is highly cellulated, and the small violet-colored cane with joints closer together, which is fuller than the first.

Farming methods do not differ from those used in other countries. Cuttings are planted, and the plants are topped if they show a marked propensity to excessive leafy growth.

257 To manufacture sugar, the cane is crushed between two vertical cylinders driven by two wooden gears of a most ingenious construction.
407 A buffalo turns the whole by means of a crossbar or shaft, the end of which is attached to its neck and constitutes a whim. Sometimes the cane is crushed between two pieces of stone or hardwood, one of which rests on the ground while the other [364] is applied on top of it by means of a wooden lever. One or several persons work the other end of the lever with all their weight and move it up and down in a series of jerky motions. The juice extracted from the cane is placed in large
[439] cast iron cauldrons shaped like cupels, which are imported by Chinese
[415] merchants. Condensation takes place over an open fire laid in primitive hearths which are cut into the ground itself, if it is clayey. When the syrup reaches the desired degree of thickness the whole mass is poured into rectangular or circular molds made of wood or bamboo. After cooling the loaves of sugar which come from the molds, and which are from three to six centimeters thick, are wrapped in dry leaves. They are transported and sold in this form. The cane itself is called "Oi" and the sugar "Nam-Oi" or, literally, water of cane.

[276] The Laotians do not refine alcohol from the juice of sugar cane,
[101] and are even ignorant of the initial refining stage which the Annamites use and which produces brown sugar.

[435] The price of sugar on the markets of Laos varies from one point to another, and transactions involve small quantities only. Statistics do give evidence, however, from which market prices of 35 to 50 francs per hundred kilograms can be deduced.

249 INDIGO. We have seen above that the Laotians use the indigo-bearing properties of certain plants which grow wild in the forests in order to dye cloth goods blue. They also produce a variety of indigo, the Indigofera tinctoria, which is similar to the variety found in Bengal. The plant itself is called "Kok-Kame" and the extract or dye "Nam-Kame

516 progresses at an even, elongated pace, carrying as much as 30 kilo-
417 grams in his pack without even seeming to suspect the feats of strength,
[132] suppleness and balance which he accomplishes. As long as he remains on high ground his resistance to fatigue is very great indeed, but he cannot go down to the lowlands without danger, especially in the hot season.

101 Certain authors claim that the word "Meo" which, when pronounce with a certain intonation, means cat in several Indo-Chinese languages, was given to these folk by reason of their agility. However, we must note that in [109] Laotian the word "Meo" used to designate these mountainfolk is neither written or pronounced like the word meo which is used to designate cats. There is the same difference between these two words as there is in French between the words maitre and metre.

342 A Meo house is built at ground level on slightly leveled ground. The walls are made of puddled clay or of ill-fitting boards, and the house is roofed with thatch or crudely-squared wooden shingles. The doors are made of wood which has been shaped with an ax, and there
[592] are no windows. Often several families live in the same house, and then each has a fireplace to itself and a compartment which serves it as a bedroom. In the common room there is an oven and fireplaces above which objects are placed to dry on a bamboo framework. Behind the house a narrow passageway is left free separating the
[343] building from the sheer mountainside. In front there is a narrow veranda where the horses are kept when they are not housed in a stable built on piles and overhanging the mountainside, as are the animal barn and pig sty, the rice granary and the goat pen. This system has the advantage of protecting the animals from the dampness of the ground, since the planks which form the floor jut out over empty space on their solid piles.

[101] Inside the house there are a few furnishings, as among all peoples of Chinese origin. There are benches, tables, camp beds, dishes,
352 iron and copper cooking utensils and opium smoking accessories, all
356 so repulsively filthy that even the least delicate would hesitate to enter and stay in these hovels, where vermin swarm under the protection of the ancestors' altar.

Although amongh themselves and with their families the Meos
198 speak a rather unharmonious language, nearly all the men can under-
212 stand and speak Qouane-hoa, the language of the Chinese mandarins, which is the official language in Yunnan. They can neither read nor write Chinese characters, and have no system of writing of their own.

779

forms of Buddhism: the Mahayana or Great Vehicle, and the Hinayana or Little Vehicle. "One must beware of contrasting too violently the two Vehicles, as is often done. They were held together by many and subtle bonds." However in our days a Laotian Hinayanist and a Mongol Mahayanist have nothing in common.

Roughly, the essential difference between the two doctrines is that Hinayana considers the Buddha not as a superior man but as a man, while Mahayana deified Sakyamuni, who, without being a god, was as much as or more than a deity. Activity, formerly condemned, is glorified, sanctified on condition that it is freed from personal interests and is used for the salvation of others. Individual salvation has absolute value only if it contributes to universal salvation. The nirvana of the Hinayanist must be denounced as a scandalous exaltation of self. Bodhi, the supreme knowledge which makes Buddhas, is accessible to all beings. The saint is the Bodhisattva, who is on the point of reaching nirvana, yet remains during periods of incalculable successive existences to save [22] souls. The Mahayanist universe, which has grown immeasurably is filled with an infinite multitude of Buddhas. Many Bodhisattva exist: the principal ones are Avalokitesvara, Maitreya, Manjousri, Vajrapani, etc. Besides, each Buddha and each Bodhisattva has been doubled by a dhyani-Buddha, a contemplative Buddha (spiritual Buddha). To the belief in nirvana proclaimed by the Hinayana, the Mahayanists add an infinite series of paradises, the "pure Grounds" (this notion is Iranian) where souls saved by the grace of the Bodhisattva are born again in the symbolical lotus.

Mahayana now flourishes in central Asia, in Tibet, China, Japan and in Vietnam, was in vogue in Java, and in the ancient Khmer empire from the ninth to the thirteenth century. Its influence is found in certain sculptures of Luang Prabang (see appendix). Hinayana is practised at the present time in Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Cambodia and Laos. [101]

Introduction of Buddhism to Laos.

175

According to certain documents, Buddhism was introduced to Laos by Buddhaghosa. This legend is too popular in other Buddhist countries of the Indochinese peninsula for it to be given any credit here. Laotian tradition tells us that Fa Ngoum had a mission come from Cambodia which brought not only the sacred books of orthodox Buddhism but also Brahmanic texts whose traces can still be found today. This tradition, which offers greater proofs than the legend, fixed the date of the introduction of Buddhism to Luang Prabang in

177
779

779 "The prince heir to the throne Mugapakkha remained dumb until
538 he was thirteen years old. He recovers his speech at the moment when his father wants to bury him alive. He then explains his previous silence by showing that an inconsiderate word may be the cause of great torment in future existences for him who has uttered it." And the Sama Jataka:

"Sama who fed his father and mother, who were both blind, dies of a wound inflicted unintentionally by king Kusi who was deer hunting. As Sama is dying, he entrusts his murderer to break the news to his parents, who lament so painfully that Sakkha is moved and brings Sama back to life."

But of all, the most popular is unquestionably the Pha Vet, the Laotian name for the Vessantara Jataka. (Cf. below Boun Pha Vet).

There exists another series of Jatakas which rival the five hundred Jatakas in popularity. It is the Pannasajataka (Ha Sip Xat) or the fifty
[101] Jatakas. This very peculiar text is found in [29] all the literature of western Indochina, and was probably composed in Thai country. Versions exist in Burmese, Khmer, Siamese and Laotian. The Laotian rendition has the peculiarity of containing 27 out of 50 tales which are not found in any other version. These 27 stories are entirely original. They are at the moment in the process of being translated.

Finally the five hundred Laotian Jatakas form a convenient framework into which all kinds of stories in the current language have been inserted. Their study will doubtless prove a mine of information on local folklore.

THE PHI

771 We cannot conclude the chapter relating to the religion of Laos without mentioning the cult of the Phi.

776 In his books "La Participation" and "L'Evolution humaine" the late lamented Jean Przyluski distinguished three successive phases of religion which, according to him, are related to an economic and social state.

When man is a collector of food, that is, when he lives from what he can gather or hunt or fish, his religion is vegetalism or totemism. When he becomes a producer, man's religion becomes agrarian, honoring the gods of vegetation, of the earth, the forests, etc., and particularly the protecting genie of the village. Finally, in the period of urban communities, universal gods appear.

While some reservations might be made on this classification, it does nevertheless offer a convenient framework in which we can

538 101 these tales were spread throughout the world in an extraordinary way. They penetrated many literatures by [80] word of mouth or in writing. But at first the means of propagation was a Pahlavi version made at the request of the Sassanid king Khosroes Anoshirvan (531-579). From this version a first Syriac translation and an Arabic transcription were made. The work became very widespread throughout the whole of Islamic literature. At the beginning of his sixth book, La Fontaine says that he has drawn the subject of a large number of his fables from those of the Indian sage Pilpay (doubtless Vidyapati), but the material was furnished to him through an Arab intermediary of the eighth century, Kalila-wa-Dimna. Finally, it should be remembered that the prologue forming the framework of "The Thousand and One Nights" is found in the Pancatantra.

The same thing happened to this text in the Far East. It is found in Java, Siam, Cambodia and Vietnam. At Vientiane it exists under the name of Mulla Tantai. This collection is unknown at Luang Prabang, but the text is found in a collection of five works called Pakon. In the first four books only tales of a similar character are grouped in a common framework. The fifth is merely a series of comments on the texts of the Vinaya and has no relationship with the Pancatantra.

These works are compiled under a uniform plan: a subject being discussed, each person who takes part in the debate expresses his opinion and bases it on a story (Finot).

The story begins with the prologue forming the framework:

"There was once a king who, while walking one day in his park, saw a young married woman who pleased him. He ordered his minister to bring him every evening a young virgin of good family under pain of death for him and his family. After some time there remained in the town only a single maiden, the daughter of the minister Nang Tantai (the Laotian Scheherazade). [81] They had to lead her to the king, but she was cautious and reassured her parents as to her fate."

It is well known how the king, charmed by the tales told by this young girl, married Nang Tantai who became queen.

b) The Ramayana. The extraordinary popularity in Asia of this Indian epic is proved by the many versions of it one finds: Chinese, Tibetan, Javanese, Malayan, Vietnamese, Khmer, Siamese, etc.

The Laotian version was somewhat neglected until recent years, because it was supposed to be only a copy or translation of the Khmer text or the Siamese version. We have undertaken to study it, and it

538 shows us, on the contrary, that this is a profoundly different text, differing not only from the two lessons already quoted but also from 101 that of Valmiki which is the source of inspiration of all the others.

Because of the newness of the problem, it would be at least premature to indicate now the origins of the Laotian text and to establish its relationship to other known versions. Therefore we will limit ourselves to recalling the essential part of the poem of Valmiki and to stating what we learn from the Laotian version.

538 The Ramayana of Valmiki. The story of Rama, son of the king of Ayodhya, takes place mostly in India. Persecuted by a jealous stepmother, the young prince and his wife Sita are exiled. He is accompanied by his brother Laksmana. Attracted by Sita's beauty, Ravana, King of Lanka (Ceylon), carries her off after removing Rama and Laksmana who pursue a golden gazelle which the king has created by magic. Thanks to his alliance with Sugriva, King of the Monkeys, Rama sends the monkey Hanuman as a messenger to Sita, then attacks Lanka. He kills Ravana and wins back his wife. But the latter is [82] suspected of being unfaithful and submits to ordeal by fire. Rama then brings her to Ayodhya.

The Pra Lak Pra Lam (Laotian Ramayana). Nang Canda, daughter of Dacaratha, king of Candapurisisattanagamahanagara (Vientiane) was carried away by Ravana, son of King Indapattanagara. Dacaratha begs the god Indra to give him a son capable of killing Ravana. Indra sends his own son Pra Lam (Rama) who, with the aid of his brother, brings Nang Canda back to Vientiane.

Ravana is exiled by his father, King of Indrapattanagara and settles at Lanka. Having risen to the paradise of Indra, he takes advantage of the latter's lack of attention to violate a woman of the harem. This woman asks permission to avenge herself. She goes down to earth and becomes the daughter of Ravana. She attempts to kill him, but he exiles her. She is abandoned on a junk and rescued by a hermit who adopts her. The fame of Sita's beauty reaches Rama, who decides to go and marry her. Ravana, no longer remembering that she is his daughter, becomes the rival of Rama. But as Rama is the only one able to lift the magic bow of the hermit, he becomes Sita's husband. At this point comes the episode of the golden gazelle and the carrying away of Sita. Rama pursues his wife, but he is turned into a monkey for three years, because of his wicked karma (Cf. the Buddhist doctrine). He has a son Hanuman. Having taken back his human shape and with the help of Laksmana, Hanuman, and the army of monkeys, he attacks Lanka, kills Ravana and brings Sita back to Vientiane.

000 Vientiane.

As can be seen, there is a certain originality in the Laotian text. 538 Only the episodes of the golden gazelle, the abduction of Sita and the 101 attack on Lanka are similar to those of the Valmiki poem. In addition the scene is laid in Laos. All the ceremonies are Laotian and many explanations are given of [83] its origin and the creation of numerous muongs, particularly those of the region between Khong and Vientiane. Northern Laos, on the contrary, is seldom mentioned.

Romances

538 There are two kinds, in verse and in prose. As is mentioned by Louis Finot, from whom we borrow the whole passage quoted below, the Laotians have a marked preference for long stories of adventure relieved by their pleasant rhythm. However, neither the actors nor the events of the drama shine by their variety; the characters can be reduced to a small number of types:

1st. The hero. He is naturally a young prince. Naturally, too, he is handsome and in love, but he is a lover who takes no pride in reserve or in fidelity. He merrily takes advantage of every occasion and usually comes back with five or six women whom he has collected by the way. When necessary he lies unscrupulously. He fights and wins, but with the help of magic weapons, which diminishes the merit of his exploits. To increase his dignity, the story-teller gives him the title of bodhisattva which becomes him as little as possible.

2nd. The Rishi. This is a hermit magician. He instructs the hero in occult arts and provides his equipment, a flying horse, miraculous weapons, etc. He also collects abandoned young girls who appear in the nick of time to become the mistresses or wives of the young prince.

3rd. The Yak. This is the enemy of the hero. He also possesses all kinds of magic powers, he flies through the air, takes different shapes, fights with enchanted weapons. He is violent, irascible, voracious and libidinous. He is sometimes good-natured and may become a faithful servant when he has been beaten mercilessly.

[84] 4th. The father-in-law. This is a king from whom his daughter is taken without consulting him. He is constantly furious, grotesque and scoffed at.

5th. Indra. He is the god ex machina. He comes to the aid of compromising situations and sends water at the opportune moment which saves those who are dead. Like a well-trained servant

536 There is no scenery. The costumes and headdresses vary according to the characters represented. The masks of colored lacquer worn by the actors, their accessories (weapons, scarves, etc.) being traditional and invariable enable the fictitious characters on the stage to be identified.

/178 The theatre of animated shadows, similar to the shadow theatre
101/ of China and Java, tends to disappear little by little.

Laotian Decoration.

Laotian decoration is characterized by a somewhat mannered
531 elegance which can be noticed in the motifs of the pagoda doors and
178 windows. The Laotian artisan is, however, endowed with an extremely well developed artistic sense, but the present day demands do not enable him any longer to live by his handiwork, and the importation of manufactured articles tends to make the artist disappear. /89/ He can only survive by royal patronage. The royal palace for this reason shelters sculptors on wood and ivory as well as goldsmiths, but
/644/ their produce is not sold and the tourist will hardly be able to bring back with him typical Laotian objects.

However, the weaving of silk materials of divers shades, often laminated with gold or silver, is still done on a sufficient scale to
/236/ satisfy the passing tourist.

The Sin

This is a skirt reaching from the hips to the ankles. It is of a
291 rather somber color with a design of vertical stripes very close together and not very evident. This skirt is decorated on its lower edge with a flat trimming of two or three rows of gold or silver braid. At the top of the skirt a belt of red cloth, more or less embroidered, relieves the rather dark tone. This garment is a regular cylinder having the same width on its entire length. When the woman emerges from her bath she lifts her skirt, gathered into the shape of a crown, above her head and lets it slide down the length of her body. She fixes it without hooks or fasteners to her belt by means of a turned in pleat tied in front leavin most of her belly exposed. A bright colored scarf of cotton or silk throw over one shoulder and completely covering the breasts completes the costume. The most beautiful scarves come from Samneua, Luang Prabang and Khong. The jewelry most frequently seen consists of
301 silver bracelets, necklaces and buttons, rings, long crossed over chains /chaînes-sautoirs/, flat clasps, and belts usually of silver but sometime of gold.

/Pages 90 to 135 not translated/ /136 blank/

115: Le Boulanger--[illegible] H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Fig. 2. /Facing p. 23/

115:Le Boulanger--36 : H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

Fig. 4. / Facing p. 52/

Lan-Xang and surrounding regions at the death of Fa-Ngoun (1374).

115: Le Boulanger--91 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

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Fig. 9. The Indo-Chinese Peninsula at the Dawn of the Eighteenth Century.

/Facing p. 142/

115: Le Boulanger--208 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(20th Cent.) Laotians AM8

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102

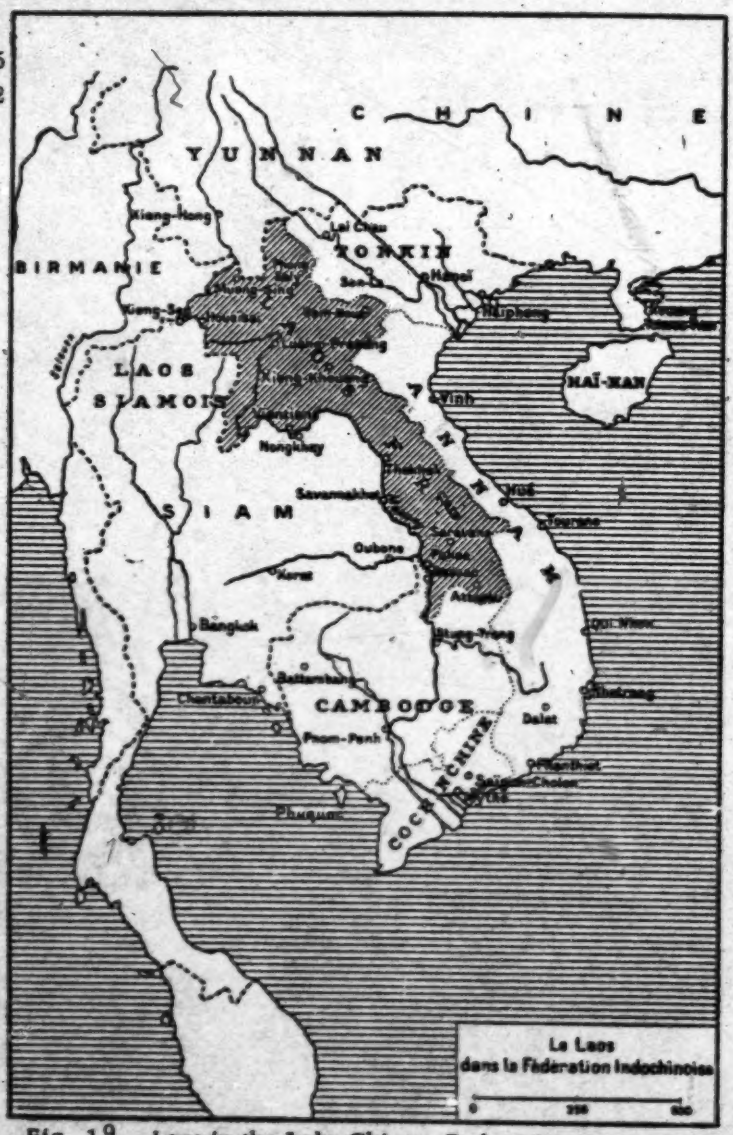

Fig. 19. Laos in the Indo-Chinese Federation.

/Facing p. 341/

149: Reinach--4c G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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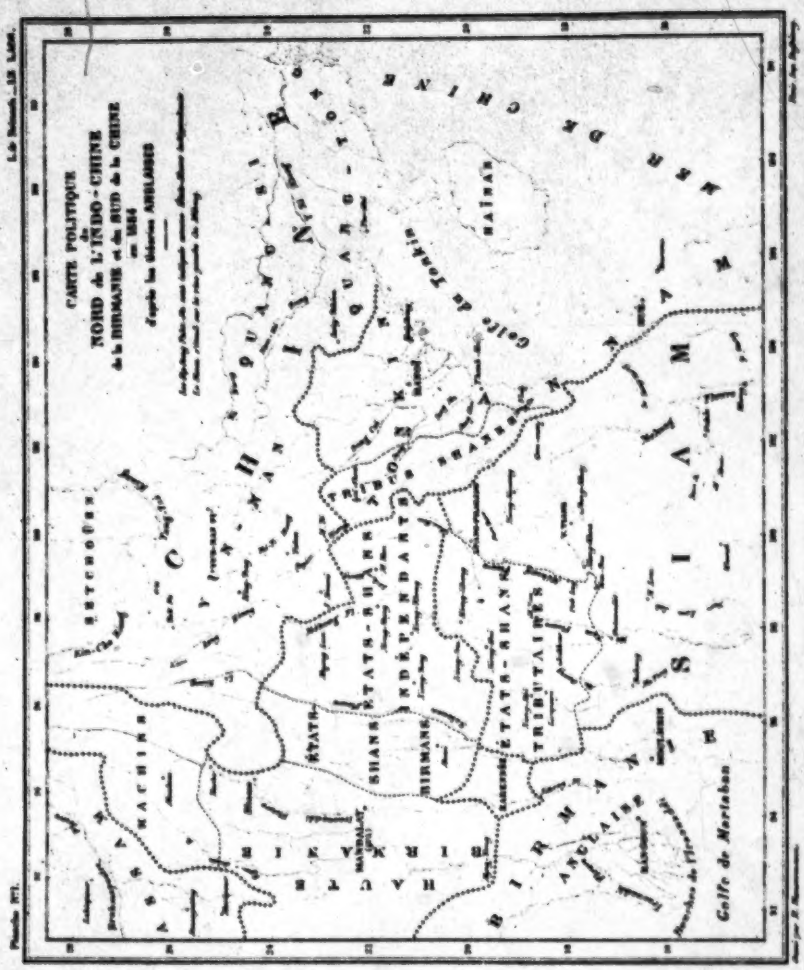
631



Political Map of the North of Indo-China, of Burma and of the South of China in 1884 according to British theories.

Plate 1 /facing p. 8/

149; Reinach--23b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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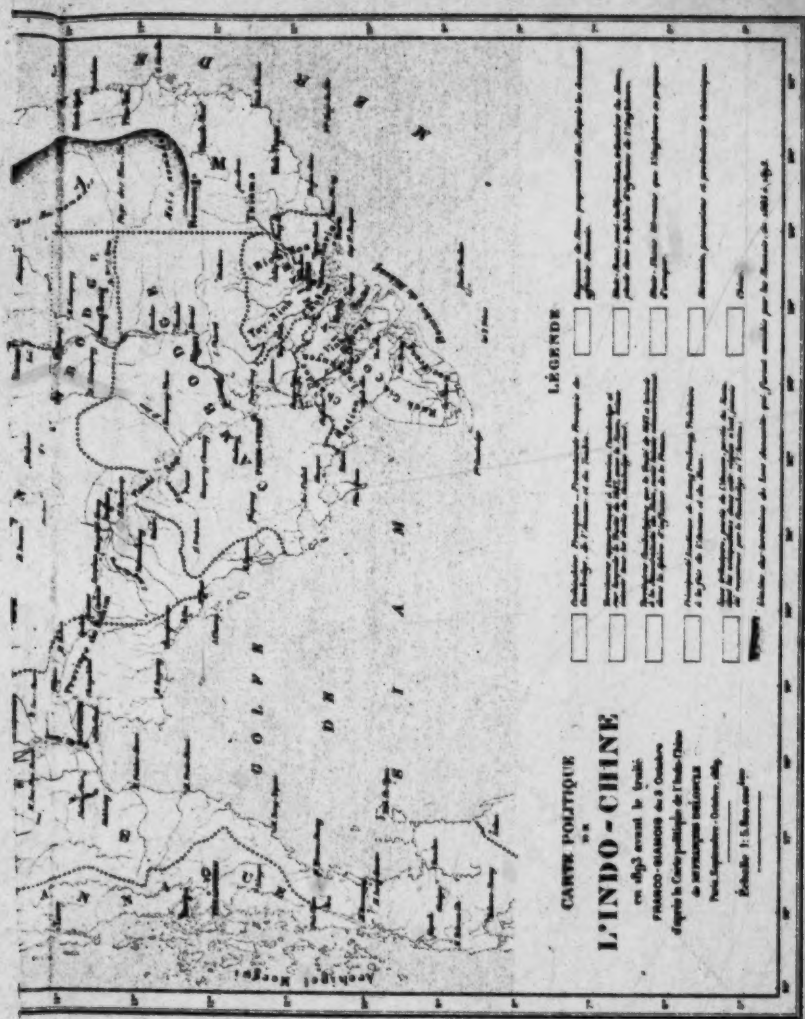
175
631

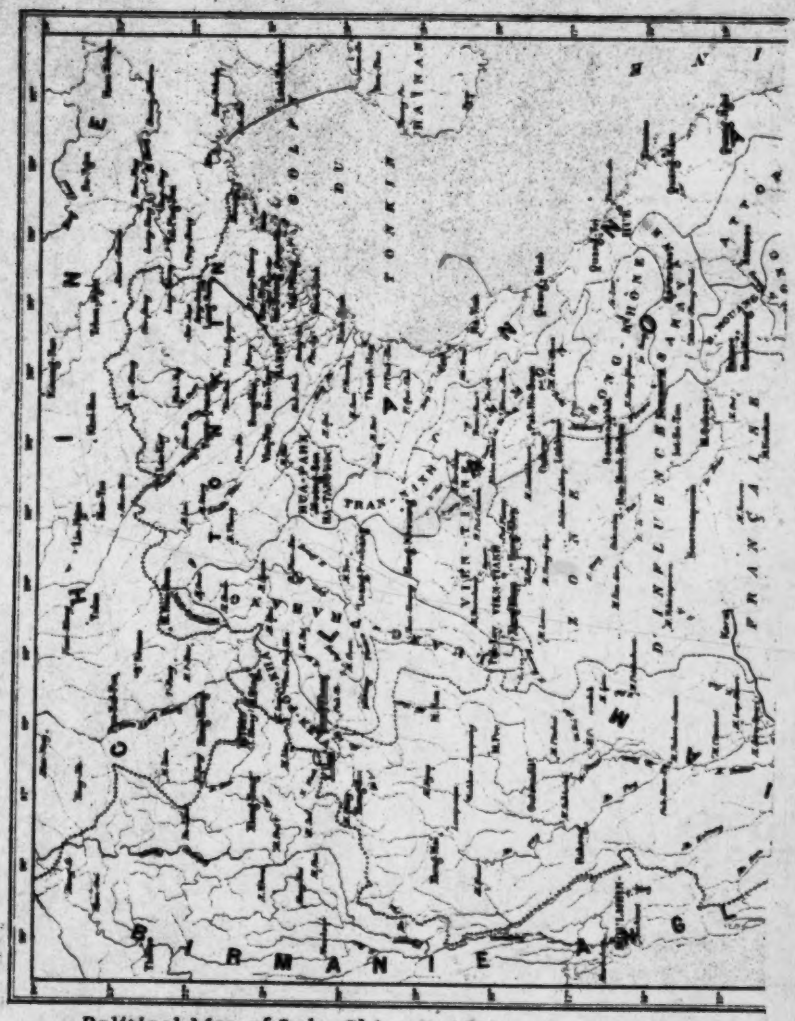


Political Map of Indo-China in 1893 before the Franco-Siamese Treaty of October 3.

Plate 4, Part B /between pp. 32 and 33/

149: Reinach--193a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

102
631



Political Map of Indo-China in 1901.

Plate 5, Part A /between pp. 272-3/

149: Reinsch--193b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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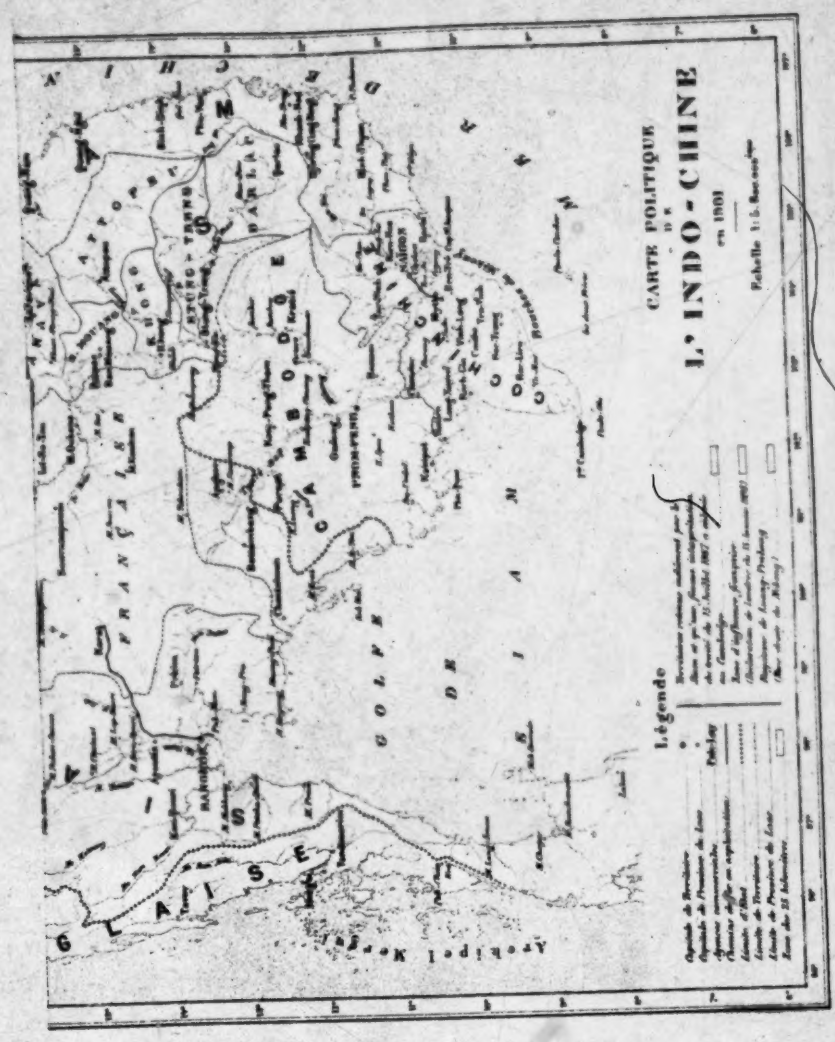
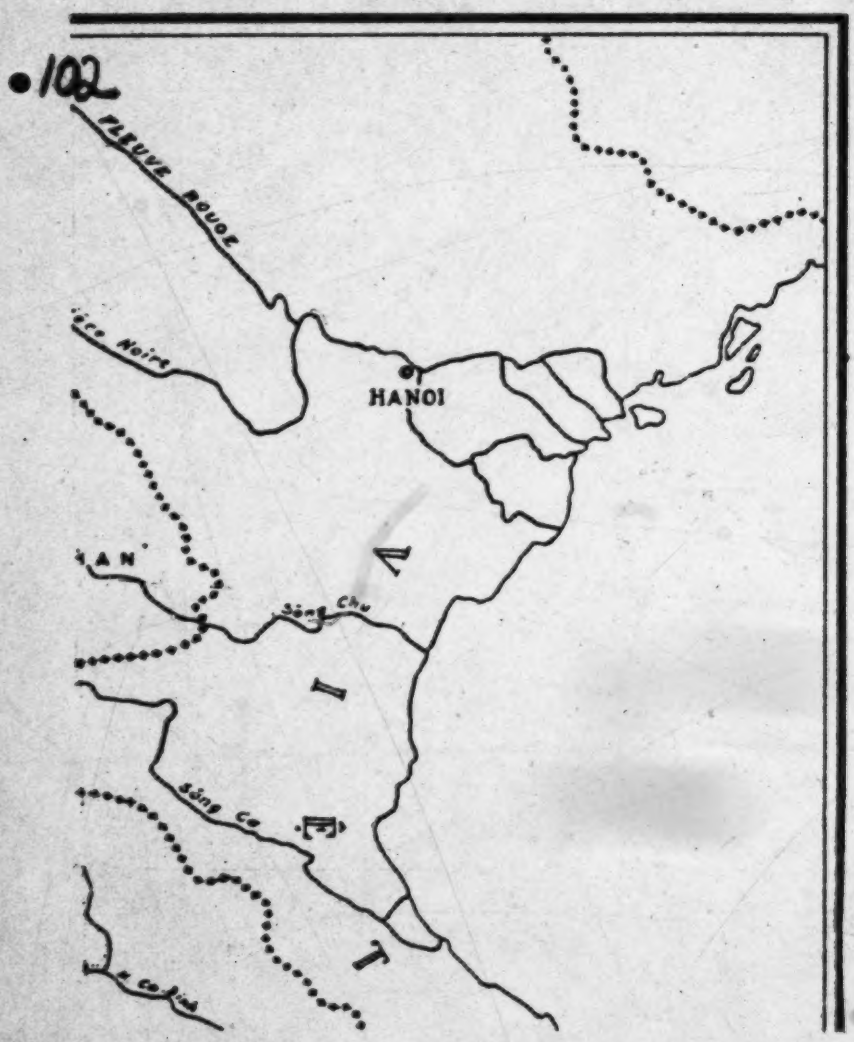
631



Political Map of Indo-China in 1901.

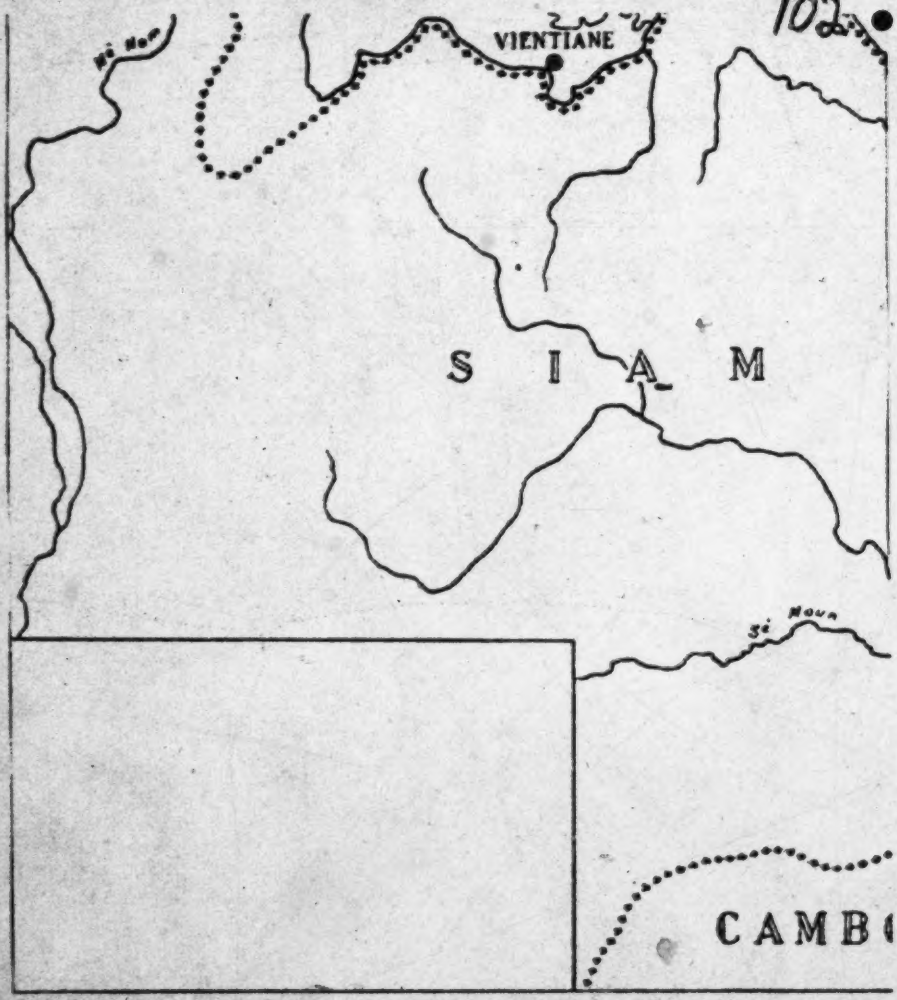
Plate 5, Part B /between pp. 272-3/

173: Deydier --77 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8



NE Sheet [159]

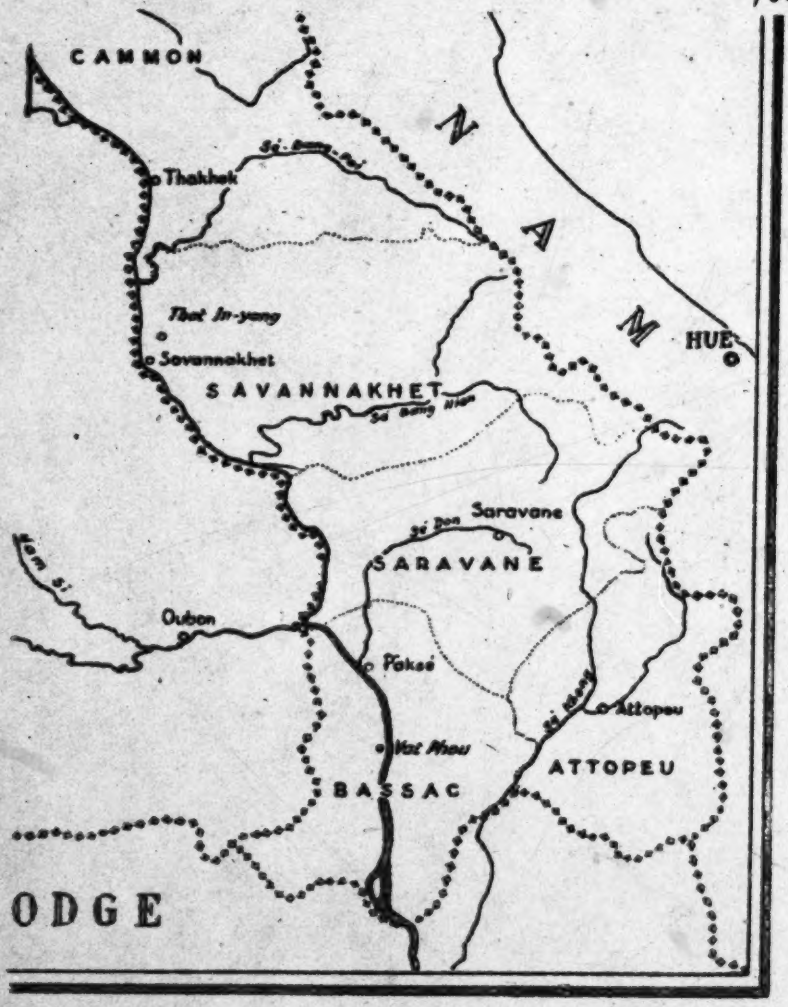
173: Deydier --78 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8



SW Sheet [189]

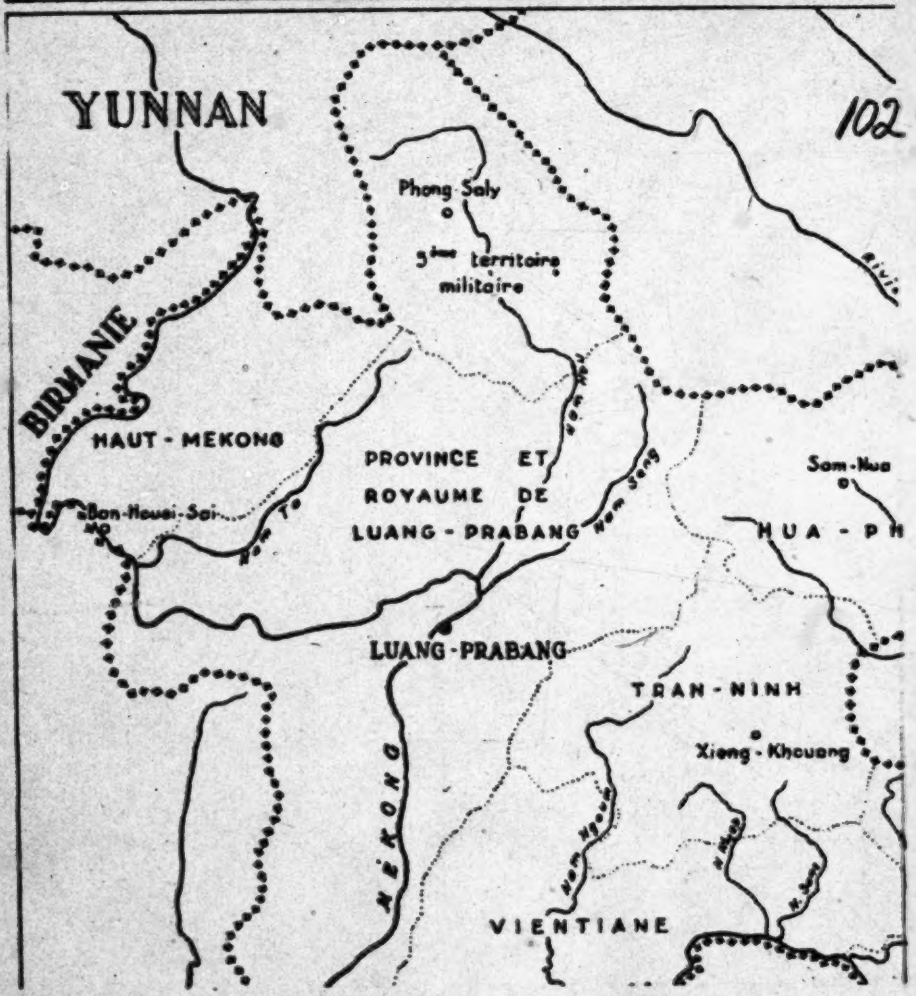
173: Deydier --79 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

102



SE Sheet 169

173: Deydier--76 H.E-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotian A148



NW Sheet [159]

10: d'Orleans--291 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 103

"Luang Prabang, or rather Muong Luang Prabang, meaning literally 'the royal town of Prabang,' so named after a much venerated idol (Muong Luoung), is a capital, and gives its name to a small State of Laos, or a Shan State, to use the English expression."

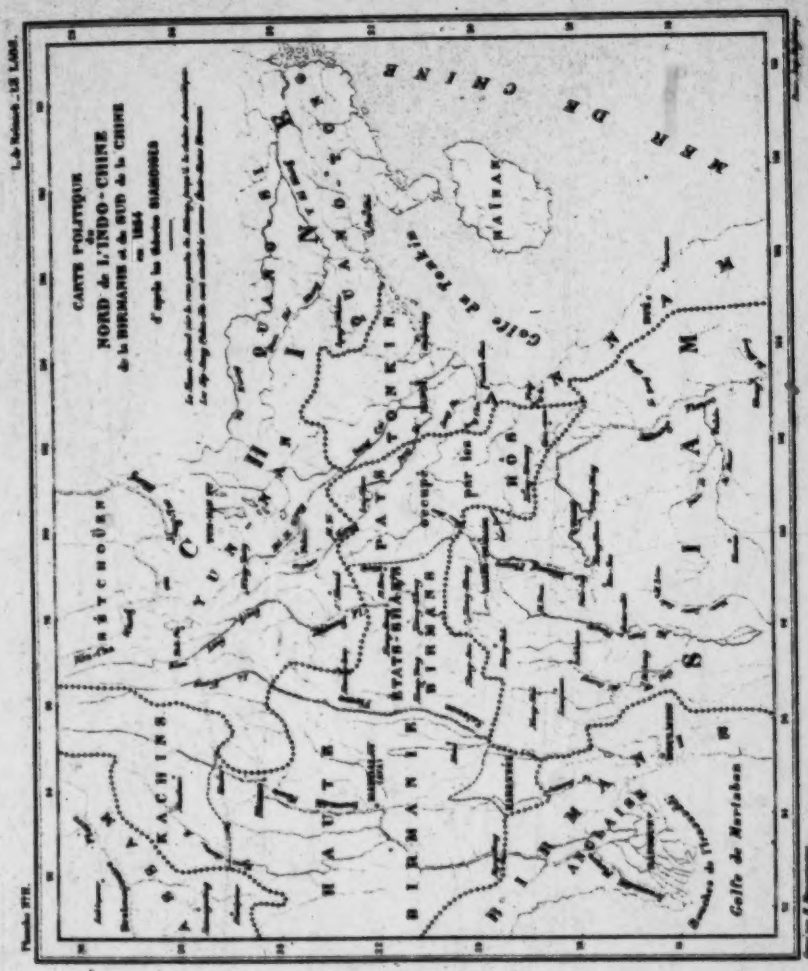
25: Brodrick--90 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 103, 491

"All the year round, you can get by car from Vinh on the Annam coast to Xieng-Khouang, the capital of Tran-ninh province, but you certainly cannot push through from Xieng-Kouang to Luang-Prabang except during the dry season. (1)

1. As you cannot get through as soon as the rains cease since, not only has the road-surface to be reconditioned in places, but some of the bridges have to be rebuilt. This route from Ving to Luang-Prabang is the Route coloniale No. 71, often called 'Queen Astrid's Highway,' since the road was laid out, or at least much improved, against the visit of the King and Queen of the Belgians in the '20's."

149: Reinach--10b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

102
631

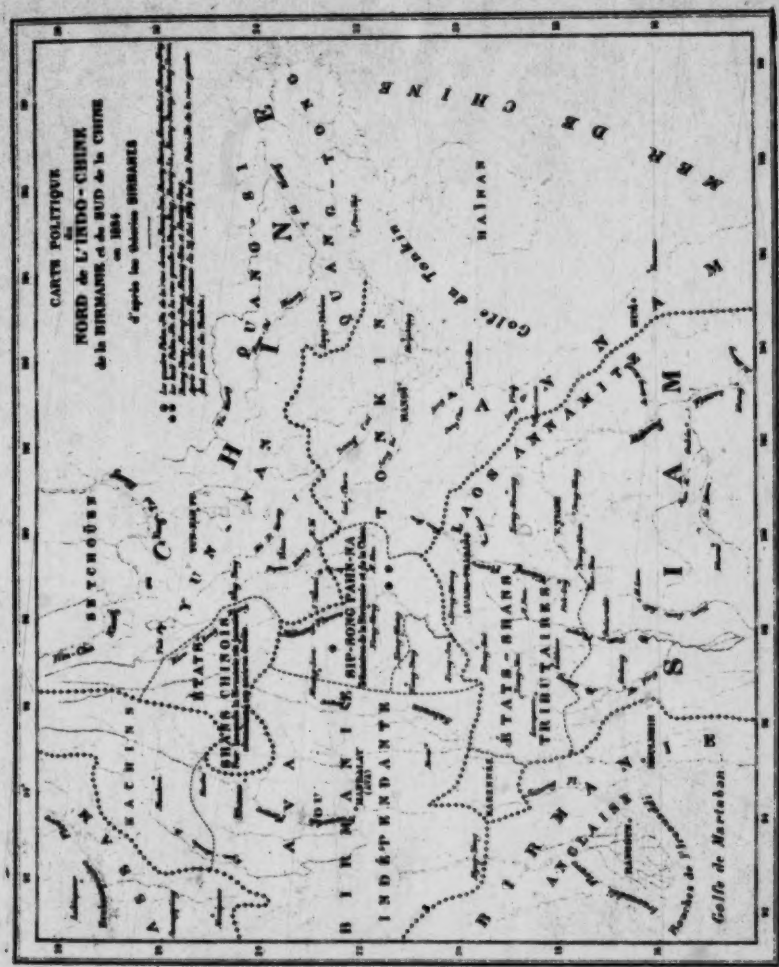


Political Map of the North of Indo-China, of Burma and of the South of China in 1884 according to Siamese theories.

Plate 2 /facing p. 16/

149: Reinach--15b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

102
631



Political Map of the North of Indo-China, of Burma and of the South of China in 1884 according to Burmese theories.

Plate 3 /facing p. 24/

149: Reinach--23a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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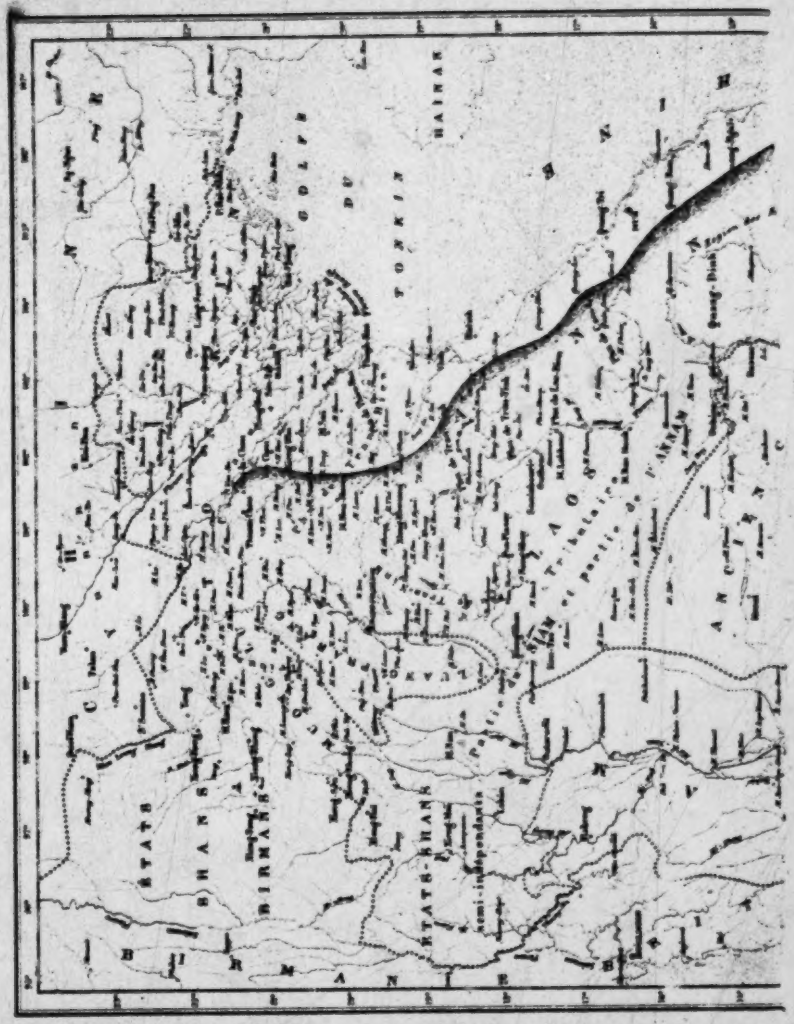
175
631



Political Map of Indo-China in 1893 before the Franco-Siamese Treaty of October 3.

Plate 4 Part A /between pp. 32 and 33/

643* Complaints against such tyranny, which had heretofore been un-
175* known in the region of Lan-Xang, reached his father-in-law the king
642 of Cambodia. The latter summoned his son-in-law to Angkor and in the name of the Buddhist precepts advised him to use /47/ moderation and "pity towards the weak" (1). Fa-Ngoun seemed to accept the

1. According to Auguste Pavie's translators, Fa-Ngoun was content merely to send an embassy to Angkor at the request of Queen Nang-Kéo.

lesson, was baptized in accordance with the rites of the Hinayana and himself urged that a Cambodian mission composed of clergymen, scholars and artisans be sent to Muong-Swa. Pha-Maha-Pasaman-Théla-Tiao, the head of the mission, brought the sacred books of orthodox Buddhism and a statue of Buddha which had been given to the Kmer sovereign by the king of Ceylon in the ninth century. This statue was the Prabang, which became the palladium of the kingdom of Lan-Xang (2).

2. When the mission passed through Vientiane the governor Phao is supposed to have requested and obtained the right to keep the statue in the city for three years. Many legends recount the voyage of the Prabang in diverse manners and disagree as to the route followed. Here again it may be a question of the Vien-Kham in Tran-Ninh.

346 The Prabang. When they reached their destination the Kmer
175* workers began the construction of a temple, the Vat-Gnot-Kéo, where
643* the Prabang was solemnly placed in 1358. But it was not until two
103 centuries later, when the seat of the capital was transferred to Vientiane by the king Setthathirat (1563), that the name of Luang-Prabang was given to the city.

643* /48/ When he returned to his States Fa-Ngoun proclaimed him-
175* self Supreme Chief of religion and resumed, with a severe hand al-
631 though never exceeding the bounds of firmness, the administration of the various territories which then made up the kingdom of Lan-Xang. These were, namely, Muong-Swa in the strict sense; Xieng-Khong in the north (present region of Houei-Sai); Vientiane, Hoi-Luang and Xieng-La (on the Mékong downstream from Vientiane), Muong-Kabang (Bassac) in the south; Kham-Keut (now the province of Cammon) and Muong-Van (Savannakhet) in the east.

133 There is only one mountainous region of note in its whole course through the plains. This is formed by the spur which forces it to describe the bend of Pak-Moun and, on the right bank, by the mountains of Bassac which tower precipitously above it. Then the river spreads out more and more until [54] it forms the altogether characteristic group of the Si-Pan-Don (four thousand islands) above the Khône waterfalls, where it falls down to its lower reach which is subject to the special conditions of the Ton-Lé-Sap risings.

[103] The origin of the word Mékong is not certain. It is doubtless an abbreviation of Mé-Nam-Kong, that is to say, the mother of the waters which come from Kong (1).

(1) This does not refer to Khong, the former capital of Lower Laos, but to another Kong situated at about 22° 20' N. latitude and well known as a transit point for caravans going from Burma to China.

The total length of its course is approximately 4200 kilometers, about half of which belongs to Laos. It is one of the largest rivers in the world. The length of its course, which is approximately the same as that of the Amour or the Hoang-Hô, would place it tenth among all the world's rivers.

In addition to the region of Khong and the Khône waterfalls, where the river spreads out over ten kilometers and even more, there is an average breadth of 1200 to 1500 meters in the Bassac reach. In the Kemmarat rapids its average width is from 300 to 500 meters, but there are also narrows where it is scarcely 100 meters wide.

In the Vien-Tiane reach it has an average width of 300 to 800 meters, but between Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang it narrows down to less than 100 meters. Above Luang-Prabang and as far as Xieng-Khong its average width is only 150 to 250 meters. Then it spreads out again through low islands, to narrow down once and for all towards Tang-Hô.

The area of its basin has been estimated to be a million square kilometers.

"The rate of flow of the Mekong (2) has not yet been measured

[113] (2) Vivien de Saint-Martin, Nouveau Dictionnaire de géographie universelle, 1887.

with the same degree of precision as those of the Irrawaddy, the

daughter, Princess Nang Yot Keo. At an indeterminate date which must come between 1340 and 1350, he was given the command of an army destined to reconquer the kingdom of his fathers. According to the Laotian chronicle, the victorious advance of this army enabled Fa Ngoum to declare himself king of Lan Xan. He immediately demanded the submission of all the Thai princes of Mekong. The center of resistance to Fa Ngoum was Phai Nam (spiny bamboos) because of the impenetrable vegetable belt which protected it like veritable ramparts. Fa Ngoum seized it by means of the classical trick of ornamenting missiles with gold and silver, then pretending to retreat and then pouncing on the enemy at the moment when they had scattered to gather the precious metal. In memory of this episode, the town was baptized Vieng Kham which means "circled with gold" and which later became Vientiane, "circled with sandalwood." Fa Ngoum organized his kingdom with force and reigned as a despot. Complaints were made and the king of Cambodia advised him to be moderate. Fa Ngoum then requested that a mission be sent him from Cambodia consisting of religious and lettered men, and of artisans. This mission introduced the orthodox books of Buddhism and a statue of the Buddha (Prabang) which had been presented in the eleventh century to the Khmer sovereign by the king of Ceylon. Prabang thus became the safeguard of the kingdom.

Up until recent years this tradition led one to believe that the introduction of Buddhism into Laos dated from Fa Ngoum. The discovery of a certain number of Buddhist sculptures of Khmer manufacture of the twelfth century A. D., has destroyed this theory (see below: Introduction of Buddhism to Laos).

After a series of wars, Fa Ngoum died in 1373 at the age of fifty-eight. His successor Sam Sen Thai reigned from 1373 to 1416. He kept [16] peace in his kingdom and passed on to his successor a prosperous kingdom, well established and living in peace, and at the same time dreaded by its neighbors.

The fifteenth century saw a succession of sovereigns about whom history has nothing in particular to tell. Let us mention, however, a war with the emperor of Annam. The first part of the sixteenth century passes under the reign of King Phothisarath (1506-1547), a pious Buddhist. One of his most famous actions is the edict against the cult of Phis. Setthathirath came into power in 1548 after a war with the Burmese. His death was followed by a troubled period. The beginning of the seventeenth century is particularly obscure, but in 1637 a great king called Souligna Vongsa (1637-1694) ascended

66: Dobby--299 [3] N-5 (no date) 1950 Laotians
116, 105, 161, 171

"Laos, the state of the Middle Mekong, is peopled by Laotians who are ethnically related to Tais. They live in small agricultural hamlets and have strong Buddhist associations and semi-feudal customs, with a disinterest in mime and dancing, therein differing from Cambodians farther south."

68: Mouhot--144-147 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 105

"The dress of the Laotians differs little from that of the Siamese. The people wear the langouti and a little red cotton waistcoat, or often nothing at all. Both men and women go barefoot: their head-dresses are like the Siamese. The women are generally better-looking than those of the latter nation: they wear a single short petticoat of cotton, and sometimes a piece of silk over the breast. Their hair, which is black, they twist into a knot at the back of the head. The houses are built of bamboos and leaves interwoven and raised upon stakes, and underneath is a shelter for domestic animals, such as oxen, pigs, fowls, &c.

The dwellings are, in the strictest sense, unfurnished, having neither tables nor beds, nor, with few exceptions, even vessels of earth or porcelain. They eat their rice made into balls out of their hands, or from little baskets plaited with cane, some of which are far from unartistic.

The crossbow and sarbacane are the arms used in hunting, as well as a kind of lance made of bamboo, and [145-146 contain illustration] [147] sometimes, but more rarely, the gun, with which they are very skilful."

115: Le Boulanger--140 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

000 If death had not placed a brutal term on his wanderings a few weeks later, the serious Mouhot might also have been the first man to question the impassive Buddhas on the mysterious past of this remote land, felt the infinite charm of its melodious nights when the khenes give voice to their moving chords, and -- who can say? -- sung the grace of the pretty girls with bare and gilded breasts who in their carefree way weave multicolored scarves under their flowered huts.

105 He contents himself with noting rapidly: "Fortunately this is not like Siam, and I can get help from the natives. . . . The /225/ Laotians are peaceable, submissive, patient, sober, trusting, credulous, superstitious, faithful, simple and naive. They naturally
/685/ hold robbery in horror. The story is told that one of their kings had thieves fried in a cauldron of boiling oil, but since the ravages of the last wars a certain number of thieves are beginning to be found among them who have been driven to rapine by poverty or by the spirit of vengeance.

/685/ "Besides cultivating rice and maize the Laotians grow batatas,
/241/ gourds, red peppers, melons and other vegetables. . . . They sell
/438 the Chinese ivory and pelts from tigers and wild animals. They
434/ also trade gold dust, silver and copper ore, gamboge, cardamom, lac, wax, dyeing wood, cotton, silk and all the products of their soil for heavy porcelain, small glassware and other small commodities of Chinese industry.

"The Laotians are not made for war. Ever since the beginning they have been subjected to the neighboring kings, and have never been able to shake off this heavy yoke.

"They seem to be more industrious than the Siamese and to
/101/ possess more of the spirit of adventure and trade. Although both peoples /226/ have many points of resemblance, both physical and moral, the Laotians can nevertheless be distinguished by their dialect and especially by their customs, which are simpler and more amiable.

533 ". . . Their music is very sweet, harmonious and sentimental.
101 Only three people are needed to make a melodious concert. One plays a bamboo organ, the second signs romances with the accent of a man inspired, and the third strikes strips of a sonorous wood together in rhythm, the clicking sounds of which have a striking effect" (1).

1. This praise of Laotian music should be compared with the

149; Reinach--179 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Tribal Tai

Men's and women's clothing varies little in [244] form from that 291
of the Thais. Under their jacket, however, the women wear a breast-
cloth attached to the neck and waist by cords, like the Annamite and
Tonkinese women.

The Lus. Two centuries or so ago the Lus, who also belong to 619
the Thai race, used to live in the "Shan states" between the Salouen
and the Nam-Hon, where they were surrounded by a drifting popula- 175
tion composed of Burmese, Kunes, Ngieous, etc. [Illustration
alongside text here.]

Following emigrations, they came to Laos and formed two dis-
tinct agglomerations.

Some Lu families have settled in the course of this century on [563]
the territory of Luang-Prabang. Today these Lus form villages com-
posed exclusively of people of their race, but live on good terms with
the Laotians, whose language and customs they have adopted.

In the old Lu kingdom of Muong-Sing, on the other hand, this 101
people has retained its habits, that is to say its character and temper-
ament are like those of the Burmese.

There the Lu is boastful, full of arrogance, a braggart and in- [105]
solent, but a little firmness is enough to humble his pride.

Lus have a clear complexion, delicate features, keen eyes and 142
a swinging stride. The men are generally tattooed from the calf of
the leg to above the navel, and they also have tattoos on their chest, 304
[245] neck, shoulders and arms which are generally red and in the 302
shape of squares with rounded corners. They have long hair rolled in
a coil on top or slightly to one side of the head. This coil is wrapped
in an enormous turban which they wear tilted over one ear. Many of
them have a moustache. This they train upwards, a trait which gives
them a conquering air, and to keep it up they smear it with wax.
[Illustration alongside text here]

The men's costume consists of a pair of full trousers and a short 291
jacket buttoned along the side. It is made of cotton and is dark blue,
almost black, in color. The bottoms of the trousers, the edges of the
jacket, the cuffs of the sleeves and the armholes are ornamented with
three galloons (blue, white and red) which are quite narrow. Their
holiday clothes are often made of silk in varied colors.

The women wind their hair into a heavy coil on top of the head [302]
and on the side of the coil they place a broad circular plaque of [301]
chased silver. They wear skirts like the Laotian women, but the
stripes are very broad, run crosswise and are in bright colors. They

23: Benedict
113, 197, 601
●

ALl Southeast Asia
Lahu AP13
●Laotians AM8

/For a linguistic reconstruction of the kinship terminology of the Lahu and Laotians, see ALl Southeast Asia, 23: Benedict: category 116, pp. 198-205, 230-235./

648 175* In the meantime the carefree populace of Luang-Prabang lived happy and at peace. This is at least the opinion of its annalists who, in confirmation of the adage which states that happy peoples have no history, begin and end their account of Souka-Seum's reign with this categorical assertion.

175* 563 167 The Meo Migration. It was about this time that the first migration of "Meos" occurred in the principality. The chroniclers make no mention of it, doubtless because it was peaceful on the whole and did not affect the tranquillity of the Laotian peoples. Indeed, the newcomers settled on the highest summits of Tran-Ninh and Luang-Prabang, in completely uninhabited regions where even the Khas had never ventured and which were outside the scope of the natives and their leaders.

Farmers and caravaneers, the Meos were above all among the worst denuders of the forests. They must have been driven south out of Se-Tchouen and Yunnan by the need to find new territories which were rich in forests, and also by their undisciplined temperament which could not endure /213/ the authority of the Chinese mandarins. They settled first on the wooded peaks of the Houa-Phan and of Tonkin, then on those of Upper Laos where they found the same kind of habitat as in the cold lands which they had fled. Without religion, without priests, without writing and obedient only to sorcerers who held absolute sway over their essentially vain and credulous character, they lived there in small independent groups, laying waste to the forest in order to grow poppies and maintaining with the neighboring groups only those relations which were strictly indispensable to marketing their opium (1).

/113/ 1. Settlement by the Meos encountered more resistance in Tonkin. "I recall," writes Deo-van-Tri in his Memoires, "having seen my country (Lai-Chau) invaded by the Meos who were called 'White Flags' about 1848. They disturbed the tranquillity of the land, but my honorable father Cam-Sinh finally came to an agreement with them and put them at liberty to settle wherever they wanted on the high plateaus of the region." In the following year, in order to spare his sons from violent family dissensions, Cam-Sinh entrusted Deo-van-Tri and his brother Cam-Heune to the king of Luang-Prabang, who placed them in a pagoda with his own children (Revue indochinoise, August 31, 1904.)

beyond comprehension. Only the British are triumphing." 648*

So greatly was this the case that Siam abandoned all ideas of 175*
using French support in order to check British mastery. In consequence it had to cede England its Malay provinces /218/ and seek compensations from Cambodia. This latter kingdom was in the process of becoming a vast Siamese province when events suddenly sprang up in Cochinchina which once again modified Bangkok's stubborn plans for extension towards the east.

Then followed, successively, the breaking off of diplomatic relations between Franch and Annam, the occupation of Tourane and Saigon by Admiral Rigault de Genouilly (1859), the capture of Mytho by Admiral Charner (1861), the capture of Bienhoa by Admiral Bonard (1862) and finally the peace treaty of June 5, 1862 which sanctioned the French conquests in the Cochinchinese delta.

This rapid page of history was heavy with consequences, then unsuspected, for Luang-Prabang, and transpired too far away from the thick Laotian forests to awaken any echo there. It was in the peaceful atmosphere of the smiling villages of the Upper Mekong that Henri Mouhot, who was the first to reveal the splendors of Angkor and the existence of the kingdom of Millions of Elephants to the western world, came to die in 1861 (1).

1. With the cooperation of various London geographical and 113
zoological societies Henri Mouhot, who was born at Montbeliard on May 15, 1826, organized an expedition to Indo-China for the purpose of pursuing studies in natural history, particularly in entomology and omithology. He visited Bangkok, Chantaboun, Ayuthya (1858), Oudong, Battambang and discovered the ruins of Angkor (1860), crossed the forest of the "King of Fire" in the north of Siam and died at Luang-Prabang on November 10, 1861. The account of his voyages, first published in the Tour du Monde, appeared in English in London, then in French in Paris in 1868 in the "Bibliotheque rose illustree" of the Hachette publishing house.

/219/ Voyage and death of Henri Mouhot in Luang-Prabang (1861).

Although this traveler did not have time to undertake as de- 114
tailed a study of the land as he had done for Siam and Cambodia, at least the few pages of his travel log -- the last pages -- which he devotes to the principality reflect the extremely keen impressions

K Attopeu and p. 160, the first known rebellion of the Khas
L of Bassac.
669
175• In fact the region had long been a vast supply ground for slaves --
563 "Annamites generally, whom the turbulent and hardly Khas went and kidnaped on the other side of the watershed chain" and bartered on the banks of the Mekong for buffalo, gongs, metals and cloth, of which they stood in permanent need.

K The cause of the rebellion of 1901, which /345/ arose in the re-
/567/ gion of Oubone and spread like wildfire, remains highly obscure. Doubtless the abolition of slavery by King Chulalongkorn and the prohibition against engaging in this traffic which was pronounced by our first administrators were not unconnected with the mystical fervor which agitated the Khas, who were tacitly supported by those
K Laotian functionaries who had suddenly been deprived of profitable
/791/ dealings. Whatever the case may be, these basically superstitious people were inflamed by their sorcerers or "Phou-Mi-Boun," who resembled messiahs and in whose supernatural gifts they had an unshakeable faith, and they declared war against the established order for the purpose of imposing the authority of their ringleaders, who alone were worthy, in their eyes, of "governing men and causing justice to reign among them" (1). In March 1901 the situation had

L 1. Cf. J.-J. Dauplay, Les terres rouges du plateau des
K Boloven. Saigon, 1929, p. 55.
● 113

become so grave on the plateau of the Bolovens that M. Remy, the
L government commissioner in Saravane, was surrounded together with
K some fifteen militiamen in the pagoda of Thateng by 1500 Khas,
669 almost all of whom were armed with flintlock rifles, and that he
175• owed his own salvation only to a forceful resistance. "A few days
563 later the whole plateau was up in arms. All the villages /346/ had followed the Phou-Mi-Boun, without distinction of race. They had, moreover, scarcely any other alternative, for the lukewarm and hesitant individuals were simply massacred" (1).

1. Cf. J.-J. Dauplay, op. cit. /Les terres rouges du plateau des Boloven. Saigon, 1929./, p. 60.

The rebels' success had no aftermath, however, and thanks to

115: Le Boulanger--221 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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glades, but "instead of the oil trees, bogus teaks with their whitish foliage and their trunks deeply dented with wide grooves, we find gigantic, shade-giving pines; and instead of the bare, powdery or viscous soil, a fine level turf on which it is a pleasure to walk and where it is enjoyable to linger and slow one's pace" (2). 133 137

(2) Letter from Captain Rivière, reproduced by Captain Gosselin in Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900. [113]

It is also a region of wild beasts, and the inhabitants of the muong of Ma-Ha-Saï come there every year to hunt elephants. [136]

At the very source of the Sé-Bang-Faï there springs up a noteworthy peak about 1200 meters high from which many watercourses flow down to the Annam coast.

South of this point the Annamitic Chain drops to give way to the gap of Aï-Lao (about 410 meters in altitude) on the road from Savannakhèt to Quang-Tri. Then the chain rises to form walls which are often more than 2000 meters high in the provinces of Saravane and Attopeu. Thus, Pou-Atonat has an altitude of about 2500 meters. It is an important orographic center from which spring the Sékhong and the Poyo, which belong to the Mékong basin, and also the Song-Bnong, a tributary of the Song-Caï which is a coastal river of Annam. 133

Between the Sédone and the Sékhong, at about the 15th parallel, stands the remarkable plateau of the Bolovens, which takes its name from the Kha tribe which inhabits it. It is a mass about 100 kilometers in diameter, and its height varies between 600 and 1200 meters. Travelers who have explored it have extolled the mildness of the climate, the wealth of the vegetation, the beauty of the plains and the abundance of water, so [50] that Dr. Harmand suggested the idea that the plateau, which could easily be linked by road with the port of Tourane, might be made into the administrative center and sanatorium of our Indo-Chinese empire. [132]

The part which the plateau may be called on to play in the future has been somewhat exaggerated. It would be imprudent to envisage it as a wonderland, [illustration here] an eldorado destined to a great future from the administrative, commercial and sanitary point of view. Today it is a plateau with well-cultivated slopes which yield fine harvests of cardamom and rice, as well as tobacco, cotton and Chinese nettles [ortie de Chine], and is inhabited by gentle, peaceful folk who live in handsome, well kept-up villages. 133 241 361

part of the natives' diet? Do not its alluvia yield the cotton, tobacco and indigo which are indispensable to the Laotian, and does not the river itself, in the high water period, transport the wood needed for cooking food, so that, in a manner of speaking, it has only to recede in order to collect firewood? Finally, from the commercial point of view, is not the Mékong the great fluvial artery and the only practical route joining Yunnan to Saigon? M. Blancsubé, a former deputy for Cochinchina, envisaged the use to which the Mékong could be put when he said: [372] 133 [502]

"I see in our establishment throughout the whole Mékong valley, the means of making flow into Saigon the products of thirty kingdoms and tribes scattered along the river, as well as those of Yunnan and those of the interior provinces of China. I see the means of making Saigon into one of the greatest storehouses in the world, and making it the queen of the Far East." 000

The vision is a tempting one. Unfortunately, the reality is quite another thing. On the one hand the orientation of trade towards Bangkok was climaxed by the completion of the Korat railroad, while on our part the problem of making the Mékong navigable from Yunnan to the sea is still far from having been solved.

Looked at as a whole, the Mékong flows first in a largely north and south direction as far as Ban-Houé-Pak-Kop (1) (where the Houé- 133

(1) Pak = mouth, junction of rivers.

Kop flows into its right bank), then turns suddenly eastward in the gorge which it has cut around the plateau which forms the last stage of the Sih-Song-Pahn-Na.

Macey (2) says, in this connection, that one can almost certainly

(2) "Cinq ans au Laos." Lecture delivered before the Society of Commercial Geography [Société de Géographie commerciale] on November 19, 1895. [113]

accept the hypothesis that in a relatively recent geological epoch the Mékong flowed into the sea in the Gulf of Siam through the valley of the present-day Ménam. The other branch of the Mékong which goes down to the sea through Cambodia and Cochinchina was a continuation of the Nam-Hou. It was only when an upheaval or

133 There is only one mountainous region of note in its whole course through the plains. This is formed by the spur which forces it to describe the bend of Pak-Moun and, on the right bank, by the mountains of Bassac which tower precipitously above it. Then the river spreads out more and more until [54] it forms the altogether characteristic group of the Si-Pan-Don (four thousand islands) above the Khône waterfalls, where it falls down to its lower reach which is subject to the special conditions of the Ton-Lé-Sap risings.

[103] The origin of the word Mékong is not certain. It is doubtless an abbreviation of Mé-Nam-Kong, that is to say, the mother of the waters which come from Kong (1).

(1) This does not refer to Khong, the former capital of Lower Laos, but to another Kong situated at about 22° 20' N. latitude and well known as a transit point for caravans going from Burma to China.

The total length of its course is approximately 4200 kilometers, about half of which belongs to Laos. It is one of the largest rivers in the world. The length of its course, which is approximately the same as that of the Amour or the Hoang-Hô, would place it tenth among all the world's rivers.

In addition to the region of Khong and the Khône waterfalls, where the river spreads out over ten kilometers and even more, there is an average breadth of 1200 to 1500 meters in the Bassac reach. In the Kemmarat rapids its average width is from 300 to 500 meters, but there are also narrows where it is scarcely 100 meters wide.

In the Vien-Tiane reach it has an average width of 300 to 800 meters, but between Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang it narrows down to less than 100 meters. Above Luang-Prabang and as far as Xieng-Khong its average width is only 150 to 250 meters. Then it spreads out again through low islands, to narrow down once and for all towards Tang-Hô.

The area of its basin has been estimated to be a million square kilometers.

"The rate of flow of the Mekong (2) has not yet been measured

[113] (2) Vivien de Saint-Martin, Nouveau Dictionnaire de géographie universelle, 1887.

with the same degree of precision as those of the Irrawaddy, the

503 member of the Lagrée mission, in 1891 (1), "have resulted in a plan

[113] (1) L. Delaporte, La grande voie commerciale de l'Indo-Chine, 1891.

505 to establish a complete service serving the course of the Mékong, in order to divert its trade to the heart of the kingdom of Siam via the fine Sé-Moun river and then take it by railway to the capital and the sea. This plan is now in the process of full achievement. Two steamships will very shortly be introduced, one on the middle course of the river between Bassac and Kemmarat with its headquarters at Pak-Moun at the river junction, and the other on the Sé-Moun between Pak-Moun and Khorat at the point where the river ceases to be navigabl and this service will be completed by a railway joining Khorat to Bangkok."

505 It was thus a question of out-distancing the Siamese sloops. Governor General Piquet himself became interested in the matter
503 and embarked on board the Cantonnais (October 1891) in the hope
654 of passing the Khône rapids and showing the French flag in the upper reach. The Argus, under the command of Ensign Guissez and serving as a look-out ship for the Cantonnais, reached Khône and tried to reconnoiter the passage. The latter had been shown by the inhabitants to M. Pelletier and Dr. Mougeot, two Europeans who then held the concession to the large island of Ca-Lomnieu, and was accessible at certain times of the year to pirogues coming down the river. But the season was far advanced (it was the end of October). The low water made it impossible to attempt the desired trial, and the Cantonnais had to return to Saigon.

In the meantime the Argus anchored in the pass of Ka-Sedam between the rapids of Tat-Val and Tat-Liou in order to complete the studies which had been begun and the exploration of the river as far upstream as possible. For more than two years this launch tried to negotiate the passes, but failed because of its large draft, its instability and its lack of speed.

The persevering energy and efforts of its commander were not lost, however, for they prepared the way for the work subsequently undertaken in these parts.

It being impossible to find a suitable passage for [65] [Illustration] [66] [Blank page] [67] steamships, a transhipment railway was built

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"The administration of public works of Cochinchina was particularly responsible for carrying out the work. The operation was directed by Messrs. Gubiand, the engineering director of public works, and Crouzat, the chief clerk of the department of civil engineering [conducteur principal des ponts et chaussées], and was fully successful despite the haste, the difficulties and the mishaps and tribulations which we had to undergo.

"On October 31, 1893, five months after the mission's arrival in Saigon, two ships, the Massie and the Ham-Luong, had passed the Khône waterfalls.

"The Ham-Luong was a sloop from Cochinchina which was sent at the last [68] moment and in all haste to replace the La Grandière numerically and provisorily, the latter being disabled below the falls as the result of grave damage to the engine."

After they had been floated in the upper reach the Massie and the Ham-Luong pushed on to Bassoc immediately, then to the junction with the Sé-Moun. The Massie finally reached Kemmarat on February 28, 1894, after successfully passing the 120 kilometers of rapids just below it. There the Massie had to wait for high water before it could pass the Keng-Sa, one of the most dangerous obstacles in this region. In the high water season of 1894 it was in the Vien-Tiane reach, where it showed the French flag over an extent of more than 500 kilometers. On September 5, 1894, the La Grandière went to Khône in its turn, on its way from one reach to another, and then in November caught up with the Massie which it soon passed. Finally in August 1895 Lieutenant Commander Simon took the La Grandière through the series of rapids stretching over a distance of 350 kilometers between Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang, which he reached on September 1.

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"This brilliant success demonstrated France's power to the friendly and hostile populations of the banks of the Mékong. Through the more frequent sight of our officers, our weapons and our cruising steamships, which ammounted to ambulatory offices, it strengthened the work accomplished by our diplomats on the left bank, which belonged to us henceforth" (1).

[113]

(1) Lanier, L'Asie, 1898. Selected readings in geography.

We rejoice at being able to render deserved homage here to the abilities of Commander Simon who, in the midst of the greatest

This preventive measure is recommended by Laveran, who discovered the haematozoon of paludism, and is followed by a great many persons. It has always yielded excellent results, even among the natives who are also subject to the fever (1). 164 757

(1) According to a report by the Superior Resident in Laos, in which mention is made of a note by M. Morin, the government commissioner in Vien-Tiane, there is a kind of liana in this province which is quite common in the region and which the Laotians call Khua-Khao-hô. 278

This liana, which the Siamese call Bora-phet, is no other, according to the dictionary by Pallegoix, than the Cocculus verrucosus of the Menispermaceae family.

The taste of the sap which it contains, when newly cut, is particularly bitter. When dried the liana itself retains a very pronounced taste of quinine.

Native doctors use it in various preparations for treating obstinate fevers and jaundice in its various forms.

At the same time as the Khao-hô, pieces of heartwood from two hardwood trees are generally used. We have been unable to discover their exact names, but the active medicinal agent, according to the natives, is primarily Cocculus verrucosus (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, August 1, 1900). [113]

[121] The daily ingestion of a small quantity of quinine keeps the blood in a toxic state for fever-bearing microbes, and it must be constantly saturated if one wishes to prevent their invasion and growth. 757

Some persons also get along very well on a treatment which consists in taking a purgation of sodium or magnesium sulphate, or else an emetic of ipecacuanha, every three months (April, July, October and January).

Whenever a feeling of torpor, stiffness in the nape of the neck or the shivers which are the forerunners of fever manifest themselves, one and a half to two grams of ipeca and one gram of quinine, after vomiting has stopped, will overcome the illness and reduce the attack to its most benign form.

In sum, one can keep in excellent health in Laos, by following these few recommendations, if one has a good stomach, solid insides and an intact liver. A stay in this country can therefore not be 000

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It is true that all the races and varieties enumerated above can be found in Laos, but it is impossible to say what their exact origins were or to gain a complete knowledge of their history, their migrations and the details of their settlement in the land.

For certain regions inhabited by several races we do possess, however, either Phong Savadan or local annals, or else legends written on palm leaves, or even accounts which have been handed down by word of mouth. The manuscripts are, in general, rather incorrect and full of interpolations and embellishments inevitably due to the scribes. They are the only written documents.

The architecture might also give us useful information on all these questions, but the monuments are either too recent and contain nothing of any interest or else they are mute on the events which motivated their edification, as well as on the events contemporaneous with them. None of this evidence, whether it be in the form of manuscripts, temples or pagodas, offers the guarantees of authenticity and the ensemble of precise details which are needed in order to leave the realm of hypotheses and [129] [Illustration] [130] [Blank page] [131] deductions, no matter how adroit and logical these may be, when we attempt to settle in exact fashion the evolution of races in the basin of the Great River.

Various theories, based on documents which are questionable in varying degrees, have been put forth by explorers and travelers. We shall here submit to the reader's judgment those which seem to afford the best summary of this somewhat obscure question.

Here, first, is the opinion of the Superior Resident in Laos (1).

[113] (1) Le Laos Français. (Revue indo-chinoise, Nos. 82 ff., 1900.)

"Laotian legends claim that all the races which now inhabit Indo-China came out of one and the same gourd in Dien-Bien-Phu (Annamite style) or Muong-Thèng (Laotian style), a vast plateau situated in the northeast part of the valley of the Nam-Hou. The sons of this gourd are said to have spread eastward towards the China Sea, southward along the Mékong and the Ménam, and westward towards Burma. Whether we will or not, this gourd reminds us of Noah's Ark.

"On the other hand, if we consult the chronological list of the kings of Luang-Prabang, we note that after six kings of foreign origin, the first of which came from India and the second from Cambodia, there were four kings of Kha race, after which Laotians coming from

193 while a prefix before the noun transforms it into a demonstrative adjective. The comparative is expressed by a suffix placed after the noun.

There are eleven expressions to indicate the superlative. They are used as prefixes or suffixes in accordance with fixed rules.

Personal pronouns. There are eleven pronouns for the first person which vary in accordance with the status of the speaker and the person being spoken to.

There are ten for the second person and eight for the third.

Possessive pronouns. There is no such pronoun in Siamese. It is replaced by the genitive of the person or animal which possesses.

Relative pronouns. They are in the number of three, and stand before the object which they modify.

Interrogative pronouns. They are five in number. When repeated they become relative or indefinite and signify, for example, whoever instead of who, whatever instead of what, etc.

Verbs. Verbs do not have conjugations, moods, tenses or persons. Like nouns, they are always invariable. Some semblance of conjugation may nevertheless be achieved by means of particles or auxiliary words. These words, in the number of eleven, change the [144] meaning of sentences by expressing an action or an idea, according as they stand before the verb or after.

Principal adverbs. There are seventy-eight principal adverbs. Moreover, certain nouns or adjectives take an adverbial form by means of seven particles which are placed after them.

Prepositions and conjunctions. There are twenty-eight main prepositions and twenty-five conjunctions (1).

[113] (1) Pallegoix, Dictionnaire siamois-français-anglais, 1896.

212 The Lao or Laotian language. The Lao alphabet is composed of
194 twenty-eight letters divided into fourteen simple or compound consonants and fourteen vowels or diphthongs. They are divided into three classes, as follows:

1. Six letters on a rising or aspirated tone;
2. Eight letters on a middle or recto tone;
3. Fourteen letters on a falling or low tone.

To obtain the grave, long grave, short, open and close tones, signs and accents are used. These may be placed above or below the consonant, or may be formed by joining certain vowels and

as a blessing.

One fact worthy of note is that the "Phi-pop"--men, women and even adolescents--are extremely intelligent folk with lively eyes and full of a strong will and energy. They know [Illustration here] a host of recipes and therapeutic formulas which have been handed down to them by their parents. They might be described as bonesetters or people who have medicine as a sideline, and who act on weak minds and nervous temperaments by the power of suggestion. "Phi-pop" women and girls are usually quite pretty. 791 755 156

One of the methods most widely used to gain the favor of the "Phis" is to play deafening music. 755

"It is not at all unusual to hear diabolic and uninterrupted music in a Laotian house for several days and nights running. In this house there is a person who is seriously ill. All the noise is designed to frighten or to assuage the spirit in the sick person's body and to persuade or force it to [153] leave the body of the invalid. The sick person generally succumbs under the waves of this curative but noisy harmony" (1). 533

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.] [113]

Religion of the Thais. They have neither pagodas nor bonzes, but practice ancestor worship and have a great veneration for the "Spirits or Genii," to whom they make offerings on all occasions. 771 769

In the first room of the house there stands a bamboo altar. The "Spirits" or "Phis" of dead forbears are supposed to inhabit this altar, which is composed of two different levels, the highest one for the male Phis and the other for the female Phis. At its foot there is an opening covered with an elliptical wooden ornament shaped like a mouth. It is there, on this "ancestors' mouth," that the head of the family places offerings and prayers, especially when a member of the family is sick. In principal an animal is never killed without some scrap of food or a few drops of blood being offered to the ancestors' mouth.

"Spirits, whether genii or demons, are everywhere--in the sky, on earth, in the forests, in the water. They are the object of a widespread cult over which individuals who might be described as 776 793 755

149: Reinach--144 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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wax candles decorated with flowers, cigarettes and a sum of money. (Author's note)

the family from the hands of her patient.

"Two or three days after her confinement ends the mother must go to the pagoda and give a few presents to the bonzes, who give her in return a few cotton threads which she fastens to her wrists " (4). [751] [792]

(4) Dr. Estrade, 1895. Dictionnaire et Guide franco-laotien. [113]

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Cases of dystocia and other childbearing difficulties are very rare in Laos, thanks to the physiological law which decrees that childbirth shall occur all the more naturally insofar as one comes closer to the primitive type and as one's body has not been deformed either by certain professional attitudes or by artifices of dress. [191] But when any difficulty of this type does occur the Laotian midwives are extremely skilful. Their hands take the place of the steel instruments in our gynecological and surgical arsenal, and their results are usually successful both for mother and child.

[554]

When the newly delivered mother is allowed to get up there occur traditional feasts and celebrations, the brilliance of which varies with the status of the young mother's parents. It is generally during these happy gatherings that the bonzes or sorcerers choose the name which the newborn child is to bear. They usually base their choice on some peculiarity of the coloring or eyes, or on a phase of the moon. The name will be replaced by another if the child falls sick, for in this case, as they say, the old name was unpleasing to his "This," that is to say to his personal tutelary spirits.

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Infanticide. Scarcely any cases of infanticide can be cited in Laos, and abortions are extremely rare or at least very well hidden. For when cases do occur it is among members of a class which, because of the rank it holds, is anxious to conceal its faults from the mass of the people.

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In popular belief abortion, whether voluntary or natural, is regarded as a punishment of heaven or as a case of aberration which cannot fail to draw down the utmost scorn on the guilty parties and their accomplices.

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Marriage. Marriage in Laos is made ready for long in advance, thanks to the liberty which young people of both sexes enjoy. The latter meet one another at every celebration and can communicate

313 "There are several kinds of bamboo. The large bamboo which is used to make boxes and floats is called mai-bane. The mai-tot is the male bamboo, [340] strong and slender, with its joints closer together. When provided with an iron point it is used for poling boats along in the rivers. The mai-an is the female bamboo, hollower and lighter, from which raft coverings and partition mats are made. It is the kind used to make kelates" (1).

• [113] (1) Revue des Deux Mondes. "A travers l'Indo-Chine. Le Haut Laos et le Mékong," by Mme Isabelle Massieu, August 1, 1900.

314 824 17. Rubber.

Rubber is called "Niang-Niut" in Laotian, which means, literally, elastic gum.

There are several plant varieties in Laos which supply a latex which becomes elastic after coagulation. Certain types of the ficus family, doubtless of the elastica genus, yield rubber of comparatively good quality. The plants which produce the most latex and that of the best quality, however, are lianas whose scientific nature has not yet been settled.

More than ten different kinds of rubber lianas are known. The Laotians call these "Khua-Mak-Niang, Khua-Hai, Khua-Niut-Niai, Khua-Mak-Som, Khua-Mak-Katong-Katiou, Khua-Khao-Pong, Khua-Lam-Sai, Khua-Tang-Tong, Khua-Som-Lam, Khua-Mak-Ka-Khay, Khua-Mak-Khao-Ngoua," etc.

It is quite certain that these diverse names do not refer to as many species which are dissimilar from the botanical point of view, but are merely different local terms used at widely separated points in order to designate the same lianas. Without any concern for their chief virtue, which is to supply latex rubber, the Laotians have named them for their appearance, the shape or type of their fruit, etc.

It seems likely that the varieties which we have just enumerated may be reduced to seven and perhaps less. We shall not be able to tell for sure until we have examined the stalks, leaves, flowers and fruits of the various species in a laboratory. The liana which is most widespread in Laos is the one bearing the name Khua-Mak-Khao-Ngoua or liana with fruits like buffalo horns. It is also called Khua-Mak-Som or liana with acid fruits. The latex is collected twice [341] each year, once in June or July (rainy season), and again in October or November (dry season). The first harvest yields only second grade rubber which is black and sticky. The second crop, which is less

banks of the Mekong and its larger tributaries. 248

It is also grown on former rais in the highlands of southern Laos. 311

The climate of the Mekong valley is essentially favorable to the production of cotton, but the extent of the plantings has so far been limited, because of the lack of outlets, to what is strictly necessary to satisfy current local consumption.

Farming methods, in the lowlands of Lower Laos as well as in the highlands, are extremely primitive. The brush is cleared from the piece of land chosen, then without either weeding or fertilization the seeds are sowed in holes made with a dibble. 248

Two varieties are grown:

1. The large-flowered variety (Fai-Dok-Niai), which is preferred as being more productive and having fewer seeds. It is sowed at the end of the rainy season, usually in October, and harvested in March. This variety is cultivated only on the banks of watercourses. Its average height is one meter.

2. The small-flowered variety (Fai-Dok-Noi). It is cultivated only on higher ground, on former rais or in mountainous regions and is similar to the variety found in northern Laos. [363] It is sowed and harvested at about the same times as the above, that is to say from May to July for sowing and November or December for harvesting. Its average height is .7 meter.

It is difficult to determine the yield per hectare, in view of the fact that the cotton fields are irregular and variable in shape and size. On the basis of results in a certain number of fields which were measured separately, however, we may hazard the approximate figure of 200 to 400 kilograms of raw cotton per hectare, depending on the type of soil and its disposition.

On-the-spot purchase prices vary appreciably between the two parts of Laos. In the northern part, for example, the second-grade cotton bought by the Chinese sells for 35 to 40 francs per hundred kilograms. [435]

This crop should be developed further, and in a later paragraph we shall outline the steps which might be taken (1).

(1) Based on the reports of the Superior Commandants of Upper and Lower Laos. [113]

SUGAR CANE. Sugar cane is cultivated everywhere, both in the hills and on the low prairies. It is used only for local consumption, 249

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2. The obligation on the part of the concessionnaire to rid the young teaks of the lianas which choke them;

3. The obligation to replant ten young teak shoots for every tree which is felled;

4. The obligation on the part of villages near groups of teaks to open up roads leading to these groups; a prohibition against making rais and cutting down trees without permission; the obligation to plant from fifty to a hundred teaks per house each year, depending on the remoteness of the village.

In return, the inhabitants of these villages need not fulfill the twenty days of labor drafts due each year.

Besides teak, we may recommend the planting of certain other trees, such as the "Mai-Niom-Pha" (mock mahogany), the "Mai-Thon" (mock walnut), the "Mai-Kha-Nioung" (mock rosewood), the "Mai-Lang-Dam" (ebony), etc.

The eucalyptus would doubtless grow well in certain regions of Laos.

PROVINCE EXPERIMENTAL GARDENS

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For several years now there have been experimental gardens in each commissionership. They serve as trial fields for the cultivation of certain European and Asian plants which are unknown or rare in Laos.

[396] These gardens are also schools of practical agriculture for the natives. Seeds and plants are distributed to the latter, and they are given extremely summary bits of information about certain plants whose cultivation would be advantageous from the point of view of commercial transactions. These gardens are destined to render services to future colonists, and the trials which are made there deserve encouragement.

Although not all heads of provinces possess the same degree of agricultural and horticultural knowledge, they devote the utmost zeal to making the most of their gardens. Seconded by their staff and guided by the enlightened counsels of the Superior Residency, of the department of Agriculture and of the directors of the botanical gardens of Indo-China, most of them have already achieved satisfactory results.

[113] The special periodicals such as the Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, the Revue des cultures coloniales, etc. which are sent to each commissioner are of invaluable help in this connection (1).

(1) Some of the libraries in the commissionerships contain a book

Cochinchina, and this is quite a lucrative trade.

231 178 The following are the main points in Laos where the raising of oxen would have a good chance of success, in view of the nature of the soil and the forage plants which grow there:

1. Northern Laos. Valleys of the upper Nam-Tha; plain of Muong-Sing; plains of the Mekong and of the Nam-Hou in the province of Luang-Prabang; valleys of the Nam-Het and of the upper Song-Ca; plains of Tran-Ninh (2); plains between the Mekong, the Nam-Tone

[175 727] (2) Tran-Ninh used to be the greatest livestock region in Laos as recently as thirty some years ago, and all the buffalo and oxen needed in nearby regions came from there. The occupation of the region by the Hos and its pitiless depopulation by the Siamese completely halted this form of industry. It is beginning to be reborn with the peace and order which we have brought to this region, and the herds are reforming. Exports have already begun again in the last year.

Livestock is the principal form of wealth of the region, and could yield high profits to a European company which had sufficient capital at its disposition to engage in large-scale breeding. [113] (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, December 1900. Report of the Superior Resident on Tran-Ninh.)

and the Nam-Ngum, in the province of Vien-Tiane.

[405] 2. Southern Laos. Plain of Tha-Khek and basin of Mahasay, in the province of Cammon; plains of the Mekong, valleys of the Se-Bang-Hien and of its tributaries in the province of Song-Khone; plains between the Se-Set and the Sedone, valley of the Se-Katam, slope of Pou-Pai-Mai, in the province of Saravane; valleys of the Bla (1), of the Poko and of the Ayoun, in the province of

(1) The raising of oxen might be greatly increased here. In all the villages, especially the Catholic villages, I saw superb herds containing animals with every fine point. If breeding is not more extensive here, this is because the prices offered at Ang-Ke are not greatly higher than those at which the animals are sold in the region, since the Khas use large numbers of them to supplant buffaloes in their superstitious ceremonies. [113] (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, December 1899. Notes by the Superior Commandant of Lower Laos on the eastern region of Lower Laos.)

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which the difficulty of communications is now impeding."
(Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, loc. cit.)
[113] [Translator's note. Probably refers to December 1900 issue, "Rapport du Résident supérieur sur le Tran-Ninh."]

5. POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH SERVICE

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The telegraph network in Laos is quite complete. At the present time only three commissionerships are not served by a telegraph line, those of Tran-Ninh, the Hua-Pahn and Darlac. All the other provinces possess one or several telegraph offices, where postal service is also provided.

Examination of Plate VI will show the extent of the telegraph network in Laos. The lines are divided into two sections: the northern one which is under the jurisdiction of the Annam-Tonkin central office, and the southern one which is attached to the Cochinchina-Cambodia central office. [484] The two sections are not connected with one another, but soon will be. Tonkin will then be in communication with Cochinchina by means of a line which will cross all of Laos from north to south.

When this result has been achieved, that is to say when the Luang-Prabang-Vien-Tiane section has been completed, the Laotian network will be 2,283 kilometers long: 1,168 in Upper Laos and 1,115 in Lower Laos.

[505] By the terms of a contract between the administration and the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [Compagnie des Messageries Fluviales], the latter was made responsible for the transport of postal dispatches on the Mekong as far as Luang-Prabang (1). Outside

(1) This company receives an annual subsidy of 300,000 francs from the government of Indo-China for this purpose.

of the region of the river, and even in certain stretches served by the Company where service can be made more rapid, the administration has recourse either to human carriers or to pirogues.

6. SERVICE BY THE RIVER MERCHANT FLEET [MESSAGERIES FLUVIALES]

505

Transport for merchandise and passengers is provided on the Mekong as far as Luang-Prabang by the Cochinchina River Merchant

505 Fleet Company [Compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine].
Although the organization of this service is not perfect, it cannot be denied that the company has made an outstanding contribution to the development and prosperity of Laos, where its ships travel more than 20,000 marine leagues annually. M. Lagrillière-Beauclerc, in his interesting book A travers l'Indo-Chine (2), has given an

[113] (2) Lagrillière-Beauclerc, A travers l'Indo-Chine, Paris, 1900.

excellent report, as follows, of the results obtained:

"To return to the considerable development of production occasioned by the establishment of the first regular service on the great river in the direction of Kratie and Laos, and to the business activity which has been the consequence thereof, it will suffice to say that the regular subsidized service, which was only weekly in the beginning and provided by an ordinary launch, is now provided twice weekly by [485] means of two rapid ships (1) and has competition in the form

(1) The Bassac and the Vien-Tiane.

of a large number of steam launches belonging to Chinese for the most part. These launches take on merchandise every day and transport hundreds of native passengers, Malays and Chinese, both upstream and downstram between Pnom-Penh and Kratie. Both banks of the river, where villages used to be widely scattered, are today populated and cultivated almost continuously.

"We should note, however, that so far these latter launches [Illustration here] have not gone upriver beyond Kratie. The first rapids of the river have frightened their owners, who leave it to the vessels of the River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales] to provide postal and commercial communication with Laos.

"This service, which was begun in 1891 and which has the Bassac, a special steamship with a shallow draft and high speed, can only be provided during the high water period. It connects with that which the River Merchant Fleet organized in 1896 on the Mekong beyond Khone, serving Lower and Upper Laos as far as Luang-Prabang, and whose economic results are beginning to be felt. Indeed, an appreciable movement of exports to Cambodia and Cochinchina [486] is taking shape more and more in the Mekong valley. Even as early as 1897 and 1898, the vessels were scarcely sufficient to the need during the high water period. Large quantities of nep (rice suitable

China and Indo-China (1).

[113] (1) E. Picanon, Le Laos français. 1901, Challamel. [Paris]

II

173 Laos, Thais and Khas. Although the Laotian legends
563 attribute the same origin to all of these (Muang-Theng or Dien-Bien-
144 Phu) and say that they all came from the same "gourd" (Nam-Tao-Phouri), it is hardly likely that the Laotians and the Khas have a common origin. Indeed, the characteristics which serve to distinguish the two races are too numerous and too marked, both from the point of view of the racial types themselves and as regards language, mores and religious beliefs.

144 Nor can it be affirmed that the Khas are the representatives of
174 the aboriginal population, for before any of their people had mounted the throne of Luang-Prabang, six kings foreign to their race had already occupied it--if we may regard the list of the first kings of the land which is preserved in the Phong-Sa Va-Dan (annals of the kingdom) as correct--and of these conquering princes the first is said to have come from India, and the second from Cambodia.

In any case, the Khas are said to have preceded the Laotians in the land, and it was not until the reign of their fourth and last king that they are supposed to have been conquered and driven out or enslaved by the Laotians, who had come down from Dien-Bien-
[609] Phu. Since that time, and despite many revolts of which the last is almost recent, the Khas have never ceased being "a folk taillable and liable to forced labor at pleasure" for their vanquishers, and their name has become a synonym for a low person or slave in the current
[56] idiom. Not until 1895 were the Khas once and for all freed--freed is perhaps not the word, for in the strict sense they were never slaves--or at least summoned to enjoy a system of rule similar to that of the other natives and which left no margin for arbitrariness and vexations.

173 In designating Dien-Bien-Phu as the cradle of the Laotian people, or at least in attributing to the Laotians and the Thais a common origin, legend seems to be in agreement with reality. There are indeed many points of resemblance and contact between the two peoples. The type is invariably the same, although finer in the native of Luang-
175 Prabang than in the native of Lai-Chau or Dien-Bien-Phu. Not more
291 than two hundred years ago the Laotians still wore, like the black Thais, the Annamite costume and their hair wound in a coil. It
177 was doubtless after contact with the Siamese--who had themselves

Kha

563 in a few particulars. They all inhabit the peaks of mountains, where they generally engage in the cultivation of poppies and maize.

[439 241] Hos. The Hos are genuine Chinese who came in with the caravans from Yunnan and settled in the land to engage in trade or to grow cotton (1).

(1) According to a monograph by Government Commissioner Grand.

[105]

APPENDIX XVIII
NOTE ON THE EASTERN REGION OF LOWER LAOS (1)

[113] (1) Extract from a report by Colonel Tournier, Superior Commandant of Lower Laos. (Bulletin Economique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900, No. 19.)

PRESENT STATUS OF THE DIFFERENT KHA TRIBES

563 TRIBES LIVING ON THE GREAT ANNAMITIC CHAIN. 1. The tribe of Tha-Hoi may be regarded as being entirely pacified. It is a dependency of both Annam and Laos, but the spheres of influence of the two lands were perfectly delimited at the time of the establishment by Annam of the administrative post in Lao-Bao.

2. The Khon-Tou-Khas, the Ve-Khas and the Alak Khas are completely pacified and extremely tranquil. They are dependencies of Saravane.

Between the high valleys of the Se-Kemane and the Sesane (where the word Legnau, which is unknown in the region, is found on the Pavie map), there is an absolutely deserted region which serves as a buffer between the abovementioned tribes and the Cedangs.

[316] 3.The great tribe of the Cedangs, so far unconquerable. It occupies both sides of the chain, and its villages are situated in extremely 563 difficult positions. The land is very poor, and until the last few years, besides the iron deposits which they work, their real commerce 567 was the slave trade. All the Annamite slaves of the Mekong valley, both on the left bank and the right, came from raids made by these tribes in Annamite territory, even down as far as the sea. The abolition of slavery in Laos was a great blow to them, but since it is absolutely necessary for them to procure buffalo and oxen in order to live and especially for their superstitious practices, they still continue to make occasional captures in Annam and find a market for

314
654

Having made these reservations, we are justified in concluding that I is a type of rubber which [138] is appreciably superior to II, although II deserves to be classified among the very good varieties of gum.

One last remark is, however, necessary. Before giving any final pronouncement as to the value of a type of rubber it is indispensable to subject it to the test of time, since its value is in direct proportion to its resistance to resinification. Under this heading I can nevertheless indicate already that rubber from the Khua-nhut-nhai (sample II) was subjected for three months to the worst kind of preservation conditions and that it withstood this trial admirably, not becoming subject to any resinification and not losing any of its elasticity.

There does not seem to be any doubt, moreover, but that the method of extracting rubber by grinding the bark gives a much higher yield of gum than can be obtained by the extraction method of bleeding the liana (assuming equal weights of fresh liana to be used in both cases).

I shall add, by way of indication, that according to the replies sent in answer to a questionnaire which was prepared under my direction at the request of a private corporation which exploits the rubber lianas of Laos, it appears to be a proven fact that cutting completely through the Khua-nhut-nhai lianas in no way compromises their vitality, on the express condition that the cutting be made above the level of the buds. Repeated bleedings of the same branch, on the other hand, yield an increasingly watery latex with an increasingly lower gum content.

The above information seems to me to be such that it might usefully be communicated to the agents of the administration, for it constitutes yet another argument in favor of exploiting the lianas exclusively by the method of grinding up the bark.

[113]

(Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, January 1901, No. 31.)

III

It is of interest to note that the Superior Resident in Laos, following a long trip which he had just made between the Nam-Hou and the Mekong, remarked on the presence everywhere of numerous rubber lianas.

These lianas had not as yet been noted in the west. Colonel Tournier gave instructions for immediate exploitation to all the native chieftains who were not acquainted with the liana or its value.

149: Reinach G-3 (no date)1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

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1. Avant 1900, les arrêtés relatifs au Haut Laos paraissaient dans la première partie (Cochinchine et Cambodge) et ceux concernant le Haut Laos dans la deuxième (Annam et Tonkin).

456

149: Reinach G-3 (no date)1901 AM1 Indochina
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463

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113

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464

149: Reinach G-3 (no date)1901 AMI Indochina
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• 113

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10: d'Orleans--315-316 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 114

"With regard to the future of the Laotian race, it may be foretold with certainty that it is fated to have the same lot which it has itself meted out to the less [316] intelligent Kas; it will be conquered or subjected by some superior race. But the question will then arise whether it will have the force of character to lead a life of servitude, working like the negritos whom it has itself subjected; or whether it will fuse with its conquerors, or gradually disappear."

10: d'Orleans--356 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 114, 211, 622

"So far as the ethnography, the flora and the fauna of Laos are concerned, no better authority is to be had than the French naturalist, Henri Monhot, whose scientific missions were paid for with English money and who succumbed to an attack of fever at Luang Prabang on the 10th of November, 1861. A small monument erected to his memory by the Garnier Mission was restored by M. Pavie, and it is a whitewashed cenotaph upon which may be read in blue letters the inscription

H. MONHOT,
1890.

The site of this is a space which has been cleared in the woods which skirt the Nam Kane about an hour's march above Luang Prabang, Monhot having died in a village beyond this. The chief of a Leu village receives six piastres to keep the monument in order and collect insects, besides being the ballet-master and master of ceremonies in his native place."

10: d'Orleans--356-357 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 114, 136, 137

"The fauna of Indo-China has been studied in so much detail by the expeditions of Garnier, Monhot, Neis, Harmand, and others, that I cannot do better than refer the reader whom this subject may happen to interest, to the records of their researches; and with regard to the flora it is very varied, among the most interesting features of it being the beautiful parasite orchids, some rose and others yellow. The country is [357] very well wooded, too, and I have been able to bring back some forty specimens of wood, chief among which I may mention the teak, called the mai sok, which grows in large quantities on the banks of the Mekong, a few days above Luang Prabang, near Kiangsen, and below the city, near Paklay."

25: Brodrick--103-104 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 114

"I cannot pretend to talk with much experience of the Laos, for I did not stay long enough in the country to receive more than impressions, and it may be that had I stayed longer, my impressions [104] would not be so vivid, neither would this half-hidden paradise have seemed so paradisial."

/i/ PREFACE

All that we know of the origin of the peoples of the Thai race 114
and of their political and social evolution has formed the object of 101
laborious research and fragmentary studies which are set forth in works of which the reader will find a list at the end of this volume.

Taken all in all, our knowledge is quite limited, and the history of the Laotian populations is still rather obscure and little known if we compare it to that of the other races which inhabit the Indo-Chinese peninsula. We possess abundant documentation on the Annamese, the Chams and the Khmers, and on their migrations and conquests, their arts and industries and the monuments which they have erected throughout the ages. But we have a great deal less information regarding the tribes, some of which tradition represents as having come from the /ii/ southern provinces of China and the others from the Malayo-Polynesian archipelagos, and which fixed their habitat at an undetermined date in the territories which today we call French Laos and Siamese Laos.

The explorations of Mouhot, of Francis Garnier, of Doudart 114
de Lagrée and of the Pavie mission, and the labors of the École française d'Extrême-Orient as well as those of eminent Indianists and Sinologists, have largely cleared a terrain which was covered by a thick vegetation of legends and fabulous traditions and have provided precious data on the principal events of which Laos has been the theater since the time when the mythical epoch came to a close, that is to say since the second half of the fourteenth century.

No work of synthesis had, however, been undertaken to establish the connection between events and the chain of happenings since that time when the Thai races came out of legend to enter into history. There were many scattered works of high value on the language, religion, mores and social status of the Laotian tribes, and on the upheavals and political crises which so profoundly troubled these populations which were almost constantly tom by /iii/ dynastic struggles or at war with neighboring tribes. But there were no connections between these essential events, and the tie which binds them was often broken. A crepuscular veil, if not a dark night, enveloped the national life of the Laotian principalities and the chronology of their sovereigns for many periods.

In a word, there was no complete and precise account of the history of the country over which France has exercised a protectorate since 1893.

114 Fortunately, these gaps have now been filled by the work which M. Le Boulanger is publishing on the Laos of former days and the causes which resulted in our intervention in the upper basin of the Mékong at the end of the last century. His work is appearing at a most opportune moment, a time when Laos is being opened to the initiatives of colonization, a time when, thanks to the early works of general interest which were executed with a view towards its development, it is rapidly accelerating towards a brilliant future.

From an entirely different point of view, this study could not have appeared at a moment better calculated to help in solving the notorious question which has been the object of interminable controversy and is still topical: Is Laos a /iv/ protectorate, or is it a territory of French sovereignty, that is to say a colony in the strict sense?

M. Le Boulanger's book gives a very clear solution of the problem, at least as far as the kingdom of Luang-Prabang is concerned. In support of his demonstration, the author uses peremptory arguments which leave no further question as to the political status of our possession of the Upper Mékong.

114 From the double point of view of history and of simple justice,
643* Luang-Prabang is unquestionably a protectorate governed by a sovereign who enjoys his title and privileges by virtue of imprescriptible rights which are supported by customs and traditions six centuries old. To claim, as do those who hold the opposite theory, that by the sole effect of our volition this sovereign was invested with the privileges of royalty for reasons of political opportuneness and that before our intervention he was only a regional chieftain who had nothing in common with a prince endowed with royal majesty, is to defend a thesis contrary to historical reality and, it should be noted in passing, contrary to the interests of France in this remote part of our Asiatic domain.

114 /v/ M. Le Boulanger's work should henceforth settle this point of
127 history and put an end to a debate which has lasted only too long and the continuation of which would only result in provoking offenses and misunderstandings of such a nature as to alienate the sentiments of one of the populations of Indo-China which is the most loyally attached to us.

Far from neglecting the works of historians who have preceded him in the study of a past which is still nebulous, the author quotes from them frequently either to support their doctrines and opinions by means of the latest discoveries of archeology and epigraphy, or

else to correct errors in date or situate in their true place events of 114
which the date had still been uncertain. 127

But M. Le Boulanger has not been content merely with taking his documentation from the numerous works on Laos which have already appeared. He has endeavored to supplement it by profiting with patient fervor from the Laotian manuscripts in the Royal Library of Luang-Prabang, the Annals of the Imperial Palace at Hué, the archives of the former kingdom of Bassac and the collections of the "Vajiravudh Library" in Bangkok.

It is therefore a sincere book and one of good faith /vi/ which 114
the author is presenting to the public. It will be consulted with profit by all those who have an interest in the expansion of our influence in the Far East. It will provide precious material for our future administrators, on whom falls the task of pursuing in Laos the work of August Pavie and his valiant companions, those apostles of French civilization who made possible the peaceful conquest of the country and the faithful loyalty of its inhabitants.

In its capital, Laos is preparing to erect a monument to the memory of Auguste Pavie, a glorious memory which, together with that of the Doudart de Lagrées, the Lamys, and the de Foucaulds, is one of the purest in our colonial epic.

M. Le Boulanger's work comes at an auspicious time for paying living and pious homage to the founder of French Laos.

J. Bosc,
Superior Resident of Laos.

/vii/ AUTHOR'S NOTE

The present study makes no pretensions to dissipating the thick 114
mist which veils and will long veil the past of Lan-Xang, as long as no one can divest the Laotian chronicles of their legends and chaotic improbabilities. It tends simply to find a connection between the chief events of long ago, events which have been found by laborious researchers in more or less obscure documents, and which have heretofore been consigned to overly rare and highly scattered works.

To all those whose assistance, in various capacities, has enabled me to pursue and complete my audacious enterprise despite many obstacles, I here express my keenest gratitude:

To Prince Phetsarath, for the inestimable /viii/ documentation and true collaboration which he, with the kindest possible zeal, gave me;

114 To Messrs. Jules Bosc and Louis Finot for their teaching, their advice and their kind encouragement;

To Messrs. Georges Coedès and Paul Vitry for their precious information.

The reader will pardon the errors of this modest compilation. Since the great Pavie who, by the "Conquest of hearts," gave this world to France, this is the first attempt at a chronology of the Laotian principalities.

P. L. B.

/1/ A HISTORY OF FRENCH LAOS

000 Privileged corner of the earth, where manners have retained an exquisite simplicity, so rare among Asiatics, whose dominant characteristic is duplicity. My affection quite naturally went out to the Laotian people, so gentle, so peaceable and so trusting, whom gaiety never abandons, even in the worst misfortunes.

Captain Cupet, Mission Pavie
(Vol. III, p. 220).

CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

131 The territory which is situated in the basin of the Mékong River and which is designated in the French Indo-Chinese Federation under the name of Laos, is included between 22° 30' and 13° 15' of north latitude and stretches from 97° 45' of longitude (the right bank of the Mekong) to 106° east of Paris.

Its political limits are: to the northeast Tonkin, to the north Chinese Yunnan, to the northwest /2/ the Anglo-Burmese State, to the west Siam, to the south Cambodia and to the east Annam.

131 654 Area. At present it is possible to give the colony's area only approximately. Any definite figure would run the risk of being incorrect, and indeed no complete triangulation has as yet been carried out. Laos, which is the last comer into the Indo-Chinese family and has neither sea frontiers, outlets nor an economic structure, is still isolated from the rest of the Union and is almost unknown outside the great valley of the Mekong. The labors of the officers of the Indo-

is today scattered throughout the Far East and Malaysia makes it I
possible to consider this hypothesis. We know that the present- L
day Indonesians preceded -- both in the southwest of the Asian 174
continent and in Indonesia -- the arrival of populations bearing Mongoloid characteristics, such as the Chinese, Thaïs, Muongs, Mans, Annamites, Malays, etc., and that wherever these yellow populations have penetrated and settled the Indonesians have been dispossessed of the greater /15/ part of the territories which they originally occupied and have been forced back into remote and inaccessible regions where they still live today. These classical facts, of an ethnic, demographic and geographical order, agree with the results of the first methodical research by prehistoric anthropologists in Southeast Asia."

It is therefore to be presumed that the first inhabitants of Laos had only very rudimentary tools and weapons at their disposition, that they lived in complete independence, that their evolution was excessively slow and that they underwent "contact with, the imprint of, and then the yoke of more intelligent and better armed neighbors who had a broader and less individual social organization." Thence arose crossings, metamorphoses, transformations and an intermingling of individuals which subsequently gave birth to intermediate sub-races and to distinct groups the characteristics or even the numbers of which are difficult to determine today, and whose present-day representatives, clinging to the sides of the mountains, "embody before our eyes the traditional type of the savage" with their swarthy skins, their straight noses, their non-slitted eyes, their huts, their arrows and their dialects which are "evidently /16/ related to the Malayo-Polynesian idioms" (1).

1. Cf. E. Chassigneux, Géographie physique, the first I
chapter of the "Indochine" published in 1929 under the L
direction of G. Maspero. 172
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Who, then, were the first invaders? In the absence of any vestiges which can be attributed to a period antedating the beginning of the Christian era, the answer to this question is still more difficult than the question of the first occupants. Formless ruins (or ruins of which it is usually impossible to determine the use, such as the "jars" of Tran-Ninh), crumbling statues and a few fragments of steles buried in the thick undergrowth -- such

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are the sole documents which have so far presented themselves to the sagacity of rare seekers who are charmed and disturbed by the very mystery which enveloped them. In vain did the imagination -- and sometimes the picturesque imagination -- of a few Frenchmen among the first men who explored the country in the steps of Auguste Pavie, endeavor to use Laotian folklore to establish a kind of chronological classification of the races which successively populated the basin of the Mékong before the formation of the historically reconstructed political groupings. We cannot, without the risk of grave error, follow them in /17/ their hazardous hypotheses, the complete fragility of which has been demonstrated by the subsequent work of more expert historians (1).

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1. Here nevertheless, as a curiosity, is the summary of the hypothesis formed by Dr. Lefèvre in the stimulating Appendix to his Voyage au Laos (Paris, Plon, 1898):

1. The first inhabitants of the peninsula, and the true aboriginals, were the Khas, an almost savage people without monuments and, so to speak, without any writing, who were driven back into the mountains by the successive invaders of their territory;

2. The Malays or Chams were the first colonists to come to Indo-China. They gradually succeeded in forming several principalities, the most important of which was the kingdom of Champa, comprising the whole coast from Tourane to Baria. A second Cham kingdom was founded in the basin of the Nam-Moun about 543 B.C.;

3. A century later there arrived 12,000 Brahmans coming from Benares with their leader Pra-Tong, the son of a king of Delhi. They struggled with the Chams, who were driven out of the basin of the Nam-Moun and came and founded the kingdom of Champassac (Bassac) whose capital was... Ventiane! (sic, p. 285). The Brahmans were the first ancestors of the Cambodians. They organized the conquered territory on the Hindu system and gave it the name of Krung (kingdom) Inthapat (of Indra). They founded Inthapataboury, the capital, to the south of the Dangrek, Saniaboury (Xania, victory; boury, city), Sakon-Lakon (Salaka, peace), Batanaboury (precious stones) and Souvanapoum (city of gold);

4. Under Açoka, emperor of "Burma" /"Birmanie"/

(sic, pp. 287 and 298; Dr. Lefevre does not seem to be aware of the fact that the emperor Açoka was one of the greatest sovereigns of Indian history), took place the arrival of the Kmers coming from Pegou and Hangsavadi, who settled in Cambodia and thus lessened the cast of Brahmans; I L 174 114

5. But the Tartars swept down from the north and leveled everything. They were followed by the Thaïs who came from Mongolia or Séchouen and spread to Siam, Laos, Burma, etc.;

6. To the east along the coast were the Annamites who came from Kouei-Tcheou and occupied all of the land between the Annamitic Chain and the sea.

/18/ Given the present state of our knowledge we may only suppose that "hardy navigators" (?) coming from the Malay Archipelago occupied the Indo-Chinese coasts several centuries before our era. They must have settled first on the thin strip of land between the Annamitic Chain and the sea, where they must subsequently have formed the powerful kingdom of Champa. Then they ventured into the basin of the Mékong and went up the river at least as far as the point where it is joined by the Nam-Moun, where they entered into conflict with the Khas. They were stronger, more intelligent and better organized, and drove these aboriginals back into the forests and mountains. They were then solidly established until the day when they encountered other men coming down from the northern regions, doubtless the Kmers or Cambodians (or their ancestors) who drove them back in their turn or absorbed them. The Chams and Kmers were strongly Hinduized, either because they were already Sivaites when they arrived in the country or because apostles of Buddhism later came to preach their faith /19/ and disseminate Indian culture in the southwest of the peninsula (1).

1. This theory of the "prehistoric" Chams, developed by E. Aymonier in his important work on Cambodia, has been strongly opposed by P. Pelliot who objects that no text has so far confirmed "any vague native traditions." -- Cf. "Deux itinéraires de Chine en Indes" (Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, 1904, Vol. IV, Nos. 1-2.)-- See, however, G. Ferrand who also believes that the Indianization of Cambodia and Champa must have begun

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174
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about the fourth century B.C. Cf. Le Kouen-louen et les anciennes navigations, 1919, and L. Finot, Les origines de la colonisation indienne en Indo-chine.

At the same time, "large junks carrying hundreds of men (from the northeast) could, we must presume, have introduced certain industries into Indo-China... then, starting in the third century B.C., the Tsins who were the real founders of Chinese power and had given the empire its practically final limits, began to think of a sort of universal domination and gave to their relations, which had become more active, a character of conquest and study of neighboring countries..." (2).

2. Cf. ibid. Contested by P. Pelliot who, in the same study, claims that "the great migrations of men from the north in centuries which antedate our era belong to fiction and not to history."

Thus in this remote epoch there was foreshadowed a division of the peninsula into two zones of /20/ civilization, such as we have already observed in the Indo-China of today: the Chinese zone which will extend over the Annamite territory (which ten centuries of submission will profoundly "sinify"); and the Indian zone which will include Champa and Cambodia with its future extensions into the basins of the Mékong and the Ménam.

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/21/ CHAPTER III

THE HISTORICAL PERIOD. -- THE BEGINNINGS

The Annals of the various Laotian kingdoms of the Mékong basin, supported by precise written evidence, mention events which did not begin until just before the fourteenth century of our era. For the earlier period we have only a rather small number of traditions and local legends. Thus in order to establish certain historical facts and try to show the connection between them, we must have recourse to the chronicles of neighboring lands which are all too often obscure and fabulous themselves. A great many hypotheses on this, so to speak, medieval epoch have been formulated, all of which are both possible and questionable. It is by trying to classify them and by taking inspiration from those which seem to be the most likely that the following guiding points have been established:

643* driven out of their States, and succeeded as a conciliating suzerain
648* in restoring them to their rights.
175* It was under his reign that a rather unfortunate episode took place, one which was to be fraught with consequences for Lan-Xang and which is related in the Annamite chronicles. The relations which had heretofore been maintained with the descendants of the Giao-Chi had been highly courteous, and when the king of Annam Lê-Loi was attacked by a Chinese army in 1421 Lane-Kham-Dèng offered him a force of 30,000 warriors and a hundred elephants. Lê-Loi accepted with the keenest satisfaction, but scarcely had the reinforcements from Lan-Xang arrived on the spot when they betrayed their allies and went over to the Chinese. They gained nothing thereby, however, for the Annamites overthrew their enemies and brusquely escorted the soldiers of Lane-Kham-Dèng back to their own territory. Although he was lucky enough to escape from this wasps' nest, the king of Annam nevertheless felt a profound resentment at this betrayal. His successors inherited the grudge, and less than fifty years later one of them was to become the instigator of a widespread coalition to punish Lan-Xang.

/59/. NANG-KEO-PHIMPHA (1428-1438).

175* During the ten years which followed the death of Lane-Kham-
643* Dèng the harmony which presided over the destinies of the royal
562 dynasty was troubled by a cruel and authoritarian woman who was the actual governor under the ephemeral crowns of seven kings.

Nang-Keo-Phimpha was the eldest of the daughters of Sam-Sene-Thaï (1). The Annals are extremely discreet as regards this

114 1. Pavie's translators, led astray by copyists' errors, wrongly
643* make of Nang-Keo-Phimpha, whom they call Maha-Thévi
175* (Great-Queen), "the daughter of Fa-Ngoun's predecessor" and the first wife of Sam-Sène-Thaï. The predecessor of Fa-Ngoun, that is to say the latter's grandfather, died at an extremely advanced age in 1353. His daughter would then have been more than eighty years old at the time which concerns us, and this is not likely. From this initial error, aggravated by mistakes and omissions in calculating the Laotian cycles, there resulted an inextricable confusion in the chronology drawn up by Pavie's interpreters, who were Cambodians and did not know French. The present account, based on direct translations which are as faithful as possible

114 643* 175* and on cross checks between the Annals and family documents, is an attempt to reestablish the facts. The exact correspondence of the dates justifies us in thinking that it is as close to historical truth as possible.

175* 643* 562 ambitious princess and limit themselves to recording her crimes without explanation or comment. It may be that her intrigues had already brought Lane-Kham-Dèng to the throne in utter disregard of the eldest son's rights, or, on the other hand, she may have been impatient /60/ to see this younger son, who does not seem to have submitted to her influence and whose life she may have shortened, placed on the throne.

Phommathat, king 1428-1429. -- Pak-Houeï-Luong, king 1429. Thao-Sai, king 1430.

643* 175* 662 Whatever the case may be, she was discontented with her nephew Phommathat, the eldest son of Lane-Kham-Dèng, and had him deposed ten months after his accession to the throne, then slaughtered on the rock of Pha-Dieou at the mouth of the Nam-Khane. Then she gave the crown to her brother Kham-Teun, the fourth son of Sam-Sène-Thaï and governor of Pak-Houei-Luong, who reigned under this latter name. Five months later, however, Kham-Teun had ceased to please and was replaced with Thao-Sai, the third son of Sam-Sène-Thaï and of Nang-Keo-Yopha. Scarcely six months had passed when the king discovered a plot to assassinate him which had been fomented by his sister. At his wits' end, he chose to hang himself in the bath chamber of his palace.

Phaya-Khai, king 1430-1433. -- Xieng-Sai, king 1433-1434.

Then Nang-Keo-Phimpha let her choice fall on her nephew Gnou-Khone, the second son of Lane-Kham-Dèng, who was governor of the /61/ Muong of Xieng-Khai and who chose the name of his province as his reigning name. Phaya-Khai "lasted" for three years and then died at Pak-Khane, assassinated by the inhabitants on his aunt's orders. Khone-Keo, the son of Sam-Sène-Thaï and of Nang-One-Sa, succeeded him under the name of Xieng-Sa and died in the same way seven months later.

Third son of Lane-Kham-Dèng, king 1434-1435.

Lane-Kham-Dèng's third son (whose name is unknown) replaced him for a space of eight months. In order to escape his aunt's fury,

115: Le Boulanger--68 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

Frontier agreements with the neighboring kingdoms. In conse- 631
sequence of agreements reached with the princes of the peninsula, 643*
the frontiers of Lan-Xang were permanently fixed from Khone in 175*
the south to Pha-Day in the north, and from Siam in the west to 653
Annam in the east. With this last country, to which Souligna had bound himself by taking one of King Le-duy-Ky's daughters as a concubine, it was agreed that all the people who lived in "houses on piles and with verandas" should be called subjects of the king of /342/ Vientiane, and that those who inhabited houses "without piles or verandas" should belong to Annam.

The stay of the Dutchman Van Wusthof in Vientiane (1641). 175*
In 1641 Vientiane was visited by the Dutch traveler Van 114
Wusthof (2). /105/ The account which he has left of his stay in the

2. A Jesuit, Father Jean-Marie Leria, had visited Vientiane before Van Wusthof and had returned to Annam by way of Hinboun and Vinh. Cf. G. Maspero, op. cit. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./, and P. Martini, Relation de divers voyages curieux, published at Paris in 1666, "chez Sebastien Marbre-Cramoisy, imprimeur du Roy, rue Saint-Jacques, aux Cicognes."

capital of Lan-Xang contains precious information, even though it remains rather vague because of a lack of previous knowledge and of impartial observation (1). Thus Buddhism in Laos, for example,

1. Histoires singulieres qui se sont passees dans les royaumes du Cambodge et au pays du Laos, aux Indes orientales depuis l'annee 1635 jusqu'en l'annee 1664 avec le voyage des Neerlandais du Cambodge, en remontant la riviere de Laos, a Vinejan, la cour de S.M. le roi de Laos et enfin le cruel massacre qui a eu lieu au Cambodge par les Indiens en l'an 1643, published at Haarlem without any author's name and printed in 1669 by "Pieter Casteleyn, imprimeur demeurant au marche, dans la couronne imperiale." Cf. G. Maspero, op. cot. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./

appeared to him as a crude "paganry," and the number of bonzes scandalized him, as did the morals of the gentle and sensual

175* inhabitants and especially the songs and laughter of the beautiful
114 girls bedecked with flowers. . . . It nevertheless follows from his re-
/771 marks that Lan-Xang was then the veritable holy land of Buddhism
792/ and that it possessed the most highly venerated sanctuaries where
priests from Siam and Cambodia "came to spend ten or twelve days
to study and receive their grades."

439 For a long time now the rich traders of Holland had been sending
175* ships into the waters of the Indian Ocean in search of cloves, /106/
nutmeg, pepper, silk goods, gold dust and porcelain. In 1641 the
mother country had made settlements in Java, Sumatra, Borneo, the
Celebes and the Moluccas, and its flag was known as far as the seas of
China and Japan. Several mercantile establishments had sent out
"sub-traders" from Batavia to Siam and to Cambodia. In July 1641
the governor general of Java, Van Diemen, ordered a mission which
was operating in Pnom-Penh on behalf of the East India Company to
send out a caravan to "the land of gum lac and benzoin." Under the
direction of Van Wustof and his assistants William de Gover and Hubert
Boudewinsz, the caravan entered the Mekong. The voyage was a long
and difficult one, and often dangerous where rapids had to be passed.
These men left Phom-Penh on July 20 and reached Vientiane on
November 3 after 106 days of effort. They brought a good-sized
packet of cloth and cottonstuffs, a casket of emeralds set in rings and
small gifts such as brightly colored sampots (?), mirrors which closed
like a book, etc... (1).

1. Cf. Cabaton, Le Laos et les Neerlandais au dix-septieme
siecle (1913).

A few kilometers out of Vientiane a /107/ messenger from the
king came to find out what the foreigners' intentions were and was shown
a letter from Van Diemen to the "sovereign of Laos." He was fully
satisfied and took them to the outskirts of the city to dwellings which
had been prepared for them on the banks of the river. On the follow-
ing day, November 4, the merchandise and gifts were unloaded. On
the 5th the Dutch were received by the king "a quarter of an hour's
/576/ march away from the capital." They knelt down most humbly, their
feet bare, striking the ground three times with their foreheads and
holding a large candle in each hand, and were welcomed in a
tumultuous camp of soldiers, horses and elephants caparisoned with

439 after a ten year reign without leaving any sons." He thus explicitly
643* contradicts the native documents which recount the many competitions
175* for the throne which had divided the royal family, and according to which the "present king" succeeded his uncle (Visai).

He adds that the government of the country was divided, under the
175* high authority of the king, between three great officials:
642
645 1. The head of the army who was "governor of the province which produces benzoin" and commander of the city of Vientiane. He doubtless refers to the prime minister Tian-Thala, the son-in-law of Souligna whom he calls Tevinia-Assen;

2. The governor of Nakhone or viceroy, who commanded the whole southern part of the kingdom, including Attopeu, as far as the Cambodian frontier. This was the Nan-Tharath of the Annals, whom he calls Lachaen;

3. The minister of the Palace who is in charge of relations with ambassadors.

These three high officials "were given /110/ an audience only every two or three months, unless there were some necessity or the king had them summoned expressly."

/693/ Next to the king there was a "tribunal in charge of civil and criminal affairs" which was composed of five of his relatives who had daily access to the sovereign.

/651 Finally, Van Wusthof estimates the king's income at "two piculs"
643/* per year of gum lac, benzoin and gold (1).

1. Cf. Georges Maspero, op. cit. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./ A picul was equal to 61 kilograms.

175* The Account of Father Marini (1666). This evocation of the
114 Laotian kingdom in the seventeenth century does not differ appreciably, on the whole, from two travel accounts published in Italian at about the same time by the Jesuit fathers Martini (quoted p. 104, note 2) and Marini. A translation of the latter's accounts was placed on sale in Paris in 1666 (2). No matter how picturesque it may be in its

/127/ 2. Relation nouvelle et curieuse des royaumes de Tonquin et de Laos, traduite de l'italien du P. Marini Romain, par L.P.L.C.C. (F. Lecomte; cel.), a Paris, chez Gervais Clouzier, au Palais, sur les degres, en montant pour aller a

la Sainte-Chapelle, a la seconde boutique, a l'enseigne 175*
du Voyageur. 114
/127/

naivete, the work /111/ does not have the ring of sincerity which constitutes the merit of the Dutch account. It was probably written from the reminiscences of Father J. M. Leria (1) and is of value

1. Father Giovanni-Maria Leria, a Piedmontese Jesuit, left Cambodia in April 1642 accompanied by some Cochinchinese neophytes with a caravan of Laotian traders who were returning to their country. He remained in Laos for five years "despite the opposition and the intrigues of the bonzes" and did not leave Vientiane until December 2, 1647. (Cf. Fr. Garnier, 1871, and Father Alex. de Rhodes, 1651.)

only as a document at second hand. It will nevertheless be of some interest to extract the following passages:

"In the East it (the kingdom of the 'Langiens') has the kingdom 131
of Tonkin which stretches to the southwest towards Cochinchina, 175*
and further to the South that of Cambodia; in the southwest and the west the kingdom of Pegou; and in the north that of Ava and the province called U or Lu (2), and still further again to the north as

2. See below, p. 176, note 1.

far as the frontiers which limit it in this direction, where there are certain peoples who are called Gnai. . . .

"Because of its fertility and because the things necessary to life 421
are found there in abundance, the kingdom is so heavily populated 433
that only a little while ago in the census which was taken of per- 161
sons who were /112/ judged fit to serve the king at war and to bear arms, 500,000 were counted, not including the old people who are so numerous and so rubust that even of those who are a hundred years old a very large army might be formed for the defense of the kingdom if the need should arise. . .

"The chief city and the one in which the king ordinarily stays 633
is situated in the middle of the kingdom, eighteen degrees toward 174
our Arctic pole, and is called Langione. It has good moats and 344
extremely high walls on one side, and on the other the great river to defend it against the undertakings of enemies. . . . The royal palace, the structure and symmetry of which are admirable, can

beyond comprehension. Only the British are triumphing." 648*

So greatly was this the case that Siam abandoned all ideas of 175*
using French support in order to check British mastery. In consequence it had to cede England its Malay provinces /218/ and seek compensations from Cambodia. This latter kingdom was in the process of becoming a vast Siamese province when events suddenly sprang up in Cochinchina which once again modified Bangkok's stubborn plans for extension towards the east.

Then followed, successively, the breaking off of diplomatic relations between Franch and Annam, the occupation of Tourane and Saigon by Admiral Rigault de Genouilly (1859), the capture of Mytho by Admiral Charner (1861), the capture of Bienhoa by Admiral Bonard (1862) and finally the peace treaty of June 6, 1862 which sanctioned the French conquests in the Cochinchinese delta.

This rapid page of history was heavy with consequences, then unsuspected, for Luang-Prabang, and transpired too far away from the thick Laotian forests to awaken any echo there. It was in the peaceful atmosphere of the smiling villages of the Upper Mekong that Henri Mouhot, who was the first to reveal the splendors of Angkor and the existence of the kingdom of Millions of Elephants to the western world, came to die in 1861 (1).

1. With the cooperation of various London geographical and 113
zoological societies Henri Mouhot, who was born at Montbeliard on May 15, 1826, organized an expedition to Indo-China for the purpose of pursuing studies in natural history, particularly in entomology and omithology. He visited Bangkok, Chantaboun, Ayuthya (1858), Oudong, Battambang and discovered the ruins of Angkor (1860), crossed the forest of the "King of Fire" in the north of Siam and died at Luang-Prabang on November 10, 1861. The account of his voyages, first published in the Tour du Monde, appeared in English in London, then in French in Paris in 1868 in the "Bibliotheque rose illustree" of the Hachette publishing house.

/219/ Voyage and death of Henri Mouhot in Luang-Prabang (1861).

Although this traveler did not have time to undertake as de- 114
tailed a study of the land as he had done for Siam and Cambodia, at least the few pages of his travel log -- the last pages -- which he devotes to the principality reflect the extremely keen impressions

114 which he felt during his stay in Laos, despite the somber presentiments which prevented him, as he admits, "from appreciating and enjoying things as formerly."

For three years he had been a tireless explorer of the Indo-Chinese brush, a prey to the fatigues, the miseries, the privations and the dangers of the sly and evil forest. A poor traveler, as he himself ingrenuously relates, he had sacrificed his family, his comfort and his health (and perhaps his life) "to the sole end of being useful to his fellow men, of discovering an unknown insect, plant or animal /220/ or verifying a latitude point in a remote region."

133 Leaving Bangkok on April 12, he reached Paklay on June 24 after
361 crossing the terrible forest of the "King of Fire" for the second time and breathing "in the midst of an atmosphere of extreme stench, hot like a steam bath filled with putrid miasmas." Paklay was a great consolation to him. "A charming village," he wrote, "very rich, larger and more beautiful than any which I have so far encountered. The houses are elegant and spacious, and everything denotes an ease and well-being which I have since noted in all the localities where I have stopped. The Mekong is much wider there than the Menam at Bangkok, and it is with a noise like that of the sea and the impetuosity of a torrent that it cuts a path between high mountains which seem to have difficulty containing it in its bed. . . . The sight of this beautiful river had the same effect on me as meeting a friend, for I have long drunk of its waters. It is an old acquaintance, and has long cradled and tormented me. Now it flows majestic, full to the brim. . . it is a truly grandiose spectacle."

Dissuaded from going up the Mekong by the inhabitants, who feared that some mischance might befall him /221/ /Page 221 is devoted to an illustration: "The Mekong at Paklay."--Translator/ in the rapids, he resumed his journey on elephant back and reached Luang-Prabang on July 25. "A delicious little city," he noted, "which stretches over a space of a square mile and holds a population, not of 80,000 inhabitants as Mgr. Pallegoix says in his work on Siam, but of only seven or eight thousand. The site is charming, and the mountains which frame the city form a circular valley in the shape of an amphitheater nine miles wide which must once have been a closed basin. The countryside is extremely pretty and reminds one of the beautiful lakes of Como and Geneva.

132 "Were it not for the sun of the tropics which shines constantly on this valley, or if a gentle breeze tempered the overpowering heat which prevails there during the day, this spot would be a little paradise.

judgment which he pronounced in October 1858 on Siamese 533
music, in connection with a dramatic presentation at the 101
court of Bangkok: "Deafening music served as the overture to the play. The orchestra distinguished itself by a dreadful racket and a complete absence of harmony... the same musical phrase was played to us for five full hours by the clock, to the great content of the king and his courtesans. I can almost believe that the whole science of music in Siam is limited to this terrible melody, for the other presentations which I was condemned to attend elsewhere always used these unique and discordant notes."

He left Luang-Prabang on August 9 to continue his entomo- 000
logical research in the valley of the Nam-Khane. The fifteenth, "on a splendid night," he camped on the bank of the river, but no matter how "charming" the countryside seemed he felt "sad, pensive and unhappy." "I /227/ miss my native soil. I should like a little life. The continued solitude weighs on me."

On September 3 he reached the village of Na-Le where he killed a tigress and went on a rhinoceros hunt. He was recalled to Luang-Prabang on the 18th by an order of the "Senate" (he does not say why) and turned back on October 15, but after three days of march he had to stop for he was stricken by a violent access of fever. On the 29th he traced this supreme exclamation in the log of his route with a trembling hand: "Have pity on me, O my God!... ." On November 7 he fell into a coma which was intermittently broken by delerium, and on the 10th he passed away about seven o'clock in the evening.

His remains were buried on the following day, "in accordance 114
with the European ceremony," by his faithful servants Phrai and Dong. Three months later the latter brought back his collections, his effects and his papers, together with their account of their master's last moments, to the French consul in Bangkok (1).

1. Cf. the Ferdinand de Lanoye edition, published by Librairie Hachette et Cie., 1882.

Mouhot's tomb (1867). The pious homage deserved by this 000
precursor, this hardy pioneer who fell victim to his devotion to science, was paid to him in April 1867 by the leader of the expedition to explore the Mekong which was organized /228/ by Admiral

but since it was ill-informed itself on the true political status of 648*
regions included between Cordillere /253/ and Mekong it invited 175*
the Annamite government at the same time to formulate its claims in a precise and unquestionable manner.

Laborious and confused negotiations ensued at Bangkok. Solidly backed by Britain, Siam claimed that it was acting in good faith and that its only aim was to defend against the "Hos" those populations which had common factors of race, language and religion with it, while Annam asserted its rights of age-old suzerainty over principalities which had paid it a regular tribute ever since the seventeenth century and the farthest reaches of which beyond the mountains had, after the fall of Vientiane and at the express request of the native leaders, been converted into "Phus" and "Huyens" which were directly connected with the administrative divisions of the empire. Maps -- highly imaginative ones, moreover -- were produced on the one side and the other, one of them drawn up after the reconnaissance carried out by the British topographer MacCarthy in Upper Laos between 1883 and 1885, and another made by M. Deveria from information supplied by the court of Hue.

Creation of a French vice-consulate in Luang-Prabang (November 1885). In the face of these /253/ irreconcilable divergences, it was finally decided "to go and see" and the Siamese government consented to the establishment of a French vice-consulate in Luang-Prabang so that both parties might reach an on-the-spot agreement concerning the contested territories through their respective representatives. To occupy this position the French government designated an agent of the rarest merit whose personal action was to exert a profound influence on the course of events. This was Auguste Pavie (1).

1. Auguste Pavie was born at Dinan in 1847 and died in 1925 at his home La Raimbaudiere.

This good and simple man who "conquered hearts" for his country 114
over a territorial area which was then practically unknown and which 175*
was larger than that of France, this "charmer of peoples" who was to 654
die a minister plenipotentiary and grand officer of the Legion of Honor, had the most modest beginnings. Discharged in Cochinchina as a petty officer in the naval infantry, he entered the administrative branch of Posts and Telegraphs in 1868 and after the Franco-Prussian

114 War was placed in charge of the station at Kampot, a small Cam-
175* bodian port on the Gulf of Siam. He soon learned how to gain the
654 confidence of the natives and became passionately interested in studying the glorious past of the ancient Kmers. His enthusiasm determined /255/ Governor Le Myre de Vilers in 1880 to place him in charge of a mission for study and for the construction of a tele-
/647 graph line between Pnom-Penh and Bangkok. For five years he explored Cambodia in all directions, brought back abundant documentation from his voyages and the beginnings of the first map of the land which he had crossed, then returned to France with thirteen young Cambodians for whom the future Colonial School /Ecole coloniale/ was created in Paris.

175* His ardent desire, expressed many times to his superiors, to com-
654 plete his first labors by means of methodical exploration of the Laotian regions and to go "in the direction of those northern peoples who had previously attracted Mouhot, Francis Garnier and de Carne" and more recently Drs. Harmand and Neis (1), gained him an

1. Upon his return from the Tonkin expedition in 1874 Dr. Harmand had been placed in charge of a scientific expedition to Indo-China. It was in the course of this mission, the account of which appeared in the Tour du Monde ("Le Laos et les populations sauvages de l'Indochine") that he explored, in 1877, Lower and Middle Laos from Bassac to Lakhone and from Lakhone to Hue, crossing the Kemmarat, exploring the Se-Bang-Hien and gaining Hue by way of the Se-Tchepone. He thus proved for the first time that it was possible to go from the banks of the Mekong to the shore of Annam.

P. Neis, a naval doctor who was also given a scientific mission in Lower Laos by the Ministry of Education in 1882, had been told by M. Le Myre de Vilers as he passed through Singapore of the more immediate interest which the exploration of the regions situated between Luang-Prabang and Tonkin would hold. Given further information by Dr. Harmand, who was then consul in Bangkok, he went up the Mekong and reached the plateau of Tran-Ninh, but the Ho incursions forced him back to Luang-Prabang where he stayed for eight months (1883) without being able to resume his eastward march. He had to content himself with returning to Bangkok by way of Xieng-Sen and Xieng-Mai.

648* As soon as they met the two missions, British and French, set to
175* work. Living side by side, after three months of the same kind of life their members were on terms "of cordial simplicity." Since they made the same maps they reached the same conclusions, and finally judged that the creation of a buffer state would only result in creating a permanent source of intrigues on their frontiers and a true den for rebels, pirates and highwaymen. The British government had the good sense to accept Scott's arguments and not to adhere blindly to its first claims. By the terms of the declaration of January 15, 1896, which was supplemented by that of April 8, 1904, it finally recognized the thalweg of the Mekong as the frontier between its Burmese possessions and French Laos. As a consequence the territory of Muong-/334/ Sing was permanently awarded to us in March 1896.

Dissolution of the Pavie mission (August-September 1895). This happy state of agreement -- a prelude to the "Entente cordiale" -- was the last manifestation of August Pavie's activity in Indo-China. For the rest, his task had been accomplished, at least the one which he had set himself seven years before: "to make of Laos a French land" (1). If the task was not complete it was nonetheless "fertile

/114 1. The geographic results which were also achieved by
654/ Pavie and his colleagues were immense. The distance which they had covered in their journeys was more than 30,000 kilometers, and the area of the territories explored was about 675,000 square kilometers. Each member's explorations went into an atlas and ten volumes dealing with the ethnography, literature and natural history of the regions traversed. (See the bibliographic index at the end of the present work.)

in its means and great and beautiful in its results," and if there were errors to correct and gaps to fill Pavie was certainly not responsible for them. Moreover, he was also to be asked to remedy faults which he had not committed. The just claims which he had formulated both against Siam's interpretation of the treaty and against the treaty itself had, in fact, attracted the attention /335/ of his department. The latter being desirous of reaching an overall decision governing all questions relative to the frontiers which Indo-China and Siam had in common (Cambodia and Laos), it reopened negotiations in Paris and summoned Pavie to "illuminate" the talks which were to be begun

149: Reinach--132 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

805
796

(Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

Besides these major holidays there are a certain number of others which are more religious than secular in character and which fall in between the ones dealt with above.

In the course of the sixth month (April-May), for example, a religious holiday is celebrated in memory of the first leaders of the Buddhist religion.

At the end of the eleventh month, on a date which is fixed in accordance with the rites and which varies from one year to another, a celebration takes place in the pagodas in honor of the men who first introduced Buddhism into Indo-China.

Finally, after the twelfth month (November or December), comes the feast of penitence which applies to all the faithful. During a [174] kind of Lent which lasts for nine days, true believers must abstain from certain foods and from all sex relations.

[185]

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Since our establishment in Laos the province capitals and all the centers where Europeans live have celebrated the National Holiday on July 14 which the natives call Boun-Phi-Falang-Sète (Holiday of the French Genie) or, by onomatopoeia, Boun Ka-Tor-Yu-Yèt. [C. A. M. Translator's note. The latter term seems to be an approximation of the French Quatorze juillet ("July 14").]

MORES AND CUSTOMS

101

By reason of their diverse origin and the relations into which they have entered with neighboring peoples, as well as by the cross-breeding which has taken place, the races of Laos necessarily have characteristics, costumes, dwellings and, in a word, mores and customs which differ to a greater or less extent from one race to another (1).

(1) On this question of mores and customs we shall have recourse from time to time to a notice entitled Le Laos français which was written by the Superior Resident in Laos and based on reports and local monographs which were provided by our administrators and are in consequence authoritative.

[114]

If we have consistently reproduced here extracts from the above work, this is because they provide an admirable summation

[114] of what has been observed, and because no better expression of the facts could be hoped for.

THE THAI RACE

142 "Laotians. Of all the Thais, the Laotian is the one who has
144 remained the purest, although he has a much higher proportion of Aryan blood than the other varieties, with the exception of the Lus. Fairly tall in stature, his hair cut short, elegant in his movements and more refined than all the other inhabitants of the land, he is the aristocratic type of Laos. His upbringing, his education, his religion and even his vices have a mark of distinction which make
438 them stand out above those of his neighbors. An excellent boatman,
505 and a trader rather than a farmer, he is the one who seems the master of the land, as much by virtue of his commercial aptitudes as by the
484 ease with which he ranges the country. Mounted on his long and narrow shaped pirogue, made in one piece of a tree trunk hollowed out by fire, he goes great distances to visit peoples of the most varied races [175] [Illustration] [176] [Blank page] [177] and serves as a link between all the human varieties which populate Laos. He is at home and at his ease everywhere, standing out clearly above all his countrymen in this respect.

[361] "The Laotian prefers to settle along navigable watercourses and in proximity to plains of ricefields. He is glad to have his land
[241] worked by mercenaries or by dependents of inferior race, and sometimes by slaves (at least before our arrival). He himself, with quite
[567] an extensive knowledge of the needs and resources of the other inhabitants of the land, particularly likes to traffic in all kinds of merchandise. He it is who goes to buy forest products and cereal grains on the spot from the mountainfolk or from sedentary farmers, and sells them cloth, salt, tobacco, earthenware, farming implements, etc. in exchange. He it is who exports the products of Laos to
[439] neighboring countries and brings back the things which Laotian industry cannot produce. His business as a commercial traveler, which he likes and which gives him a good standard of living, occupies him for only a few months of the year but brings him into contact with all the neighboring peoples and also with the Europeans and Chinese in the Siamese, Annamite and Cochinchinese trading posts. Thence arises his veneer of civilization which strikes one at first glance.

149: Reinach--229 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[313]

Crustaceans

136 The crayfish, the shrimp and the crab.

Mollusks

Mollusks are very numerous, and a few types are even peculiar to Laos. They include acephalans, lamellibranchiates, gastropods, etc., several of which are edible (1).

[114] (1) A complete study of the mollusks of Laos was made by M. Pavie and Commander Morlet (their collections are to be seen in the Paris Museum).

Insects

Because of their great numbers and infinite variety, insects have a very interesting, or at least important, place in the fauna of Laos. Despite their small size and weak vocal organs as individuals, when evening comes their collective cries produce a noise which covers all others.

There is still a fine harvest for the entomologist to reap, even after Mouhot, who was the first to make studies of this type in Laos. Lepidoptera, coleoptera, hemiptera, diptera, arachnida--all the types are represented, in the form of many-colored butterflies, brilliant fireflies, hideous, foul-smelling bugs, hardy beetles, dangerous scorpions, scolopendra with a thousand feet, repulsive spiders which are huge and hairy, and finally indefatigable suctoria such as mosquitos, flies, gnats, etc.

825 There are only two types of useful insects. These are the coccus which produces crimson lake or stick-lac, and several kinds of bees which supply honey and wax.

The greater part of all this animal life which we have passed in review is used by the inhabitants of Laos for food and other needs. It also provides certain products in the form of animal remains which are the basis for either local or export trade. A list of these follows:

173: Deydier--1 H.B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

INTRODUCTION TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF LAOS

[2 blank page][3] PREFACE

114 The newcomer to Laos who wishes to interest himself in the country complains that he can find no work capable of satisfying his curiosity. However, many volumes have been published, but these are of unequal value, many being merely a confused collection about well-known places. Unfortunately, they are usually out of print or inaccessible. Having quoted the book by L. de Reinach, Le Laos, already rather old, and L'Histoire du Laos Français by P. Le Boulanger, one has about exhausted the serious works which are available without too much difficulty.

There exist, however, many well documented articles which provide a precious source of information. Unfortunately they are scattered in periodicals many of which had only a short life or have disappeared without leaving a trace.

121 For this reason, at the request of friends from Laos and France, we propose to write this modest introduction to the knowledge of
114 Laos, based principally on the works of our predecessors, making an effort to give the evidence of our research or of our personal experience whenever possible.

However, the speed with which we wish to complete this popular work on Laos has not allowed us to benefit from the results of studies now being made in France. Many points which remain obscure, particularly the origin of certain festivals, will be partially explained in these works. [4] Should one have waited for their publication, fortified with all the critical development of scientific studies? Our need to publish quickly an introductory manual to Laos has obliged us to ignore these works, after having taken the precaution to notify the reader.

Some may be surprised that we do not once mention the mountain people. We have done this intentionally, for these questions can be treated in another volume without affecting the plan of the present one. In any case, it would be desirable for these questions to be studied by an ethnologist.

114 Since the signature of the agreements attached to the general convention of July 19, 1949, the French School of the Far East [Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient, referred to by author as E.F.E.O. -- Translator] anxious to give fresh impetus to research on Laos and thanks to the benevolent understanding of the Royal Government,

has created a center for the study of Laos which will enable the country to be better known and better loved. From these works new elements will arise which will serve as a base for more detailed works which the reader can study to his advantage, while awaiting the publication of a new edition of this modest tract, whose only ambition is to increase the understanding of the habits, customs, and traditions of the Muong Lao. 114

May we express here our profound gratitude to His Royal Highness Prince Savang Vathana, heir to the throne, for the friendly interest he has ever shown in our work. We express our thanks to His Highness Boun Oum, Prince of Champassak, who has kindly pointed out to us monuments till now unknown. To L. L. E. E. Thao Kou Abhay, president of the King's Council and to Thao Nhouy Abhay, former minister, we are also indebted for certain information for which we are grateful. We thank Mr. Michaudel for the friendly and constant help he has given to the French School [5] of the Far East in Laos, and we also thank Mr. Malleret, director of this school, who has made useful suggestions. Finally, we express our thanks to Prince Souvanna Phouma and to the Princess for the consideration they have shown us on many occasions and for the encouragement they have given to this work. 122

[6 blank page]

[7]

HISTORICAL SKETCH

"...Then, Phou Lan Xon, messenger of Phaya Then, king of the sky, took a red-hot iron and pierced the gourd. Immediately a crowd of men sprang forth. There were so many that the opening was not large enough to let them through, so larger openings were made with scissors." 173 563

Such is the origin of the two groups of people of Laos. The Khas, who came out of the opening made by the red-hot iron, were blackened by the cinders; the Thais, who came through holes made by scissors, kept their fair complexion.

However original, this charming legend is far from giving us precise information about the first inhabitants of Laos. As a famous scholar has already bitterly remarked, it is the beginnings about which we know the least. Alas, Laos is no exception to this rule. The historian who attempts to retrace the events which have occurred in this country from the origins to the 13th century, at which period documents with substantial proofs are available, finds himself in much the same position as an ant lost in a sieve. The holes are more 127

inverting the order of words. The negation bo is added. Is the gentle- 173
man home? is translated Tan you ban bo? Sometimes a single word contains a whole phrase:

mi = there are.
dai = it is possible.

Vocabulary. In addition to the pronunciation of sounds, one 192
of the difficulties of the Laotian language is the distinction between 554
noble language and popular language. The language is different when one addresses the bonzes, the high dignitaries, the king. There is a [178]
very rich concrete and abstract Laotian vocabulary which unfortunately is tending to go out of use. We have found in manuscripts Laotian words translating textually [78] abstract Pali words, but they have been gradually forgotten. The Laotians no longer read enough of their origi- 177
nal texts. Cheap Siamese literature has invaded the country making 538
the people abandon their own language.

One of the urgent tasks is to bring back the old Laotian texts into honor and to spread them abroad again among the public.

[79] LITERATURE AND MUSIC

In addition to the canonical religious literature already discussed, 538
Laos possesses an important literary treasury. But as in Cambodia, Siam and Burma, this literature is anonymous. We are in the presence of epic texts of Indian origin, of legendary traditions, of apologues, of legal, moral or comic tales. There exist also novels, but as in French "romances" of the Middle Ages, they are by unknown authors. There is no equivalent in Laos of a Kalidasa or of a Li T'ai-po. No philosopher or dramatic author is known.

If the name of a French writer were mentioned whose manner is closest to that of Laotian authors, it would be that of Charles Perrault, and this in a word characterizes the type of Laotian literature. It excels in wonderful tales.

Literature of Indian Inspiration.

In addition to the Jatakas, Laos possesses at least two great texts 177
of Indian origin. This is said under reservation of further discoveries, 114
for in spite of the important work of Louis Finot, "Recherches sur la littérature laotienne," we are still far from knowing all the treasures of the Laos pagodas.

a) The Pancatantra. The first text is a collection of tales copied from the famous Indian Pancatantra. In the Middle Ages

/970/"Laotian Politeness in Ancient and Modern Times (1)"

1. A talk held on June 18, 1949, under the auspices of the Alliance Francaise in Vientiane.

121 An eminent lecturer has said that the Laotian is a humble person. I should like to add that the Laotian is also very polite. If I dared, I would use the past tense! But one should not let oneself be misled by the appearance of the newly arisen cities and the uncertain customs of a generation as yet poorly adjusted, where the old remember the past and where the young believe that much must be destroyed.

That is why the talk that I gave in Laotian on the subject had as much an informative character as an educational one, for I believe that in the era in which we find ourselves it is necessary to help people in making choices and in adjusting themselves. And since we, Frenchmen and Laotians, have been living side by side for more than half a century, we must, in some sort, have an interpretation of French and Laotian customs in order to be able to decide, now in favor of the former, now in favor of the latter.

576 What are the marks of respect?--To show his respect to a superior or to an older person, the Laotian salutes with his hands joined together. This manner of salutation must be preserved. The custom of going on all fours in approaching a mandarin will no longer do. It is, in effect, a humiliating posture. When one passes by a superior it is enough to walk softly while inclining the head a little.

The salute in the Laotian or in the French manner marks the respect of one person toward another. It must be reciprocal, but it is up to the subordinate to salute first.

/971/ When one person salutes another with his hands folded together, the latter must answer in the same manner. If he does not answer at all or only makes a sign with his head he must be considered ill-bred.

177 After having returned the greeting in the Laotian manner,
576 the superior can shake hands in the European manner in order to show his good will towards the person who respects him.

Some say that to salute in the European fashion is too liberal a

173: Deydier--1 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

INTRODUCTION TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF LAOS

[2 blank page][3] PREFACE

114 The newcomer to Laos who wishes to interest himself in the country complains that he can find no work capable of satisfying his curiosity. However, many volumes have been published, but these are of unequal value, many being merely a confused collection about well-known places. Unfortunately, they are usually out of print or inaccessible. Having quoted the book by L. de Reinach, Le Laos, already rather old, and L'Histoire du Laos Français by P. Le Boulanger, one has about exhausted the serious works which are available without too much difficulty.

There exist, however, many well documented articles which provide a precious source of information. Unfortunately they are scattered in periodicals many of which had only a short life or have disappeared without leaving a trace.

121 For this reason, at the request of friends from Laos and France,
114 we propose to write this modest introduction to the knowledge of Laos, based principally on the works of our predecessors, making an effort to give the evidence of our research or of our personal experience whenever possible.

However, the speed with which we wish to complete this popular work on Laos has not allowed us to benefit from the results of studies now being made in France. Many points which remain obscure, particularly the origin of certain festivals, will be partially explained in these works. [4] Should one have waited for their publication, fortified with all the critical development of scientific studies? Our need to publish quickly an introductory manual to Laos has obliged us to ignore these works, after having taken the precaution to notify the reader.

Some may be surprised that we do not once mention the mountain people. We have done this intentionally, for these questions can be treated in another volume without affecting the plan of the present one. In any case, it would be desirable for these questions to be studied by an ethnologist.

114 Since the signature of the agreements attached to the general convention of July 19, 1949, the French School of the Far East [Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient, referred to by author as E.F.E.O. -- Translator] anxious to give fresh impetus to research on Laos and thanks to the benevolent understanding of the Royal Government,

68: Mouhot--105-106 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 631, 122, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"On the 28th February, 1861, I arrived at the town of Chaiapume, [HD: at that time a Laotian town tributary to Siam] and presented myself before the governor to request his permission to hire some elephants or oxen to enable me to continue my journey. I showed him my French passport, and also gave him the letter from Khrom Luang, [HD: one of the brothers of the King of Siam] and another from the Governor of Korat; [HD: an important outlying province of Siam. See category 116, p. 115] but all in vain. He replied that, if I wanted oxen or elephants, there were plenty in the forest. I might easily have done without the assistance of this functionary, and procured animals from people in the village; but they would have made me pay two or three times the ordinary price, and my purse was too slenderly filled to allow of my submitting to this extortion, which would probably be repeated at every station.

The only thing left me to do, therefore, was to retrace my steps, and, leaving one of my servants at Korat with [106] my baggage, to return to Bangkok and claim aid from the consul, the ministers, or the king himself; for there is a treaty between the Governments of Siam and France, concluded by M. de Montigny, which obliges the king to afford assistance and protection to the French, and especially to missionaries and naturalists. It was a sad loss of time for me, and might occasion me serious inconvenience; for, if I were delayed, the rainy season might surprise me in the midst of the

68: Mouhot--105-106 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 631, 122, 177.63 Siam
636.63

forests before I could reach a healthier region, and the consequences might be fatal. However, I was forced to submit, and I returned to Bangkok."

68: Mouhot--119-120 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 122, 175, 487

"To consult any existing maps of Indo-China for my guidance in the interior of Laos [HD: i.e. territory which is now central and northeastern Siam] would have been a folly, no traveller, at least to my knowledge, having penetrated into east Laos, or published any authentic information respecting it. To question the natives about places more than a degree distant would have been useless. My desire was to reach Louang-Prabang by land, to visit the northern tribes dependent on that state, and then again to descend the Mekong to Cambodia. Setting out from Korat, [HD: in Siam, northeast of Bangkok] I had but to proceed northwards as long as I found practicable roads and inhabited places; and if I could not go by a direct route to Louang-Prabang, I [120] should only have to diverge to the east when I judged it necessary."

68: Mouhot--120-121 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
Siam
116, 609, 122, 631, 177.63
636.63

"I was again delayed a few days at Korat before I could obtain elephants, in consequence of the absence of the viceroy; but on his return he received me in a friendly manner, and gave me a letter of introduction to the governors of the provinces under his jurisdiction. He likewise furnished me with two elephants for myself and servants, and two others for my baggage; so at last I was able to set out for Chaiapume. Before I started, the Chinese with whom I lodged gave me the following advice: --'Buy a tam-tam, and, wherever you halt, sound it. They will say, "Here is an officer of the king;" robbers will keep aloof, and the authorities will respect you. If this does not answer, the only plan to get rid of all the difficulties which the Laotian officials will be sure to throw in your way is to have a good stick, the longer the better. Try it on the back of any mandarin who makes the least resistance and will not do what you wish. Put all delicacy aside. Laos is not like a country of the whites. Follow my advice, and you will find it good.'

I was, however, much better received on my second visit to Chaiapume, and required neither tam-tam nor cane. The sight of the elephants and the order from the viceroy of Korat made the mandarin as supple as a glove, and he provided me with other elephants for a visit to some ruins existing about 3 leagues north of the town, at the foot of a mountain. The superstitious Laotians say that [121]these ruins contain gold, but that every one who has sought for it has been struck with madness."

68: Mouhot--129-130 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 122, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"[HD: Going north to Pak Lai] I soon found that, but for the letter from the governor of Korat, I should have met everywhere with the same reception as at Chaiapume; however, this missive was very positively worded. Wherever I went, the authorities were ordered to furnish me with elephants, and supply me with all necessary provisions, as if I were a king's envoy. I was much amused to see these petty provincial chiefs executing the orders of my servants, and evidently in dread lest, following the Siamese custom, I should use the stick.

One of my men, to give himself importance, had tied one of these bugbears to the arms which he carried, and the sight of it alone sufficed, with the sound of the tam-tam, to inspire fear, whilst small presents judiciously distributed, and a little money to the cornacs, [HD: elephant drivers] procured me the sympathy of the people.

Most of the villages are situated about a day's journey from one another, but frequently you have to travel for three or four days without seeing a single habitation, [130] and then you have no alternative but to sleep in the jungle."

68: Mouhot--251 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 122, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"I have done everything in my power to obtain letters and passports [HD: to Laos] from the French and Siamese authorities here, [HD: i.e. in Bangkok, Siam] but all have been nearly useless. I have obtained nothing but a letter from the King's brother, [HD: Khrom Luang] who has the superintendence of the provinces north of Laos, and with that I trust to be able to get on."

68: Mouhot--256-257 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 122, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"When I reached Chaiapume, I went to the governor with my letters, and asked him to lend me elephants to enable me to continue my journey, that being the only method of travelling among these mountains; but he refused me decidedly, and consequently I have been forced to retrace my steps. Here one can do nothing without the help of the people in power.

I therefore returned to Korat, and established Phrai in a [257] hut which I hired of a Chinese; and went myself to Bangkok, to procure from the authorities orders to the different governors of provinces to aid me instead of throwing obstacles in my way."

68: Mouhot--258-260 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-4
116, 122, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"[HD: Excerpt from one of Mouhot's letters to his wife] You will be much surprised on receiving this letter to see it dated from Saraburi, [HD: in Siam] for if you have received the one I wrote in January, you must believe me to be already in Laos. But man proposes, and God disposes. However, to reassure you, I must begin by saying that I am in perfect health, and full of strength and hope. All goes well with me.

I had in fact reached Laos. I arrived at Korat after a tedious and troublesome journey, for I had only a few oxen for my baggage, and was forced to walk myself. From there I went to Chaiapume, and here an animal of the mandarin species made himself great, and under the pretext of having no elephants refused me the means of going further, and was so rude and impolite to me that I determined at once to return and protest against the very insufficient protection which had been granted to me. Indeed, I could do nothing else, not being able to go on. The elephant which had brought me to Chaiapume took me back to Korat, and there I found a mandarin from Bangkok, who had been sent to fetch a white elephant which had been taken in Laos. I begged him to let me join his party, and he lent me two elephants, one for my servant and luggage, and one for myself. I left Phrai at Korat, with the greater part of my possessions, having hired a room for him in the house of a Chinese, and a week afterwards found myself back at Saraburi, in company with this strange divinity (who, by the way, had

more black than white about him), and of the grand personage who had been sent to escort him, and who had showered on him every kind of attention during the journey. He had an escort of fifty foot soldiers and several on horseback. As for me, I wanted for nothing; at every halt the mandarin sent me ducks, fish, fruit, sweetmeats, &c., and he was [259] also kind enough to allow me eight men as night-guards to watch round my fire. In return, I discovered for him in the mountains large quantities of copper, and even gold, which delighted him.

The whole province of Saraburi was in motion to do honour to the white elephant; the King and all his court are coming here; the ministers are here already to watch over him. I decided, therefore, to apply to the Siamese, hoping to obtain more from them than from the Europeans; and yesterday hearing of the arrival of Khrom Luang, the King's brother, I hastened to address myself to him. He, however, had only passed through, and was gone to Prabat, to join the King. However, I found here the man I wanted, the mandarin who has most interest in Laos, and without a letter from whom it would have been difficult to proceed. I did not know him, but I went to him to ask about the Prince, and told him what I wanted. 'I am your man,' said he; 'the Prince can only give an order for me to write a letter, such as I will give you, if you like.' I accepted gladly, and promised him in return my double-barrelled gun, which I could easily replace, 'if

he would only furnish me with the means of travelling through Laos without expense, and would bring the Chaiapume mandarin to reason.' The poor governor of Saraburi was with us, and had to remain more than an hour amidst a number of others kneeling on the bare ground, while I was seated on the mat of the mandarin, by his side, eating sweetmeats and drinking tea, while he dictated a letter in which he called the governor of Chaiapume a fool, and threatened to deprive him of his office, and of this letter I was to be the bearer; and he promised me another general one on the morrow, in which he stated that if I did not receive efficient aid it might bring on a war; [HD: i.e. with France who was then occupying Cochinchina] and this he also repeated to all the chiefs present. My cause was gained, and I could plainly see that our affairs must be going on well in Cochin China; the echo of the cannon had its effect in Siam. However, I had pro-
[260] mised him my gun, and evidently he wished to have it before he gave me the letters This morning, therefore, I took it to him all cleaned and furbished up. He was delighted with it, and gave me at once the letter for Korat and Chaiapume, and to-morrow I am to have one which will carry me all through Laos without any expense but a few ticals to the cornacs. [HD: i.e. elephant drivers] Without this, judging by what I had to pay for an elephant from Korat to Chaiapume, my purse would have been exhausted by the time I reached the north of Laos, and I should not have had the means of returning without

sending to Bangkok to ask for help, which would have been a work of difficulty, and, what is worse, I should have been exposed all along the route to the insolence of these arrogant mandarins. Now, they will all humble themselves before me, taking me for some important personage sent by the Emperor Napoleon or Queen Victoria to collect butterflies, insects, and birds for them. I shall no longer travel on foot, but on elephants, and shall want for nothing. Agree, then, with me, that out of evil comes good, or rather, that God does all for the best. When at Chaiapume I found myself obliged to retrace my steps, after so many fatigues, and so great a waste of money, I was only downcast for a few minutes; God almost immediately inspired me with the idea that all would turn to my advantage, and this persuasion never left me again. Unaccountably to myself, I was gayer on my return than I had been in coming, although then I was everywhere well received and kindly treated by the people. Even after my discourteous reception [HD: by the mandarin] at Chaiapume, all the inhabitants came to see me, to bring me little presents, and to express their regret that they could not aid me from fear of their chief. The head of the monastery took me to see some ruins similar to those in Cambodia, and gave me a tiger-skin; and all along the road I experienced the same kindness, and numbers came to me to ask for advice and various remedies."

68: Mouhot--276-277 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
Siam
116, 122, 174, 609, 631, 177.63
636.63

"Notwithstanding the small population of Korat, it is the chief town of a province, or rather an extensive state, containing eleven towns or boroughs, chief towns of districts, and a great number of villages, more or less populated. Fifteen days' [277] journey brings you from Korat to Bassac on the banks of the Mekon, and in the same latitude.

My intention was to proceed northwards, only stopping in the province of Louang Prabang, and then to descend the river as far as Cambodia. I hired elephants, and five days after, having passed through several villages inhabited by the descendants of ancient Siamese colonists who had taken refuge there in time of war, passing continually through forests of resin trees thinly scattered, I arrived at Ban Prang, a village where I discovered a ruined tower, and also the remains of an ancient temple. The next place I arrived at was Chaiapoune, the principal Laotian town in the north, and the chief town of the district. Here also I found ruins; but they were inconsiderable, and seemed more like a Laotian imitation than the work of Khmer Dôme. The inscriptions on the other temples in the province of Korat resemble those of Ongcor: here I found upon a block of broken slate-stone an inscription in Laotian characters, but which is unintelligible even to the inhabitants of the country. These, with some remains of idols and towers at the foot of a mountain in the district, were the only vestiges of that ancient

68: Mouhot--276-277 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 122, 174, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

civilization which I discovered in the north. Everything leads me to suppose that here also were the limits which separated the kingdom of Cambodia from that of Vieng Thiane, destroyed during the last war which the Siamese raised against the Western Laotians or white-bellies. It was in this district that I was stopped in my travels by the authorities of the country, who treated me with great rudeness, and who forbade the people to let me have any means of transport, even after seeing my passport. I was therefore obliged to retrace my steps, deploring the expense and loss of time in the best part of the year, and which will cause me serious inconvenience."

has created a center for the study of Laos which will enable the country to be better known and better loved. From these works new elements will arise which will serve as a base for more detailed works which the reader can study to his advantage, while awaiting the publication of a new edition of this modest tract, whose only ambition is to increase the understanding of the habits, customs, and traditions of the Muong Lao. 114

May we express here our profound gratitude to His Royal Highness Prince Savang Vathana, heir to the throne, for the friendly interest he has ever shown in our work. We express our thanks to His Highness Boun Oum, Prince of Champassak, who has kindly pointed out to us monuments till now unknown. To L. L. E. E. Thao Kou Abhay, president of the King's Council and to Thao Nhouy Abhay, former minister, we are also indebted for certain information for which we are grateful. We thank Mr. Michaudel for the friendly and constant help he has given to the French School [5] of the Far East in Laos, and we also thank Mr. Malleret, director of this school, who has made useful suggestions. Finally, we express our thanks to Prince Souvanna Phouma and to the Princess for the consideration they have shown us on many occasions and for the encouragement they have given to this work. 122

[6 blank page]

[7]

HISTORICAL SKETCH

"...Then, Phou Lan Xon, messenger of Phaya Then, king of the sky, took a red-hot iron and pierced the gourd. Immediately a crowd of men sprang forth. There were so many that the opening was not large enough to let them through, so larger openings were made with scissors." 173 563

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10: d'Orleans--319-320 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 123

"Having given these particulars as to the kingdom of Luang Prabang, its limits, its inhabitants, its administration and its future, I must now say something about the town and what we saw there.

During the fortnight of our stay we employed our time in much the same way. We spent the morning and fore part of the day upon the left bank, visiting everything that was to be seen in [320] as much detail as possible, taking notes and photographs, while later in the afternoon we went out on horseback to the suburbs."

68: Mouhot--268-269 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 123, 576, 609, 646

"No event could have caused more sensation here [HD: in Luang Prabang] than the arrival of 'the long-bearded stranger.' From the humblest to the greatest--for even here are distinctions of rank--every one [269] looks on a 'white' as a natural curiosity, and they are not yet satisfied with looking--nothing is talked of but the stranger. When I pass through the town in my white dress, to go to the market or to visit the pagodas or other interesting places, the people crowd round me, and look after me as long as they can catch a glimpse of me. Everywhere I go complete silence reigns, and I am treated as though I were a sovereign or prince, and the council, by order of the king, have given to me as to them power of life or death over his subjects. Poor people! why can I not raise you from the abasement into which you have fallen?"

10: d'Orleans--277 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 124, 177, 192, 563, 802 Ethnic subgroups

"I am trying to make a lexicon of their [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] language; they answer us, but sometimes we have a great deal of trouble in hearing what they say, and particularly in separating the affixes or suffixes, with which they can surround the same word. I notice the absence of special names for certain classes of things; they have no word for bread and the names of the numerals, except the four first, are borrowed from the Laotians; lastly mother is called ma, the word in general use amongst nearly all the peoples of the world, perhaps because it is the first sound that a newborn infant instinctively produces, when it requires food."

114 Fortunately, these gaps have now been filled by the work which M. Le Boulanger is publishing on the Laos of former days and the causes which resulted in our intervention in the upper basin of the Mékong at the end of the last century. His work is appearing at a most opportune moment, a time when Laos is being opened to the initiatives of colonization, a time when, thanks to the early works of general interest which were executed with a view towards its development, it is rapidly accelerating towards a brilliant future.

From an entirely different point of view, this study could not have appeared at a moment better calculated to help in solving the notorious question which has been the object of interminable controversy and is still topical: Is Laos a /iv/ protectorate, or is it a territory of French sovereignty, that is to say a colony in the strict sense?

M. Le Boulanger's book gives a very clear solution of the problem, at least as far as the kingdom of Luang-Prabang is concerned. In support of his demonstration, the author uses peremptory arguments which leave no further question as to the political status of our possession of the Upper Mékong.

114 From the double point of view of history and of simple justice,
643* Luang-Prabang is unquestionably a protectorate governed by a sovereign who enjoys his title and privileges by virtue of imprescriptible rights which are supported by customs and traditions six centuries old. To claim, as do those who hold the opposite theory, that by the sole effect of our volition this sovereign was invested with the privileges of royalty for reasons of political opportuneness and that before our intervention he was only a regional chieftain who had nothing in common with a prince endowed with royal majesty, is to defend a thesis contrary to historical reality and, it should be noted in passing, contrary to the interests of France in this remote part of our Asiatic domain.

114 /v/ M. Le Boulanger's work should henceforth settle this point of
127 history and put an end to a debate which has lasted only too long and the continuation of which would only result in provoking offenses and misunderstandings of such a nature as to alienate the sentiments of one of the populations of Indo-China which is the most loyally attached to us.

Far from neglecting the works of historians who have preceded him in the study of a past which is still nebulous, the author quotes from them frequently either to support their doctrines and opinions by means of the latest discoveries of archeology and epigraphy, or

else to correct errors in date or situate in their true place events of 114
which the date had still been uncertain. 127

But M. Le Boulanger has not been content merely with taking his documentation from the numerous works on Laos which have already appeared. He has endeavored to supplement it by profiting with patient fervor from the Laotian manuscripts in the Royal Library of Luang-Prabang, the Annals of the Imperial Palace at Hué, the archives of the former kingdom of Bassac and the collections of the "Vajiravudh Library" in Bangkok.

It is therefore a sincere book and one of good faith /vi/ which 114
the author is presenting to the public. It will be consulted with profit by all those who have an interest in the expansion of our influence in the Far East. It will provide precious material for our future administrators, on whom falls the task of pursuing in Laos the work of August Pavie and his valiant companions, those apostles of French civilization who made possible the peaceful conquest of the country and the faithful loyalty of its inhabitants.

In its capital, Laos is preparing to erect a monument to the memory of Auguste Pavie, a glorious memory which, together with that of the Doudart de Lagrées, the Lamys, and the de Foucaulds, is one of the purest in our colonial epic.

M. Le Boulanger's work comes at an auspicious time for paying living and pious homage to the founder of French Laos.

J. Bosc,
Superior Resident of Laos.

/vii/ AUTHOR'S NOTE

The present study makes no pretensions to dissipating the thick 114
mist which veils and will long veil the past of Lan-Xang, as long as no one can divest the Laotian chronicles of their legends and chaotic improbabilities. It tends simply to find a connection between the chief events of long ago, events which have been found by laborious researchers in more or less obscure documents, and which have heretofore been consigned to overly rare and highly scattered works.

To all those whose assistance, in various capacities, has enabled me to pursue and complete my audacious enterprise despite many obstacles, I here express my keenest gratitude:

To Prince Phetsarath, for the inestimable /viii/ documentation and true collaboration which he, with the kindest possible zeal, gave me;

I about the fourth century B.C. Cf. Le Kouen-louen et les
L anciennes navigations, 1919, and L. Finot, Les origines de
174 la colonisation indienne en Indo-chine.
114

At the same time, "large junks carrying hundreds of men (from the northeast) could, we must presume, have introduced certain industries into Indo-China... then, starting in the third century B.C., the Tsins who were the real founders of Chinese power and had given the empire its practically final limits, began to think of a sort of universal domination and gave to their relations, which had become more active, a character of conquest and study of neighboring countries..." (2).

2. Cf. ibid. Contested by P. Pelliot who, in the same study, claims that "the great migrations of men from the north in centuries which antedate our era belong to fiction and not to history."

Thus in this remote epoch there was foreshadowed a division of the peninsula into two zones of /20/ civilization, such as we have already observed in the Indo-China of today: the Chinese zone which will extend over the Annamite territory (which ten centuries of submission will profoundly "sinify"); and the Indian zone which will include Champa and Cambodia with its future extensions into the basins of the Mékong and the Ménam.

I /21/ CHAPTER III
L THE HISTORICAL PERIOD. -- THE BEGINNINGS
174
127 The Annals of the various Laotian kingdoms of the Mékong basin, supported by precise written evidence, mention events which did not begin until just before the fourteenth century of our era. For the earlier period we have only a rather small number of traditions and local legends. Thus in order to establish certain historical facts and try to show the connection between them, we must have recourse to the chronicles of neighboring lands which are all too often obscure and fabulous themselves. A great many hypotheses on this, so to speak, medieval epoch have been formulated, all of which are both possible and questionable. It is by trying to classify them and by taking inspiration from those which seem to be the most likely that the following guiding points have been established:

439 after a ten year reign without leaving any sons." He thus explicitly
643* contradicts the native documents which recount the many competitions
175* for the throne which had divided the royal family, and according to which the "present king" succeeded his uncle (Visai).

He adds that the government of the country was divided, under the
175* high authority of the king, between three great officials:
642
645 1. The head of the army who was "governor of the province which produces benzoin" and commander of the city of Vientiane. He doubtless refers to the prime minister Tian-Thala, the son-in-law of Souligna whom he calls Tevinia-Assen;

2. The governor of Nakhone or viceroy, who commanded the whole southern part of the kingdom, including Attopeu, as far as the Cambodian frontier. This was the Nan-Tharath of the Annals, whom he calls Lachaen;

3. The minister of the Palace who is in charge of relations with ambassadors.

These three high officials "were given /110/ an audience only every two or three months, unless there were some necessity or the king had them summoned expressly."

/693/ Next to the king there was a "tribunal in charge of civil and criminal affairs" which was composed of five of his relatives who had daily access to the sovereign.

/651 Finally, Van Wusthof estimates the king's income at "two piculs"
643/* per year of gum lac, benzoin and gold (1).

1. Cf. Georges Maspero, op. cit. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./ A picul was equal to 61 kilograms.

175* The Account of Father Marini (1666). This evocation of the
114 Laotian kingdom in the seventeenth century does not differ appreciably, on the whole, from two travel accounts published in Italian at about the same time by the Jesuit fathers Martini (quoted p. 104, note 2) and Marini. A translation of the latter's accounts was placed on sale in Paris in 1666 (2). No matter how picturesque it may be in its

/127/ 2. Relation nouvelle et curieuse des royaumes de Tonquin et de Laos, traduite de l'italien du P. Marini Romain, par L.P.L.C.C. (F. Lecomte; cel.), a Paris, chez Gervais Clouzier, au Palais, sur les degres, en montant pour aller a

la Sainte-Chapelle, a la seconde boutique, a l'enseigne 175*
du Voyageur. 114
/127/

naivete, the work /111/ does not have the ring of sincerity which constitutes the merit of the Dutch account. It was probably written from the reminiscences of Father J. M. Leria (1) and is of value

1. Father Giovanni-Maria Leria, a Piedmontese Jesuit, left Cambodia in April 1642 accompanied by some Cochinchinese neophytes with a caravan of Laotian traders who were returning to their country. He remained in Laos for five years "despite the opposition and the intrigues of the bonzes" and did not leave Vientiane until December 2, 1647. (Cf. Fr. Garnier, 1871, and Father Alex. de Rhodes, 1651.)

only as a document at second hand. It will nevertheless be of some interest to extract the following passages:

"In the East it (the kingdom of the 'Langiens') has the kingdom 131
of Tonkin which stretches to the southwest towards Cochinchina, 175*
and further to the South that of Cambodia; in the southwest and the west the kingdom of Pegou; and in the north that of Ava and the province called U or Lu (2), and still further again to the north as

2. See below, p. 176, note 1.

far as the frontiers which limit it in this direction, where there are certain peoples who are called Gnai. . . .

"Because of its fertility and because the things necessary to life 421
are found there in abundance, the kingdom is so heavily populated 433
that only a little while ago in the census which was taken of per- 161
sons who were /112/ judged fit to serve the king at war and to bear arms, 500,000 were counted, not including the old people who are so numerous and so rubust that even of those who are a hundred years old a very large army might be formed for the defense of the kingdom if the need should arise. . .

"The chief city and the one in which the king ordinarily stays 633
is situated in the middle of the kingdom, eighteen degrees toward 174
our Arctic pole, and is called Langione. It has good moats and 344
extremely high walls on one side, and on the other the great river to defend it against the undertakings of enemies. . . . The royal palace, the structure and symmetry of which are admirable, can

648* Ong-Hue cared only about receiving his tribute, and therefore
643* straightway abandoned his protege, whose life and liberty Ong-Lo
175* had spared, and received his "vassal" with all the regard due to his rank.

Severance of Bassac. His authority does not seem to have gained any greater acceptance in the southern provinces, if we dare refer to the unconnected and improbably manuscripts which constitute what have come to be called the Annals of Bassac. The prince who /147/ governed this latter country from 1713 to 1747, Chao-Soi-Sisamout by name, clearly seems to have turned to Siam and Cambodia, while Ong-Hue was powerless to expose himself in his turn to the risks which Setthathirath had once run in a hazardous and distant expedition. He had to bow helplessly before this new consequence of the schism in order to concentrate all his attention on Luang-Prabang, where his cousins King-Kitsarath, Intha-Som and Khamone-Noi were agitating "for the crown" (1). He died around 1735 without having

1. See below, "Luang-Prabang," p. 179 ff.

had a chance to intervene in the affairs of the dissenting principality (2).

127
174

2. Since the chronicles of Vientiane were completely destroyed when the city was sacked in 1828, the events which marked the last century of the kingdom's existence are known only through the Annals of the neighboring States. The country, emptied of its inhabitants, has preserved no oral tradition and no exact memory of this period of decadence. The result is that no claim for rigorous exactitude can be made even for the dates of the different reigns which are indicated in the course of the present study. Most of them were arrived at by trial and error and are given with reservations.

ONG-LONG, KING 1735-1760.

643* His son Ong-Long succeeded him. The first years of his reign
648* do not seem to have been troubled by the age-old struggle between
175* the /148/ Burmese and the Pegouans, which had nevertheless flared up suddenly and threatened to overflow into the neighboring States.

has created a center for the study of Laos which will enable the country to be better known and better loved. From these works new elements will arise which will serve as a base for more detailed works which the reader can study to his advantage, while awaiting the publication of a new edition of this modest tract, whose only ambition is to increase the understanding of the habits, customs, and traditions of the Muong Lao. 114

May we express here our profound gratitude to His Royal Highness Prince Savang Vathana, heir to the throne, for the friendly interest he has ever shown in our work. We express our thanks to His Highness Boun Oum, Prince of Champassak, who has kindly pointed out to us monuments till now unknown. To L. L. E. E. Thao Kou Abhay, president of the King's Council and to Thao Nhouy Abhay, former minister, we are also indebted for certain information for which we are grateful. We thank Mr. Michaudel for the friendly and constant help he has given to the French School [5] of the Far East in Laos, and we also thank Mr. Malleret, director of this school, who has made useful suggestions. Finally, we express our thanks to Prince Souvanna Phouma and to the Princess for the consideration they have shown us on many occasions and for the encouragement they have given to this work. 122

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[7]

HISTORICAL SKETCH

"...Then, Phou Lan Xon, messenger of Phaya Then, king of the sky, took a red-hot iron and pierced the gourd. Immediately a crowd of men sprang forth. There were so many that the opening was not large enough to let them through, so larger openings were made with scissors." 173 563

Such is the origin of the two groups of people of Laos. The Khas, who came out of the opening made by the red-hot iron, were blackened by the cinders; the Thais, who came through holes made by scissors, kept their fair complexion.

However original, this charming legend is far from giving us precise information about the first inhabitants of Laos. As a famous scholar has already bitterly remarked, it is the beginnings about which we know the least. Alas, Laos is no exception to this rule. The historian who attempts to retrace the events which have occurred in this country from the origins to the 13th century, at which period documents with substantial proofs are available, finds himself in much the same position as an ant lost in a sieve. The holes are more 127

127 numerous than the solid paths.

For ancient documents are indeed rare. As in Cambodia, one has to admit that the manuscripts of Laos, written in chalk on blackened skins or carved with a stylus on palm leaves, have resisted neither the passage of time nor termites. As for inscriptions, they only appear during [8] the sixth century A. D., and even they are of Khmer origin, the first inscription in Thai writing dating only from A. D. 1292 in the reign of Râma Kamhêng of Soukhodaya.

What then remains for us? Fortunately the earth has preserved what the memory of man has forgotten. Prehistoric studies and archeology enable us partially to fill in certain gaps. Let us therefore examine the documents they provide and find out from them what we can learn of the past of the Muong Lao.

ANTECEDENTS OF LAOS. PREHISTORIC PERIOD.

172 The most ancient vestiges of civilization which have so far been found in Laos are located in three well-defined regions:

A) Region of Luang Prabang.

During the year 1940 Mr. Paul Lévy discovered a prehistoric deposit of exceptional importance because of its extent, the abundance of stone material and the composition of this material. This discovery was made in the immediate neighborhood of Luang Prabang (villages of Xieng-Lek, of Phon-Muat and of Pha-Khom). This area has always been inhabited since the time when man's only tools were roughly chipped pebbles. But the paleolithic study of Indochina is interesting in showing that in Indochina, as in the valley of the Somme, man of the most remote prehistoric epochs already lived on the banks of rivers (Lévy). This epoch is characterized by tools of worked stone and by the almost complete absence of pottery. In Indochina this period is usually called the Hoabinian epoch, because the first tools of this type were found in the grottoes of Hoa-binh (Southern Tonkin). We may [9] mention that the human remains found on Hoabinian sites show characteristics which relate them to Australian and Papuan-Melanesian races. But all this is still in an embryonic state and should not lead to any conclusions without observing the greatest prudence.

B) Province of Kham-mouane.

The findings of Madeleine Colani in the grottoes of Mahaxay bring us more reliable information. These natural shelters are undoubtedly necropolises; the furnishings are poor, but they reveal two series of facts.

7: Thompson--363 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 101, 131, 621

"Laos is a ribbon of a country stretching from Cambodia to the Yunnanese frontier, and entirely dominated by the Mekong River. That great waterway is so imperfect a means of communication that the geographic diversity of the country and its peoples has free rein. Laos is covered with muongs or totally independent village groups. They have only been united under either a powerful neighbouring state like Siam or Cambodia, or when the two strongest among them--the principalities of Luang-Prabang and Vientiane--had kings energetic enough to achieve a confederation."

10: d'Orleans--258 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 131, 342, 361, 485

"Although the region called Laos has not, properly speaking, any clearly defined frontiers, we may consider that we have crossed the eastern boundary between Dien Bien and Sop Nao. Here the country changes, and we appear to enter a more civilised world; the houses are still based upon piles, but they are better built than those of the Thaïs, and they are arranged in regular lines on each side of a street; at the entrance an empty hostelry is ready for travellers."

10: d'Orleans--[illegible] [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 131

"The territory is not extensive; and although the frontiers are in many places not at all clearly defined, they may be stated approximately as follows: to the east the State of Luang Prabang begins, when descending the Nam-Ou, three or four days before the confluence of that stream with the Mekong, while it is a three days' journey down the latter southward to the frontier and twice as far northward before reaching the confines of Xieng Mai. To the westward, the frontier is not so far, being more or less nearly formed by the watershed of the Mekong and of the Menam, upon the borders of the principality of Nan. If measured by distance on the map, I think that one would not be far out were one to represent the kingdom of Luang Prabang as a square of about seventy-five miles."

23: Franck--271-272 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 131, 241, 311 Ethnic subgroup

"Sturdy enough in their natural habitat, they [EJ: of the 'Black Miao.'] must live at least three thousand feet above sea-level to be either happy or healthy, just as the Annamese must stick [272] to their miasmic rice-plains; and they never descend below that altitude if there is any way out of it. Of all the races of Indo-China the Miao are probably the most self-sufficient. In common with some other mountain tribes of Laos they burn off steep hillsides, normally every nine years, for their cultivation. When they need new fields to plant, they fell the biggest trees and set afire great patches of the jungle-forest, destroying wood and lumber enough to supply a large city for years to come. This burning is partly to drive off the blackleg fever and partly to give room for grass for their cattle; and as cinders make good fertilizer for a few years, their crops are abundant until it comes time to burn off another mountain-side. As this burning by patches has probably been going on for centuries, much of the Laos is not so forested as one expected to be, but often covered with those half-grown forests which the French call brousse. Yet with all the uneven growth there are many magnificent panoramas of densely forested ranges."

25: Brodrick--85 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 131, 489, 177.48 France
636.48

"The Laos was, and indeed still is, a country happy in its isolation. It is land quite difficult of access. There are no railways. There is only one all-weather road crossing the country and that in the Lower Laos. Moreover, in my day, at least, that is to say on the very eve of the last World War, you did not just start off for the Laos as you would for any other part of Indo-China, discreet inquiries were made. The French liked to keep their Laos uncontaminated by foreigners.(1)

1. The total area of the Laos is just under 90,000 square miles and the population, at the last census, was just over one million. There is no all-weather road right up the Mekong Valley and the highways from the east cannot be used during the rains except for that across the Lower Laos from Dong-Ha to Kabao. Much of the Laos is, therefore, except for air-communication, cut off from the outer world for at least five months out of every year."

26: Brodrick-- 59-60 S-3 (1939) 1944 Laotians -1-2
116, 131, 491

"Route Coloniale No.13 runs northwards from Cambodia into the Laos country--the first home of the Thai-speaking immigrants from over the mountain in Yünnan (see p. 47) (3)

3. Route Coloniale No. 1 runs from the Siamese frontier to that of China.

The Laos country between the Annamese Chain and the course of the Mekong (with an extension over the right bank of the river in the north) is a land of mountains and deep valleys, of swift-flowing hill-streams. It borders on Tongking, Annam, Cambodia, Siam and Yünnan.

Although the Laos has a total area of 89,320 square miles (or more than one and a half times that of England), until a few years ago, this vast region, with a scattered population of less than one million, was almost inaccessible. [60] The Mekong was the only highway to the south, and arduous mountain-paths zigzagged through the jungle down to the littoral of Annam. In the wet season the Laos was isolated. In the last few years, however, not only has the 1000-mile long route coloniale No. 13 been completed, (1) but

1. The road runs from Cambodia and Saigon through Thakek and Paksé to Vientiane and thence to Luang-Prabang.

the Queen Astrid Highway (690 kilometres) has been cut from Vinh, on the coast of Annam, up and over the Annam Chain, and through the famous 'Plain of Jars' (2) to

2. The 'Plain of Jars' is dotted with hollowed megaliths formerly used as burial urns.

Luang-Prabang. Another road has been constructed from Vientiane to Vinh (282 kilometres) and among the subsidiary routes recently laid out is the so-called 'Benzoin Way' from Samneua to Moc-Chau (in Tongking) where it joins the road to Hanoi.

All these roads, however, are impracticable, or, at least, dangerous during the wet months (May to October) although route coloniale No. 13 is not impassable for most of the year. But communication between the Laos and the east (and that means with Hanoi, the capital of the Indo-Chinese Union) during the monsoon must be maintained by air."

28: Crawfurd -219-220 G-3 (1821) 1830 Laotians
116, 101, 131, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"The Kariang, the Lawá, the Ká, and the Chong, are wild and migratory races. The first and second of these are the same people who inhabit various portions of the Burman dominions. They are confined to the mountainous parts of Lao. The Ká, a term which in the [220] Siamese language means slave, but who are called by the Kambojans, Panong, inhabit the mountains of Lao, bordering upon Kamboja."

35; Ennis--1[3] H-3 (no date) 1936 Laotians
116, 131, 162

"Laos has 321,200 square kilometers, containing 420 French and 832,000 natives. It is the largest country of the group but contains the smallest number of people, as well as the most backward, on account of the lack of communication with the outside world."

68: Mouhot--85-86 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 131, 728, 631, 162, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"A great number of the inhabitants of this province [HD: i.e. Saraburi, in Siam] are natives of Laos, and are principally captives brought from Vien Chang after the insurrection there. The provinces of Boatioume and Petchaboune are peopled by Siamese, for Laos proper only commences at M'Lôm. Boatioume, Petchaboune, Sôm, and some other provinces in the north and east, are governed by Siamese mandarins of rank more or less elevated; that is to say, several of them have the power of life and death, and are [86]then considered as viceroys. The most distant provinces belong to the empire of Siam, and form a part of it."

114 To Messrs. Jules Bosc and Louis Finot for their teaching, their advice and their kind encouragement;

To Messrs. Georges Coedès and Paul Vitry for their precious information.

The reader will pardon the errors of this modest compilation. Since the great Pavie who, by the "Conquest of hearts," gave this world to France, this is the first attempt at a chronology of the Laotian principalities.

P.L.B.

/1/ A HISTORY OF FRENCH LAOS

000 Privileged comer of the earth, where manners have retained an exquisite simplicity, so rare among Asiatics, whose dominant characteristic is duplicity. My affection quite naturally went out to the Laotian people, so gentle, so peaceable and so trusting, whom gaiety never abandons, even in the worst misfortunes.

Captain Cupet, Mission Pavie
(Vol. III, p. 220).

CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

131 The territory which is situated in the basin of the Mékong River and which is designated in the French Indo-Chinese Federation under the name of Laos, is included between 22° 30' and 13° 15' of north latitude and stretches from 97° 45' of longitude (the right bank of the Mekong) to 106° east of Paris.

Its political limits are: to the northeast Tonkin, to the north Chinese Yunnan, to the northwest /2/ the Anglo-Burmese State, to the west Siam, to the south Cambodia and to the east Annam.

131 654 Area. At present it is possible to give the colony's area only approximately. Any definite figure would run the risk of being incorrect, and indeed no complete triangulation has as yet been carried out. Laos, which is the last comer into the Indo-Chinese family and has neither sea frontiers, outlets nor an economic structure, is still isolated from the rest of the Union and is almost unknown outside the great valley of the Mekong. The labors of the officers of the Indo-

China Geographical Service /Service géographique de l'Indochine/ 131
and the road surveys made by administrators at the heads of prov- 654
inces nevertheless agree substantially in estimating the area of Laos at approximately 250,000 square kilometers, or about half that of France.

Population. This is the largest of the five countries in French 161
Indo-China, and it is also the least densely populated. According to information collected on the spot, the population must be be- /162/
tween a million and 1,200,000 inhabitants, a figure appreciably larger than the one figuring in the official documents, which estimate it to be only 800,000. Persons of the Laotian race in the strict /3/ sense form the majority. They populate the plains 162
which are watered by the Mékong and its tributaries and the low altitude plateaus. The mountains are inhabited by highly diverse races belonging to various ethnic types, some of which are related to the Chinese, and others to the Tibetan branch, while still others are grouped under the generic name of "Khas." These various groups are scattered over the western side of the Annamitic Chain, the foothills of the plateau of Trân-Ninh and in the upper valley of the Mékong.

The extremely low population density is to be explained by the 162
Siamese and Chinese invasions in the course of the nineteenth 166
century. The "Hos," plunderers who came from Yunnan, massa- 648*
cred the inhabitants after they had burned their villages and forced 175
those who escaped famine or torture to settle in another region. The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical manner and depopulated the country by transporting inhabitants, livestock and elephants to the right bank of the Mekong and oftentimes taking them as far as the valley of the Ménam.

Upper Laos. Upper Laos, a ramification of the Tibetan pla- 133
teau, "is an inextricable tangle /4/ of wild and wooded mountains in the midst of which paths wind like gigantic Russian
mountains" (1). The country has a savage look. These high 133
137

1. Dr. Lefèvre, "Le Haut-Laos" (Bulletin de la Société de Géographie commerciale, 1898).

mountain chains, which are cut here and there by deep valleys where torrents which are often invisible flow, are covered with

la Sainte-Chapelle, a la seconde boutique, a l'enseigne 175*
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extremely high walls on one side, and on the other the great river to defend it against the undertakings of enemies. . . . The royal palace, the structure and symmetry of which are admirable, can

149: Reinach--28 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
~~Laotians~~ AM8
Colonial

648
175

4. The two Governments agree that commercial or other privileges and advantages conceded in the two Chinese provinces of Yunnan and Set-Chuên either to France or to Great Britain by virtue of their respective treaties with China of March 1, 1894, and June 20, 1895, and all privileges and advantages of any nature which may thereafter be conceded in the same Chinese provinces either to France or to Great Britain, shall, insofar as it depends on them, be extended and acknowledged to be common to both powers, their nationals and persons under their jurisdiction, and they agree to use their influence and good offices with the Chinese Government to this end.

5. This article relates to the Niger.

6. This article deals with negotiations to be undertaken in order to replace the present [38] general agreement with a new agreement responding to the intentions announced in the above articles.

Done at London on January 15, 1896.

(Signed) A. de Courcel.
(Signed) Salisbury

As a result of this declaration the territory of Muong-Sing was returned to us in March 1896, and from that time on French Laos was constituted as shall be described in the following chapters (1).

(1) It will be of the utmost interest, after this rapid résumé of the situation, to read Appendices XV and XVI which show in detail what our action was in the Mékong basin, and to compare what we intended to accomplish there with what the necessities of international policy enabled us to do.

[39] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER II

§ I--GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION--BOUNDARIES--EXTENT

131

Laos extends between 22° 30' N. latitude, somewhat below Muong-Kang (prefecture of S'sémao), and 13° 15' N. latitude, the latter being the parallel of Thboung-Kla, opposite Siem-Boc. Slightly to the east of this point, however, on the 105th meridian, the Laotian province of Darlac stretches a long point southwards to the 12th parallel.

131 Longitudinally it extends from 97° 45' (right bank of the Mékong at Xieng-Sèn) to 106° E. longitude in one point of [40] the Annamitic Chain bordering on the basin of the Srépok or Sé-Bang Khan.

The boundaries of Laos are (1):

(1) In what follows it will be necessary to consult the map of the Pavie mission, published by Challamel in Paris. There it will particularly be noted that Laos borders on Cambodia, Cochinchina and Annam all at once in the south.

a. FROM THE POLITICAL POINT OF VIEW

131 1. In the northeast, the Sib-Song-Chau-Thaï (Tonkin, province of Van-Bu);

648 2. In the north, Yun-Nan (prefecture of S'sémao);

3. In the northwest, the Anglo-Burmese Shan State of Xieng-Tong as far as Nam-Huok, slightly upstream from Xieng-Sèn;

4. In the west:

a) The Siamese Shan and Youn States of Xieng-Haï and Muong-Nan;

b) Siam itself (province of Outaradit);

c) The provinces which are tributary to Siam but which were placed in the zone of French influence by the London declaration of January 15, 1896; they are: Lao-Pou-Eûn, with its capital in Ban-Dua-Makeng; Lao-Kao, with its capital in Oubône; and the principality of Tiampa-Sac (Bassac);

d) Cambodia (province of Kompong-Thom);

5. In the south, the provinces of Kratié (Cambodia), Tayninh (Cochinchina) and Binh-Thuan (Annam);

6. In the east, Annam.

b. FROM THE PHYSICAL POINT OF VIEW

131 1. In the northern region:

133 a) The watershed on the left side of the valley of the Nam-La, as far as the Mékong;

[41] b) The right bank of the Mékong, from its junction with the Nam-La to its junction with the Nam-Huok;

2. In the western region:

149: Reinach--30 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotian: AM8

131
133

a) The right bank of the Mekong, from its junction with the Nam-Huck to the foot of Pou-Padaï, somewhat downstream from the mouth of the Nam-Ngao;

b) The crest of Pou-Padaï, then the boundary between the State of Muong-Nan and the Siamese province of Outaradit on the one hand, and the Laotian provinces of Muong-Houn-Sieng-Houn, Sagaboury, Outhaï-Thani and Kèn-Tao on the other, as far as the mouth of the Nam-Huong, but leaving the sources of the Ménam and of the Nam-Pat in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang (1);

(1) This frontier has been precisely defined for 150 years and is constituted by the following mountains: P. Padaï, P. Sakô, P. Dine-Deng, P. Kiou-Khating, P. Kha-Tang-Luong, P. Kiou-Mao, the plain called Na-Hon, P. Kheugne, P. Gniac, P. Kiou-Met, P. Koun-Houng, P. Pa-Thaï, P. Gnia-Mi, P. Koun-Tane, P. Kiou-Kang, P. Pouï, P. Lak-Mun, the streams of Houei-Noun and Houei-Kha, P. Liebp-Paï, P. Dou-Tong-Luong, P. Dou-Song-Tone (Houei-Song-Kouei), P. Tani, P. Pang-Nga, and finally the rivers Nam-Tane and Nam-Huong.

c) The right bank of the Mékong as far as Siemboc;

3. In the southern region:

A line starting at Thboung-Kla, following the Prek-Kadol and veering sharply south-southeast to include all the southern basin of the Srépok or Sébang-Khan and join the Annamitic Chain;

4. In the eastern region:

a) The crest line of the Annamitic Chain, which is also the watershed between the Mékong basin and those of the China Sea and the Gulf of Tonkin. This line cuts the Attopeu road in Qui-Nhon between Kon-Xalam and Kon-Tiorak (2), the Savannakhèt road in Quang-Tri

(2) However, the valley of the Dak-Ayoun, a tributary of the Song-Ba, belongs to Laos.

at the gap of Lao-Bao (Aï-Lao) and the Pak-Hin-Boun road in Vinh at the ridge of Tram-Mua.

131
133

After following the valley of the Song-Ca to about the 102nd meridian, it turns northward, following the latter meridian approximately as far as the Song-Ma and leaving to Laos the [42] deep valleys of the Nam-Mo and Nam-Neun or Song-Ca. The left side of the Song-Ma then forms the limit between Tonkin and Laos as far as a point slightly beyond the Nam-Het. Then this limit follows the crest of Pon-Sang-Lam and moves northwest along the watersheds between the basins of the coastal rivers of Annam and the Mékong basin. It cuts across the course of the Nam-Ngoua, a subtributary of the Mékong, at Sop-Nao and then, with the same orientation, strikes the peak of Toung-Kouang to the south of Muong-Lé (Chinese frontier). From this point the frontier takes a north-south direction and follows the peaks of the range which separates the waters of the Nam-Hou from those of the Nam-San (Lo-So-Kiang) and the Nam-La. Then it moves northwest and strikes the junction of this latter river with the Mékong (1).

(1) The boundaries between Laos, Annam and Tonkin are still ill-defined, particularly in the case of the Hua-Pahn. Part of the latter, although of Thai race and language, was recently annexed to Annam. It will be seen that it is impossible to fix the limits of Laos in any more precise fashion.

The greatest length in a north-south direction measures approximately 1160 kilometers.

Because of the many bends which the Mékong makes between the 18th and 22nd parallels, Laos does not have a regular geometrical shape. There are very narrow parts and very wide parts. Thus, measuring distances parallel to the equator and as the crow flies, Laos is only about fifty kilometers wide in its northern extremity in the region of Muong-Hou. Somewhat further south, between Xieng-Sen and Thanh-Hoa, it is about 450 kilometers wide; from Luang-Prabang to Thanh-Hoa, about 230 kilometers; from Pak-Lay to the ridge of Tram-Mua, about 400 kilometers; from Pak-Hin-Boun to the ridge of Tram-Mua, about 120 kilometers; from Savannakhet to Ai-Lao, about 220 kilometers; from Khong to the

Annamitic Chain, about 300 kilometers; and finally from Thboung-Kla to the Chain, about 250 kilometers. Below this parallel, moreover, the territory of Laos ends in a strip of terrain about 150 to 200 kilometers wide (province of Darlac). The width of Laos thus varies between 50 and 450 kilometers approximately, giving an average width of about 250 kilometers. 131 133

[43] § II--AREA

It is not possible at present to give the exact area of the colony, since boundaries have not been fixed at certain points and the mountain ranges are scarcely known at all.

Any figure given can only be approximate, until such time as a complete triangulation makes it possible to calculate the area of the territory in precise fashion.

As of the present time, official sources agree that Laos has an approximate area of 267,700 square kilometers, that is to says

Northern Laos	155,000
Southern Laos	112,000

This area is 49 percent of that of France (1). It is the largest

(1) Or approximately the area of Italy.

of the five countries which go to make up French Indo-China, and it is also the least populated.

§ III--OROGRAPHY

Taken as a whole, the Indo-Chinese mountain mass seems to be a ramification of the plateau of Tibet. Indeed, spurs jut out from from the latter in all directions, particularly from its southeastern extremity. These spurs form the vast plateau of Yunnan, and then stretch out to capes Négrais, Bolor, Bang-Pla-Soi and Padaran. 133

First there is the chain which forms the watershed between the Brahmaputra and the Irrawaddy (Arrakan-Yoma); then the peaks which form the watershed between the Irrawaddy and the Salouen on the one hand, and between the Salouen and the Ménam on the other (in the plateau of Ban the Malay peninsula springs out of this latter chain); then the folds which separate the Ménam from the Mékong and which are called Pnom-Dangrek in Siam; and finally the high

10: d'Orleans--288 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 132, 788

"Pakou is a shrine for pilgrimages; the people come from Luang Prabang with great pomp several times a year; they hold boat races, get up picnics, and pray. The grotto has another advantage for us besided its religious interest, for it gives us a fine view over the valley of the Mekong; but it is the middle of the day, and the light is so intense that the distance is lost in a trembling atmosphere of heat. When we return to the pirogues, I find it is more than 125 degrees in the sun, and my alcohol thermometer has burst."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

CHAPTER XVII

LAOS

LAOS from 10,000 feet was a grey-green frothing seen through a heat-mist that was like a pane of dirty glass. As we came into Vientiane in the late afternoon the mist thickened and the pilot came down as if to look for landmarks. For the last half-hour bundles of rags kept whirling past the cabin. They were vultures — bad things to hit at two hundred miles an hour. We landed bumpily in a haze, as though bonfires had been lit round the field; and in this the sun wallowed — a diffused yellow disc. As the door of the cabin was opened, the heat rolled in.

In most journeyings there stands out the memory of days of discouragement; when the enthusiasm flags under the strain of petty physical discomforts. The introduction to Laos was spent in such a period. This was the earthly paradise that all the French had promised; the country that was one vast Tahiti, causing all the French who had been stationed there to affect ever after a vaguely dissolute manner. To be fair to Laos I was seeing it at the worst of all possible seasons — it was late March — when the air is burdened with the presage of storms and the landscape blighted with autumnal sadness. Heat lay like an interdict on the town of Vientiane, although the sun was wrapped until late morning in a sweltering mist. At certain hours, out of the stillness, a hot wind rose suddenly and skirmished in the streets, producing a brief, false animation, flapping huge leaves in the faces of passers-by, who were half disembodied by the swirling dust, above which they floated like genii. Sometimes the grey, swollen sky squeezed out a few drops of rain.

I was lodged in the government guest-house, a European villa — since it had two storeys — which at some time had gone native, with earthenware dragons crawling on its roof. Hornets had

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM 1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

132 started cellular constructions in the window shutters and armies of
485 cockroaches marched across the floors. Precious, expensive water was brought in large pots and left in the subdivision of the room where, using a gourd with a hole in its bottom, you could take a shower. The main advantage of having this open pot of water in the room was that it collected a gauzy layer of mosquitoes which were content to stay there in harmless concentration, unless disturbed. The Mekong could be seen from the window, a sallow strip of water across half a mile of whitened river-bed. Perhaps this drought had something to do with the town's electrical generating system, because only occasionally – and never at night – would the filament of the electric light bulb consent to glow feebly. Whenever the hot wind sprang up, stirring the trees round the house, great dry leaves as big as dishes came tumbling down and fell with a crash in the layer already deposited on the earth. It was the death-rattle of the year, which in Laos expires in croaking senility, to be re-born with the raging storms which were about to break.

346 Vientiane is a religious centre, one of the two ancient capitals of Laos. It abounds with pagodas, many of them deserted and in ruins; and colossal Buddhas, with dusty half-obliterated smiles, sit in the tumbled brickwork.

527 Since at this time, when the earth had dried up, there was no
794 work to be done anywhere, it was the season of *bouns*; the Laotian festivals. Each pagoda holds one, as a means of collecting funds. They last for three days, and although an attempt is made not to hold two *bouns* at the same time, there are so many pagodas that duplication cannot always be helped; so that every night for several weeks the sky over one or more districts of Vientiane glows with the reflection of thousands of lights, while from a distance one catches the gusty, carnival sounds of Laotian rejoicings. *Bouns* start at about eleven, and go on all night.

527 The first night after my arrival I went to a *boun*, which I found by

1 [late March. -- Analyst]

seems to be a cloak of verdure with deep, harmonious folds. Its 133
bed is deeply cut and scattered with rocks and rapids as far as a point upriver from Vientiane where it attains an average width of 900 meters. Enormous calcareous rocks strung out like beads or laid on in cliffs like a veneer alternate with graceful beaches, and here and there hamlets cling to the hillsides which are lit up, as if by a flame in the sun, by the gilded spire of a pagoda. . . .

After describing a sharp bend to the south it flows peacefully towards Savannakhet between low banks which are now sandy and now covered with vigorous vegetation. It is 1500 meters in width, and its waters are deep enough in this level stretch to permit steamboat navigation all year long. Downstream from Savannakhet stretches a sudden succession of staggered rapids over a /7/ length of about 160 kilometers. These are the "Khemmarat." The current is extremely violent and forms eddies and whirlpools, while an irregular channel winds in the midst of the rocky bed. "The yellowish waters break against the rocks with a dreadful noise. Men have fled its banks, and the great trees of the forest lean from both sides over the abyss, into which their weight often drags them. A few daring fishermen have made themselves homes in the crags of the rocks, but these unfortunate creatures scarcely have time to flee when the first rains come, so great is the rapidity with which the waters of the river rise" (1).

1. De Carné, Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois.

When it leaves the rapids the Mékong widens out (two kilometers), with isles of verdure scattered here and there, and again becomes navigable as far as Không, the old capital of Lower Laos. Its banks grow higher again, and many villages rise in the midst of /134/
rich and fertile plains. It reaches a width as great as eight or ten kilometers and gives birth to an important group of islands, including the island of Khône which is famous for its waterfalls which bring navigation to an absolute halt. A railroad has been built /496/
across the island by the French administration to serve as a connecting link /8/ between the level stretch of Không and that of Kratié (Cambodia).

Laos ends at South Khône, and the coastal reach of the Mekong, which belongs to Cambodia and to Cochinchina, begins.

The great river is fed from the left by multiple tributaries, the 133
chief ones of which (Nam-Ou, Nam-Ngum, Nam-Ka-Dinh, 132

133 Sé-Bang-Fai, Sé-Bang-Hiên) descend from the western slopes of the
132 Annamitic Chain. Its tributaries on the right are few in number and unimportant (Nam-Moun). The rate of flow of all of these, like that of the Mékong, is subject to the variations of the seasons, which are themselves conditioned, in the tropical zone in which all of Laos is situated, by the alternatively dry and rainy monsoons.

114 which he felt during his stay in Laos, despite the somber presentiments which prevented him, as he admits, "from appreciating and enjoying things as formerly."

For three years he had been a tireless explorer of the Indo-Chinese brush, a prey to the fatigues, the miseries, the privations and the dangers of the sly and evil forest. A poor traveler, as he himself ingrenuously relates, he had sacrificed his family, his comfort and his health (and perhaps his life) "to the sole end of being useful to his fellow men, of discovering an unknown insect, plant or animal /220/ or verifying a latitude point in a remote region."

133 Leaving Bangkok on April 12, he reached Paklay on June 24 after
361 crossing the terrible forest of the "King of Fire" for the second time and breathing "in the midst of an atmosphere of extreme stench, hot like a steam bath filled with putrid miasmas." Paklay was a great consolation to him. "A charming village," he wrote, "very rich, larger and more beautiful than any which I have so far encountered. The houses are elegant and spacious, and everything denotes an ease and well-being which I have since noted in all the localities where I have stopped. The Mekong is much wider there than the Menam at Bangkok, and it is with a noise like that of the sea and the impetuosity of a torrent that it cuts a path between high mountains which seem to have difficulty containing it in its bed. . . . The sight of this beautiful river had the same effect on me as meeting a friend, for I have long drunk of its waters. It is an old acquaintance, and has long cradled and tormented me. Now it flows majestic, full to the brim. . . it is a truly grandiose spectacle."

Dissuaded from going up the Mekong by the inhabitants, who feared that some mischance might befall him /221/ /Page 221 is devoted to an illustration: "The Mekong at Paklay."--Translator/ in the rapids, he resumed his journey on elephant back and reached Luang-Prabang on July 25. "A delicious little city," he noted, "which stretches over a space of a square mile and holds a population, not of 80,000 inhabitants as Mgr. Pallegoix says in his work on Siam, but of only seven or eight thousand. The site is charming, and the mountains which frame the city form a circular valley in the shape of an amphitheater nine miles wide which must once have been a closed basin. The countryside is extremely pretty and reminds one of the beautiful lakes of Como and Geneva.

132 "Were it not for the sun of the tropics which shines constantly on this valley, or if a gentle breeze tempered the overpowering heat which prevails there during the day, this spot would be a little paradise.

What would he have said -- and what would not have been 132
his delight -- if he had reached the smiling capital not in July
when the tropical sun does indeed alternate its hottest rays with
cataracts of the most violent downpours, but in December or
January during the delicious Laotian winter which spreads the
sweet coolness of Mediterranean springtime over an autumnal
decor? He could scarcely have been able, in the course of his /361/
hunts for insects, to grasp /223/ a fugitive vision, between two
tornadoes, of the golden minaret of the Phou-Si, the sacred hill
in the heart of the city, or of the harmonious suburbs all trembling
in their mantles of verdure, or of the flaming twilights on the
misty mountains at whose feet winds the capricious Nam-Khane, a
true river of diamonds by moonlight...

"The city," he explains, "is built on both banks of the river, 361
but the greater number of dwellings are built on the left bank. The
largest part surrounds an isolated peak which is a hundred and some
meters high and at the summit of which a pagoda has been estab-
lished."

On August 5 he was presented "to the princes who govern this 643*
little State and who bear the title of kings." He depicts them
(Tiantha-Koumane and his brother the Oupahat Oun-Kham) with a
dash of bantering irreverence, then immediately acknowledges that
the king is "kind and good" to him (1).

1. "He takes care of my letters. He himself will take them 643*
to Bangkok where he goes, I believe, to take his oath of /648*/
allegiance and vassaldom." "I do not know why," he con-
tinues, "but they display in my behalf all that they are
capable of imagining in the way of pomp and splendor."

He is thus the first to note the dominant character trait of this 609
kind, open-hearted /224/ and hospitable people. Tiantha- 157
Koumane was certainly ignorant of his guest's capacities and had 643*
no opinion on the naturalist Mouhot, who was still quite unknown
in Europe. It was therefore not the scholar whom he intended to
honor, but simply the stranger and the traveler whose visit was a
happy event for the kingdom, an event which should be celebrated
with great pomp and with general rejoicing. All the Frenchmen
from Pavie down to our own day who have explored the principality
have been given a welcome which has always been just as spontane-
ous and have been received with the same eager and smiling good
grace.

wind like gigantic Russian mountains" (1).

(1) Bulletin de la Soc. de Géog. commerciale, 1898, Vol. XX, No. 12. Dr. Lefèvre, "Le Haut Laos, sa situation économique." 133

The slopes are sheer, a fact which explains the torrential character of the great river and its tributaries. Thus Xieng-Hong is at an altitude of 700 meters and Vien-Tiane is at about the 300 meter level, making a difference in level of 400 meters over a space of four degrees, whereas from Vien-Tiane to the sea, that is to say over eight degrees, the drop is only 300 meters.

The country has a wild look and the high chains, cut here and there by deep valleys in which torrents flow which are often invisible, are covered with immense impenetrable forests. The traveler who explores these regions sees only tall grass or gigantic trees intertwined with lianas. Then all at once a break in the foliage shows the cascades of a river. This is the only noise which comes to interrupt the impressive silence of the great forests.

The highest points of this northern mountain mass are Pou-Fai in the province of Muong-Ngoi (1600 meters) and Pou-Loi, mentioned above, in Luang-Prabang (2000 meters).

Further south, between Nam-Khan and Nam-Sane, comes the vast plateau of Tran-Ninh which stretches over an area of 1200 square kilometers. This mass, the average altitude of which varies between 1000 and 1500 meters, is crossed by sheer valleys through which flow torrents and rivers ending either at the Mékong or the Gulf of Tonkin. It is a superb region with a temperate climate (2). 133 132

(2) An obvious spot for establishing a sanatorium.

fertile soil and luxuriant vegetation, and would be admirably suited to any kind of livestock breeding or large-scale farming. Its remoteness and especially the difficulty of communication are, for the moment, the only obstacles to the success of any plans which one might make.

Slightly to the north of the 18th parallel there branches off the long chain which ends at [46] Padaran, that is to say at about the 11th parallel. It is known as the Annamitic Chain and forms a clear-cut line of demarcation between Laos and Annam. It is also

132 a climatic dividing line. On the Annam side, in fact, each monsoon has its rainy season, a fact which makes it possible to grow two rice
133 crops per year. On the Laotian side there is one rainy season and one dry season. The two are sharply separated, so that there can be
[241] only one crop. The chain runs parallel to the coast of Annam in a northwest-southeast direction, leaving Annam only a narrow strip of terrain, while it enables the Mékong to be joined on its left bank by watercourses which often stretch over wide extents. On the Annam side the slopes are steep and the valleys narrow. On the Laotian side the slopes generally do not terminate so abruptly. They come
[137] down to the Mékong in successive stages, first forming plateaus or folds in the terrain which are covered with thick forests (Dong in Laotian), then gentler undulations on which there are forest glades (Khok in Laotian) and finally the vast ricefields which stretch down to the Mékong.

137 The large thick forests have the same wild appearance as in northern Laos. Oftentimes they do not even let the sun's rays through,
132 and form domes of foliage which hide the horizon.

The forest glades have two different aspects, depending on the season. During the rainy season there is shadow and often a carpet of verdure, while during the dry season the bare trees and the naked soil which is covered only with dead leaves and reflects the burning rays of the sun, give the appearance of a desolate and abandoned land.

133 The Annamitic Chain first separates the Nam-Nhong, a right-bank tributary of the Nam-Ka-Dinh, from the Song-Ca which flows into the Gulf of Tonkin near Vinh. It enters the province of Cammon, where its average altitude is 1000 to 1200 meters. The ridge of Tram Mua, on the road from Vinh to Pak-Hin-Boun, is at the 1280 meter level. In Cammon there are, so to speak, no forest glades. [47] [Illustration] [48] [Blank page] [49] for the plateaus themselves usually run down to the banks of the Mékong.

Of the latter, the most noteworthy is that of Na-Kaï or Pou-Hac,
133 the limits of which are formed by the courses of the Nam-Hin-Boun
137 and of the Sé (1) -Bang-Faï. This vast plateau lies at an altitude

(1) Nam and Sé mean river. Nam is the term generally employed in northern Laos, and Sé in southern Laos.

of about 800 meters and, like the plain, is covered with forest

glades, but "instead of the oil trees, bogus teaks with their whitish foliage and their trunks deeply dented with wide grooves, we find gigantic, shade-giving pines; and instead of the bare, powdery or viscous soil, a fine level turf on which it is a pleasure to walk and where it is enjoyable to linger and slow one's pace" (2). 133 137

(2) Letter from Captain Rivière, reproduced by Captain Gosselin in Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900. [113]

It is also a region of wild beasts, and the inhabitants of the muong of Ma-Ha-Sal come there every year to hunt elephants. [136]

At the very source of the Sé-Bang-Fal there springs up a noteworthy peak about 1200 meters high from which many watercourses flow down to the Annam coast.

South of this point the Annamitic Chain drops to give way to the gap of Al-Lao (about 410 meters in altitude) on the road from Savannakhet to Quang-Tri. Then the chain rises to form walls which are often more than 2000 meters high in the provinces of Saravane and Attopeu. Thus, Pou-Atouat has an altitude of about 2500 meters. It is an important orographic center from which spring the Sékhong and the Poyo, which belong to the Mékong basin, and also the Song-Buong, a tributary of the Song-Cal which is a coastal river of Annam. 133

Between the Sédone and the Sékhong, at about the 15th parallel, stands the remarkable plateau of the Bolovens, which takes its name from the Kha tribe which inhabits it. It is a mass about 100 kilometers in diameter, and its height varies between 600 and 1200 meters. Travelers who have explored it have extolled the mildness of the climate, the wealth of the vegetation, the beauty of the plains and the abundance of water, so [50] that Dr. Harmand suggested the idea that the plateau, which could easily be linked by road with the port of Tourane, might be made into the administrative center and sanatorium of our Indo-Chinese empire. [132]

The part which the plateau may be called on to play in the future has been somewhat exaggerated. It would be imprudent to envisage it as a wonderland, [illustration here] an eldorado destined to a great future from the administrative, commercial and sanitary point of view. Today it is a plateau with well-cultivated slopes which yield fine harvests of cardamom and rice, as well as tobacco, cotton and Chinese nettles [ortie de Chine], and is inhabited by gentle, peaceful folk who live in handsome, well kept-up villages. 133 241 361

133 Mississippi and the rivers of western Europe. At Lakhône in Laos, Delaporte estimated the flow of the river to be 1350 cubic meters per second at the end of the dry season. In Bassac Garnier found 9000 cubic meters on December 5, and the waters had already fallen nine meters and the average velocity of the water was then only one meter per second. His calculations gave him [55] more than 50,000 cubic meters for the rate of flow in the period of high rising. Where the delta forks into three branches it must reach sixty or seventy thousand cubic meters. According to Boulengier it would be even higher than this enormous total. Whatever the case may be, the standard cannot be set at less than 12,000 cubic meters."

b.--HIGH AND LOW WATER PERIODS

132 133 We have already noted that in Laos there are two distinct seasons, a rainy season from May to October and a dry season from November to April. On the river the rainy season corresponds to the high water period, and the dry season to the low water period. The enormous valley of the Mékong does not fill or empty instantly. Its waters are always subject to either a rising or falling movement and, except perhaps for the months of March and April, the period when its waters are lowest and its oscillations are very slight, the river always shows a more or less marked rising or falling tendency. It will also be seen that on a river whose extent is so considerable and whose course is so capricious, now encumbered by rocks which obstruct its bed and now flowing peacefully through vast plains, the risings will not be the same at all points of its course. Through an odd peculiarity one of the highest water marks to be observed on the whole river is found on the island of Khône near what is perhaps the lowest mark. Thus at North Khône risings scarcely reach a height of 1.5 meters, whereas at South Khône, five kilometers downstream, they often exceed 18 meters. The average rising of the river is from ten to twelve meters and is due first of all to melting snows in Tibet, but especially to the rain brought by the southwest monsoon.

149: Reinach--79 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[107] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER III

1. CLIMATOLOGY

132 The climatology of Laos is not uniform, but varies with altitude, with latitude, with the direction of the valleys, with the position of the plateaus and with the nature of the region, which may be dry or [134] humid, wooded or bare. It also depends on the constitution of the soil and on whether it is alluvial or eruptive, compact or powdery, light in color or dark, etc.

It would be extremely difficult to give absolutely detailed information on this important question unless we were to cite all the points of Laos one after the other, giving each one's climatic peculiarity.

This task can only be undertaken with the help of [108] meteorological stations, which have already been installed at several points and which we must hope to see become more numerous and better equipped so that they can be in a position to collect and group observations for a whole year. While awaiting more complete and detailed studies, we may divide French Laos, from the climatological point of view, into two parts, a southern part extending from the 13th parallel to the 18th, and a northern part from the 18th parallel to the 22nd.

Situated south of the tropic of Cancer, the land is subject to a monsoon regime which includes two distinct seasons, especially from the hydrographic point of view. These are the rainy season and the dry season, which divide the year nearly in half.

We must, however, make a slight reservation in the case of certain parts of northern Laos where, by reason of the high altitude, there is a sort of mixed half-season between the rainy season and the dry season in the strict sense, which is characterized by foggy weather and a rather low temperature.

In general, the rainy season corresponds to the southwest monsoon which prevails, theoretically, from April or May to October. The dry season is dominated by the northeast monsoon, which follows the above and consequently extends from October to April.

The rainy season begins with staggered storms, short but violent,

132 and accompanied or preceded by hurricanes, cyclones and even tornadoes, sudden showers, hail, etc.

The first manifestations of the rainy season occur in April after a period of two months during which great dry, hot winds blow which make respiration difficult. Clearing mountain land and burning the stubble in the ricefields further increase the natural heat of the atmosphere, for it is at this time that the stubble is burned in order to obtain soda with which to fertilize the next crop.

[241]

The first storms are preceded by high electrical tensions which light up the horizon, but without thunder. Then when the clouds break the water of the first storms comes down in veritable sheets. The earth, which has become hardened and cracked for nearly a meter below the surface, [109] begins to steam. It absorbs instantly, so to speak, and without leaving any traces thereof, the enormous quantity of water which pours down, exuding an odor sui generis and freeing clouds of mosquitoes, myriads of febriferous microbes and other infectious bacillae.

When the rain stops between two storms the purified atmosphere becomes light and diaphanous. The electrical tension disappears, the air is saturated with ozone and the temperature falls several degrees. The refreshed leaves absorb carbon dioxide more easily from the air and consequently give off more oxygen, and men as well as animals, panting and oppressed a few moments before by the heavy heat, enjoy the happy effects of the rain.

During this period the temperature rises at night and people begin to rid their beds of the blankets which had been necessary ever since December.

Depending on the altitude, the latitude and the disposition of the terrain, the variations in temperature for the two parts of Laos from March to May are as follows:

1. Northern Laos:
   (a) Valleys and Low Plains
   - Morning..... 20° to 22°
   - Noon..... 25° to 30°
   - Afternoon..... 15° to 25°
   - Night..... 15° to 20°

   (b) Plateaus and High Valleys
   - Morning..... 15° to 17°
   - Noon..... 20° to 25°
   - Afternoon..... 10° to 15°
   - Night..... 10° to 12°

.132

2. Southern Laos:

(a) Valleys and Low Plains

Morning.....25° to 29°
Noon.....30° to 40°
Afternoon.....24° to 26°
Night.....24° to 25°

(b) Plateaus and High Valleys

Morning.....20° to 26°
Noon.....26° to 31°
Afternoon.....19° to 23°
Night.....19° to 20°

In May the storms grow more frequent and gradually change into great downpours, either with or without thunder and lightning. The [110] electrical tension is greatly lessened and the precipitation of water lasts longer, although it is less violent and more vertical.

The soil soaks up more water each day and soon reaches a saturation point. Then the level of the watercourses begins to rise quite appreciably.

The fires in forests and ricefields, which sprang up again between the early storms, are now permanently extinguished and no longer fill the air with their bitter, hot odors and their carbonized organic debris.

Vegetation takes on new life. Green stems spring from the burned plants, the dry grass grows thick and verdant and the trees which have lost their leaves show new buds, new leaves and then flowers. Once the wet season is well established, that is to say in June, the weather remains cloudy and rain falls in great downpours which are almost daily in occurrence and more or less continuous depending on the year. It sometimes lasts for several days and several nights.

In July and August the rain reaches a maximum and the watercourses reach their highest level. The temperature falls an average of four or five degrees. But the air is saturated with a great deal of humidity and prevents the evaporation of perspiration, thus making these two months quite unpleasant despite a slight drop in temperature.

In September the downpours grow more infrequent, the storms reappear, the temperature falls still further and there are no longer risings on the watercourses. October marks the end of the

rains (1). The sun reappears, the rivers fall, the land dries out and

(1) The amount of rainfall in middle Laos in 1894 and 1895 was as follows, according to Lieutenant Commander Simon:

1894.....2.233 meters
1895.....1.410 meters, an exceptionally dry year.

By way of comparison, the amount of rain which falls in Paris in an average year is 0.56 meter. (Lecture delivered before the Paris Geography Society [Société de Géographie de Paris] on May 15, 1896.

the roads become passable once more. This is the time when traveling and commercial transactions are resumed.

[111] November, December and part of January are characterized by a delightful temperature. The earth is moist, and the heat of the sun is tempered by light mists.

In southern Laos the temperature falls as low as 12° in the valleys and 7° on the plateaus. The annual mean temperatures are, respectively, 22° to 25° and 12° to 14°.

The nights are generally cool and there is abundant dew. Light hail is also observed occasionally, and woolen clothing and blankets are indispensable.

In the northern part of Laos, which is higher and more mountainous, this period which forms the mixed half-season referred to above extends from November to January, inclusively, and constitutes a true winter. The temperature sometimes falls as low as 5° in the valleys and 2° on the plateaus. The average for the season varies from 12° to 18° and from 8° to 11° at the same points. In some years there have been a sort of very fine hail, and sometimes even a very light frost. Fog covers everything until nine or ten o'clock in the morning, the time when the sun appears, pale and cold.

During this part of the year it is necessary to keep a fire night and day, and to dress in warm clothing.

In January the morning fogs stop. The mornings and nights are fine, but the heat begins to be felt during the day and the earth dries out more and more.

Then comes the period of great winds, with the fires in forests and ricefields which last, as we have seen, until well into March.

132 Vegetation dries out then, and some plants and trees even lose their leaves. The earth cracks and pulverizes under the action of the drought and sun.

2. METEOROLOGICAL STATIONS

[654] The meteorological system of Laos includes:

1. Main stations:

Vien-Tiane, administrative capital of Laos and seat of the Superior Residency.

[112] 2. Secondary stations:

Luang-Prabang, Savannakhet, Khong, Attopeu.

3. SANITARY CONDITIONS

132 164 At the beginning of the rainy season the body is tired out after the excessive drought and heat of the last two months, and is predisposed to attack by the fever-bearing mosquitoes and various bacillae for which river water serves as a vehicle after it has watered the vegetation. It is then that the many different kinds of fever strike, with their characteristics varying depending on season, region, race, individual and temperament. Attacks which take a pernicious form are rare, however, both in the natives--who are nevertheless without preventive treatment--and in Europeans, who are better protected by a good diet and specific medication.

To be sure, in a form which may be more or less benign these attacks of paludism end, in the long run, by damaging even those temperaments which are most robust in appearance, especially if the latter suffer from any kind of stomach, liver or intestinal disorder. It is also at this time of the year, as well as during the first cold spells, that dysenteric diarrhea and diarrhea in the strict sense occur, striking both natives and Europeans.

The cause of these afflictions may be attributed, in May and June, to excessive ingestion of insufficiently ripe fruits and vegetables, and in November and December to nocturnal abdominal chills. The various liver ailments also strike during the changes in season.

Cholera is epidemic in the country, and reappears at more or less distant intervals. Each year, however, diarrheic cholerine claims a number of victims among the native population.

00 0 advised for persons who suffer from any weakness in any of these organs.

132 529 Although situated in the tropical zone, Laos has regions where a climate like that of Europe prevails during several months of the year and where Europeans who were fatigued by their stay in the low plains or hot valleys might go each year to recover and regain strength and vigor.

We may mention, among other regions, the plateau of the Bolovens, which is recommended by Dr. Harmand, but especially the plateau of Tran-Ninh and the high valleys of the Hua-Pahn.

In Tran-Ninh and the Hua-Pahn, particularly from November to March, that is to say over a period of five months, the thermometer falls as low as nearly 2° and rarely rises above 25°.

[122] The morning, the late afternoon and evening, and the night are delicious on these plateaus, while the middle of the day is quite similar to springtime in the south of France. The air is healthy and dry, walking is pleasant and the views varied.

There are already European groups in Xieng-Khouang and Muong-Son, since these are province capitals. A few supplementary buildings would be enough to turn them into sanatoriums, without aiming at all that the word implies in the way of equipment, but merely at the establishment of rest spots where officials and colonists from other regions could spend a few months or weeks of healthful vacation time.

5. HEALTH SERVICE

744 Health service in Laos is in the hands of three colony physicians who direct infirmaries located at Khong, Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang.

In each of these infirmaries consultation and hospitalization services are provided for Europeans, civil guards, Annamite and Laotian interpreters and scholars, and for native employees.

The costs are partly paid out of receipts from payments made by the colonists and native employees for each day of treatment and, in Luang-Prabang, out of a levy on the Royal Treasury.

The Khong infirmary is equipped with an ice machine which supplies the needs of the medical service and those of the Europeans in the region, in return for a fee. The Vien-Tiane infirmary was to have received one in 1900, and it is to be hoped that Luang-Prabang will soon be similarly equipped.

487
491

1. From Luang-Prabang to Bangkok by way of Pitchai.

Luang-Prabang to Pak-Lay (Mekong).....	4 days
Pak-Lay to Pitchai (Siam) by land.....	10 "
Pitchai to Bangkok (Menam).....	11 "
Total	25 days.
Length of return voyage.....	50 "
Entire trip, going and return.....	75 days.

2. From Luang-Prabang to Vien-Tiane by way of Muong-Khassy, Som-Di and Tourakome, in 11 to 12 days.

[32] This road belongs to the second category, but only during the dry season. Certain parts are flooded in the plains or impassable in the mountains during the rainy season.

3. From Luang-Prabang to Vinh (Annam) by way of Tran-Ninh.

By land to Tha-Do, going either through Ban-Pak-Sa and Xieng-Det, or through Sop-Vi and Muong-You to reach Xieng-Khouang (Tran-Ninh); from Tha-Do to Vinh via the Song-Mo and the Song-Ca. Length of trip 20 days, and of return trip, that is to say from Vinh to Luang-Prabang, 30 days. A minimum of 50 days for the round trip (1). A second category road.

(1) This route is extremely picturesque, and the Superior Resident describes it as follows:

"For tourists I should recommend all of this route from Luang-Prabang to Xieng-Khouang by way of Muong-You, especially the part between Sop-Tia and Ban-Namat, a part of which our present maps do not give any idea. Between these two points one crosses the Pou-Hong, a very high peak. The road follows the crest almost continually and passes over the highest point. When one reaches the last peaks, the view stretches out in all directions as far as the eye can see and one can then gain some idea of Laos and particularly of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang. Everywhere, on all sides, there is nothing but a chaos of mountains pressed against one another, and the location of the valleys is indicated only by a few bands of mist, especially at the beginning of the rainy season. Above these mountains rise isolated needles of calcareous rock which have extremely bizarre shapes.

"On the plateau from Ban-Sot to Xieng-Khouang, one would really think that one was on one of the plateaus of the Juras or of

516 progresses at an even, elongated pace, carrying as much as 40 kilo-
417 grams in his pack without even seeming to suspect the feats of strength,
[132] suppleness and balance which he accomplishes. As long as he remains on high ground his resistance to fatigue is very great indeed, but he cannot go down to the lowlands without danger, especially in the hot season.

101 Certain authors claim that the word "Meo" which, when pronounced with a certain intonation, means cat in several Indo-Chinese languages, was given to these folk by reason of their agility. However, we must note that in [109] Laotian the word "Meo" used to designate these mountainfolk is neither written or pronounced like the word meo which is used to designate cats. There is the same difference between these two words as there is in French between the words maitre and mètre.

342 A Meo house is built at ground level on slightly leveled ground. The walls are made of puddled clay or of ill-fitting boards, and the house is roofed with thatch or crudely-squared wooden shingles. The doors are made of wood which has been shaped with an ax, and there
[592] are no windows. Often several families live in the same house, and then each has a fireplace to itself and a compartment which serves it as a bedroom. In the common room there is an oven and fireplaces above which objects are placed to dry on a bamboo framework. Behind the house a narrow passageway is left free separating the
[343] building from the sheer mountainside. In front there is a narrow veranda where the horses are kept when they are not housed in a stable built on piles and overhanging the mountainside, as are the animal barn and pig sty, the rice granary and the goat pen. This system has the advantage of protecting the animals from the dampness of the ground, since the planks which form the floor jut out over empty space on their solid piles.

[101] Inside the house there are a few furnishings, as among all peoples of Chinese origin. There are benches, tables, camp beds, dishes,
352 iron and copper cooking utensils and opium smoking accessories, all so repulsively filthy that even the least delicate would hesitate to
356 enter and stay in these hovels, where vermin swarm under the protection of the ancestors' altar.

Although amongh themselves and with their families the Meos
198 speak a rather unharmonious language, nearly all the men can understand and speak Qouane-hoa, the language of the Chinese mandarins,
212 which is the official language in Yunnan. They can neither read nor write Chinese characters, and have no system of writing of their own.

3: Robequain--113-116 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians-1-5
116, 133, 503, 505, 177.50 France
636.50

"The Mekong appeared to offer a splendid means of penetrating the plateaus and mountains of Laos. At one time it was even suggested that Saigon could be one of the great ports for Southern China. As early as 1866, the Doudart de Lagrée and Francis Garnier mission realized the difficulties[114]of navigating the river above Kratié. This large river, as a matter of fact, is still very young as far as physical geography is concerned, or rather, a series of recent and still only partially explained tectonic episodes have renewed its youth. It consists of a chain of calm-surfaced reaches, separated by rapids or falls. The chief obstacle to navigation is at Khône where the arms of the river, spread out over an area several kilometers wide, drop 15 meters through torrential and rock-studded channles or cataracts. Here precisely is the border between Cambodia and Laos. Other rapids are scattered both up and down stream, making navigation by launch difficult and uncertain throughout entire sections between Kratié and Savannakhet. It is only at Savannakhet ('the gateway to paradise') that the great navigable reaches begin which permit launches to sail as far as several kilometers above Vientiane without breaking bulk.

Europeans were eager to tame the Mekong. As early as 1890 the Messageries

3: Robequain--113-116 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians-2
116, 133, 503, 505, 177.50 France
636.50

Fluviales de Cochinchine had organized a steamship line which, with the help of some trans-shipment, operated as far as Khône. For more than two years the launch, Argus, tried to get past the Khône barrier through the channels which canoes sometimes used in descending the river. In view of the failure of these attempts, a narrow guage railway was built across Khône Island, and by this means gunboats and then launches were carried to the upper river in 1893.

Conditions of navigation have been improved since then, but scouring the river channels has not always produced the desired results, since the river's reactions are difficult to predict; buoying had been improved up to 1925; more than a thousand towers, buoys and landmarks had been built. Hundred-ton launches, drawing one and one half meters, can reach as far as Khône, at high water, about three months a year; in other months, the section between Kratié and Khône, much of which had to be traversed by canoe up to 1900, can now be covered, with only one trans-shipment, by a short thirty-ton launch which can manage the sharp turns of the narrow channels. Above Khône, the most difficult passage is through the sandstone canyon of Kemmarat, where the river attains [115] a depth of eighteen meters during the heavy floods and the current in some rapids is from nine to ten knots. Since 1910 more powerful launches have been put into service, and were later supplied with semi-Diesel engines; they have gradually reduced the number of changes but the Keng Sa rapids are still impassable at low water

and necessitate trans-shipments to motor-canoes.

In 1895 a small gunboat, the Lagrandière, went up above the Savannakhet-Vientiane reaches to within 50 kilometers of the Yunnan frontier, about 2,500 kilometers from the sea and 400 meters above sea-level; this was a purely sporting exploit. Since then other steamboats have gone up as far as Luang Prabang, but it was realized that regular traffic could not be maintained through one section, dotted with dangerous rapids. Nevertheless, the trip between the two Laotian capitals previously made by native canoes plying upstream, and by rafts going downstream, has been very much speeded up since 1930 by the use of motor canoes.

In brief, progress is summed up in the following figures; in 1900, at low water, it took 65 days or more to go from Saigon to Luang Prabang; in 1909 the time was reduced to a maximum of 50 days; in 1937 the upstream trip took 37 days, downstream 27; and at high water, it took 27 or 22 days, respectively.

In spite of all this, French Upper Laos is still farther from Saigon by water than Saigon is from Marseille. Even below Vientiane in Lower Laos, the transport capacity of the Mekong depends on the obstacles encountered between Savannakhet and Khône. It is difficult to cut down the present length of the time needed for the journey: the narrowness of the channels and the limited power of the engines which can negotiate them do not

permit increasing the useful cargo beyond 100 tons. At low water, trans-shipment is a heavy burden on shipping. In 1936 only 4,644 tons of freight passed the port of Khone going downstream (10) and 5,286 tons upstream.

10. Excluding teak logs which are floated down the river.

Thus the high hopes for the Mekong as a means of transportation have been dashed. Experts believe that if additional improvements could increase the traffic to 25,000 tons a year, [116] this is a maximum which would be hard to surpass. Railways and highways will therefore have to furnish transportation which will be justified in the future by our reasonable expectations for an enlarged Laotian economy, if not by its extent at present. (11)

11. The arguments in favor of the water route are set forth by Colonel Bernard in the Bulletin du Comité de l'Indochine, February 20, 1936. Navigation on the Mekong has undergone great changes since the end of 1937, at the expiration of the contract of the Campagnie Saigonnaise de Navigation et de Transports, which had replaced the Messageries Fluviales. Steam launches no longer negotiate the Kemmarat narrows;

3: Robequain--113-116 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians-5
116, 133, 503, 505, 177.50 France
636.50

there is no longer a regular service between Paksé and Savannakhet. From Savannakhet to Vientiane service is now assured by a company employing flat-bottomed barges and from Vientiane to Luang Prabang and Xieng Sen by motor canoes."

10: d'Orleans--289 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 133, 361, 501

[LSS: near Luang Prabang] "The river is 300 or 400 yards wide; the banks are steep but low, the villages are numerous and always surrounded by small woods, while sea gulls wheel and cry over our heads. Our boats travel slowly; the men have fastened the two pirogues side by side, and like our boys they are busy washing and dressing before they enter the city. At four o'clock we pass the Laotian Custom House on our left, and, thanks to our flag, we are not stopped."

10: d'Orleans--289-290 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 133, 441, 501, 563

"Lower down,[LSS: at Luang Prabang] lying against the river bank itself, immense rafts, real houses of thirty to forty yards long, carry stocks of merchandise and of various commodities, regularly [290] stacked one above the other. Chinamen live in these floating establishments.

The bank only rises some fifteen yards, and the shallow water scarcely hides a few sandbanks, while the calm powerful river flows on in a muddy stream more than 400 yards wide."

10: d'Orleans--339 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 133, 505

"This brings us to the confluent of the Nam Kane, which is not more than 130 feet broad, and is only accessible to canoes of light draught whereas if there was more water, it could be utilized for the transport of goods as far as Luang Prabang. From Vinh to this latter place, the journey now takes about thirty days and the region situated between the coast of Annam and the Mekong is a very fertile one. This is the plateau of Poûon, which is in the possession of an European climate, the vine, fruit trees, melons and other European plants thriving well there. The country is a very healthy one, and there is a prosperous future before the intelligent colonists who know how to go to work."

10: d'Orleans--367-368 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 133, 173

[LSS: between Luang Prabang and Paklay] "Some of the rocks have a story of their own. In the afternoon of the 20th we leave on our left a chalk cliff, which descends precipitously from a height of some 650 feet into the stream. On the sides of the mountain the trees manage to cling somehow or other, and numerous fissures, forming here and there [368] grottoes visible up to a great height, while black portions of the rock, harder than the rest and washed by the rain, hang in gigantic stalactites.

In vain I search with my glass the nooks and corners in the hope of finding a pagoda. There are no statues, but at about 160 feet from the top, on a white surface, I make out a sort of escutcheon, filled with small rows of Buddhas.

This rock is called Pakao (the white rock). A Kha, runs the tradition, having ventured upon the summit to look at the river, was carried over the edge by a strong wind, and touched the water. But far from being killed he swam for some miles down stream and was received by the canoes of a village. The inhabitants, marvelling at what had occurred, fell prostrate before the Kha, gave him presents and named him their king."

23: Franck--260-261 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 133, 491

"At Muongsen there begins one of the greatest automobile climbs I have ever seen, up and up and forever up through the jungled ranges of the great Annamese chain, an ascension unforgettable both for its magnificence and its danger. We climbed abruptly to an elevation of fifteen hundred meters, a full mile above sea-level, without moving forward a mile on the map. The road, forever clawing itself a place in the flank of the mountain, constantly making great detours, looking always for an opening, a gap to slip through, writhed like a tortured snake, struggled fiercely upward, grew dizzy with effort, took breath again, and climbed valiantly onward. On the left, or, worse still, on the right, the abyss always yawned. Our wheels touched the edge of space and flung stones off down sheer wooded slopes into le vide--emptiness; in many places there were curves so sharp that we had just room between the jagged mountain wall and the bottomless pit to make the turn by backing and filling where the slightest miscalculation might have meant destruction. Even then we barely got by without striking a lamp on the recently blasted mountain-side or dropping a hind wheel over the edge.[261]

Between the trees of every size there were glimpses here and there for an instant of the great Annamese chain we were struggling to surmount. The narrow little boats fighting their way up the rapids of the river we had crossed again at the beginning of the climb had long since disappeared; the river itself was gone. Giant ferns, valleys full of banana-plants, perfect tenement clothes-line mazes of jungle vines, range after

blue range of the densest forest-jungle sank beneath us, and still the climbing continued, steadily, inexorably, forever. Sometimes, when the road was completely exhausted, it went a little way on the level, but only long enough to catch its breath, as quickly as do the barrel-chested Indians of the Andes, before digging its toes into the mountain-side again. The air became fresher; the humid scent of the tropics disappeared; with every wheel-turn it was more pleasure to breathe. Behind and below us lay an ocean of branches, a vegetation so compact that it filled the vast ravine of the visible world to its very edges, like an overflowing bowl of greens, an immense panorama of verdure dotted with densely black patches of shade that looked like the mouths of caves."

66: Dobby--299[4] N-5 (no date) 1950 Laotians
116, 133, 361

"The settlements of Laos are generally along the Mekong itself, with Vientiane, Luang, Prabang, Pakse, Savannakhet and Tha Khek as the largest. The river is the chief line of transport, especially between Savannakhet and Vientiane, but contact with the exterior by way of the Mekong is impeded by rapids, narrows and shifting sandbanks, the signs of an immature river."

68: Mouhot--135-136 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 361, 489, 133

"On the 24th of June [HD: 1861] I arrived at Paklaïe, lat. 19° 16′58", the first small town on my northward route. It is situated on the Mekon, and is a charming place; the inhabitants seem well off; the houses elegant and spacious,--larger, indeed, than I have seen before in this country; and everything betokens a degree of prosperity which I have also remarked wherever I have stopped since. The Mekon at this place is much larger than the Menam at Bangkok, and forces its way between the lofty mountains with a noise resembling the roaring of the sea and the impetuosity of a torrent, seeming scarcely able to keep within its bed. There are many rapids between Paklaïe and Louang Prabang, which is ten or fifteen days' painful travelling.

I was tired of my long journey on elephants, and was [136] anxious to hire a boat here, but the chief and some of the inhabitants, fearing that I might meet with some accident, advised me to continue my route by land. I therefore proceeded as far as Thadua, ninety miles farther north, and during eight days passed through much the same style of country as before, changing one valley for another, and crossing mountains which became more and more elevated, and being more than ever annoyed by the leeches. We were, however, no longer compelled to sleep in the jungle, for every evening we reached some hamlet or village, where we found shelter either in a pagoda or caravanserai."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

A DRAGON APPARENT

000 Up till the last fraction of a second before a thousand graceful stems screened it from our view it was still upright and quite level. The soldiers in it had hardly risen from their seats and raised their arms not so much in alarm, it seemed, as to wave farewell.

Soon after, the infantry climbed down from the lorries and began their march in single file along the sides of the road in front. This manœuvre seemed to me not only useless but dangerous, since nothing could have been easier for ambushers than to let the soldiers go by and then destroy the defenceless vehicles. In the spirit of one who whistles in the dark to keep his courage up, the armoured car ahead occasionally opened up with its machine-guns and 2-cm. cannon, provoking, to the great discomfort of the following cars, one small forest fire. We never heard that the enemy
494 was other than imaginary. At five in the afternoon we crawled into the village of Vang Vieng, having done about twenty miles since mid-day.

133 Vang Vieng was just such another village as the one where we had had our mid-day Chinese soup, but it was set in the most staggering surroundings. Overhanging it was a range of mountains which were not very high, since the peaks only reached 8000 feet, but which did not look like any mountains I had ever seen before. There was no visual preparation by a gently rising foreground of foothills. These were stupendous walls of rock rising 4000, 5000 and 6000 feet sheer out of an absolutely flat plain. We were overhung, as it were, by a huge scrabbling in the sky, which at its base had been erased by mists. Dupont said that we would pass over these mountains that night.

494 It was at Vang Vieng that Dupont had planned to slip away. His
725 resolution was only slightly shaken when it was announced that the
669 whole convoy would stay in the village overnight, owing to the presence of a small force of Viet-Minh, which the infantry would have to clear out, in a village fifteen kilometres further along the

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

133

The fantastic landscape of northern Laos

[facing p. 272]

China Geographical Service /Service géographique de l'Indochine/ 131
and the road surveys made by administrators at the heads of prov- 654
inces nevertheless agree substantially in estimating the area of
Laos at approximately 250,000 square kilometers, or about half
that of France.

Population. This is the largest of the five countries in French 161
Indo-China, and it is also the least densely populated. According
to information collected on the spot, the population must be be- /162/
tween a million and 1,200,000 inhabitants, a figure appreciably
larger than the one figuring in the official documents, which esti-
mate it to be only 800,000. Persons of the Laotian race in the
strict /3/ sense form the majority. They populate the plains 162
which are watered by the Mékong and its tributaries and the low
altitude plateaus. The mountains are inhabited by highly diverse
races belonging to various ethnic types, some of which are related
to the Chinese, and others to the Tibetan branch, while still others
are grouped under the generic name of "Khas." These various
groups are scattered over the western side of the Annamitic Chain,
the foothills of the plateau of Trân-Ninh and in the upper valley of
the Mékong.

The extremely low population density is to be explained by the 162
Siamese and Chinese invasions in the course of the nineteenth 166
century. The "Hos," plunderers who came from Yunnan, massa- 648*
cred the inhabitants after they had burned their villages and forced 175
those who escaped famine or torture to settle in another region.
The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical manner and depopu-
lated the country by transporting inhabitants, livestock and ele-
phants to the right bank of the Mekong and oftentimes taking them
as far as the valley of the Ménam.

Upper Laos. Upper Laos, a ramification of the Tibetan pla- 133
teau, "is an inextricable tangle /4/ of wild and wooded moun-
tains in the midst of which paths wind like gigantic Russian
mountains" (1). The country has a savage look. These high 133
137

1. Dr. Lefèvre, "Le Haut-Laos" (Bulletin de la Société de Géographie commerciale, 1898).

mountain chains, which are cut here and there by deep valleys
where torrents which are often invisible flow, are covered with

133 vast impenetrable forests and "the traveler sees only tall grass or
137 gigantic trees intertwined with lianas, then all at once, through a break in the foliage, he discovers the cascades of a river. This is the only noise to interrupt the impressive silence of these great forests" (2).

2. L. de Reinach, Le Laos, 1911.

133 Set against the huge mountain masses of Yunnan, this tormented region has always been the natural refuge of peoples driven out of India or China by famine, great invasions or religious discord, and its orography explains, in large measure, the multiplicity of tiny
/631/ states which were formed there throughout the ages. Its abrupt defiles radiate out and, so to speak, become calmed in the valleys of the Ménam, the Mékong and the Red River, and its principal substructure spreads out /5/ and ends in a vast plateau known as the plateau of Tran-Ninh, whose hillocks are planted with pine trees and drop suddenly from east to west.

In the southeast, however, the Tran-Ninh plateau clings "like an excrescence" to a long artery known as the Annamitic Chain which forms a distinct line of demarcation between Laos and Annam. This chain runs parallel to the coast in a northwest-southeast direction, and its peaks go all the way down to the Mékong by successive stages, first forming plateaus or folds of ground covered with thick forests (dông in Laotian), then slighter undulations where there are forest glades (khok in Laotian), and finally vast ricefields ending in the river.

The Mékong. This great river frontier which, over 800 kilometers of its length, marks the political separation of French Indo-China from the kingdom of Siam, gives life to Laos, together with its tributaries, "as the Nile constitutes Egypt." It fertilizes it with
/226/ its alluvia, feeds the native with its fish and guarantees transport for
/505/ his rafts and pirogues from north to south. But this liquid highway where nature seems to have taken pleasure in piling up obstacles and which is cut by numerous rapids and barred by waterfalls, can not be
/502/ /6/ regarded as usable for regular navigation over all of its length.
133 Fed by the melting snows of Tibet, the Mékong enters Laos through a capricious gorge, widens for a moment in the alluvia of an old lake basin and narrows again towards Luang-Prabang. Grandiose surroundings framed by the blue line of the far-off peaks give it what

seems to be a cloak of verdure with deep, harmonious folds. Its 133
bed is deeply cut and scattered with rocks and rapids as far as a point upriver from Vientiane where it attains an average width of 900 meters. Enormous calcareous rocks strung out like beads or laid on in cliffs like a veneer alternate with graceful beaches, and here and there hamlets cling to the hillsides which are lit up, as if by a flame in the sun, by the gilded spire of a pagoda. . . .

After describing a sharp bend to the south it flows peacefully towards Savannakhet between low banks which are now sandy and now covered with vigorous vegetation. It is 1500 meters in width, and its waters are deep enough in this level stretch to permit steamboat navigation all year long. Downstream from Savannakhet stretches a sudden succession of staggered rapids over a /7/ length of about 160 kilometers. These are the "Khemmarat." The current is extremely violent and forms eddies and whirlpools, while an irregular channel winds in the midst of the rocky bed. "The yellowish waters break against the rocks with a dreadful noise. Men have fled its banks, and the great trees of the forest lean from both sides over the abyss, into which their weight often drags them. A few daring fishermen have made themselves homes in the crags of the rocks, but these unfortunate creatures scarcely have time to flee when the first rains come, so great is the rapidity with which the waters of the river rise" (1).

1. De Carné, Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois.

When it leaves the rapids the Mékong widens out (two kilometers), with isles of verdure scattered here and there, and again becomes navigable as far as Không, the old capital of Lower Laos. Its banks grow higher again, and many villages rise in the midst of /134/
rich and fertile plains. It reaches a width as great as eight or ten kilometers and gives birth to an important group of islands, including the island of Khône which is famous for its waterfalls which bring navigation to an absolute halt. A railroad has been built /496/
across the island by the French administration to serve as a connecting link /8/ between the level stretch of Không and that of Kratié (Cambodia).

Laos ends at South Khône, and the coastal reach of the Mekong, which belongs to Cambodia and to Cochinchina, begins.

The great river is fed from the left by multiple tributaries, the 133
chief ones of which (Nam-Ou, Nam-Ngum, Nam-Ka-Dinh, 132

133 Sé-Bang-Fai, Sé-Bang-Hiên) descend from the western slopes of the
132 Annamitic Chain. Its tributaries on the right are few in number and unimportant (Nam-Moun). The rate of flow of all of these, like that of the Mékong, is subject to the variations of the seasons, which are themselves conditioned, in the tropical zone in which all of Láos is situated, by the alternatively dry and rainy monsoons.

Xieng-Khouang) and Candanapuri (Sayfong-Vientiane). At 174
first all these had to recognize the suzerainty of Angkor (2), then 631

2. Cf. G. Maspero, Ibid., and "Sayfong, une ville morte" (Bulletin de l'E.F.E.O., Vol. III, No. 1, January-March 1903).

they were conquered by the king of Sukhothai, as is revealed to us precisely by the inscription of Rama-Khameng.

This lack of unity between the principalities is to be ex- 174
plained in large part by the geographical configuration of the 631
country. The many level stretches of the Mékong, "separated 133
by rapids which were difficult to negotiate" and by this very fact "almost /34/ foreign to one another" (1), placed serious obstacles

1. Cf. G. Maspero, ibid. (Moeurs et coutumes de l'ancien Laos, p. 225.)

in the way of any political fusion of groups which were nevertheless of the same race and the same language and whose frontiers touched one another. It required all the energy of Fa-Ngoun "the Conqueror," the prince of Muong-Swa, to achieve Laotian unity in the following century after many campaigns, and even then chiefs of provinces (muong) continued to govern their fiefs in a spirit of independence which unceasingly impelled them to shake off the yoke of the sovereign. This vestige of feudalism was to remain, in the last analysis, the dominant characteristic of the whole history of these principalities which were shut off from one another in a natural isolation which favored the persistence of local authorities

/35/ CHAPTER IV
THE KINGDOM OF LAN-XANG (1353-1707)

Previous to 1315 A.D., the date of birth of Fa-Ngoun, the 175
tradition of Muong-Swa has preserved only a long list of names of native chieftains which unrolls into a tortuous labyrinth where Ariadne's thread is often broken. From the fables contained in the manuscripts on latania leaves which Auguste Pavie searched through meticulously during his first stay in Paklay, it is possible

669 royal troops succeeded in dispersing the partisans of Intha-Som and
175* forced them, after a bloody encounter, to retreat in disorder along the Nam-Ou. Ong-Ek swam across the river and fled to Phoutong-Nongboua. As for Intha-Som, he was able to gain the Sip-Song-Panas where he kept a close watch on events and waited for a more favorable opportunity.

Finally free to organize his conquest, King-Kitsarath endeavored to restore some measure of order in the kingdom, which was greatly in need thereof. Aided by his cousin Khamone-Noi (1), he succeeded

1. See p. 133.

within a few years in restoring tranquillity to his subjects. Luang-
/633/ Prabang, once again a royal metropolis, was slowly repopulated and resumed the foremost place in a diminished State.

633 Gracefully stretching across the junction of the Mekong and the
175* Nam-Khane and dominated by the verdant hill of the "Phou-Si," the
133 city regained some of its animation and gradually became covered /181/ with new buildings grouped around the ancient pagodas which recalled the past grandeur of the legendary Muong-Swa.

"Moreover, the configuration of the principality's territory and the particular topography of the region combined at this river junction to provide all the elements for the prosperity of a great city. Luang-Prabang is in fact contained in the immediate zone where the region's three great navigable watercourses converge on the Mekong. These watercourses (Nam-Ou, Nam-Suong, Nam-Khane) have in the past favored the political centralization of the country as well as trade relations with China, Tonkin and Annam. Whereas both upstream and downstream for a distance of several hundred kilometers the banks of the river are constantly cut deep between the mountains and nowhere offer a surface of flat land which would lend itself to large agglomerations, here nature has provided on both banks a broad extent of land which can be cultivated as ricefields and is capable of supplying all the needs of a large population" (1).

1. Cf. Captain Cupet, Mission Pavie, Vol. III /Voyages au Laos et chez les sauvages du Sud-Est de l'Indochine (1900)/, p. 34.

643* At his death, which occurred about 1726, King-Kitsarath left
595 three daughters born of three different wives /182/ /Page 182 is
175*

114 which he felt during his stay in Laos, despite the somber presentiments which prevented him, as he admits, "from appreciating and enjoying things as formerly."

For three years he had been a tireless explorer of the Indo-Chinese brush, a prey to the fatigues, the miseries, the privations and the dangers of the sly and evil forest. A poor traveler, as he himself ingrenuously relates, he had sacrificed his family, his comfort and his health (and perhaps his life) "to the sole end of being useful to his fellow men, of discovering an unknown insect, plant or animal /220/ or verifying a latitude point in a remote region."

133 Leaving Bangkok on April 12, he reached Paklay on June 24 after
361 crossing the terrible forest of the "King of Fire" for the second time and breathing "in the midst of an atmosphere of extreme stench, hot like a steam bath filled with putrid miasmas." Paklay was a great consolation to him. "A charming village," he wrote, "very rich, larger and more beautiful than any which I have so far encountered. The houses are elegant and spacious, and everything denotes an ease and well-being which I have since noted in all the localities where I have stopped. The Mekong is much wider there than the Menam at Bangkok, and it is with a noise like that of the sea and the impetuosity of a torrent that it cuts a path between high mountains which seem to have difficulty containing it in its bed. . . . The sight of this beautiful river had the same effect on me as meeting a friend, for I have long drunk of its waters. It is an old acquaintance, and has long cradled and tormented me. Now it flows majestic, full to the brim. . . it is a truly grandiose spectacle."

Dissuaded from going up the Mekong by the inhabitants, who feared that some mischance might befall him /221/ /Page 221 is devoted to an illustration: "The Mekong at Paklay."--Translator/ in the rapids, he resumed his journey on elephant back and reached Luang-Prabang on July 25. "A delicious little city," he noted, "which stretches over a space of a square mile and holds a population, not of 80,000 inhabitants as Mgr. Pallegoix says in his work on Siam, but of only seven or eight thousand. The site is charming, and the mountains which frame the city form a circular valley in the shape of an amphitheater nine miles wide which must once have been a closed basin. The countryside is extremely pretty and reminds one of the beautiful lakes of Como and Geneva.

132 "Were it not for the sun of the tropics which shines constantly on this valley, or if a gentle breeze tempered the overpowering heat which prevails there during the day, this spot would be a little paradise.

115: Le Boulanger--138 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

133

Fig. 12. The Mekong at Paklay

/Facing p. 220/

648* occupy, by force if necessary (2), the posts "improperly" held by the
175*

2. However, the governor general of Indo-China "recommended avoiding joining battle, insofar as possible. It was essential," he said, "to seek to gain the inhabitants' sympathy and always to prefer diplomacy and peaceful means to uncertain engagements." (Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos (Posthumous edition), Paris, 1911./, p. 16.)

Siamese as far as the left bank of the Mekong. The first column, under the command of Vice-resident Bastard and Captain Thoreux, had Stung-Treng and Khone as its objectives. The second, led by Dufrenil the resident of Dong-Hoi, who was seconded by the militia inspector Claude Garnier, crossed the ridge of Ai-Lao and advanced towards Muong-Phine. The third, which was placed under Luce, the resident of Vinh, and under Inspector Grosgurin, was given Cammon as its theater of operations.

By setting the farthest limit of its occupation at the bed of the great river, the /308/ French government clearly indicated its in-
/133 tention to regard the Mekong as constituting the natural line of
101/ separation between Siam and French Indo-China. Now throughout the ages, as we have seen, the Laotian principalities' territory had always extended over both banks, and over the whole of its course the Mekong had established close age-old ties "between the folk on the banks." The simplified formula of the "Mekong frontier" was therefore arbitrary and singularly incorrect, but no matter how many objections Pavie raised in this connection it was always retained because it seemed the clearest and most alluring solution to our interminable boundary difficulties.

The Dufrenil-Garnier column accomplished its mission without any untoward incident. In scarcely a month it had covered three hundred kilometers and was able on May 26 to force the eight Siamese garrisons, which had cut all the roads all the way from Ai-Lao, back to the banks of the Mekong opposite Kemmarat.

At Khone, on the other hand, after first withdrawing before the forces of Captain Thoreux without putting up the least resistance, the Siamese suddenly returned to the offensive, seized the captain, who was taking an unescorted convoy from Stung-Treng to Khone, by surprise and /309/ invested the outpost which Lieutenant Pourchot was defending. The island was not freed until July.

115: Le Boulanger--199 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(20th Cent.) Laotians AM8

133
487

Fig. 18. Bridge over the Nam-Khane at Luang-Prabang.

/Facing p. 326/

131 Longitudinally it extends from 97° 45' (right bank of the Mékong at Xieng-Sèn) to 106° E. longitude in one point of [40] the Annamitic Chain bordering on the basin of the Srépok or Sé-Bang Khan.

The boundaries of Laos are (1):

(1) In what follows it will be necessary to consult the map of the Pavie mission, published by Challamel in Paris. There it will particularly be noted that Laos borders on Cambodia, Cochinchina and Annam all at once in the south.

a. FROM THE POLITICAL POINT OF VIEW

131 1. In the northeast, the Sib-Song-Chau-Thaï (Tonkin, province of Van-Bu);

648 2. In the north, Yun-Nan (prefecture of S'sémao);

3. In the northwest, the Anglo-Burmese Shan State of Xieng-Tong as far as Nam-Huok, slightly upstream from Xieng-Sèn;

4. In the west:

a) The Siamese Shan and Youn States of Xieng-Haï and Muong-Nan;

b) Siam itself (province of Outaradit);

c) The provinces which are tributary to Siam but which were placed in the zone of French influence by the London declaration of January 15, 1896; they are: Lao-Pou-Eïn, with its capital in Ban-Dua-Makeng; Lao-Kao, with its capital in Oubône; and the principality of Tiampa-Sac (Bassac);

d) Cambodia (province of Kompong-Thom);

5. In the south, the provinces of Kratié (Cambodia), Tayninh (Cochinchina) and Binh-Thuan (Annam);

6. In the east, Annam.

b. FROM THE PHYSICAL POINT OF VIEW

131 1. In the northern region:

a) The watershed on the left side of the valley of the

133 Nam-La, as far as the Mékong;

[41] b) The right bank of the Mékong, from its junction with the Nam-La to its junction with the Nam-Huok;

2. In the western region:

149; Reinach--30 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

131
133

a) The right bank of the Mekong, from its junction with the Nam-Huck to the foot of Pou-Padaï, somewhat downstream from the mouth of the Nam-Ngao;

b) The crest of Pou-Padaï, then the boundary between the State of Muong-Nan and the Siamese province of Outaradit on the one hand, and the Laotian provinces of Muong-Houn-Sieng-Houn, Sagaboury, Outhaï-Thani and Kèn-Tao on the other, as far as the mouth of the Nam-Huong, but leaving the sources of the Mékam and of the Nam-Pat in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang (1);

(1) This frontier has been precisely defined for 150 years and is constituted by the following mountains: P. Padaï, P. Sakô, P. Dine-Deng, P. Kiou-Khating, P. Kha-Tang-Luong, P. Kiou-Mao, the plain called Na-Hon, P. Kheugne, P. Gniac, P. Kiou-Met, P. Koun-Houng, P. Pa-Thaï, P. Gnia-Mi, P. Koun-Tane, P. Kiou-Kang, P. Pouï, P. Lak-Mun, the streams of Houei-Noun and Houei-Kha, P. Liebp-Paï, P. Dou-Tong-Luong, P. Dou-Song-Tone (Houei-Song-Kouei), P. Tani, P. Pang-Nga, and finally the rivers Nam-Tane and Nam-Huong.

c) The right bank of the Mékong as far as Siemboc;

3. In the southern region:

A line starting at Thboung-Kla, following the Prek-Kadol and veering sharply south-southeast to include all the southern basin of the Srépok or Sébang-Khan and join the Annamitic Chain;

4. In the eastern region:

a) The crest line of the Annamitic Chain, which is also the watershed between the Mékong basin and those of the China Sea and the Gulf of Tonkin. This line cuts the Attopeu road in Qui-Nhon between Kon-Xalam and Kon-Tiorak (2), the Savannakhet road in Quang-Tri

(2) However, the valley of the Dak-Ayoun, a tributary of the Song-Ba, belongs to Laos.

at the gap of Lao-Bao (Aï-Lao) and the Pak-Hin-Boun road in Vinh at the ridge of Tram-Mua.

131
133

After following the valley of the Song-Ca to about the 102nd meridian, it turns northward, following the latter meridian approximately as far as the Song-Ma and leaving to Laos the [42] deep valleys of the Nam-Mo and Nam-Neun or Song-Ca. The left side of the Song-Ma then forms the limit between Tonkin and Laos as far as a point slightly beyond the Nam-Het. Then this limit follows the crest of Pou-Sang-Lam and moves northwest along the watersheds between the basins of the coastal rivers of Annam and the Mékong basin. It cuts across the course of the Nam-Ngoua, a subtributary of the Mékong, at Sop-Nao and then, with the same orientation, strikes the peak of Toung-Kouang to the south of Muong-Lé (Chinese frontier). From this point the frontier takes a north-south direction and follows the peaks of the range which separates the waters of the Nam-Hou from those of the Nam-Ban (Lo-So-Kiang) and the Nam-La. Then it moves northwest and strikes the junction of this latter river with the Mékong (1).

(1) The boundaries between Laos, Annam and Tonkin are still ill-defined, particularly in the case of the Hua-Pahn. Part of the latter, although of Thai race and language, was recently annexed to Annam. It will be seen that it is impossible to fix the limits of Laos in any more precise fashion.

The greatest length in a north-south direction measures approximately 1160 kilometers.

Because of the many bends which the Mékong makes between the 18th and 22nd parallels, Laos does not have a regular geometrical shape. There are very narrow parts and very wide parts. Thus, measuring distances parallel to the equator and as the crow flies, Laos is only about fifty kilometers wide in its northern extremity in the region of Muong-Hou. Somewhat further south, between Xieng-Sèn and Thanh-Hoa, it is about 450 kilometers wide; from Luang-Prabang to Thanh-Hoa, about 230 kilometers; from Pak-Lay to the ridge of Tram-Mua, about 400 kilometers; from Pak-Hin-Boun to the ridge of Tram-Mua, about 120 kilometers; from Savannakhèt to Ai-Lao, about 220 kilometers; from Khong to the

Annamitic Chain, about 300 kilometers; and finally from Thboung-Kla to the Chain, about 250 kilometers. Below this parallel, moreover, the territory of Laos ends in a strip of terrain about 150 to 200 kilometers wide (province of Darlac). The width of Laos thus varies between 50 and 450 kilometers approximately, giving an average width of about 250 kilometers. 131 133

[43] § II--AREA

It is not possible at present to give the exact area of the colony, since boundaries have not been fixed at certain points and the mountain ranges are scarcely known at all.

Any figure given can only be approximate, until such time as a complete triangulation makes it possible to calculate the area of the territory in precise fashion.

As of the present time, official sources agree that Laos has an approximate area of 267,700 square kilometers, that is to says

Northern Laos	155,000
Southern Laos	112,000

This area is 49 percent of that of France (1). It is the largest

(1) Or approximately the area of Italy.

of the five countries which go to make up French Indo-China, and it is also the least populated.

§ III--OROGRAPHY

Taken as a whole, the Indo-Chinese mountain mass seems to be a ramification of the plateau of Tibet. Indeed, spurs jut out from from the latter in all directions, particularly from its southeastern extremity. These spurs form the vast plateau of Yunnan, and then stretch out to capes Négrais, Bolor, Bang-Pla-Sof and Padaran. 133

First there is the chain which forms the watershed between the Brahmaputra and the Irrawaddy (Arrakan-Yoma); then the peaks which form the watershed between the Irrawaddy and the Salouen on the one hand, and between the Salouen and the Ménam on the other (in the plateau of Ban the Malay peninsula springs out of this latter chain); then the folds which separate the Ménam from the Mékong and which are called Pnom-Dangrek in Siam; and finally the high

133 line which rises first between the [44] Mékong and the Red River, and then between the Mékong and the China Sea, and which is called the plateau of Tran-Ninh and the Annamitic Chain.

These heavy ribs, which start from an altitude of 7000 meters and lose themselves in several seas, stretch east and south like the tentacles of a gigantic octopus and form the skeleton of the Indo-Chinese continent. In the folds between these ribs flow the great fluvial arteries which are mentioned above and which often spread out over several thousands of kilometers, now flowing between sheer banks and now expanding over plateaus or immense plains in which the populations are grouped.

Francis Garnier has compared the Indo-Chinese mountain mass to an immense hand of which the plateau of Tibet is the palm and the five fingers are the Irrawaddy, the Salouen, the Ménam, the Mékong and the Red River.

In what follows we shall be concerned only with the chain which ends at Padaran, for only this latter has a direct bearing on Laos.

The orographic system of Laos has its origin, as we have seen, in the plateau of Yunnan, which is itself derived from the Tibetan mountain mass.

In Tali-Fou begins the mountainous branch which enters Laos in Muong-Hou at an average altitude of 1600 meters and separates the valley of the Nam-Hou from those of the Black River and of the Nam-La and Nam-Ta, two right-bank tributaries of the Mékong.

At the junction of Pou-Loï (1) (2000 meters) the chain spreads

(1) Pou = mountain.

out and sends ramifications in all directions between the Song-Ca, the Nam-Het (a tributary of the Song-Ma), the Nam-Suong and the Nam-Khan, which are tributaries of the Mékong.

The general character of all this part of northern Laos is quite clear-cut. It is nothing more than a succession of crests separated by narrow valleys in which the Mékong and its left-bank tributaries have laboriously cut an extremely slim passage.

[45] "Upper Laos," writes Dr. Lefèvre, "is an inextricable tangle of wild and wooded mountains, in the midst of which paths

wind like gigantic Russian mountains" (1).

(1) Bulletin de la Soc. de Géog. commerciale, 1898, Vol. XX, No. 12. Dr. Lefèvre, "Le Haut Laos, sa situation économique." 133

The slopes are sheer, a fact which explains the torrential character of the great river and its tributaries. Thus Xieng-Hong is at an altitude of 700 meters and Vien-Tiane is at about the 300 meter level, making a difference in level of 400 meters over a space of four degrees, whereas from Vien-Tiane to the sea, that is to say over eight degrees, the drop is only 300 meters.

The country has a wild look and the high chains, cut here and there by deep valleys in which torrents flow which are often invisible, are covered with immense impenetrable forests. The traveler who explores these regions sees only tall grass or gigantic trees intertwined with lianas. Then all at once a break in the foliage shows the cascades of a river. This is the only noise which comes to interrupt the impressive silence of the great forests.

The highest points of this northern mountain mass are Pou-Fai in the province of Muong-Ngoi (1600 meters) and Pou-Loi, mentioned above, in Luang-Prabang (2000 meters).

Further south, between Nam-Khan and Nam-Sane, comes the vast plateau of Tran-Ninh which stretches over an area of 1200 square kilometers. This mass, the average altitude of which varies between 1000 and 1500 meters, is crossed by sheer valleys through which flow torrents and rivers ending either at the Mékong or the Gulf of Tonkin. It is a superb region with a temperate climate (2). 133 132

(2) An obvious spot for establishing a sanatorium.

fertile soil and luxuriant vegetation, and would be admirably suited to any kind of livestock breeding or large-scale farming. Its remoteness and especially the difficulty of communication are, for the moment, the only obstacles to the success of any plans which one might make.

Slightly to the north of the 18th parallel there branches off the long chain which ends at [46] Padaran, that is to say at about the 11th parallel. It is known as the Annamitic Chain and forms a clear-cut line of demarcation between Laos and Annam. It is also

132 a climatic dividing line. On the Annam side, in fact, each monsoon has its rainy season, a fact which makes it possible to grow two rice
133 crops per year. On the Laotian side there is one rainy season and one dry season. The two are sharply separated, so that there can be
[241] only one crop. The chain runs parallel to the coast of Annam in a northwest-southeast direction, leaving Annam only a narrow strip of terrain, while it enables the Mékong to be joined on its left bank by watercourses which often stretch over wide extents. On the Annam side the slopes are steep and the valleys narrow. On the Laotian side the slopes generally do not terminate so abruptly. They come
[137] down to the Mékong in successive stages, first forming plateaus or folds in the terrain which are covered with thick forests (Dong in Laotian), then gentler undulations on which there are forest glades (Khok in Laotian) and finally the vast ricefields which stretch down to the Mékong.

137 The large thick forests have the same wild appearance as in northern Laos. Oftentimes they do not even let the sun's rays through,
132 and form domes of foliage which hide the horizon.

The forest glades have two different aspects, depending on the season. During the rainy season there is shadow and often a carpet of verdure, while during the dry season the bare trees and the naked soil which is covered only with dead leaves and reflects the burning rays of the sun, give the appearance of a desolate and abandoned land.

133 The Annamitic Chain first separates the Nam-Nhang, a right-bank tributary of the Nam-Ka-Dinh, from the Song-Ca which flows into the Gulf of Tonkin near Vinh. It enters the province of Cammon, where its average altitude is 1000 to 1200 meters. The ridge of Tram Mua, on the road from Vinh to Pak-Hin-Boun, is at the 1280 meter level. In Cammon there are, so to speak, no forest glades. [47] [Illustration] [48] [Blank page] [49] for the plateaus themselves usually run down to the banks of the Mékong.

Of the latter, the most noteworthy is that of Na-Kaï or Pou-Hac,
133 the limits of which are formed by the courses of the Nam-Hin-Boun
137 and of the Sé (1) -Bang-Faï. This vast plateau lies at an altitude

(1) Nam and Sé mean river. Nam is the term generally employed in northern Laos, and Sé in southern Laos.

of about 800 meters and, like the plain, is covered with forest

glades, but "instead of the oil trees, bogus teaks with their whitish foliage and their trunks deeply dented with wide grooves, we find gigantic, shade-giving pines; and instead of the bare, powdery or viscous soil, a fine level turf on which it is a pleasure to walk and where it is enjoyable to linger and slow one's pace" (2). 133 137

(2) Letter from Captain Rivière, reproduced by Captain Gosselin in Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900. [113]

It is also a region of wild beasts, and the inhabitants of the muong of Ma-Ha-Saï come there every year to hunt elephants. [136]

At the very source of the Sé-Bang-Faï there springs up a noteworthy peak about 1200 meters high from which many watercourses flow down to the Annam coast.

South of this point the Annamitic Chain drops to give way to the gap of Aï-Lao (about 410 meters in altitude) on the road from Savannakhèt to Quang-Tri. Then the chain rises to form walls which are often more than 2000 meters high in the provinces of Saravane and Attopeu. Thus, Pou-Atouat has an altitude of about 2500 meters. It is an important orographic center from which spring the Sékhong and the Poyo, which belong to the Mékong basin, and also the Song-Buong, a tributary of the Song-Caï which is a coastal river of Annam. 133

Between the Sédone and the Sékhong, at about the 15th parallel, stands the remarkable plateau of the Bolovens, which takes its name from the Kha tribe which inhabits it. It is a mass about 100 kilometers in diameter, and its height varies between 600 and 1200 meters. Travelers who have explored it have extolled the mildness of the climate, the wealth of the vegetation, the beauty of the plains and the abundance of water, so [50] that Dr. Harmand suggested the idea that the plateau, which could easily be linked by road with the port of Tourane, might be made into the administrative center and sanatorium of our Indo-Chinese empire. [132]

The part which the plateau may be called on to play in the future has been somewhat exaggerated. It would be imprudent to envisage it as a wonderland, [illustration here] an eldorado destined to a great future from the administrative, commercial and sanitary point of view. Today it is a plateau with well-cultivated slopes which yield fine harvests of cardamom and rice, as well as tobacco, cotton and Chinese nettles [ortie de Chine], and is inhabited by gentle, peaceful folk who live in handsome, well kept-up villages. 133 241 361

133 The market of Bassac owes its importance to the proximity of the plateau. It is therefore a storehouse for the Laotians of the whole
433 region, a reservoir [51] from which they draw. The part which it
438 plays is obviously a fine one, and no more can be asked of it.

There has also been much discussion as to whether large-scale breeding of buffalo and oxen would be successful there, for at present livestock is found only in the villages situated near the Sédone, that is to say, quite far from the plateau. The question has not yet been settled, and sufficient tests have not yet been made.

At the southernmost corner of the plateau there is a conical
133 mountain about 800 meters in altitude which Francis Garnier baptized The Breast [le Téton] because of its shape, and to which he later gave the name Lagrée's Peak [Pic de Lagrée] in commemoration of the President of the Exploratory Commission of 1866.

[224] The elephant hunters of southern Laos go to the mountainous region of Saravane and Attopeu every year, and there they capture an annual quota of fifty to a hundred elephants.

133 To the east of Attopeu the mountains are inhabited by well-nigh independent Kha tribes--Cédangs, Djarais, Rognaos and
[177 797] Bahnars. The two latter tribes have almost been pacified, thanks to the persevering efforts of the Christian missionaries of Kon-Toum. This point is the center of the mission, and through it passes the road from Attopeu to Qui-Nhon. It crosses the Annamitic Chain
563 between Kon-Xalam and Kon-Tiorak at an altitude of about 900 meters. Near Attopeu this same road goes up over Pou-Satièng (400 meters), the last ramification of the great chain, which separates the basin of the Sé-Souk from that of the Sé-Kémane.

[135] This region of Pou-Satièng, Sé-Souk and Sé-Kémane has long been known to be rich in gold deposits.

§ IV--HYDROLOGY

a.--THE MÉKONG--GENERALITIES

133 It has often been said, and rightly so, that the Nile constituted Egypt. In the same way it can be said that the Mékong makes Laos, for is it not the river which gives what vitality there is to these vast isolated regions? Is it not the river which, by its annual floods, helps the growth of rice? Does it not supply, with its fish, a large

part of the natives' diet? Do not its alluvia yield the cotton, tobacco and indigo which are indispensable to the Laotian, and does not the river itself, in the high water period, transport the wood needed for cooking food, so that, in a manner of speaking, it has only to recede in order to collect firewood? Finally, from the commercial point of view, is not the Mékong the great fluvial artery and the only practical route joining Yunnan to Saigon? M. Blancsubé, a former deputy for Cochinchina, envisaged the use to which the Mékong could be put when he said: [372] 133 [502]

"I see in our establishment throughout the whole Mékong valley, the means of making flow into Saigon the products of thirty kingdoms and tribes scattered along the river, as well as those of Yunnan and those of the interior provinces of China. I see the means of making Saigon into one of the greatest storehouses in the world, and making it the queen of the Far East." 000

The vision is a tempting one. Unfortunately, the reality is quite another thing. On the one hand the orientation of trade towards Bangkok was climaxed by the completion of the Korat railroad, while on our part the problem of making the Mékong navigable from Yunnan to the sea is still far from having been solved.

Looked at as a whole, the Mékong flows first in a largely north and south direction as far as Ban-Houé-Pak-Kop (1) (where the Houé- 133

(1) Pak = mouth, junction of rivers.

Kop flows into its right bank), then turns suddenly eastward in the gorge which it has cut around the plateau which forms the last stage of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na.

Macey (2) says, in this connection, that one can almost certainly

(2) "Cinq ans au Laos." Lecture delivered before the Society of Commercial Geography [Société de Géographie commerciale] on November 19, 1895. [113]

accept the hypothesis that in a relatively recent geological epoch the Mékong flowed into the sea in the Gulf of Siam through the valley of the present-day Ménam. The other branch of the Mékong which goes down to the sea through Cambodia and Cochinchina was a continuation of the Nam-Hou. It was only when an upheaval or

133

a fold occurred that the east-west dividing crest was formed which separated the waters as [58] we see them today. From that time on the upper branch of the Mékong was forced to erode a passage for itself and dug the "Cañon" which is its bed from Xieng-Kong to Pak-Hou.

"At this latter point, moreover, the cutting is quite evident, and the calcareous rock masses which form the right bank of the junction of the Nam-Hou and the Mékong continue along the right bank of the great river. The sheer wall has clearly been cut in two by the water of the branch which comes from Tibet and was turned from its course by the upheaval referred to above." (1)

(1) Francis Garnier also mentions the proximity of the rivers to one another: "The sources of the two watercourses (the Ménam and the Sé-Ngum, a right-bank tributary of the Mékong) are separated only by a very slight distance, and according to information from the natives one need only, during the high water period, drag a bark for a mile or two over fairly level ground in order to leave the Mékong basin and sail into the Ménam basin. Was it this proximity which occasioned the hypothetical indications on our old maps, according to which the two rivers communicated with one another?" (Francis Garnier, 1885, Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine.)

From Pak-Hou the Mékong therefore follows the direction of the Nam-Hou, that is to say that its course runs approximately north-south as far as Ban-Houé-Hat. At this point the river is turned eastward by a spur of Pou-Vieng (right bank) as far as Keng-Sa-Dok, which is downstream from Pat-Choum. In this region the river leaves the gorge at Sam-Pan-Na and has then cut a rather capricious course in the alluvia which fill an old lake basin, still represented today by several ponds including the Nong-Han-Noï and the Nong-Han-Xieng-Soum on the right bank. The last underspurs of Cammon and Cam-Kheut suddenly turn it in a general south-southeast direction, and thus it remains as far as Kratié in Cambodia, flowing through the middle of vast plains. Its peaceful course is interrupted all at once at Ban-Ta-Sa-Kou, slightly downstream from Ban-Mouk, by a succession of rapids dotted with small islands and isolated blocks in the midst of the current. The latter bear witness to the work of erosion which has taken place in these parts.

133 There is only one mountainous region of note in its whole course through the plains. This is formed by the spur which forces it to describe the bend of Pak-Moun and, on the right bank, by the mountains of Bassac which tower precipitously above it. Then the river spreads out more and more until [54] it forms the altogether characteristic group of the Si-Pan-Don (four thousand islands) above the Khône waterfalls, where it falls down to its lower reach which is subject to the special conditions of the Ton-Lé-Sap risings.

[103] The origin of the word Mékong is not certain. It is doubtless an abbreviation of Mé-Nam-Kong, that is to say, the mother of the waters which come from Kong (1).

(1) This does not refer to Khong, the former capital of Lower Laos, but to another Kong situated at about 22° 20' N. latitude and well known as a transit point for caravans going from Burma to China.

The total length of its course is approximately 4200 kilometers, about half of which belongs to Laos. It is one of the largest rivers in the world. The length of its course, which is approximately the same as that of the Amour or the Hoang-Hô, would place it tenth among all the world's rivers.

In addition to the region of Khong and the Khône waterfalls, where the river spreads out over ten kilometers and even more, there is an average breadth of 1200 to 1500 meters in the Bassac reach. In the Kemmarat rapids its average width is from 300 to 500 meters, but there are also narrows where it is scarcely 100 meters wide.

In the Vien-Tiane reach it has an average width of 300 to 800 meters, but between Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang it narrows down to less than 100 meters. Above Luang-Prabang and as far as Xieng-Khong its average width is only 150 to 250 meters. Then it spreads out again through low islands, to narrow down once and for all towards Tang-Hô.

The area of its basin has been estimated to be a million square kilometers.

"The rate of flow of the Mekong (2) has not yet been measured

[113] (2) Vivien de Saint-Martin, Nouveau Dictionnaire de géographie universelle, 1887.

with the same degree of precision as those of the Irrawaddy, the

133 Mississippi and the rivers of western Europe. At Lakhône in Laos, Delaporte estimated the flow of the river to be 1350 cubic meters per second at the end of the dry season. In Bassac Garnier found 9000 cubic meters on December 5, and the waters had already fallen nine meters and the average velocity of the water was then only one meter per second. His calculations gave him [55] more than 50,000 cubic meters for the rate of flow in the period of high rising. Where the delta forks into three branches it must reach sixty or seventy thousand cubic meters. According to Boulengier it would be even higher than this enormous total. Whatever the case may be, the standard cannot be set at less than 12,000 cubic meters."

b.--HIGH AND LOW WATER PERIODS

132 We have already noted that in Laos there are two distinct
133 seasons, a rainy season from May to October and a dry season from November to April. On the river the rainy season corresponds to the high water period, and the dry season to the low water period. The enormous valley of the Mékong does not fill or empty instantly. Its waters are always subject to either a rising or falling movement and, except perhaps for the months of March and April, the period when its waters are lowest and its oscillations are very slight, the river always shows a more or less marked rising or falling tendency. It will also be seen that on a river whose extent is so considerable and whose course is so capricious, now encumbered by rocks which obstruct its bed and now flowing peacefully through vast plains, the risings will not be the same at all points of its course. Through an odd peculiarity one of the highest water marks to be observed on the whole river is found on the island of Khône near what is perhaps the lowest mark. Thus at North Khône risings scarcely reach a height of 1.5 meters, whereas at South Khône, five kilometers downstream, they often exceed 18 meters. The average rising of the river is from ten to twelve meters and is due first of all to melting snows in Tibet, but especially to the rain brought by the southwest monsoon.

149: Reinach--42 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

c.--NAVIGABILITY OF THE MÉKONG
WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED--WHAT REMAINS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

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From the point of view of navigation, the Mékong does not constitute one continuous artery from one end to the other of its course. Several serious obstacles, such as the Khône waterfalls and the rapids of [56] Kemmarat, lie in the way of steam navigation. It has therefore been found necessary to divide the river, as far as navigability goes, into several reaches. These are:

1. The reach of Luang-Prabang or upper reach, which extends [Illustration here] from the Mékong's entry into Laos to Sam-Pan-Na, that is to say from approximately the 22nd parallel to the 18th.

In this reach navigation is impossible, even for pirogues, as far as Tang-Hô because of the river's irregular drop in level (approximately 160 meters over a distance of 180 kilometers) and the many rocks which encumber its bed.

From Tang-Hô to Vien-Tiane navigation by pirogues and [57] [Illustration] [58] [Blank page] [59] rafts is the rule and native boats function all year long despite fairly numerous rapids.

2. The reach of Vien-Tiane or middle reach, which extends from Sam-Pan-Na to Ban-Ta-Sa-Kou (right bank) or Huêin-Hin (left bank), that is to say from the 18th parallel to slightly below the 16th and the head of the Kemmarat rapids. This reach is navigable for steamships of a draft of one meter during almost all of the year.

Between this last reach and the following one comes the extremely precipitous part of the river which is known as the rapids of Kemmarat and stretches over a distance of 160 kilometers as far as Pak-Moun (15° 20'). In its present state steam navigation of any sort is impossible. All year long, however, rafts and pirogues can go downriver through the rapids, but only pirogues can go upriver.

3. The reach of Bassac, between Pak-Moun and North Khône, that is to say between approximately 15° 20' and 14°.

This reach is navigable all year long and over its entire length for rafts and pirogues, and only during three or four months (July to October) for steam launches.

To the south of this reach the Khône waterfalls form a complete obstacle to steam navigation over a distance of about five kilometers. Before the establishment of the railway transhipment of merchandise

149: Reinach--42a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

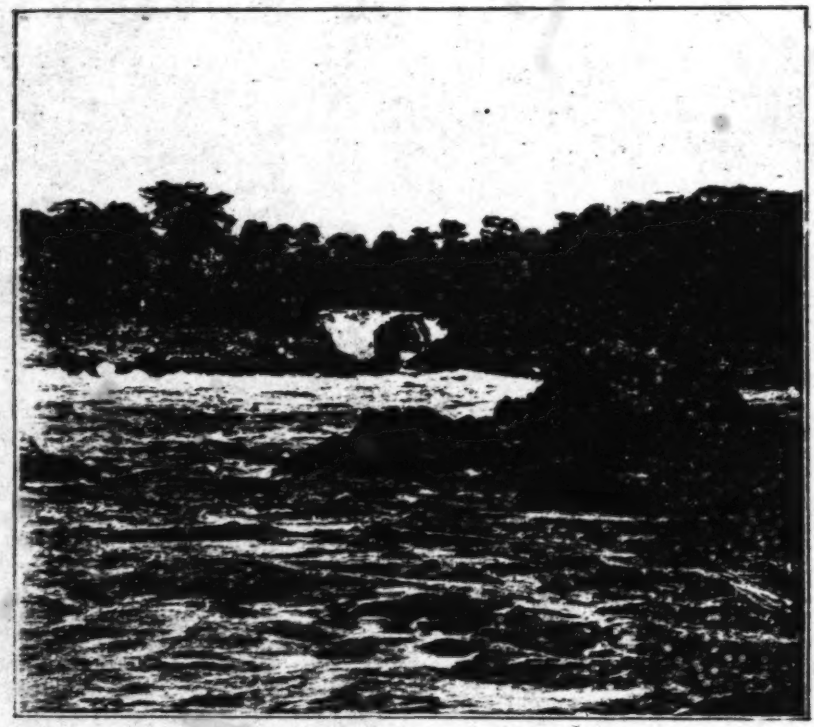

Fig. 16 /p. 56/ The Khone waterfalls.

149: Reinsch--42b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

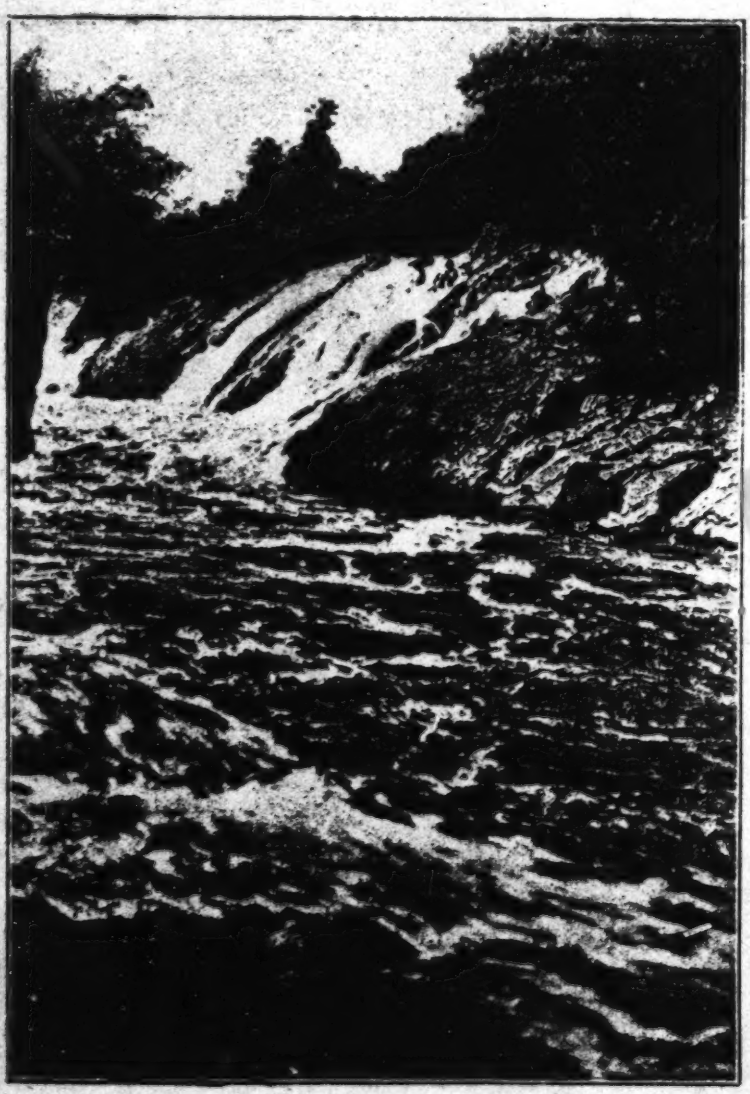

Fig. 17 /p. 57/ The Khone waterfalls.

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from upstream to downstream and vice versa was accomplished by means of oxcarts. In the high water period, however, loaded pirogues ventured to descend the passes. Nowadays the railways offers such advantageous transportation that merchants no longer have any reason to expose their pirogues to the dangers of the Khône passes or to effect a transshipment by means of carts or bearers.

4. The maritime reach from South Khône to the sea.

For a distance of about 200 kilometers, that is to say from South Khône to Kratié (Cambodia), this reach is navigable for steam launches only during the high water period (July to October). It is navigable over a shorter distance, from Khône to Stung-Treng, in all seasons. From Kratié down to the sea steam navigation is possible all year long.

[60] Thus, despite its great rate of flow and the volume of its waters, the Mékong can be negotiated by steam launches only over a small part of its immense course. Here navigation will be interrupted by insurmountable changes in level, there it will be stopped by the rapidity of the current, and elsewhere a lack of water or sand will form an obstacle. In short, the Mékong is a capricious river and has, in addition to a few magnificent reaches where steam navigation is generally easy, rapids which render it dangerous and even impossible.

Under present conditions the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet [compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine] has been able to establish a fairly direct service by steam launch and pirogue from Saigon to Luang-Prabang, over a total distance of 2300 kilometers.

The following table shows the length in kilometers of possible journeys both by steam launch and by pirogue during high and low water periods.

149: Reinach--44 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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KRATIÉ TO LUANG-PRABANG

Distance in kilometers: 1503.4

Stage	High Water		Low Water		Observations
	Steam launch	Pirogue	Steam launch	Pirogue	
Kratié to Stung-Treng	135	—	—	135	
Stung-Treng to South Khône	55	—	55	—	
South Khône to North Khône	5	—	5	—	Railway
North Khône to Ban-Dong	28.8	—	—	28.8	
Ban-Dong to Don-Saï	32.9	—	32.9	—	
Don-Saï to Pak-Moun	127.7	—	—	127.7	
Pak-Moun to Savannakhèt	—	210.5	—	210.5	
Savannakhèt to Kabao	30	—	—	30	
Kabao to Vien-Tiane	453	—	430	23*	*Stage from Don-Kassec to Don-Nakè
Vien-Tiane to Luang-Prabang	—	425.5	—	425.5	

We may recapitulate the above table without further commentary, for the figures speak for themselves.

[61]

			kilometers		kilometers
From Kratié to Luang-Prabang	High water:	steam launches	867.4	(57%)	1503.4
	"	pirogues	636	(43%)	
	Low water:	steam launches	522.9	(34%)	1503.4
	"	pirogues	980.5	(66%)	

No more need be said in order to show that the problem of commercial transport by steamship on the Mékong is far from being solved.

149: Reinach--45a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 18 /p. 62/ Rapids on the Mekong.

503 predict. It has therefore been decided that, for the moment at least, no more attention should be given to these rapids and that our concern should be restricted to accomplishing the labors necessary to facilitate steam navigation during the low water period in the following reaches:

"1. from Kratié to Stung-Treng and Khône;

"2. between Khône and Pak-Moun;

"3. between Savannakhèt and Sam-Pan-Na."

It might perhaps be understandable that the plan to make these rapids navigable should have been abandoned, if haste were made to build a railway joining the middle Mékong to some port in Annam, when the rapids would become an absolute barrier which we should no longer think of overcoming. But such is not the case, and many long years will still have to pass before the products of the markets of Luang-Prabang and Nong-Khay can reach the Annam coast in any practical way. Moreover, if the work on the navigability of the Mékong continues to go forward at the same slow rate and if we do not take greater advantage of this "moving highway," we shall continue to play into the hands of the Siamese and the market in Bangkok, thanks to the Korat railway, will continue to absorb the Laotian products which should have no other outlets than Saigon, Tourane and Vinh.

[138]

d.--DESCRIPTION OF THE DIFFERENT REACHES

1. The Upper Reach

133 505 The Mékong enters Laos where it is joined by the Nam-La, at 21° 40' N. latitude, slightly downstream from Xieng-Hong which is on the 22nd parallel. As far as Xieng-Sen it flows in an approximately northeast and southwest direction between two ranges of peaks which constrict its bed and make it a torrent rather than a river. In this narrow corridor it has dug a channel which varies, during the high water period, from 150 to 300 meters in width and which sometimes grows as narrow as 50 meters during the low water period. Its bed is generally encumbered with shoals and [79] rocks, and the whirlpools, eddies, currents and counter-currents make navigation impossible. Thus Lieutenant Commander Mazeran's bold and successful venture deserves mention here, for he succeeded in taking the gunboat La Grandière as far as Xieng-Kok, that is to say nearly to the 21st

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parallel, and 2800 kilometers from the sea.

It was a noteworthy physical effort, but unfortunately a useless one which in no way proves that the Mekong is or ever will be commercially navigable in this region.

Tang-Hô is the point where all ships must stop, no matter what they may be, and not even a Laotian pirogue boatman would venture into the rapids which lie upstream. It may be of interest to quote, in this connection, the opinion of M. Garanger, who was for a long time government commissioner in Vien-Poukha.

"The outlet on the Mékong for the whole region," he says, "is at Tang-Hô at the foot of the famous rapids which are regarded as the terminal point of navigation, since further upstream there are nothing but small pirogues designed for fishing.

"The question of passing the rapids was of too great an interest to the northern part of my commissionership for me not to take some account of the hopes which had been aroused by the successful passage of the La Grandière.

"I was forced to conclude, after following the gunboat's itinerary, that the difficulties remained almost insurmountable. The route followed by the La Grandière is now on dry land in the midst of sand and rocks of a chaotic appearance and some 250 or 300 meters from the rapids. There is water over the bank where passage was found for only two or three months of the year, and it attains an appreciable depth only during the few days which mark the maximum of each rising. The rapids themselves, where all the water is now concentrated, roll on with unheard-of violence in a narrow corridor bordered by two rock walls, and the last attempt to negotiate the passage in a pirogue resulted in the death of one man and the loss of the boat.

"Further upstream, according to the natives, there are still graver obstacles, but they never had any occasion to see them. This information should be accepted only with great reservations, but I myself saw in Xieng-Hong, in 1893, that by using the sandbanks natives were able to cross the great river without ever going further than knee-deep into the water."

Upstream from Xieng-Sèn the Mékong is joined on its right bank by the Nam-Huok, which serves as the frontier between the Anglo-Burmese States and [80] Siam. Slightly downstream from this point it is joined by the Nam-Khôk. From the latter point the river describes a northward curve as far as Xieng-Khong. It then resumes

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its southward course, and just before it reaches the 20th parallel it is joined by its first important left-bank tributary, the Nam-Tha.

The Nam-Tha comes from the northeast and crosses the rich plain of Muong-Luong-Nam-Tha which has been called "the jewel of all Upper Laos," for it is an extremely fertile and well watered region capable of being made into an infinite number of fine rice-fields. The Nam-Tha is navigable in all seasons as far as Sop-Ngim, and as far as Muong-Luong for small pirogues.

The Mékong continues in a sourtherly direction as far as Ban Pak-Kop (19° 45'), then suddenly bends eastward for a distance of 200 or so kilometers as far as Luang-Prabang, as if it were going to flow into the Gulf of Tonkin. In this part of its course it flows between steep hills. It can be navigated by pirogues in all seasons despite the Keng-Li rapids, which require merchandise to be unloaded during the low water period. Upstream from Luang-Prabang it resumes its north and south direction, and towards the 20th parallel its left bank is joined by three large rivers, the Nam-Hou, the Nam-Suong and the Nam-Khan.

In view of the length of its courses and the volume of its waters, the Nam-Hou may be regarded, as we have noted, as one of the branches of the Mékong. Although its mouth is narrow, it soon widens out and takes on the appearance of a great river as far as Muong-Ngoï. At this point it becomes narrow again, only to widen once more until its junction with the Nam-Ngoua. The Nam-Hou could doubtless be negotiated by steam launches during the high water period as far as Muong-Koua (about 150 kilometers from Luang-Prabang), the market where the produce of the region is concentrated. It is navigable in all seasons for pirogues as far as Muong-Houa. From Muong-Houa to Muong-Hahin and Muong-Hou the Nam-Hou can be negotiated only by extremely narrow rafts going downstream. The great rapids of Keng-Louang, situated a day's journey from Pak-Hou, require the cargoes of pirogues to be completely unloaded during middle and low water periods.

[81] By way of the Nam-Ngona, its left-bank tributary, and its sub-tributary the Nam-Youn, which are navigable in all seasons for small pirogues, the high plateau of Muong-Theng (Dien-Bien-Phu, province of Van-Bu, Tonkin) can be reached. From that point two land routes connect with the Black River at Muong-Laï (Lai-Chau) and Van-Bu.

[487]

487 A particularity which should be noted is that these two land routes which represent some hundred odd kilometers are the only ones which the traveler can take in order to go from Hanoi to Saigon by way of Luang- [Illustration here] Prabang, that is to say by way of the Red River, the Black River, the tributaries of the Mékong and the great river itself, or in order to cover a total distance of approximately 2200 kilometers. These hundred kilometers of land roads are the only ones which merit the name, since all the rest of the journey is made on navigable waterways in steamships, pirogues and rafts.

505 133 The Nam-Suong and its tributary the Nam-Seng can be negotiated in all seasons by pirogues and rafts. Ban-Pak-Seng, at the junction of the Nam-Suong and the Nam-Seng, is the capital of one of the most prosperous cantons in the province of Luang-Prabang.

A day's journey away from Luang-Prabang the Nam-Suong is blocked by [82] a shelf called the Keng-Luang which necessitates complete portage of merchandise and even of pirogues and rafts at certain seasons.

The Nam-Khan is navigable for pirogues and rafts during the greater part of the year, starting at Muong-You which is the fund for the road from Tran-Ninh to Luang-Prabang. It flows into the Mékong in the northern part of this city, one of the suburbs of which it circles.

[361] Luang-Prabang, the capital of the kingdom of the same name, is situated at an altitude of 350 meters above sea level, at 19° 54' 20" N. latitude and 99° 45' E. longitude. From the commercial point of view it is one of the most important centers—if not the most important—in Laos. The city numbers about 10,000 inhabitants and 2000 houses. In Luang-Prabang the river is 350 to 400 meters wide. Just above and below the city it is blocked by sandbanks which leave a channel only 100 meters wide during the low water period, but which is always navigable for pirogues and rafts.

The following table shows the average length of time it takes to travel both up and down the rivers between Luang-Prabang and the posts on this reach.

149: Reinach--58a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 23 /p. 81/ The Mekong at Khong, during the low water period.

149: Reinach--60 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

About fifteen kilometers from Luang-Prabang a series of rapids begins which makes navigation as far as Pak-Lay extremely difficult, even in pirogues. The Keng-Kaniok and the Keng-Louang [83] make it necessary to unload merchandise and transport it by land using bearers, while the pirogues pass the rapids empty. 505 133.

Between Luang-Prabang and Pak-Lay the river is quite deeply cut into hills and rock masses, the sides of which constrict its bed to a width of only fifty meters at several points during the low water period. But as it approaches Pak-Lay (1) it widens out to 700

(1) Pak-Lay is situated at 18° 12' 20" N. latitude and 99° 5' E. longitude. [361]

or 800 meters.

In this part of the river we should note three tributaries of some importance on its right bank. These are the Nam-Houng, the Nam-Poun and the Nam-Lay, and in their valleys there are many teak trees.

Towards the 18th parallel between Pak-Lay and Xieng-Khan (2)

(2) It is at Ban Houé-Hat, between Pak-Lay and Xieng-Khan, that the Mékong comes closest to Bangkok (470 kilometers as the crow flies).

the Mékong is constricted between rocky headlands. Here it is extremely sinuous, and describes an overall northward bend slightly below the parallel (3). Then in another bend which is broader

(3) There is no tributary worthy of note on the left bank. On the right bank, however, about in the center of the bend and upstream from Xieng-Khan there are the mouths of two water-courses, the Nam-Huong and the Nam-Leui, which water a region of fairly dense population. One particularity to be noted is as follows: the sources of these two rivers are only a few kilometers away and are separated, by rather low ridges, 1) from the Nam-Lom-Sak, the easternmost branch of the Ménam, and 2) from the Klong-Koé-Noï, one of its middle left-bank tributaries.

and less winding, but which turns in the opposite direction, that is

133 to say towards the north, the river is joined on its left bank by the Nam-Sang and the Nam-Thon, the valleys of which are rich in gold
505 and catechu (sisièt). Then it finally leaves its steep gorges and reaches Sam-Pan-Na, the entrance to the great middle reach which extends as far as Savannakhèt.

Although it presents numerous navigation difficulties because of its rapids, native boats are nevertheless very active as far as Luang-Prabang by reason of the large flow of trade from this great market towards Bangkok by way of Pak-Lay on the one hand, and by way of Nong-Khay on the other.

[84] 2. The Middle Reach

133 At Sam-Pan-Na the Mékong leaves the region bristling with mountains which have restricted its course for good and all, and
505 spreads out at its ease in a fine navigable reach nearly 600 kilometers long.

361 It first passes through Vien-Tiane, the old capital of the kingdom of the same name which included, before 1827, all the Laotian territory on both banks of the Mékong between Luang-Prabang and Cambodia. Today the former state of things has been reestablished, and Vien-Tiane is once again the capital of French Laos. In fact, this point is the navigation terminus of the steam launches of the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des Messagerie fluviales de Cochinchine], even though the river is accessible to steamships as far as Kok-Peung, which is about 35 kilometers from Vien-Tiane, that is to say above Sam-Pan-Na. It would be true to add that the company would derive no commercial advantage from sending its launches that far up.

Between Vien-Tiane and Nong-Khay the river describes a sharp southward bend which doubles the 22-kilometer distance between the two points by land.

"Nong-Khay, which was founded after the destruction of Vien-Tiane by the Siamese, has partly inherited the importance of this old city. It is the greatest population center to be found on the banks of the Mékong between Pnom-Penh and Luang-Prabang" (1).

(1) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

361
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[492]

Today Nong-Khay numbers about 10,000 inhabitants and 2000 houses. It is the starting point for the ox-cart caravans which travel to Bangkok by way of Korat carrying all the products of northern Laos.

From Nong-Khay on the Mékong winds through a plain in a northeast direction. Its banks are densely populated and highly fertile. At Pon-Pissay, on the 18th parallel (2), the river makes

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(2) The reader will have noted that the 18th parallel has often been referred to in the foregoing. This stems from the curious fact that, in its meanderings, the great river is theoretically cut seven times by the parallel between Pak-Lay and Saniabouri, that is to say over a distance of 535 kilometers.

another northward bend [85] as far as Keng-Sa-Doc, which is just downstream from Pak-Sane (Patchoum). From this point on the Mékong takes the course which it will keep all the way to the sea, following a line approximately parallel to the Annamitic Chain and to the Gulf of Tonkin.

Somewhat beyond Pon-Pissay the Mékong is joined on its left bank by an important tributary, the Ngûm, a fine river with a peaceful course whose valley is highly populated and gives rise to quite extensive trade. Cinnamon, tobacco and catechu [sisièt] are its chief products. The Ngûm can be navigated by pirogues and rafts in all seasons as far as Tinh-Kéo, where the river is joined by the Nam-Song, about thirty kilometers from Tourakhom. The gunboat Massie went partway up the river during the high water period. It is said that the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine] intends to begin a steam launch service along the river because of its commercial importance.

After the Ngûm on the left bank of the river come first the Nam-Mang, which is of no great interest, and then the Nam-Nhiêp, which might be thought larger than it really is, to judge by its mouth. In fact, its total length is scarcely fifty kilometers, and its valley is sparsely populated. Just downstream from the Nam-Nhiêp is the mouth of the Nam-Sane, which flows into the river at Muong-Pak-Sane (Patchoum). This river, which has a very winding course, can be navigated by pirogues and rafts in all seasons as far as Keng-Louang, to the north of Borikan. It can be navigated by steam launches over a distance of about fifty kilometers during the high water period.

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or as far as Muong-Borikan which is about halfway between the Mékong and the Keng-Louang. At Pak-Sane a road comes from the right bank and leads to Tran-Ninh by way of Borikan.

Downstream from Pak-Sane there is a series of small rapids which can be negotiated in all seasons. One of these is the Keng-Sa-Doc. Below this point the Mékong is joined by an important left-bank tributary, the Nam-Ka-Dinh or Nam-Teûn. Captain Gosselin describes the latter as follows (1):

(1) Captain Gosselin, op. cit. [Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900.]

[86] "The Nam-Ka-Dinh, or Nam-Teûn, has its origin in the center of the muong of Cam-Mon, on a very high and irregular plateau containing the watershed between the basins of the Mékong and of the China Sea. This torrential river, which cuts the plateau of Na-Kaï and receives all its waters, is unusual in that it has navigable tributaries while it itself is not accessible to navigation over the greater part of its course.

"This peculiarity can easily be understood from a glance at the map, where one may note the enormous difference in altitude which its course shows over a distance less than sixty kilometers, immediately downstream from the point where its tributary joins it."

It is possible to travel up the Nam-Ka-Dinh for a two days' journey, as far as the rapids of Keng-Bi.

Throughout this whole reach, as far as Ban Ta-Sa-Kou (right bank) and Hueûn-Hin (left bank), the Mékong retains the appearance of a peaceful river flowing between low banks which are now sandy, and now covered with abundant vegetation. Its width varies between 1200 and 1500 meters, and its waters are deep enough to make steam navigation possible almost all year long. However, the first rapids or Keng-Kassek, which are situated just above Saniabouri, are an obligatory transshipment point during the dry season, although this obstacle does not exist in the period of high waters. After Saniabouri the river passes between Outhène, a quite important market on the right bank, and Pak-Hin-Boun, the capital of a province on the left bank (Cammon).

[36]

The Nam-Hin-Boun, a left-bank tributary, comes from the plateau of Na-Kaï. This river is unusual in that it flows into a tunnel

under the rocks, where it loses itself in an immense grotto. It can be navigated by pirogues in all seasons from Keng-Kiet on. 505 133

The large island of Don-Don is found between Pak-Hin-Boun and Lakhône.

Lakhone is an important center on the right bank located opposite Tha-Khèk, which is the nearest point to the Annam coast on the whole Mékong (1). [361]

(1) From Tha-Khèk to the mouth of the Cua-Nhuong (Hatinh) is reckoned 180 kilometers as the crow flies.

Just below the 17th parallel is found Muong-Panom, the holy city [87] [Illustration] [88] [Blank page] [89] of Laos and a celebrated spot of pilgrimage, by reason a That (1) which is said to contain relics [778]

(1) A that is a kind of stele or four-sided pyramid.

of Buddha. Opposite Panom, on the left bank, the Sé-Bang-Fai flows into the Mékong.

The Sé-Bang-Fai comes from the Annamitic Chain. It has a sinuous and extremely long course, but cannot be navigated in any season except by pirogues as far as Pou-Houa, that is to say for a distance of about eighty kilometers.

Below its mouth, and thirty kilometers upstream from Savannakhèt, is the Keng-Kabao. The latter deserves mention here, for during the low water period it forms an insurmountable obstacle for steam launches, which never go below this point from November to July.

Difficulties in navigation do not begin until after Hueûn-Hin, and the steam launches of the River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des Messageries fluviales] could reach that point during the high water period if there were any commercial advantage to be gained by so doing.

A series of rapids stretches over a length of about 160 kilometers between Hueûn-Hin and Pak-Moun. These are known as the "rapids of Kemmarat" because of the large muong (2) on the right bank which

(2) Muong = province; also means capital of a province. [631]

is located along this part of the river. They are a succession of rapids

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arranged in tiers, which the Mékong descends at speeds which have been found to be as high as eight or nine miles per hour during the high water period. The extremely violent current encounters many rocks and forms whirlpools and eddies which are extremely dangerous to navigation. The pilots and pirogue boatmen must have a great deal of composure and skill in order to direct their great rafts along the upper river through the lashing waves and to prevent them from foundering on the reefs towards which the rapidity of this enormous mass of water impels them.

Francis Garnier speaks as follows of these rapids:

"During the low water period the river here has the appearance of an immense dried-out torrent which has left vast banks of sandstone bare all along its course. An irregular channel [90] winds through the middle of its rocky bed. It is sometimes less than sixty meters wide, while its depth sometimes exceeds a hundred meters at a few points where the current is slow-moving. Each narrowing of the channel produces a rapids or Keng. The latter are the only hazards in this difficult kind of navigation, and each of them has been given a special name by the natives" (1).

(1) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

The rapids which are the most difficult to negotiate and where the greatest number of pirogue accidents occur are, going downriver, the Keng-Mouang and the Keng-Sa above Kemmarat, and below it the Keng-Ngao-Fa-Khop, the Keng-Ka-Niên, the Keng-Kong-Louong (at about 15° 41' N. latitude), the Keng-Nam-Phong, the Keng-Ya-Peut and the Keng-Tha-Kiên. During the high water period the steam launches from the following reach could, if the need should arise, go up as far as Tha-Kiên just below the rapids. This point is of some importance, for it is there that the most direct road between Oubône and Kham-Thong-Niaï and Saravane intersects the river, and Tha-Kiên is less than twenty kilometers from Kham-Thong, that is to say from the Sédone.

Before Pak-Moun the direction of the Mékong, which ever since the mouth of the Nam-Ka-Dinh had been approximately north-northwest and south-southeast, suddenly changes and a spur of Pou-Kang-Huon forces it to curve sharply to the west for a few kilometers,

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as far as the mouth of the Moun.

In this region of rapids the Mékong has only one major tributary, the Sé-Bang-Hièn, which flows into the river opposite Kemmarat.

The Sé-Bang-Hièn (about 250 kilometers in length) derives its importance from the fact that its course and that of its tributary the Sé-Tchépon open a road from Annam to Laos in the middle reach. The Sé-Tchépon is, in fact, navigable from Lao-Bao (Aï-Lao) on during the high water period. Since the latter point is only about 50 kilometers from Maï-Lan, where the river of Quang-Tri is also navigable, it will readily be understood that in 1893, or even 1894, when it was essential at all cost and as quickly as possible to reach the great reach of [91] Vien-Tiane and there fly the French flag on a steam launch, someone should have thought of taking a demountable launch from the Annam coast to the middle basin of the Mékong by way of the depression of Aï-Lao. The plan could not be attempted, until the high water period of 1895.

M. Mercié, a ship's ensign, succeeded in crossing the Aï-Lao gap at an altitude of no less than 410 meters, with his launch taken apart and carried by bearers. When put together and set afloat again on the Tchépon the Fourmi was able to reach the Sé-Bang-Hièn and to negotiate four of its rapids. But it struck bottom in the fifth one, the Pak-Sé-Metch, and was broken up by the rocks just at the moment when it was about to enter the lower Sé-Bang-Hièn, that is to say in a part of its course where the river had only a few unimportant shelves which are covered, in the right season, by more than ten meters of water.

Even supposing that the attempt could have succeeded, the useful and practical advantage to be gained from the venture at the time is not too clear, since the Massie and the La Grandière had already passed the Kemmarat rapids and were in the reach of Vien-Tiane (1),

(1) The La Grandière had even reached Luang-Prabang on September 1, 1895.

which was the first goal to be attained. Moreover, because of the launch's light tonnage and low engine power, even if ship's ensign Mercié's undertaking had succeeded it would not have proved beyond all question of a doubt that the Sé-Bang-Hièn and the Sé-Tchépon were commercially navigable for launches of a practical tonnage.

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Finally, at the junction of the Sé-Bang-Hiên with the great river the Fourmi would have found itself confronted by other and almost insurmountable obstacles before it could gain the navigable reach, such as the Keng-Sa and the Keng-Mouang. We must nevertheless pay homage to the real efforts which were accomplished in a completely disinterested undertaking by this young and daring naval officer.

The following are the average lengths of journeys by river from Vien-Tiane to the nearby posts on this reach:

149: Reinach--69 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

3. The Inner Reach

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After being joined by the Moun, the largest tributary on its right bank, the Mékong turns back eastward. As it leaves the narrow gorge of Pak-Moun where its course narrows to as little as 200 meters in width between sheer cliffs, it resumes a general north-northwest and south-southeast direction and spreads out over rich plains as far as the mouth of the Sédone.

Korat (1), the largest market in Siamese Laos, also belongs to the

(1) The Moun passes about 25 kilometers to the southeast of Korat.

Mékong basin through the Ta-Krong. The importance of this center is well-known, and today it is directly connected with Bangkok by a railway. Oubône (2), the other market town which is the storehouse

(2) Korat and Oubône are the seats of two French consulates.

of Lower Laos for Korat and Bangkok, as Nong-Khay is the storehouse of Upper Laos, is situated on the banks of the Moun about 300 kilometers from Korat, and only sixty from the Mékong. Communication between Korat and Oubône is achieved mainly by land, by means of ox-carts. We have seen in the foregoing that [93] steam navigation had been attempted on the Moun during the high water period as early as 1891, and that the Siamese were then planning to send their steamships out on the Mékong in the hope of getting there ahead of us. The launches provide a highly irregular service between Oubône and Tha-Phan-Sang, which is about 25 kilometers downstream from Korat. The trip takes from eight to ten days going upriver, and four to five coming down.

[492]

In its lower course, that is to say between Oubône and Pak-Moun, the Moun is barred near its mouth by shelves which make navigation extremely difficult, even for pirogues, during part of the year. The Chinese merchants of Oubône, however, who go by pirogue to Bassac or out on the Sédone, go up and down the Moun in all seasons. Because of the particular service for which they are used, their pirogues are known by the special name of Hua-Moun, or pirogues of the Moun (1).

(1) See table, Chapter VIII.

of the Moun (1). 000

(1) See table, Chapter VIII.

The most difficult rapid to negotiate is the Keng-Tanah, situated only three kilometers from Pak-Moun. During the low water period it is necessary to unload them completely and transport them by hand across dry land over extremely rough sandstone rocks. It has been negotiated during the high water period by the single-wheeler the Haiphong, and since the current beyond the rapids is weak and the width sufficient (300 meters), steam navigation is possible as far as Oubône for perhaps two or three months. 505 133

Francis Garnier describes this region as follows (2):

(2) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

"From Pi-Moun on the river is once more unobstructed. A very weak current, straight banks and a uniform width give it, in certain spots, the appearance of a canal dug by man."

At Pak-Sédone the Mékong is joined on its left bank by another important tributary, the Sédone. This river, which is about 200 kilometers in length, rounds the northern part of the plateau of the Bolovens. All the roads which descend from this mountain mass end in its valley, and all the products of the region leave it by way of the Sédone. Cardamom, which is the most important of these, is [94] an item much dealt in at the temporary market of Champi. The latter is the terminus of the convoys which come down from the plateau, and from this point on merchandise goes by river to Bassac or Oubône. 438 361 241

The market of Champi had to be established fairly near the mouth of the Sédone, for just upriver and less than thirty kilometers from Pak-Sédone the river is barred by insurmountable waterfalls [Illustration here] fifteen meters in height. From the point of view of navigation the Sédone is therefore divided into two sections: the part situated above the falls and the part situated below. 505 133

To the north of the falls the Sédone has a reach some thirty kilometers in length which can be navigated in all seasons by pirogues

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as far as Muong-Khong (1), the point where the roads from Ban-Mouang

(1) During the high water period the Sédone can even be navigated as far as Smia by light pirogues.

to Saravane and from Ban-Mouang to Song-Khone fork. Some pirogues go directly from Kham-Thong-Nial to Bassac, and in this case [95] the cargo is completely unloaded above the falls and the pirogues are carried overland across steep rocky slopes.

Below the falls the river is accessible to steam launches during the high water period. Before the establishment of steamship service by the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine], the single-wheeler Haïphong provided a regular weekly service for dispatches, travelers and merchandise as far as Champi and Keng-Kok. This lower part of the river's course can be navigated by pirogues in all seasons, but during the low water period the many shelves make navigation extremely difficult.

From the Sédone on, and as far as Bassac, the Mékong is hemmed in by the mountains of Bassac which tower steeply over its right bank and reduce its width to about 500 meters. Francis Garnier characterizes as follows the difference between this gorge and the broad plains which border the river downstream from Bassac (1):

(1) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

"The character of the landscape changes in sudden fashion. Instead of the smiling, uniform plains which the sparkling waters slowly traversed and where they formed hundreds of islands, and instead of the almost submerged banks hidden by long lines of palm trees and houses, there are sheer banks where rocks crop up everywhere and high undulations covered with forests which hem in the rapid black water on all sides."

The river valley then widens out again, and at Bassac itself reaches a width of nearly two kilometers. Bassac is a point of transit where the produce of the region comes to be taken on either for Pnom-Penh or for Oubône. Opposite this center is the large, well-cultivated island of Don-Dèng. From Bassac to Khong, that is to say over a distance of about 100 kilometers, the Mékong flows

149: Reinach--7la G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

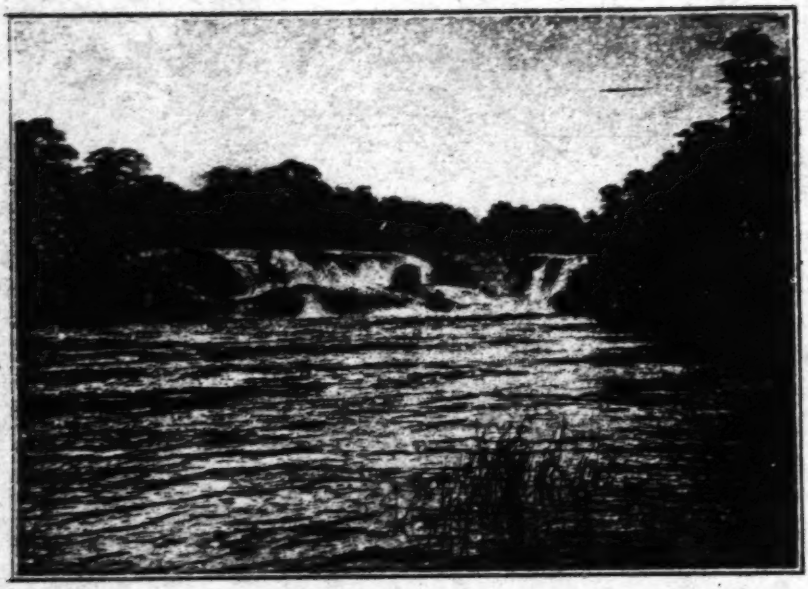

Fig. 25 /p. 94/ The waterfalls on the Sedone.

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in an almost exactly north and south direction through rich and extremely fertile plains where villages succeed one another almost without interruption. Halfway between Bassac and Khong there is another large island, called Don-Sa', which like Don-Dèng is highly populated and well-cultivated. Upstream from the island of Khong the river becomes much wider (eight to ten kilometers) and contains an important [96] group of islands which, by reason of their number, are known as Si-Pan-Don (4000 islands). The island of Khong is by far the most important. It is twenty kilometers long, seven wide, contains several fine villages and has a total population of 10,000 (1). [361]

(1) In all Laos, this is the point where the population density is greatest with respect to the area (1500 inhabitants per 100 square kilometers). [161]

On this island is located the city of Khong, the former capital of Lower Laos. [Illustration here] [361]

Slightly below the 14th parallel is found the island of Khône, famed for its waterfalls which form an absolute obstacle to navigation. Francis Garnier has given us a detailed description of the falls, which he calls cataracts. A few lines of his description are given below (2):

(2) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

"The two largest channels and the most beautiful cataracts are found on the outermost arms of the river, the Salaphe branch and the Paphèng branch. There one may see waterfalls more than fifteen meters in vertical height and which [97] sometimes reach a width of one kilometer. The broken line of cataracts has a total extent of twelve or thirteen kilometers. Upstream the river narrows momentarily until it occupies not more than half this extent, then it spreads out again over the immense plateau of rocks which precedes the falls, losing itself in the midst of numberless islands and embracing between its two banks a space of nearly five leagues."

We have already seen that a railway was established from north to south across the island of Khône to serve as a link between the reaches of Kratié and Bassac. [Illustration here]

The reach of Bassac can be navigated by steam launches during

505 the high water period from North Khône to Pak-Moun, that is to say
over a distance of nearly 200 kilometers. When the waters fall the
133 navigable extent is reduced, and at low water only a limited service
of about thirty kilometers is possible, from Ban-Dong to the southern
point of Don-Sal. All the rest of the journey must be made by
pirogue, for these small boats can circulate quite easily in this reach
in all seasons. Rafts are used only going downriver.

The average length of journeys by river on this reach between Bassac and nearby points is as follows:

4. The Maritime Reach

505 Below Khône the Mékong is encumbered by islands, islets and
133 shelves which are more or less difficult to negotiate. During the high water period the river covers most of these hazards. Only the crests of the trees are left above water, and one navigates in a veritable submerged forest which reminds one of an inundation.

361 Stung-Treng is an important center, especially by reason of its
438 site, for the city is located at the junction of the Mékong and the Sé-Khong, somewhat below the point where the latter joins the Sésane, which is itself swelled near its mouth by the Ton-Lé-Srépok. The produce of the region of Attopeu naturally finds its way to Stung-Treng, for it is the commercial intermediary between this region and Cambodia.

505 At Thboung-Kla, thirty kilometers below Stung-Treng, the
133 Mékong enters Cambodian territory. Then begins a long series of rapids which impede its course and make it difficult [99] [Illustration] [100] [Blank page] [101] to negotiate, but which do not constitute an insurmountable obstacle for steam launches which have sufficient speed. The first important post in Cambodia is at Kratié, and steamships can go up as far as this point in all seasons.

The Sékhong, the Sésane and the Srépok form a basin which is noteworthy for its extent, being equal in area to all of Cochinchina. Unfortunately, the population density and importance of trade in the basin are not in proportion to so considerable an area. The valleys are sparsely populated and traffic there is, in consequence, quite limited. Finally, these watercourses are difficult to negotiate.

The Sékhong is a river whose course stretches over about 400 kilometers. Its sources lie near the 16th parallel, some hundred kilometers to the southwest of Hué, in the orographic nucleus of the Annamitic Chain which also gives rise to one of its large tributaries, the Dak-Poyo.

The upper course of the Sékhong bears the name of Dak-Mout. This river crosses an extremely rough region where towering rocks hem in its torrential bed. Beyond Koum-Kang the valley of the Sékhong widens out and small pirogues can navigate there.

At Muong-Mai, that is to say somewhat below the 15th parallel, the Sékhong is joined by the Sé-Kémane, an important tributary which, under the name of the Dak-Poyo, has its origin in the same mountain mass as the Dak-Mout. After it, like the Sékhong, flows past steep

rocks which tower precipitously over its course, the Sé-Kémane widens out as it is joined by the Dak-Bla, the sources of which, like those of its chief tributary the Sé-Souk, are near the Sésane. The Sé-Kémane is hardly navigable for pirogues except from Muong-Kao on. The latter is the most important center in the region and is generally known by the name of Attopeu. Pirogues can ply back and forth between this point and Stung-Treng in all seasons, but the many rapids with which the Sékhong is encumbered, mainly as far as the Sé-Pien, make its course extremely torrential and navigation very difficult. Before it reaches Siempang the Sékhong is joined on its right bank by the Sé-Pien which, like its [102] tributary the Sé-Kampho, comes from the plateau of the Bolovens. When they leave their gorges these two rivers water marvelous plains which are slightly hilly towards the north and which could serve as pasture land for immense flocks. From Siempang on the Sékhong can be navigated by steam launches during the high water period.

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Before it reaches the Mékong the Sékhong is joined, less than ten kilometers from its mouth, by its chief tributary the Sésane, which with its 400-kilometer course is of no less importance and interest than the Sékhong itself.

The Sésane comes from a mountain mass which dominates the amphitheater of Cong-Bol just above the 15th parallel. Its deep valley is called Poco by the natives. Like all the upper valleys of the watercourses in this region, it is encumbered with rapids and waterfalls and deeply cut between rock walls. On its left bank the Poco is joined by the Bla, the valley of which is followed for some distance by the road joining Attopeu to Qui-Nhon by way of Kon-Toum. The Sésane then traverses all this gold-bearing region which is still little-known and, so to speak, unexploited to this day. In its valley are found the mining posts of Ban-Phi, Ruhleville and Bokham. It can be navigated by pirogue in all seasons from Kong-Sédam on. The latter point, slightly above Ban-Phi, has a militia post stationed there to provide security for the works of the Attopeu Gold Mining Company [compagnie des Mines d'or d'Attopeu].

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Some twenty-five kilometers from its mouth the Sésane is joined by the Ton-Lé-Srépok, a large tributary. This river, also known as the Sé-Bang-Khan, comes from the south, not far from the plateau of Lang-Bian. It passes close by Darlac, the capital of the province of the same name, and through Ban-Don, from which point it is

505 navigable during part of the year.
133 The Ia-Drang, whose valley is inhabited by the Djaraï tribe, is one of its principal tributaries. For that matter, the most important Kha tribes are settled in the valleys of the watercourses which have been dealt with in the foregoing. Thus we find the Lovè Khas between the Sé-Khong, the Sé-Souk and the Sésane; the Niaheun Khas and a few Alaks in the valley of the Sékhong; the Souk Khas in those of the Sé-Pien, [103] [Illustration] [104] [Blank page] [105] the Sé-Kampho and the lower Sékhong; the Salangs between the Sésane and the Sé-Souk; the Bahnars and the Rognaos in those of the Bla and the other left-bank tributaries of the Poco; the Penongs in the deep valley of the Srépok; the Djaraïs in the middle valley of the Sésane and in that of the Ia-Drang; and the Braos and the Tiam-Poueun in the lower Sésane. Those [Illustration here] of the Kha tribes which have been pacified work the gold-bearing alluvia of these rivers and pay their taxes with the gold dust which they extract.
[563 316]

Upriver from Stung-Treng and as far as the waterfalls the Mékong can be navigated at low water by steam launches. At high water the large steamers of the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine] which provide service between Saigon and Pnom-Penh can go up as far as Khône. Below Stung-Treng and as far as Kratié the river can be navigated only by pirogues at low water. The following table [106] shows the average length of journeys by river between Stung-Treng and nearby points on this reach:

149. Reinach--77a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

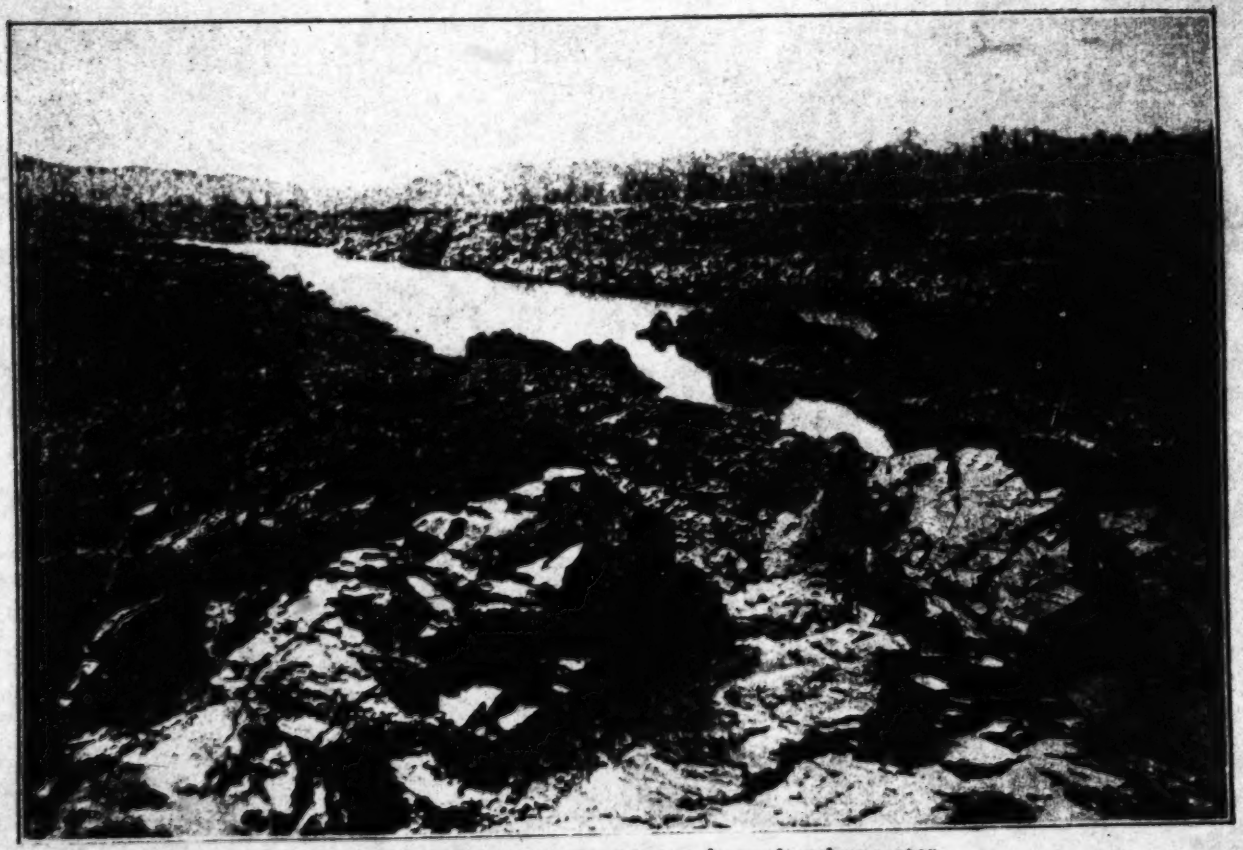

Fig. 29 /p. 103/ The Khone channel at low water.

149: Reinach--86 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

4. HYGIENE

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The choice of dwelling sites is of prime importance from the point of view of hygiene. Insofar as necessities permit, Europeans in Laos should seek to satisfy the following conditions:

1. Avoid building in regions which are low, hemmed in, formed of damp alluvia or near swamps or stagnant ponds.

2. Also avoid living on the banks of small watercourses and choose instead, insofar as possible, the larger rivers, especially near the point where they join a sea-going river or on the banks of the sea-going river itself (2).

(2) We have seen in Chapter II that the Mékong is the only river in Laos which flows into the sea.

3. Build houses on an eminence, no matter how small, and preferably on a rock foundation or on sand or on alluvia which are sandy and permeable to water.

4. Houses may be of brick or quarry-stone. They may be roofed [116] with tiles, wooden shingles, bamboo lath or ordinary thatch, depending on the local resources. They must be raised above the ground (at least 1.5 meters), and air must be able to circulate underneath.

5. However, a house made of wood or of a double thickness of bamboo lath can be as healthy as a brick house if it is carefully built.

6. Houses should be large, well ventilated and surrounded by [Illustration here] broad verandas provided with awnings made of strips of rattan. There should at least be verandas on the south and west.

7. Floors must be such that they can be washed with running water, while mats and rugs must be kept to a strict minimum and be easy to move. The best procedure is to use a colored plaster or an encaustic and apply it to the floor of the rooms and verandas and to the bottoms of walls and partitions half a meter up from the floor.

8. Furniture must be light and easy to move, clean and even wash. Bent wood, in the Thonet style, and rattan fulfill these two conditions perfectly.

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/117/ 9. Avoid hangings and draperies insofar as possible. Have only folding doors and windows with two interchangeable sets of panels for each (glass for winter and shutters for the hot season).

seems to be a cloak of verdure with deep, harmonious folds. Its 133
bed is deeply cut and scattered with rocks and rapids as far as a point upriver from Vientiane where it attains an average width of 900 meters. Enormous calcareous rocks strung out like beads or laid on in cliffs like a veneer alternate with graceful beaches, and here and there hamlets cling to the hillsides which are lit up, as if by a flame in the sun, by the gilded spire of a pagoda. . . .

After describing a sharp bend to the south it flows peacefully towards Savannakhet between low banks which are now sandy and now covered with vigorous vegetation. It is 1500 meters in width, and its waters are deep enough in this level stretch to permit steamboat navigation all year long. Downstream from Savannakhet stretches a sudden succession of staggered rapids over a /7/ length of about 160 kilometers. These are the "Khemmarat." The current is extremely violent and forms eddies and whirlpools, while an irregular channel winds in the midst of the rocky bed. "The yellowish waters break against the rocks with a dreadful noise. Men have fled its banks, and the great trees of the forest lean from both sides over the abyss, into which their weight often drags them. A few daring fishermen have made themselves homes in the crags of the rocks, but these unfortunate creatures scarcely have time to flee when the first rains come, so great is the rapidity with which the waters of the river rise" (1).

1. De Carné, Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois.

When it leaves the rapids the Mékong widens out (two kilometers), with isles of verdure scattered here and there, and again becomes navigable as far as Không, the old capital of Lower Laos. Its banks grow higher again, and many villages rise in the midst of /134/
rich and fertile plains. It reaches a width as great as eight or ten kilometers and gives birth to an important group of islands, including the island of Khône which is famous for its waterfalls which bring navigation to an absolute halt. A railroad has been built /496/
across the island by the French administration to serve as a connecting link /8/ between the level stretch of Không and that of Kratié (Cambodia).

Laos ends at South Khône, and the coastal reach of the Mekong, which belongs to Cambodia and to Cochinchina, begins.

The great river is fed from the left by multiple tributaries, the 133
chief ones of which (Nam-Ou, Nam-Ngum, Nam-Ka-Dinh, 132

149: Reinach--79 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[107] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER III

1. CLIMATOLOGY

132 The climatology of Laos is not uniform, but varies with altitude, with latitude, with the direction of the valleys, with the position of the plateaus and with the nature of the region, which may be dry or [134] humid, wooded or bare. It also depends on the constitution of the soil and on whether it is alluvial or eruptive, compact or powdery, light in color or dark, etc.

It would be extremely difficult to give absolutely detailed information on this important question unless we were to cite all the points of Laos one after the other, giving each one's climatic peculiarity.

This task can only be undertaken with the help of [108] meteorological stations, which have already been installed at several points and which we must hope to see become more numerous and better equipped so that they can be in a position to collect and group observations for a whole year. While awaiting more complete and detailed studies, we may divide French Laos, from the climatological point of view, into two parts, a southern part extending from the 13th parallel to the 18th, and a northern part from the 18th parallel to the 22nd.

Situated south of the tropic of Cancer, the land is subject to a monsoon regime which includes two distinct seasons, especially from the hydrographic point of view. These are the rainy season and the dry season, which divide the year nearly in half.

We must, however, make a slight reservation in the case of certain parts of northern Laos where, by reason of the high altitude, there is a sort of mixed half-season between the rainy season and the dry season in the strict sense, which is characterized by foggy weather and a rather low temperature.

In general, the rainy season corresponds to the southwest monsoon which prevails, theoretically, from April or May to October. The dry season is dominated by the northeast monsoon, which follows the above and consequently extends from October to April.

The rainy season begins with staggered storms, short but violent,

245 (bombax and callotropis), tamarind trees, jujube trees, cucumber trees, water chestnuts, etc.

In the north of Laos grow peach trees, plum trees, almond trees, [306] walnut trees, cherry trees, apple trees, pear trees, strawberry plants and medlar trees, the fruits of which are similar in taste to that of their counterparts in Europe, although they are neither as large nor as succulent as the latter.

On the edges of the forest, and sometimes even in the middle, there are also other wild fruit trees reminiscent of the plum tree, the cherry tree, the apple tree (a rose-apple tree with red or green fruits), the fig tree, the quince tree, etc. Their fruits have remained in a wild state or reverted to one because of a lack of adequate care, and are not edible. Their seeds, pits and stones have developed excessively, to the detriment of the pulp which remains tough, bitter or tasteless.

248 Finally, opium poppies, tea, ramie, hemp, etc. are cultivated
249 on the plateaus and in the high valleys.

Most European vegetables grow in Laos, in the gardens of the
241 Europeans. They are seeded at the end of the rainy season. Early varieties can be harvested and a new crop seeded well into July, but care must be taken to cover the beds during downpours, which occur frequently from May on.

The forests of Laos may have two characteristic forms, depending
134 on whether the soil is mountainous and composed of clay or limestone,
137 or else flat or slightly sloped and sandy, rocky or stony. In the first case the soil has a high percentage of vegetable matter, is moist and rich in humus and consequently covered with thick forests (Dong or Pa). In the second case it has a low percentage of vegetable matter, is hot and poor in humus and is covered with light forestation (Khok or Pa-hang).

A table contained in the Appendices (No. XX) gives the nomenclature of some sixty varieties of trees on which we have information. In addition to the trees which we cite, we should also note the bamboos, rattans and banana trees.

There are some twenty varieties of bamboo, in which the stalks vary from the size of the little finger to as much as thirty or even thirty-five centimeters in diameter. They sometimes reach a height
824 of twenty meters. There are six or seven varieties of rattan of different grades and sizes, but they are used only for local needs. Among the many wild banana trees, a few varieties such as the "Kok-Koue-Kene" yield a sort of fiber rather like abaca.

137 [307] Although we are able today to evaluate the forest wealth of Laos approximately and to compute its immense commercial value,

314 lose forever the plant which they have mutilated. The Superior Resident in Laos has had studies made of the methods of extraction which can be employed without danger, and he proposes to make
314 them obligatory within a short time. As of the present time, he
656 has issued the following decree relative to the exploitation of rubber:

"Any native desiring to engage in harvesting rubber on Laotian territory must obtain a special authorization which will be conferred by the chau-muong if the interested party resides in the muong where he desires to operate, and in all other cases by the Government Commissioner of the province.

[65] [110] "This authorization shall indicate, in as clear a manner as possible, the limits within which exploitation is to take place, the methods of extraction which may be employed and those which are prohibited, and finally the point where the rubber must be submitted for checking and payment of the duties which represent land tax before it leaves Laos.

"Businessmen and corporations desirous of sending their paid agents into the regions of rubber production may address to the Government Commissioner a collective request, in which the names and residences of such agents shall be listed and in which they shall agree to abide by all regulations which the authorities shall deem it useful to prescribe. In return they shall be sent permits drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the preceding article, these permits to be delivered to their employees.

"The above authorizations shall be granted entirely free of charge.

"Contraventions to the present decree shall be prosecuted and punished by the provincial tribunals in accordance with the laws and customs in force in Laos." (Decree of September 21, 1900.)

[141]

APPENDIX XXIII
NOTE ON TOBACCO

249 Growth and preparation. Tobacco is best grown on the banks of watercourses which are left dry each year when the waters fall and which are fertilized by deposits of alluvia.

Tobacco is also grown, however, on the banks in old alluvia which are no longer inundated by the river, but where an ample supply of water is assured by the presence of a nearby stream.

134 In Laos the soil which is suited to tobacco is light and sandy and
249 contains a high proportion of potash, relatively little lime and an average quantity of nitrogenous vegetable matter.

3: Robequain--260 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 135, 316, 439, 471

"For the past several years the production of tin in the Nam Patène basin in Laos has exceeded that at Pia Ouac. The Nam Patène River is a left hand tributary of the Nam Hin Boun, which itself flows into the Mekong at Pak Hin Boun, north of Thakhek. Cassiterite has been mined here from time immemorial by the Laotians who dug small shafts a few meters deep into the alluvium. Native mining continues today on the European concessions, the ore being purchased by the companies. Formerly, after careful sorting, the richest particles were crushed, washed in cradles and reduced in Chinese charcoal-furnaces. But about 1920 production was still a mere ten to fifteen tons a year; it was exported to Thailand where it was used only as ballast for fish nets."

3: Robequain--260-261 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 135, 316, 471

"It was not until 1923 that the Société d'Études et d'Exploitations Minières de l'Indochine began to work the beds systematically. Veins had first been discovered in the eluvium and alluvium of a huge karstic basin some 30 kilometers long and 8 wide, cut into the Urals-Permian limestone which dominates it with dramatic masses and sheer, almost insurmountable slopes. The eluvial cassiterite is joined in depth to the veins which pass through the Muscovitic sandstone subjacent to the limestone, and which have been metamorphized by granite intrusions. Here it is not associated with wolfram as it is in Pia Ouac. It is about ten meters thick with a thin covering of unproductive soil; mining is quite easily performed by the open-pit method, under a 'cai's' direction. Almost all the ore extracted up to the present has come from the Phon Tiou bed on the Solange grant. The 1926-1929 boom brought about the formation of other companies whose grants are worked by the Compagnie Fermière des Étains d'Extrême-Orient. Production started in 1933 and is carried [261] on around Boneng. They have begun cutting out the veins, whose reddish chimneys stand out between their white sand-stone wells."

3: Robequain--261 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 135, 316, 402, 494

"Laos ore is harder to work than Tonkinese because of its lower metal content and the presence of considerable amounts of sulphurous and ferruginous matter. In addition, coal is scarce here: producer gas gazogenes run the dynamos which produce motive power, but they consume enormous quantities of wood, which must be cut farther and farther away from the mine. As a result, the ore has never been smelted on the spot. But mechanical processes for separating and purifying have gradually been set up at the mines. For example, after crushing and magnetic separation, very well-equipped washers prepare concentrates for export. Under sloping roofs, powerful machines stand in tiers one above another on the hillsides, so that the water and the gradually purified product itself are moved as much as possible by mere gravity from one process to another. The mud and rocks, which were dumped out of small wagons at the top of the mill, appear as black cassiterite crystals at the bottom where they fill little 35 or 50 kilogram sacks for shipment to Singapore. They are transported either via the Mekong or over the roads from Thakhek and Savannakhet to the Annam coast. Six thousand Annamites work in the tin mines of the Laos basin; though a few are Tonkinese most of them come from Nghê Tinh. Work is done by gangs and goes on continuously since the machines can be stopped only at great expense; at night this isolated basin, surrounded by rugged mountains and dotted with electric lights which furnish illumination for the coolies as they work to the accompaniment of the mills' unrelenting rhythm, is a striking picture."

3: Robequain--262 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 135, 316, 439

"More or less argentiferous lead ores are found together with zinc ores in most beds, and it was these for which the Chinese sought particularly. French companies have attempted to reopen the mines, particularly that at Ngan Son south of Pia Ouac, but without success. The Compagnie Minière et Métallurgique de l'Indochine exports a few tons of lead ore and some tens of kilograms of silver, mere by-products of the company's zinc mining."

10: d'Orleans--357-358 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 135, 316

"There is a great deal of mineral wealth, in the Laos country, and among the many gold fields which might be worked to advantage are Pac Bay (above Luang Prabang), Xieng Mang, and Xieng Mon. There is an abundance of antimony, lead, copper, and iron, while there are agates and chalcedonies near Luang Prabang. Then, [358] in the neighbourhood of Kiangsen, there is a ruby mine belonging to the king of Nan, which is not yet worked, though a Burmese has applied for a concession."

133 The market of Bassac owes its importance to the proximity of the plateau. It is therefore a storehouse for the Laotians of the whole
433 region, a reservoir [51] from which they draw. The part which it
438 plays is obviously a fine one, and no more can be asked of it.

There has also been much discussion as to whether large-scale breeding of buffalo and oxen would be successful there, for at present livestock is found only in the villages situated near the Sédone, that is to say, quite far from the plateau. The question has not yet been settled, and sufficient tests have not yet been made.

133 At the southernmost corner of the plateau there is a conical mountain about 800 meters in altitude which Francis Garnier baptized The Breast [le Téton] because of its shape, and to which he later gave the name Lagrée's Peak [Pic de Lagrée] in commemoration of the President of the Exploratory Commission of 1866.

[224] The elephant hunters of southern Laos go to the mountainous region of Saravane and Attopeu every year, and there they capture an annual quota of fifty to a hundred elephants.

133 To the east of Attopeu the mountains are inhabited by well-nigh independent Kha tribes--Cédangs, Djarais, Rognaos and
[177 Bahnars. The two latter tribes have almost been pacified, thanks
797] to the persevering efforts of the Christian missionaries of Kon-Toum. This point is the center of the mission, and through it passes the road from Attopeu to Qui-Nhon. It crosses the Annamitic Chain
563 between Kon-Xalam and Kon-Tiorak at an altitude of about 900 meters. Near Attopeu this same road goes up over Pou-Satièng (400 meters), the last ramification of the great chain, which separates the basin of the Sé-Souk from that of the Sé-Kémane.

[135] This region of Pou-Satièng, Sé-Souk and Sé-Kémane has long been known to be rich in gold deposits.

§ IV--HYDROLOGY

a.--THE MÉKONG--GENERALITIES

133 It has often been said, and rightly so, that the Nile constituted Egypt. In the same way it can be said that the Mékong makes Laos, for is it not the river which gives what vitality there is to these vast isolated regions? Is it not the river which, by its annual floods, helps the growth of rice? Does it not supply, with its fish, a large

149: Reinach—230 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

825 Elephant.....Ivory, teeth, toenails, bones, hide.
Tiger.....Pelts, talons, fangs, bones.
136 [314] Rhinoceros.....Hide, horns.
Bear.....Skins, gall (used in medicines).
Goat, otter, cayman.....Hides and skins.
Scaly anteater.....Scales and skin.
Buffalo, ox, stag, deer.....Hides, horns and antlers.
Peacock, marabou stork
and other birds.....Feathers.
Snakes.....Skins and venom.
Coccus (insect).....Crimson lake.
Bees.....Honey and wax.

3. MINERALOGY

a) Mineral Wealth

135 As we said above, the geological formations of Laos are similar in nature, rate of change and transformations undergone to those in the neighboring countries on the west, northwest and south. Everywhere there is the same original substratum, and this, together with the sediments which have formed in its folds, has been traversed, lifted and dislocated by volcanic thrusts which are less and less apparent as one moves away from the two eruptive nuclei located in the northwest and south, that is to say in Tibet and Malaysia. To be sure, the orographic nucleus which has had the greatest influence on the relief of the country and the formation of the various regions of Laos is the one which, in Tibet, has produced the long ridges of mountains between which the valleys of the great rivers of China, Burma and the Indo-Chinese peninsula have cut their paths.

In the basin of the Mekong, the only one with which we need be concerned here, there are secondary ridges brought about by partial upheavals or folds, which form a series of stepped plateaus and chains of valleys eminently suited to catching the sediment carried down from the peaks and to furthering its distribution in accordance with the laws of gravity. It is to this peculiar disposition that Laos owes its mineral wealth. During the course of centuries the partial dislocations, atmospheric agents, moving waters, etc. disaggregated, split and reduced [315] to stones, and then into gravel and soil, the mountain crests of eruptive rocks which contained gold, precious stones, silver-bearing galena, tin, copper, iron, etc. Once set free

135 by the destruction, pulverization and washing of their gangues, all these metal particles were deposited, merely by virtue of their density, in nearby beds and on the least inclined planes along the courses of the waters in which they were contained.

Moreover, because the soil of Laos has long been stable we find the mineral deposits covered with a comparatively shallow layer of sterile alluvia. Sometimes this layer is practically nonexistent, and it is always easy and inexpensive to work. In some points the lode-bearing deposits are even on the surface or only just below the alluvial deposits.

The list which follows will give some idea of the extensive mineral wealth in Laos. Because of a lack of means of communication and mechanical equipment, however, the exploitation of its forest, animal and vegetable resources will be delayed for some time. But although one might hesitate to come to Laos in order to experiment with the rich crops which would be suited to its warm, damp climate and its virgin soil, we believe that the exploitation of its mineral deposits is of such a nature as to tempt French capitalists who, if they operate prudently, can be assured of reaping rich rewards in a short length of time for their effort and their initiative.

316 Here is an enumeration of the mineral wealth of Laos, based on the most recent information.

1. Gold Mines

A. Deposits of Nam-Beng and Nam-Ngao (province of Luang-Prabang).	Prospected in 1895 by Mallet and Isnard, engineers.
B. Deposits of Nam-Poun, (Outhai-Thani, Luang-Prabang, right bank).	Goldbearing gravel prospected in 1899 by M. Macey, government commissioner.
[316] C. Deposits of Tran-Ninh.	Prospected in 1895 by a private company.
D. Deposits of Ban-Tong-Ak (Upper Nam-Teun, province of Cammon) and of Vang-Kham (same province)	Deposits noted but not yet prospected.

10: d'Orleans--282-283 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 136, 825

"In the middle of the night we are suddenly awakened by a loud voice, which sounds from a corner of the room, from the ceiling, or from a neighbouring tree: Tako, tako...ken, ken, ken...oh, oh, followed by a kind of hoarse laugh. The first time it is heard, we are astonished, and find some difficulty in sleeping again; we look about but cannot discover anything. After a little while, we become accustomed to the songs of the hidden guest, who speaks at night in every Laotian house. The natives know it well; sometimes they see it and point it out during the day, but they respect it as a sacred being, a household friend. An idea of protection, a veneration that is even a little superstitious, is attached to its presence in a house....I see that in speaking of the singer I am acquainted with, I have forgotten the important point of introducing it to the reader. The takou (so called by onomatopœia) is simply a [283] large green jecko (cordylus), about a cubit long and three fingers wide, ocellated with beautiful spots of azure blue; a great insect destroyer, but quite harmless to man, by whom it is regarded as a friend."

10: d'Orleans--356-357 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 114, 136, 137

"The fauna of Indo-China has been studied in so much detail by the expeditions of Garnier, Monhot, Neis, Harmand, and others, that I cannot do better than refer the reader whom this subject may happen to interest, to the records of their researches; and with regard to the flora it is very varied, among the most interesting features of it being the beautiful parasite orchids, some rose and others yellow. The country is [357] very well wooded, too, and I have been able to bring back some forty specimens of wood, chief among which I may mention the teak, called the mal sok, which grows in large quantities on the banks of the Mekong, a few days above Luang Prabang, near Kiangsen, and below the city, near Paklay."

10: d'Orleans--370 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 136, 237

"Paklay owes its importance to its situation on the Mekong at the extremity of the shortest route from the Menam. In the neighbourhood there is a good deal of teak which might be advantageously exploited. Wild animals abound, stags and oxen being killed for their antlers and horns. Some years ago, I am told, a tapir was killed near here, but native information is so little to be trusted that no confidence can be put in this story, and I have never before heard it said, moreover, that tapirs come so high up."

23: Franck--278-279 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 136, 367

"Visitors do not come often to Xieng Khuang; besides, there are things of interest there, and whatever is worth doing, be it only a journey, is worth doing well.

There was the commissaire's zoo, for instance, a score of pets ranging from some distant member of the leopard family to monkeys that looked like puffballs, fittingly domiciled in his garden, with or without chains to assure their allegiance to a master from whose hand the fiercest of them ate with murmurs of pleasure. There are said to be more species of animals in the forests and on the plains of Tran-ninh than in almost any other space of similar size on earth--tigers, panthers, bears, gaur, gibbons, monkeys, deer, pythons, boa-constrictors, and a host of lesser serpents; a cobra was chased out of the yard of one of the French [279] residents that very day; and the museum maintained this quarter-century past by a tropic-emaciated Frenchman was easily proof that the province is an unspoiled paradise of the ornithologist and the collector of butterflies and insects."

23: Franck--340 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 136, 757

"This region is noted for its leeches, especially during the rainy season that was now descending upon us. On that rainy Sunday afternoon the feet of my Kha were all bleeding, and were covered with the scars of what were evidently old leech-bites. These pets snatch upon the passer-by from the bushes overhanging the narrow trails, particularly after a shower; they get in somehow, even though one is not barefooted, soak the traveler's legs and socks in blood before he knows they are there, and he may be all day or all night in getting the flow stopped. In the middle of this third afternoon, chancing to pass a hand over an ankle, I felt a disgustingly soft lump under one of my high socks. Suddenly feeling the other leg with misgiving, I found it had two such unwelcome guests. Not far beyond we halted at a lonely little rest-house in the bush, and while the men rested and washed their feet, some of them put lumps of tobacco, such as they used in their long slim pipes, and other jungle leaves, on the three wounds; but at least one of them did not entirely stop bleeding until the next day."

23: Franck--353 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 136

"Elands abound, and there are great herds of gaur, that wild-like survivor from an earlier age which seems to be found nowhere else, a red-brown beast weighing on the average two thousand kilograms. There were at the camp half a dozen heads of this animal, shot within the past day or two, the foreheads unnaturally high, the female horns closer together than those of the male. The birds of these parts build no nests in the trees, because the monkeys, especially the black long-armed gibbons, steal their eggs. On the other hand partridge and guail, after building their nests in holes in the ground, roost in the trees as a protection against serpents."

68: Mouhot--91-92 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 136, 825

"Beetles of the longicorn tribe abound here; [HD: at Khao-Khoc, Siam, inhabited mainly by Laotians] and to-day I have filled a box with more than a thousand new or rare insects. I have even been [92] fortunate enoguh [sic] to replace some of the more valuable kinds which were destroyed or injured by sea-water on board the 'Sir James Brooke.' The villagers come every day to bring me 'beasts,' as they call them, grass-hoppers, scorpions, serpents, tortoises, &c., all presented to me at the end of a stick."

glades, but "instead of the oil trees, bogus teaks with their whitish foliage and their trunks deeply dented with wide grooves, we find gigantic, shade-giving pines; and instead of the bare, powdery or viscous soil, a fine level turf on which it is a pleasure to walk and where it is enjoyable to linger and slow one's pace" (2). 133 137

(2) Letter from Captain Rivière, reproduced by Captain Gosselin in Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900. [113]

It is also a region of wild beasts, and the inhabitants of the muong of Ma-Ha-Sai come there every year to hunt elephants. [136]

At the very source of the Sé-Bang-Fai there springs up a noteworthy peak about 1200 meters high from which many watercourses flow down to the Annam coast.

South of this point the Annamitic Chain drops to give way to the gap of Ai-Lao (about 410 meters in altitude) on the road from Savannakhet to Quang-Tri. Then the chain rises to form walls which are often more than 2000 meters high in the provinces of Saravane and Attopeu. Thus, Pou-Atouat has an altitude of about 2500 meters. It is an important orographic center from which spring the Sékhong and the Poyo, which belong to the Mékong basin, and also the Song-Buong, a tributary of the Song-Cai which is a coastal river of Annam. 133

Between the Sédone and the Sékhong, at about the 15th parallel, stands the remarkable plateau of the Bolovens, which takes its name from the Kha tribe which inhabits it. It is a mass about 100 kilometers in diameter, and its height varies between 600 and 1200 meters. Travelers who have explored it have extolled the mildness of the climate, the wealth of the vegetation, the beauty of the plains and the abundance of water, so [50] that Dr. Harmand suggested the idea that the plateau, which could easily be linked by road with the port of Tourane, might be made into the administrative center and sanatorium of our Indo-Chinese empire. [132]

The part which the plateau may be called on to play in the future has been somewhat exaggerated. It would be imprudent to envisage it as a wonderland, [illustration here] an eldorado destined to a great future from the administrative, commercial and sanitary point of view. Today it is a plateau with well-cultivated slopes which yield fine harvests of cardamom and rice, as well as tobacco, cotton and Chinese nettles [ortie de Chine], and is inhabited by gentle, peaceful folk who live in handsome, well kept-up villages. 133 241 361

313 M. Lussan merely had to see that they were followed at a distance by two light pirogues, the duty of the latter being to explore the banks and islands and push back into the current any of the small rafts which might have gone aground along the way.

"All the logs were then halted above the rapids by lookout posts judiciously located at narrow points in the river. They were again set free, but this time singly in order to traverse the rapids. Below the rapids the logs were collected by the same lookout system, the lookouts now being located at two points on the downstream reaches. The distance between the two points had been calculated so that the logs would pass by the first outpost at night and be collected at the second outpost twelve hours later, that is to say during the day." (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900.)

We shall study below, in Chapter VII, the methods of cultivating, extracting and exploiting the forest resources and the measures which the administration has taken for their conservation and development.

[309] 2. FAUNA, ANIMAL HIDES AND REMAINS

136 The fauna of Laos is scarcely different from that of India. It is just as varied and just as abundant, proportionately speaking.

Domesticated Fauna

231 Domesticated fauna includes the elephant, horse, buffalo, ox, pig, goat, poultry (chickens and peacocks), turtle-doves, dogs and cats (some with a straight or curved tail, others with a short tail ending in a ball, and still others without a tail, of Siamese origin). [Illustration alongside text here]

Wild Fauna

136 a) Mammals and rodents. These animals include the wild elephant and the rhinoceros (both Indian and Sumatran varieties, that is to say with one or two horns), the buffalo, the ox, the stag, the elk, the buck, the gazelle, the agouti, the wild boar, the otter, a great variety of monkeys (lemurs, paresseux, dormeurs, macaques, gibbons), the scaly anteater, the mongoose (ctenomis), the genet, the civet cat, the shrew-mouse, the polecat, the ordinary squirrel

and the flying squirrel (polatouche assapanick), the muskrat, [310] the water rat, the palm-squirrel, the field mouse, the mouse, the bat, the flying fox, etc. 136

In the forests one also finds domesticated animals which have reverted to a wild state, such as goats, bucks, dogs, cats and most kinds of gallinaceous birds (1). [231]

(1) Some notices also remark the presence of tapirs, but we cannot vouch for the accuracy of this information.

b) Carnivores. These are represented by the tiger, the jaguar, the ocelot, the panther, the tiger-cat, the wild cat, the climbing bear, the cave bear, etc.

c) Birds. In addition to numerous varieties not yet identified, the following have been noted:

1. Long-flying birds: first the birds of prey, such as the mountain eagle, two kinds of vultures, the sparrow hawk, the falcon, the kite, etc.; then the passerines, doves, etc., such as the peacock, the gilded pheasant and the silver pheasant, the wild cock and hen, a large variety of parakeets, the toucan, the hooded hornbill, the crow, the magpie, the jay, the swallow, the lark, the sparrow, the lapwing, the partridge, the quail, the snipe, the turtle-dove, the pigeon (several varieties), the blackbird, the crane, the green woodpecker, the owl and the screech owl, not to mention a large number of colibris, humming-birds, etc.

2. Water birds and grallatores: the fishing eagle (two varieties), the pelican, the wild goose, the marsh hen, the plover, the cormorant, the grebe, the flamingo, the marabou stork, the heron, the kingfisher, the egret, the swan, the gull, the wagtail, etc.

Reptiles

a) Ophidians. Since varieties of this class are quite numerous, we have summarized them in the opposite table, which is based on a notice by M. Grand, government commissioner in Luang-Prabang.

149: Reinach--225 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

136

TABLE OF REPTILES

Laotian name	Species or genus in French	Maximum Length (meters)
	a. Non-poisonous	
Ngou-Luam	Boa or python	7
Luam-Ho	Same	2
Sing	Snake, black with white belly	1.2
Sa	" with blue and yellow stripes	1.5
Pa	Water snake	1
Bone	Grass snake	1
Khiaou	Snake, green	1
Suak-Khouai	Snake, very slender, with yellow stripes	1.8
Mat-Phot	" with red spots	.5
Phao	Coconut palm snake	.5
Soi-Mak	Snake, very slender, with green spots	.7
	b. Poisonous	
Hao-Hom	Snake, genus Naja	2.5
Hao-Kho-Kham	" genus Cobra	2.2
Kane-Pong	" with white, black, red and yellow rings	1
Sang-Ha	Trigonocephalus	1
Dok-Mak	Whip snake	1
Phao-Nao-Bok	Coconut palm snake	1.8
Phao-Nok-Kaba	" " "	1.8
Ai-Khouang	Jumping snake	.4
Lao	Ichthyophis glutinosa	.3
Hao-Kho-Chong	Viper	1.5

Ngou is the generic term for "snake"

Ngou-Hao-Ponak	Barking viper	1.5
Hao-Khao-Tao	" "	3.5
Hao-Chong-Ang	Viper, genus Psammodynastes	3
Kiaou-Hang-Heme	Green viper	.2
	c. Extremely poisonous	
Thame-Thane	Black snake	2.5

b) Saurians. This class includes the cayman, the iguana, the chameleon, the flying lizard, the lizard (several varieties), the grey lizard, the gecko or tokkai, etc.

c) Chelonians. These are represented by several varieties of long-necked land and water tortoises. There is also an insect of the scarabaeid genus which resembles a tortoise and whose shell appears to be gilded (pythophagic cheliform).

[312] d) Batrachians. These include the toad and several species of frogs, all of them edible. One of the latter is called "bellowing" or "bullfrog", and with a comparatively small body produces a bellowing noise like that of a bull.

Fish

The principal varieties are enumerated in the table below:

149; Reinach--227 G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotian; AMB

136

TABLE OF FISH

	Name in Laotian	Type of Scales	Dentition	Type of caudal fin	Length in meters	Circumference (meters)	Weight in kilograms
Pa-	Beuk	No scales	Ruminant	Heterocercal	2.7	1.6	200
	Leum	" "	Pike type	"	1.8	1.0	100
	Sa-Ho	Heavy scales	4 nodosities	Homocercal	.9	.9	60
	Kai	Very fine scales	Pike type	Heterocercal	1.2	.66	35
	Khoun	No scales	" "	"	1.2	.66	35
	Saouat	Fine scales	No teeth	Monocercal	.9	.45	18
	Bun	Heavy scales	" "	Homocercal	.9	.66	25
	Sa	Fine scales	" "	"	.75	.45	18
	Souai	No scales	" "	Monocercal	1.2	.66	24
	Kouang	Very fine scales	" "	Homocercal	.75	.45	18
	Khao	No scales	Pike type, heavy	"	.9	.45	18
	Ling	" "	No teeth	Monocercal	.75	.45	6
	Khop	" "	Pike type	"	.45	.24	3
	Kheung	" "	No teeth	Homocercal	1.2	.9	36
	Hien	Medium red scales	" "	"	.45	.45	5

Pa is the generic term signifying "fish".

136

TABLE OF FISH (continued)

Pa-	Oua	Medium black scales	No teeth	Homocercal	.25	.45	3
	Pak	Medium white scales	" "	"	.25	.45	3
	Pung	No scales	" "	Monocercal	.45	.45	3
	Phon	Heavy green scales	" "	Heterocercal	.45	.24	1
	Keng	Heavy green scales	" "	"	.45	.24	1

There are also a large number of small fish which are caught with a net or scoop net. These are designated by the descriptive term "Pa-Noi."

Reinach--229 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[113]

Crustaceans

136 The crayfish, the shrimp and the crab.

Mollusks

Mollusks are very numerous, and a few types are even peculiar to Laos. They include acephalans, lamellibranchiates, gastropods, etc., several of which are edible (1).

[114] (1) A complete study of the mollusks of Laos was made by M. Pavie and Commander Morlet (their collections are to be seen in the Paris Museum).

Insects

Because of their great numbers and infinite variety, insects have a very interesting, or at least important, place in the fauna of Laos. Despite their small size and weak vocal organs as individuals, when evening comes their collective cries produce a noise which covers all others.

There is still a fine harvest for the entomologist to reap, even after Mouhot, who was the first to make studies of this type in Laos. Lepidoptera, coleoptera, hemiptera, diptera, arachnida--all the types are represented, in the form of many-colored butterflies, brilliant fireflies, hideous, foul-smelling bugs, hardy beetles, dangerous scorpions, scolopendra with a thousand feet, repulsive spiders which are huge and hairy, and finally indefatigable suctoria such as mosquitos, flies, gnats, etc.

825 There are only two types of useful insects. These are the coccus which produces crimson lake or stick-lac, and several kinds of bees which supply honey and wax.

The greater part of all this animal life which we have passed in review is used by the inhabitants of Laos for food and other needs. It also provides certain products in the form of animal remains which are the basis for either local or export trade. A list of these follows:

825 Elephant.....Ivory, teeth, toenails, bones, hide.
Tiger.....Pelts, talons, fangs, bones.
136 [314] Rhinoceros.....Hide, horns.
Bear.....Skins, gall (used in medicines).
Goat, otter, cayman.....Hides and skins.
Scaly anteater.....Scales and skin.
Buffalo, ox, stag, deer.....Hides, horns and antlers.
Peacock, marabou stork
and other birds.....Feathers.
Snakes.....Skins and venom.
Coccus (insect).....Crimson lake.
Bees.....Honey and wax.

3. MINERALOGY

a) Mineral Wealth

135 As we said above, the geological formations of Laos are similar in nature, rate of change and transformations undergone to those in the neighboring countries on the west, northwest and south. Everywhere there is the same original substratum, and this, together with the sediments which have formed in its folds, has been traversed, lifted and dislocated by volcanic thrusts which are less and less apparent as one moves away from the two eruptive nuclei located in the northwest and south, that is to say in Tibet and Malaysia. To be sure, the orographic nucleus which has had the greatest influence on the relief of the country and the formation of the various regions of Laos is the one which, in Tibet, has produced the long ridges of mountains between which the valleys of the great rivers of China, Burma and the Indo-Chinese peninsula have cut their paths.

In the basin of the Mekong, the only one with which we need be concerned here, there are secondary ridges brought about by partial upheavals or folds, which form a series of stepped plateaus and chains of valleys eminently suited to catching the sediment carried down from the peaks and to furthering its distribution in accordance with the laws of gravity. It is to this peculiar disposition that Laos owes its mineral wealth. During the course of centuries the partial dislocations, atmospheric agents, moving waters, etc., disaggregated, split and reduced [315] to stones, and then into gravel and soil, the mountain crests of eruptive rocks which contained gold, precious stones, silver-bearing galena, tin, copper, iron, etc. Once set free

10: d'Orleans--356-357 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 114, 136, 137

"The fauna of Indo-China has been studied in so much detail by the expeditions of Garnier, Monhot, Neïs, Harmand, and others, that I cannot do better than refer the reader whom this subject may happen to interest, to the records of their researches; and with regard to the flora it is very varied, among the most interesting features of it being the beautiful parasite orchids, some rose and others yellow. The country is [357] very well wooded, too, and I have been able to bring back some forty specimens of wood, chief among which I may mention the teak, called the mal sok, which grows in large quantities on the banks of the Mekong, a few days above Luang Prabang, near Kiangsen, and below the city, near Paklay."

10: d'Orleans--357 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 137, 241, 439

"At the present time two vegetable products are exported from Luang Prabang, one being cardamome and the other benzoin, the latter having recently decreased 50 per cent. in value on the Bangkok market, doubtless because this perfume is now extracted from hippuric acid and other matters by chemical processes, while in time the flora of the country, which is very rich in other wild plants highly perfumed, will doubtless lend itself to fresh sources of industry.

In addition to the native products it will be easy to introduce fresh cultivations, such as the pepper tree, which already thrives in Annam, the vine, which grows wild on the plateau of the Poûon, and fruit trees of various kinds."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

000 tasted of earth and bitter herbs when a commotion aroused us. Hurrying from the restaurant we saw Dupont's dog busy with carrion in a nearby field, surrounded by an excited huddle of vultures for whose benefit it had been exposed there. Dupont's cries of horror were interrupted by the whistle of the convoy-commander, who this time signalled for all officers to gather round
494 him. He told them that seventy Issaraks[1] were reported to be in
669 ambush, awaiting us at Kilometre 115 — about twenty miles further
725 on. They were turned out in new American uniforms, he said, and were well armed. At Kilometre 115 a cross-country track leading from Siam into Viet-Nam crossed our route. It occurred to both Dupont and myself that if this report was several hours old, it was not likely that the Issarak would be in the place where they were first seen. However, the official view taken was that they would not have moved more than five kilometres down the road in our direction, because orders were given for the infantry escort to dismount from their lorries at Kilometre 110 and to precede the convoy on foot for the next five kilometres. We noticed, too, that the officer assumed that the Issarak, if they had moved at all, would have inevitably marched towards us, and not in the other direction, because, once Kilometre 115 had been reached, the danger would be officially declared at an end, and the infantry ordered back into their lorries.

137 We now entered a country of low, bare hills; a whitish landscape, rarely animated by wandering pink-skinned buffaloes. In the hollows there were islands of splendid vegetation — flamboyant trees, arranged as if by design, with giant ferns and feathery bamboos. Peacocks gleamed in abandoned paddy fields, and storks, flapping away at our approach, trailed their legs in pools of yellow marsh-water. The vegetation was sensitive to quite small variations in altitude. The valley-bottoms were choked with bamboo thickets, and slender, segmented canes, wreathed in blue convolvulus, curved over our path like coachmen's whips, flicking us as we passed beneath. At this level the ditches were full of dead butterflies

[1] i.e., "free men" of Laos and Cambodia -- Analyst

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

which seemed to have completed their lives' span while in the act of drinking. But a climb of only a few hundred feet was enough to break right out of this hot-house profusion; to pass through the curtains of liana and to reach the first pines.

Approaching the portentous kilometre, the road became steadily worse. It was only just wide enough for the six-wheelers to pass and there were frequent tyre-bursts. Whenever a vehicle was put out of action, it was manhandled off the road and left to its own devices. There was continual trouble with the bridges, which were temporary affairs, put up at the end of the rainy season and only intended to last until the weather broke again. The most rickety-looking of the bridges had to be tested first with a jeep, followed by an unladen lorry. When this precaution was neglected, a lorry loaded with supplies crashed through and fell into the river below. This meant a painful detour through the water for the rest of the convoy. Several vehicles also got stuck and had to be hauled out. Any of these moments would have provided an ideal opportunity for an attack.

The Meo dog suffered from the heat just as badly as, according to report, its original owner would have done. Its tongue lolled from its mouth and, laying its head either on Dupont's lap or on mine, it dribbled on our bare knees. It could not stand the dust, and wetted us further with its continual sneezings.

Some of the drivers were showing signs of tiredness, and probably nervous strain. The standard of driving was going down. We were once again in the bamboo thickets, and the road was no better than a ledge round the flank of a low hill. On our right was a precipice, but the vegetation was so thick that you could get no idea of the drop. Dupont, having profited by casualties in front, had now worked his way up to a position immediately behind the last of the lorries, and we were nosing our way round the hill, keeping a look-out for occasional gaps in the road left by subsidences, when the lorry ahead suddenly turned off the road and went over the side. Gently, almost, it was lowered from sight amongst the bamboos.

China Geographical Service /Service géographique de l'Indochine/ 131
and the road surveys made by administrators at the heads of prov- 654
inces nevertheless agree substantially in estimating the area of
Laos at approximately 250,000 square kilometers, or about half
that of France.

Population. This is the largest of the five countries in French 161
Indo-China, and it is also the least densely populated. According
to information collected on the spot, the population must be be- /162/
tween a million and 1,200,000 inhabitants, a figure appreciably
larger than the one figuring in the official documents, which esti-
mate it to be only 800,000. Persons of the Laotian race in the
strict /3/ sense form the majority. They populate the plains 162
which are watered by the Mékong and its tributaries and the low
altitude plateaus. The mountains are inhabited by highly diverse
races belonging to various ethnic types, some of which are related
to the Chinese, and others to the Tibetan branch, while still others
are grouped under the generic name of "Khas." These various
groups are scattered over the western side of the Annamitic Chain,
the foothills of the plateau of Trân-Ninh and in the upper valley of
the Mékong.

The extremely low population density is to be explained by the 162
Siamese and Chinese invasions in the course of the nineteenth 166
century. The "Hos," plunderers who came from Yunnan, massa- 648*
cred the inhabitants after they had burned their villages and forced 175
those who escaped famine or torture to settle in another region.
The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical manner and depopu-
lated the country by transporting inhabitants, livestock and ele-
phants to the right bank of the Mekong and oftentimes taking them
as far as the valley of the Ménam.

Upper Laos. Upper Laos, a ramification of the Tibetan pla- 133
teau, "is an inextricable tangle /4/ of wild and wooded moun-
tains in the midst of which paths wind like gigantic Russian
mountains" (1). The country has a savage look. These high 133
137

1. Dr. Lefèvre, "Le Haut-Laos" (Bulletin de la Société de Géographie commerciale, 1898).

mountain chains, which are cut here and there by deep valleys
where torrents which are often invisible flow, are covered with

133 vast impenetrable forests and "the traveler sees only tall grass or
137 gigantic trees intertwined with lianas, then all at once, through a break in the foliage, he discovers the cascades of a river. This is the only noise to interrupt the impressive silence of these great forests" (2).

2. L. de Reinach, Le Laos, 1911.

133 Set against the huge mountain masses of Yunnan, this tormented region has always been the natural refuge of peoples driven out of India or China by famine, great invasions or religious discord, and its orography explains, in large measure, the multiplicity of tiny
/631/ states which were formed there throughout the ages. Its abrupt defiles radiate out and, so to speak, become calmed in the valleys of the Ménam, the Mékong and the Red River, and its principal substructure spreads out /5/ and ends in a vast plateau known as the plateau of Tran-Ninh, whose hillocks are planted with pine trees and drop suddenly from east to west.

In the southeast, however, the Tran-Ninh plateau clings "like an excrescence" to a long artery known as the Annamitic Chain which forms a distinct line of demarcation between Laos and Annam. This chain runs parallel to the coast in a northwest-southeast direction, and its peaks go all the way down to the Mékong by successive stages, first forming plateaus or folds of ground covered with thick forests (dông in Laotian), then slighter undulations where there are forest glades (khok in Laotian), and finally vast ricefields ending in the river.

The Mékong. This great river frontier which, over 800 kilometers of its length, marks the political separation of French Indo-China from the kingdom of Siam, gives life to Laos, together with its tributaries, "as the Nile constitutes Egypt." It fertilizes it with
/226/ its alluvia, feeds the native with its fish and guarantees transport for
/505/ his rafts and pirogues from north to south. But this liquid highway where nature seems to have taken pleasure in piling up obstacles and which is cut by numerous rapids and barred by waterfalls, can not be
/502/ /6/ regarded as usable for regular navigation over all of its length.
133 Fed by the melting snows of Tibet, the Mékong enters Laos through a capricious gorge, widens for a moment in the alluvia of an old lake basin and narrows again towards Luang-Prabang. Grandiose surroundings framed by the blue line of the far-off peaks give it what

132 a climatic dividing line. On the Annam side, in fact, each monsoon
133 has its rainy season, a fact which makes it possible to grow two rice
crops per year. On the Laotian side there is one rainy season and
[241] one dry season. The two are sharply separated, so that there can be
only one crop. The chain runs parallel to the coast of Annam in a
northwest-southeast direction, leaving Annam only a narrow strip of
terrain, while it enables the Mékong to be joined on its left bank by
watercourses which often stretch over wide extents. On the Annam
side the slopes are steep and the valleys narrow. On the Laotian
[137] side the slopes generally do not terminate so abruptly. They come
down to the Mékong in successive stages, first forming plateaus or
folds in the terrain which are covered with thick forests (Dong in
Laotian), then gentler undulations on which there are forest glades
(Khok in Laotian) and finally the vast ricefields which stretch down
to the Mékong.

137 The large thick forests have the same wild appearance as in
northern Laos. Oftentimes they do not even let the sun's rays through,
132 and form domes of foliage which hide the horizon.

The forest glades have two different aspects, depending on the season. During the rainy season there is shadow and often a carpet of verdure, while during the dry season the bare trees and the naked soil which is covered only with dead leaves and reflects the burning rays of the sun, give the appearance of a desolate and abandoned land.

133 The Annamitic Chain first separates the Nam-Nhung, a right-bank tributary of the Nam-Ka-Dinh, from the Song-Ca which flows into the Gulf of Tonkin near Vinh. It enters the province of Cammon, where its average altitude is 1000 to 1200 meters. The ridge of Tram Mua, on the road from Vinh to Pak-Hin-Boun, is at the 1280 meter level. In Cammon there are, so to speak, no forest glades. [47] [Illustration] [48] [Blank page] [49] for the plateaus themselves usually run down to the banks of the Mékong.

Of the latter, the most noteworthy is that of Na-Kaï or Pou-Hac,
133 the limits of which are formed by the courses of the Nam-Hin-Boun
137 and of the Sé (1) -Bang-Faï. This vast plateau lies at an altitude

(1) Nam and Sé mean river. Nam is the term generally employed in northern Laos, and Sé in southern Laos.

of about 800 meters and, like the plain, is covered with forest

glades, but "instead of the oil trees, bogus teaks with their whitish foliage and their trunks deeply dented with wide grooves, we find gigantic, shade-giving pines; and instead of the bare, powdery or viscous soil, a fine level turf on which it is a pleasure to walk and where it is enjoyable to linger and slow one's pace" (2). 133 137

(2) Letter from Captain Rivière, reproduced by Captain Gosselin in Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900. [113]

It is also a region of wild beasts, and the inhabitants of the muong of Ma-Ha-Sai come there every year to hunt elephants. [136]

At the very source of the Sé-Bang-Fai there springs up a noteworthy peak about 1200 meters high from which many watercourses flow down to the Annam coast.

South of this point the Annamitic Chain drops to give way to the gap of Ai-Lao (about 410 meters in altitude) on the road from Savannakhet to Quang-Tri. Then the chain rises to form walls which are often more than 2000 meters high in the provinces of Saravane and Attopeu. Thus, Pou-Atouat has an altitude of about 2500 meters. It is an important orographic center from which spring the Sékhong and the Poyo, which belong to the Mékong basin, and also the Song-Buong, a tributary of the Song-Cai which is a coastal river of Annam. 133

Between the Sédone and the Sékhong, at about the 15th parallel, stands the remarkable plateau of the Bolovens, which takes its name from the Kha tribe which inhabits it. It is a mass about 100 kilometers in diameter, and its height varies between 600 and 1200 meters. Travelers who have explored it have extolled the mildness of the climate, the wealth of the vegetation, the beauty of the plains and the abundance of water, so [50] that Dr. Harmand suggested the idea that the plateau, which could easily be linked by road with the port of Tourane, might be made into the administrative center and sanatorium of our Indo-Chinese empire. [132]

The part which the plateau may be called on to play in the future has been somewhat exaggerated. It would be imprudent to envisage it as a wonderland, [illustration here] an eldorado destined to a great future from the administrative, commercial and sanitary point of view. Today it is a plateau with well-cultivated slopes which yield fine harvests of cardamom and rice, as well as tobacco, cotton and Chinese nettles [ortie de Chine], and is inhabited by gentle, peaceful folk who live in handsome, well kept-up villages. 133 241 361

161 that the registered persons in the kingdom of Luang-Praban, who inhabit the right bank, have been included in this figure. The Laotian budget for 1898 anticipates revenues of 60, 000 piasters from personal taxes in Lower Laos, while only 35, 000 piasters are anticipated from Upper Laos, a fact tending to prove that the number of registered persons in Upper Laos is scarcely more than half those in Lower Laos.

Finally, as regards the average population density, it should be remembered that the density in France is 6, 700 inhabitants per 100 square kilometers. If the latter had a density equal to that of Laos, there would be a million inhabitants in France.

The muong of Khong has the highest population density in all Laos, or 1, 508 inhabitants per 100 square kilometers.

/303/ /Illustration at top/

CHAPTER VI

1. FLORA--FOREST RESOURCES AND THEIR EXPLOITATION

• 137 Since Laos has the same orographic center as Burma, Yunnan, Siam and the Malay Peninsula, the nature of the soil, the configuration of the land and the distribution of the various geological formations are also similar. It follows that its flora and, in general, all of its forest riches are like those of the above countries, which have long been studied from this particular point of view.

There are quite probably botanical studies of great interest to be made in Laos, where the flora is so varied and so rich that it has been called the "naturalist's paradise." Here, however, our purpose is quite a different one, and we shall merely try to enumerate the types of plants and trees which are already known and used as of /304/ the present time, leaving it to others who are more competent to identify the different varieties.

In addition to the arborescent varieties which will be listed further on, the forests contain many different types of plants and flowers, most of which are unknown and which are as noteworthy for the diversity of their colors and the grace of their forms as for their delicious perfumes. There are also mosses of great delicacy and sweetness, as well as dwarf and arborescent ferns with elegant serrations and harmoniously shaded colors varying from yellow to poppy-red.

149; Reinach--220 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

The trees also support incomparable wild orchids with strange flowers, and climbing or twining plants of every possible shape and color which are as graceful as they are delicate, which cross, intertwine and with their lianas form an inextricable jungle, a curtain of flowers, stems and foliage which moves at the whim of the winds and is so thick in certain spots that it casts an almost perpetual shadow (1). 137!

(1) The exact nomenclature of these floral species is almost impossible to establish. We shall content ourselves with noting, among many others which are still unknown: the acacia, and principally the farnèse acacia; various kinds of lilacs; the double and single hibiscus, the African marigold and the zinnias, the lotus, the cockscomb, the marvel of Peru, the sunflower, several kinds of magnolias, syringa, camellias, etc.

Various plants used for food, medicine and dye also grow in the forests, such as yams, taros, ginger, cardamom, annatto, curcuma, catechu (sisèt), Campeachy wood, wild indigo, etc., as well as trees and lianas which produce resins, oil lac, black and red lacquer, damarine (huile de bois), benzoin, wax, gums and rubber. 824

Rice and maize are cultivated on the plateaus, low hills, mountainsides and in the valleys, as well as on the alluvial deposits of the Mekong. These form the basis of the natives' food supply and are essential elements in the manufacture of alcohol. 243 273

The banks of the watercourses, which are covered by inundations every year and constantly fertilized by alluvial deposits, are [305] used for the cultivation of cotton, tobacco, indigo, castor oil plants, batatas, peanuts, manioc and vegetables and fruits such as onions, garlic, tomatoes, squash, melons, fennel, mustard, edible convolvulnses, sensitive d'eau, etc. In the gardens which are cultivated near the banks one also finds sugar cane, coconut palms, sugar palms, betel palms, latania palms, the poivrier bétel, the arborescent mulberry, peppers, coriander, mint, the citronella and [illustration here] purslane. Here also are a large variety of fruit trees: banana trees (more than twenty-four varieties), cinnamon trees, fig trees, orange trees, tangerine trees, grapefruit trees, lemon trees, lime trees, pineapple trees, pomegranate trees, guava trees, mango trees, papaw trees, ebony trees (Diospyros ebenum), mangosteen trees, jack trees, durian trees, custard-apple trees, avocado trees, litchi trees, sapodilla trees (red balata), fayolliers (légumineuses), silk-cotton trees 241 245

245 (bombax and callotropis), tamarind trees, jujube trees, cucumber trees, water chestnuts, etc.

In the north of Laos grow peach trees, plum trees, almond trees, [306] walnut trees, cherry trees, apple trees, pear trees, strawberry plants and medlar trees, the fruits of which are similar in taste to that of their counterparts in Europe, although they are neither as large nor as succulent as the latter.

On the edges of the forest, and sometimes even in the middle, there are also other wild fruit trees reminiscent of the plum tree, the cherry tree, the apple tree (a rose-apple tree with red or green fruits), the fig tree, the quince tree, etc. Their fruits have remained in a wild state or reverted to one because of a lack of adequate care, and are not edible. Their seeds, pits and stones have developed excessively, to the detriment of the pulp which remains tough, bitter or tasteless.

248 Finally, opium poppies, tea, ramie, hemp, etc. are cultivated
249 on the plateaus and in the high valleys.

Most European vegetables grow in Laos, in the gardens of the
241 Europeans. They are seeded at the end of the rainy season. Early varieties can be harvested and a new crop seeded well into July, but care must be taken to cover the beds during downpours, which occur frequently from May on.

The forests of Laos may have two characteristic forms, depending
134 on whether the soil is mountainous and composed of clay or limestone,
137 or else flat or slightly sloped and sandy, rocky or stony. In the first case the soil has a high percentage of vegetable matter, is moist and rich in humus and consequently covered with thick forests (Dong or Pa). In the second case it has a low percentage of vegetable matter, is hot and poor in humus and is covered with light forestation (Khok or Pa-hang).

A table contained in the Appendices (No. XX) gives the nomenclature of some sixty varieties of trees on which we have information. In addition to the trees which we cite, we should also note the bamboos, rattans and banana trees.

There are some twenty varieties of bamboo, in which the stalks vary from the size of the little finger to as much as thirty or even thirty-five centimeters in diameter. They sometimes reach a height
824 of twenty meters. There are six or seven varieties of rattan of different grades and sizes, but they are used only for local needs. Among the many wild banana trees, a few varieties such as the "Kok-Koue-Kene" yield a sort of fiber rather like abaca.

137 [307] Although we are able today to evaluate the forest wealth of Laos approximately and to compute its immense commercial value,

as yet we can regard it only in the light of a reserve for the future and hope that this future is imminent. [Illustration alongside text here] 137

The establishment of sawmills near the points where trees are felled is not to be recommended, particularly in middle and upper Laos. Any industry of this type could not yet find sufficiently large local outlets, because of the difficulty of transportation. Moreover, the natives use only axes and machetes for felling and cutting up trees, and they would never be willing to underwrite the cost of sawmills. The only remaining recourse, therefore, is exploitation for the coastal markets or for export, and the future obviously lies herein. But as long as there are no railways leading from the Mekong to the Annam coast, or steamers capable of traversing the river from Luang-Prabang as far as the island of Khone without trans-shipping their cargo, there can be no thought of felling trees where they grow in order to export them in the form of wood ready for industry (planks, billets, beams) nor, in consequence, of establishing sawmills in the Laotian interior.

[308] The only method at present practical would be to float the undressed logs downriver, either by themselves if their density permits or else by means of bamboo floats. These logs could be floated down to North Khone and then cut up on the island itself by means of sawmills driven hydraulically by the waterfalls. They could then be transported to Pnom-Penh or Saigon by steamship. 313

The above considerations would apply to the majority of the hardwoods which do not float by themselves. In the case of teak, pine and mock mahogany (mai-niom-pha), for example, there would be no difficulty in floating the undressed logs down from Xieng-Khong or even Tang-Ho, if we are to rely on a conclusive experiment performed in 1899. M. Lussan succeeded in bringing 170 undressed teak logs all the way from Luang-Prabang to Saigon, coming through the valley of the Me-Khok by way of Xieng-Sen (1).

(1) "This year the teak logs which M. Lussan is bringing down from the same region are said to represent about 600 cubic meters. When last heard from, the billets had left Khone (the island was crossed via the Decauville railway so as to avoid the rapids). Losses of billets at this time amounted to only 2-1/2 to 3 percent of the total number.

"The Superior Resident in Laos notes that an ingenious system of floating was used this year. The logs were tied together in groups of only three or four and launched into the current.

149; Reinach--409 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

137
84

APPENDIX XX TABLE OF TREES

Laotian Name	Other names	Height in meters	Size (diameter) in meters	Uses	Subject to attack by insects	Habitat	Provinces	Observations
				A. RESINOUS TREES				
Mai-niang	Cai-dau-nuoc (Annamite) Dom-teal (Cambodian) Dipterocarpus alata	30 to 35	.6 to 1	Furniture, boards, framing; yields an oleoresin used to make torches and a mastic for caulking pirogues. Can yield about 20 liters of essential oil per year.	Yes	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Soft wood, yellowish in color, easily worked. Very common and well known to all Laotians. Lasts about 6 to 10 years, but can be preserved in dry, well-aired places.
Mai-sat	Dipterocarpus (?)	20 to 30	.6 to .8	Boards and ordinary traverse beams. Its oil is used in making torches.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Soft wood, reddish-gray in color, of inferior quality. Very plentiful and well-grown; lasts 5 to 6 years, rots in earth.
Mai-sang	Cai-gac (Annamite) Dom-papel (Cambodian) Hopea odorata	20 to 25	1 to 1.5	Boards and timbers. Could yield about 20 kilograms of a good resin per year.	No	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Softwood, brown, easy to work; very plentiful; average lasting qualities; resembles the ash; well-grown tree.

[Table continued over]

137
824

Mai-khom		20 to 25	.8 to 1	Useless for cabinet work. The Laotians cut it into small pieces like the Mai-seng-khem for chewing with betel. Its oil is used for caulking pirogues and making torches.	No	Forest glades	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Very hard wood, dark red in color. Has often been mistaken for teak. Very plentiful, together with the Mai-tabeng it makes up the greater part of varieties in forest glades; unlimited life.
Mai-chik	Cai-chai (Annamite)	15	.4 to .5	Widely used for house columns. It yields 20 kilograms per year of a resin used by the Laotians for caulking.	No	Forest glades	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Hardwood, veined yellow in color, fine grain. Very plentiful. Unlimited life.

(1) It is essential to note that these trees can be used only if the sapwood is removed and only the heartwood used.

[112-113] Mai-tabeng	Cai-dap-taben (?) (Annamite) Dom-trac (?) (Cambodian) Dipterocarpus species (?)	30	.5	Little used in building. Passable boards and columns. Can yield some 20 liters of oil annually which is used for making torches and caulking pirogues.	No	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Fairly hard and resistant wood, reddish in color. Very plentiful. Long life. Resembles the Mai-niang, keeps better.
Mai-ptek	Cai-thong (Annamite) Dom-eral (Cambodian) Pinaster	30 to 35	1 to 1.5	Various uses. Yields a whitish odorous resin which, when mixed with sticklac, produces varnish and certain mastics.	No	Plateaus and clear parts of forests	Upper Laos	Reddish wood with coarse fiber. Floats. Said to be inferior to other resinous varieties.

[table continued over]

149. Reinach--411 G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AMS
137
824
322

Mai-nam-kieng	Cai-sen (Annamite) Dom-crul (Cambodian) Melanorrhea laccifera (varnish-tree)			Yields a fine black varnish similar to lacquer. Would be suitable for cabinet work.			Lower Laos	Red wood, reminiscent of Brazilian rosewood. Very rare. Does not last under moist conditions.

B. TREES WITH WOOD SUITABLE FOR CABINET WORK

Mai-Kiompha	Mock mahogany	30	.6 to .7	Furniture, boards. Resembles the mahogany of Florida or Texas, used for cigar boxes.	Yes	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Very beautiful soft-wood, pink in color. Fairly plentiful. Floats.
Mai-pouei or Mai-pouei-kien	Cai-bang-lang (Annamite) Lagerstroemia (?)	30	.6 to 1	Furniture, fine boards.	Yes	Thick forest	Lower Laos	White wood with slight gray tinge, not very resistant, fine grain. Very plentiful. Lasts about ten years, does not withstand rain.
Mai-thon	Cai-lim (Annamite) Mock walnut	30	.5 to .6	Boards, fine cabinet work.	Yes	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Very beautiful brown wood, veined like the walnut which it resembles although darker. Very long life. Very plentiful. Very well-grown tree.

[Table continued over]

•137
824
322

Mai-kha-niem	Cai-trat (Annamite)	15 to 25	.5 to .6	Furniture, boards, pirogues.	No	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Resistant wood, slightly yellowish, fine grain, quite light, well-grown. Rather scarce. The tree bears very odoriferous yellow flowers.
Mai-lang-dam	Cai-mun (Annamite) Dom-heyman (Cambodian) Diospyros ebenum Ebony	10 to 15	.3 to .4	Good for cabinet work. House traverse beams. Its fruit is used to make a black dye.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Hardwood, black, heavy, non-floating, small, resembles ebony. Lasts about seven years. Plentiful.
[114-115]								
Mai-deng	Cai-huong (Annamite)	25	.6 to .7	Columns and posts for houses and pagodas. Furniture.	No	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Resistant, red, very well-veined wood. Highly esteemed, hard, difficult to work. Resembles rosewood somewhat. Very well-grown tree, well-known to the Laotians, plentiful.
Mai-te	Cai-go (Annamite) Grandifera cochinchinensis	30 to 50	.6 to .7	Columns for houses and pagodas. Boards.	No	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Very hard wood, mahogany yellow, fine grain. Unlimited life. Plentiful. Edible fruit.

[table continued over]

137
884
322

Mai-dou or Mai-dou-khao	Cai-boi-moc (Annamite)	30	.7 to .8	House columns, furniture, chests, cart axles.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Beautiful, very hard wood, slightly reddish, very well-veined; reminiscent of the thuja. Quite hard to work. Unlimited life. Plentiful.
Mai-pan-set		20 to 35	.8	Very fine planks and columns.	No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Very hard wood, difficult to work.
Mai-khen-kin	Cai-sao-da (Annamite) Hopea (?)	30	.4	Very fine columns and traverse beams.	No	Thick Forest	Lower Laos	Very beautiful, very hard wood, highly resistant, yellowish in color, very heavy. Life would be unlimited. Plentiful.
Mai-ed	Don-kinor-prey (Cambodian) Nauclea orientalis (?) Jack-tree	10	.4	Columns, furniture and boxes. The bark is used for dyeing bonzes' clothing yellow.	No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Very pretty light wood, yellowish in color. Quite easy to work. Floats when dry. Noted especially for its fruit.
Mai-bob-khai			.9 to 1	Not used by the Laotians, the grain being too hard for their tools. Ought to make fine boards.		Forest glades	Lower Laos	Hardwood, whitish-yellow in color. Very well-grown. Plentiful.

[table continued over]

137
824
322

Mai-khe-nieung	Oai-trac (Annamite) Dom-ernghung (Cambodian) Dalbergia (?)	15 to 20	.5 to .6	Used for cart axles and in the wheelwright's trade. Would be a good wood for cabinet work.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Very hard wood, dark red veined with black, like the Brazilian rosewood. Unlimited life. Rather scarce. Respected by the Laotians because almost impossible to work with their tools.
Mai-pouei-lai	Oai-bang-lang (Annamite) Lagerstroemia (?)	30 to 40	1.5	Interior woodwork, furniture.	No	Low mountains, valleys	Upper Laos	Beautiful hardwood, gray with wavy veins like the maple. Medium in color between the ash and the beech. Difficult to work, gives a striking effect under varnish.
Mai-kan-luong		17 to 18	.6	Furniture and framing. Very good for woodworking.	No	Beside water	Upper Laos	Hardwood, yellow, good grain, easy to work.
Mai-som		16 to 17	.3 to .4	Furniture and framing.	No	Beside water	Upper Laos	White wood, straight grain, easy to work, quite plentiful.
[116-117] Mai-khe		24 to 25	.4 to .5	Furniture, framing, posts.	No	Large forests	Upper Laos	Hardwood, red heartwood; difficult to work; plentiful.
Mai-ka-bok	Dom-kaka (?) (Cambodian) Sindora cambrana (?)	18 to 19	.3 to .4	Used for turned pieces and long-lasting items.	No	Same	Upper Laos	Hardwood, brown with reddish reflections, fairly easy to work; very beautiful when polished.

[table continued over]

137
824
322

Mai-sak	Dom-mysac (?) (Cambodian) <u>Tectona grandis</u> Teak	30 to 40	.8 to 1.2	Framing, woodworking, cabinet work, boatbuilding.	No	Mountainsides and valleys	Upper Laos	Easy to work, reddish beautiful close grain, very well-grown, rot-proof, floating. Edible fruit; sometimes replaces the betel nut in the betel masticatory.
Mai-khao-khwai				Excellent posts	No	Hillsides and valleys. Thick forests	Upper Laos	Hardwood, fine grain, unlimited life.
Mai-tchouang or Mai-kioumeng				Cabinet work.	No	Hillsides and valleys	Upper Laos	Wood which has the perfume of sandalwood. Used to make statues of Buddha.
Mai-dou-deng	Service tree (?)	30 to 35	1.5 to 1.8	Posts, pirogues, tools.	No	Mountainsides and valleys. Thick forest	Upper Laos	Excellent hardwood, with the look and qualities of the service tree, that is to say reddish brown with fine grain. Very well-grown, plentiful, fairly easy to work. Unlimited life.
Mai-sakhan		20 to 25	.5	Posts, framing, boards.	No	Low slopes and valleys	Upper Laos	Good red wood, straight grain, quite scarce, easy to work.

[table continued over]

137
824
322

Mai-fene		25 to 30	1.2	Posts	No	Valleys	Upper Laos	Good wood, fairly difficult to work, much sought-after, rather scarce, long life.
Mai-kha-hioung		18 to 20	.25 to .35	Posts, framing.	No	Large Forests	Upper Laos	Hardwood, white, quite difficult to work, quite plentiful.
				C. MISCELLANEOUS TREES				
Mai-khan-hok		30 to 35		Boards, traverse beams, laths.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Hardwood, white with black heartwood, plentiful on the plateau of the Bolovens; edible fruit.
Mai-khen	Cai-sao (Annamite) Dom-kaki (Cambodian) Hopea spuria (?)	.3 to .4	1 to 1.5	Used mainly in the construction of pirogues.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Semi-hard wood, with beautiful fibers of a yellow color, very well-grown. Water-resistant. Lasts 12 to 15 years.
Mai-hang	Cai-sen (Annamite) Vatica (?)			Columns and mediocre traverse beams.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Greatly resembles the Mai-khen-hin, but is neither as resistant nor as highly esteemed; unlimited life.
[118-119] Mai-tab-tao		10	.4 to .6	Mediocre traverse beams, very little used in building.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Soft wood, yellowish in color, quite well-grown, little used, quite light; plentiful.

[table continued over]

149; Reinsch--417 G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotian AMS

137
824
322

Mai-tiou		12	.5 to .6	Same as above.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Very soft wood, white, slightly grayish, of inferior quality, cannot withstand rain; fine grain; well-grown tree. Lasts about 7 years.
Mai-koung		15	.6 to .8	Boards and traverse beams. The dried leaves are used to make pirogue roofs and partitions for Laotian houses.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Fairly hard wood, slightly reddish, well-grown; plentiful.
Mai-khe-thang		25 to 30	.25 to .3	Beams	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Hardwood, slightly yellowish, plentiful, quite well-grown.
Mai-tong		35	.5	Coffin planks.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Softwood, white, acid fruit; plentiful.
Mai-keng-seng		15	.6	Planks, studs for partition walls and doors.	Yes	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Softwood, heartwood dark red; plentiful in the valleys.
Mai-man-pa		15	.25	House columns.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Hard and resistant wood, grayish-yellow, fairly easy to work; plentiful, unlimited life.
Mai-hat	Cai-xnai (Annamite)	25	.4	Wooden bells, mediocre traverse beams and columns; little used in building.	No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Rather unresistant, yellowish-white wood; plentiful, unlimited life.

[table continued over]

137
824
322

[26]

Mai-mok		.2 to .25			Forest glades	Lower Laos	Slightly yellowish wood, light, with fine grain; dwarf tree, bears large yellow flowers which are very odoriferous.
Mai-seng-khan		.5 to .6	Bark used by the Laotians for chewing with betel.		Forest glades	Upper Laos Lower Laos	Yellowish wood with quite fine grain; well-grown tree; not very plentiful.
Mai-si		.3 to .4			Forest glades	Lower Laos	Slightly grayish wood, quite close-fibered; well-grown tree; not very plentiful.
Mai-lieng		.6 to .7	Used only for making plowshares.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Hard, knotty, red, rather dark wood; difficult to work with an ax, does not grow straight; not very plentiful; unlimited life.
Mai-souak		.6 to .7		No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Very hard wood, very dark reddish-gray in color, well-veined, difficult to work; very well-grown tree.
[120-121]							
Mai-lam-sing		1 to 1.2		No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Hardwood, dark red, close-grained, difficult to work; well-grown tree; quite plentiful.

[table continued over]

137
84
322

Mai-seng	Dom-khlang-nang (Cambodian) Strychnos nux-vomica		.5 to .6	Its wood, roots and leaves, with the exception of the pulp of its fruit, are used as a remedy against fever and snake bite.	No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Very hard wood, slightly reddish, difficult to work; well-grown tree, its seed is the nux vomica; not very plentiful.
Mai-som-hong		20 to 25	.9 to 1		No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Slightly grayish wood, difficult to work, cannot withstand rain; well-grown tree; not very plentiful.
Mai-lek	Yan (Annamite) Morus ferrea (?)	20 to 25	.6 to .9	Railway ties. Piles for wharfs.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Ironwood, very hard, mahogany in color.
Mai-thum-da		20 to 25	.6 to .8		No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Very tall tree with blond heartwood. It is sought-after by the bonzes, who use it to make statues.
Mai-khao		18 to 20	.5 to .6	Boards, framing.	Yes	Thick forest	Lower Laos	White wood of inferior quality; lasts about five years.
Mai-mieu	Chi-gon (Annamite) Dom-cor (Cambodian) Bombax and Ochlotropis Mock cotton	15 to 20	.6 to .8	Not used as wood.	Yes	Banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Quite unresistant wood. The tree yields cotton of excellent quality. It grows rapidly, and is very common.

[table continued over]

137
84
322

Mai-pakeung		20 to 25	.8 to 1	Paneling.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Beautiful wood, purplish-red heartwood, blackens upon exposure to air.
Mai-ka-nan		25	1	Building wood.	No		Lower Laos	Hard and resistant wood, resembles the Mai-tabang; plentiful; unlimited life.
Mai-bi-mai		18 to 20	.6 to .8	Framing.	Yes		Lower Laos	Wood of inferior quality, hard but not very resistant, red in color; lasts from 6 to 10 years.
Mai-khai-so		18 to 20	.6 to .8	Framing.	Yes		Lower Laos	Wood of inferior quality, hard but not very resistant, red in color; lasts for seven years.
Mai-nga-loi		15 to 18	.5 to .6	Interior woodwork.	Yes		Lower Laos	White wood, of inferior quality; lasts for 5 to 6 years.
Mai-sisiet	Catechu Acacia catechu	30	1.3	The bark alone, which forms catechu, is used for chewing with betel.	Yes	Valleys and low slopes	Upper Laos	The wood is good only for burning.
[122-123] Mai-kob-ea		8	.25 to .35	The bark alone is used in making a very resistant paper.	Yes	Valleys	Upper Laos	
Mai-so		30	1.5	Framing and mediocre woodwork.	No	Low mountains and valleys	Upper Laos	Hard wood, fairly good, very light; not very plentiful.

[table continued over]

137
824
322

Mai-hiene		30	.8	Framing, posts, mediocre woodwork.	Only after ten years	Low slopes and valleys	Upper Laos	Good wood, straight grain; not very plentiful; very straight tree.
Mai-ka-kalang		25 to 30	.5 to .6	Posts and framing.	Yes	Low slopes and valleys	Upper Laos	Soft, reddish wood, easy to work; plentiful.
Mai-ca-ke		14 to 15	25 to 30	Used to make charcoal. Also used for short-lived projects.	Yes	Low slopes and valleys	Upper Laos	Softwood, white, good grain; plentiful.
Mai-li				Posts and columns			Upper Laos	Very hard wood, difficult to work.

6: Goudal--5 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-1-4
116, 101, 161, 141, 463, 177.65 France
636.65

"The Tai are of Mongolian race. They came from China and formed various groups, including the Laotians (and the Siamese) and the predominant ethnical group in Upper Tonking. Their numbers are assessed at a million. They are of less than average height (1.59 metres). As a people they are very gay and hospitable. Like the Cambodians, the Laotians are Buddhists, but their religious sense goes hand in hand with very great moral freedom. They are indifferent farmers but engage frequently in fishing and hunting and are excellent boatmen. As traders they possess remarkable qualities.

For a long time the Laotian was considered as an apathetic creature, hating all effort and anxious only to enjoy the present without worrying about the morrow or without trying to improve his moral well-being or his material existence by persevering labour. It cannot be denied that this people, whose country was repeatedly laid waste throughout the centuries by invasions from the north and the west, seemed at the time of our arrival in Indo-China to be doomed to decadence. . . At the present time the country has roads and tracks, and its doors are open to commercial and industrial undertakings which have already done much for the development of the land and its mineral wealth. The local authorities have no difficulty in securing the very active co-operation of the inhabitants in the contruction of roads and tracks. . . The legend

of the Laotian as an idle creature, exercising passive resistance to any attempt to make use ofhis intelligence or his physical labour, had disappeared. Far from taking no interest in public welfare as was long asserted, the Laotians on the contrary seem to take a lively interest in it, and in particular in the progress of the development of the country and of the schools and medical institutions that are being established. (2)

2. Léon Archimbaud: Rapport au nom de la Commission des finances sur le budget général des Colonies (1928), pp. 88-89. This point of view is confirmed by the following statement:

'It has been repeatedly alleged that the Laotian abhors work and does only what is strictly necessary to provide for his own needs and for those of his family. He is said to have two serious defects: a very idle mind and a hatred of effort. This view is mistaken. It is certainly true that there is a certain fundamental apathy and indolence about the Laotian but this can be quite naturally explained by his background and the circumstances

6: Goudal--5 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-3
116, 101, 161, 141, 463, 177.65 France
636.65

in which his material existence has so far been passed.

'Times have now changed, the country is entirely pacified and war and piracy are merely a memory. . . . Exports of raw materials which were practically non-existent a mere 15 years ago are now increasing rapidly and this is clearly proof that the Laotian worker is not, as has been said, indifferent to gain, but that he can collaborate effectively with the settlers.

'The whole question is one of making use of his services in a manner suited to his special mentality, customs, qualities and defects. It is essential to treat him fairly and kindly; his intelligence and his docility of character enable him to adapt himself gradually to modern working methods. The tin mines in the province of Cammon have for several years been employing Laotian workers who have proved completely satisfactory both for mining the ore and for its treatment.

'Similarly, in connection with road making, in Upper and Lower Laos groups of workers have been used for cutting down

trees and clearing away stumps and undergrowth in the heart of a mountainous country where conditions of work are difficult and resources are slight. Under the skilful direction of our administrators and engineers the use of Laotian labour has proved satisfactory in almost every case.' (M. Bosc: Rapport d'ensemble sur le Laos. Conference on Native Communities held at the International Colonial Exhibition, Paris, 1931.)"

10: d'Orleans--261 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 291, 302

"I remark some differences between the inhabitants [LSS of Sop Nao] and the Thaïs whom we have just left. Here the men shave the head, leaving only a small circle of short hair on the top. The women wear only one garment, which is fastened round the waist. At first sight the type seems to me distinct from that of Thaï; I think it is rather more European, there is a look of Indo-Caucasian relationship. The face is paler and longer, the cheekbones less prominent, the eyes less oblique than those of their Eastern brothers. However, I am only stating a first impression, which requires confirmation."

10: d'Orleans--275 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"... They [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] are of small size, with very dark complexions and narrow foreheads; their eyes are close together, but the cheek-bones are not prominent; they wear their hair very short like the bristles of a brush."

10: d'Orleans--302 -305 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 291, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"For the most part of small stature, (1) the Kas are very dark in complexion and of

1. Those whom we measured averaged about five feet two inches; the women being smaller.

the same colour all over the body. Their legs are as a rule thin and their stomachs protuberant; the nose broad and flat; the eyes rather elongated; the lips thick and the jaw prominent, while the forehead is narrow and receding. The facial angle seems to indicate that they belong to an inferior race, and, as a matter of fact, they look like savages by the side of the Laotians. These Kas have long, straight hair falling over the forehead, in some cases tied together by a strip of cloth, or else plastered on the top of the head and fastened at the back in a chignon. The men wear a large ring in the lobe of the ear and fill up the interstice with a piece of wood, [pages 303 and 304 contain illustration] [305] or a bunch of flowers. Their dress, as a rule, consists only of a sheet, that is to say of a piece of blue cloth passing between the legs and fastened round the waist, the women wearing a turban, a loose vest, and a short petticoat."

10: d'Orleans--306 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 291, 301

"Compared to the Kas, the Laotians, as I have said, represent the dominant race. Taller than the former, and of a lighter complexion, the men have not in the shoulders and chest the purity of lines which one sees in the savages, and they generally go about bareheaded, with their hair cut close and clothed only in a tunic. The women wear merely a small petticoat, though some of them have a scarf of red or yellow silk over their breasts. Their bust is, as a rule, of good shape, and their hair, combed back, is worn in a small chignon. Despite their slightly flattened nose and the size of their mouth, some of the young girls strike one as pretty, but, as is always the case in the south and in the east, they soon show signs of age. They are very fond of jewellery, and generally wear earrings in the shape of a long nail of red gold, and bracelets of the same material."

23: Franck--279 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 291, 302

"It was market day, and well fed, almost haughty women, with many brilliant reds and yellows in their dress, were squatted in the shade over their semi-tropical vegetables, and pottering homeward again in long broken files. They had almost nothing in common with the Annamese women, except their sex and the protection of the French. Their lustrous hair piled in great black glossy heaps on the top of the head in an intricate fashion, usually with a saffron, rose-yellow, or red cloth about it, and most of them with stomachers of similar gay colors, they were striking examples of the unrestricted portion of the human race. In complexion they were much like ourselves plus many layers of tan, but were noticeable for bad teeth."

23: Franck--290-291 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 684

"Though they did not thrust themselves forward, the women of this region were not so retiring as those of most of the Orient. Some of them were distinctly good-looking, well formed, their skin of an almost golden color, enhanced by the frequent bathing of most tropical peoples; and at least one of these village maidens would not have looked at all out of place in a famous Broadway review--[291] except that she was far too modest both in dress and demeanor for such company. With the conversation at Muongsen still in mind, I took care not to touch these fair damsels in getting photographs of them, though with difficulty, since it has become almost second nature during two decades of wandering among camera-shy peoples to arrange by hand my subjects to the camera's liking. It would have been a sad ending to so officially attested a trip to have been charged with one of the most serious crimes in the Laosian code!"

23: Franck--294 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 501, 515

"Bamboo rafts, with little houses on them, made their way more slowly down the stream, so placid now that it mirrored the ever-lower hills densely covered with jungle-forest, networks of lianas, some trees completely shrouded in vines, whole hillsides of huge banana-plumes, flashes of birds across them. Women wearing nothing but skirts were getting water from the river; others, especially at sundown, were bathing themselves and their naked children. Bonzes in dirty yellow robes, loafing, or horse-playing to use up the energy their calling does not permit them to waste in work or domestic happiness, showed themselves here and there along the way. The people seemed darker, burned to an almost Madrasi color."

23: Franck--327[2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 181

"The difference indicated how great is the adaptability of the human frame, for these men were if anything larger, sturdier, certainly more visibly muscular than Chinese carriers. They were like those muscle marvels one sees in gymnasiums and in physical culture magazines, no good at all beside the wiry little shrimp when it comes to real sustained hardships. Unless hunger or the white man drives them, the Laosians do little work; they are so happy-go-lucky in their tropical fairy-land that their rulers even have trouble making them keep their communal granaries filled against possible famines."

23: Franck--341 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 164, 291

"Women were bathing children and themselves here also, especially now toward sunset, but no one came to stare at me, though in China there would have been a regular circus audience. Nor was this for lack of energy, for on the whole these were a well built, muscular, and very healthy-looking people, with few if any signs of a social disease so common in Annam and China and with almost none of the filth diseases. Though the women all showed their breasts and thought nothing of it, one never saw even a bathing man completely naked. So-called barbarian peoples, though they commonly wear only a loin-cloth or its feminine equivalent, are usually as exacting about having that in place as we are with our own clothing."

25: Brodrick--91 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 142, 162, 291, 361

"The Laotians who, in their land, keep to the river valleys and avoid the hills and plateaux, are fairly easy to recognize, since there is no confusing them with the strangely garbed men and women of the northern hills or with the semi-savage 'Khas' of the mountains. The Laotians are, as a rule, of more sturdy build than any Annamese, and compared with the stolid and serious-looking Cambodians, the men of the Laos are gay and smiling. Their dress is quite unlike that of the Cambodians. Only the saffron-clad monks will be familiar if you come up from the south. The girls, especially, love bright colours. The usual costume is a skirt reaching to the ankles and often, if not generally, of light tint, puce, mauve, yellow or red. At the waist and the hem is a band of polychrome embroidery, green and white, purple and yellow or green, red and yellow. The women wear usually a white shift, sleeveless and cut rather low back and front, but all are girt about with a long, generally, yellow scarf, draped either as a bandolier with a long end hanging down one side or slung as a gigantic necklace like an Hawaian garland."

devoted to an illustration: "Junction of the Nam-Khane and the 643*
Mekong at Luang-Prabang." --Translator/ /183/ whom he had 595
chosen in Luang-Prabang itself from the families of his mandarins. 175*

KHAMONE-NOI, KING 1726-1727.

Khamone-Noi succeeded him and took as wives two of the dead /595/
king's daughters, Thene-Sao and Thene-Kham. But Intha-Som at 175*
once began to agitate. Not daring to hope that the family of the 669
Sip-Song-Panas would lend him aid against one of its children, he 643*
addressed himself to some newcomers to the land who had been 563
infiltrating for some time into the valley of the Nam-Ou. These /167/
were the "Mousseux," mountainfolk driven out of Yunnan by the
religious wars (1). Although their temperament was not at all war-

1. Violent Moslem rebellions were then devastating southern China.

like, these fugitives nevertheless agreed, since they had no choice, 721
to lend their aid to Intha-Som. In return the latter promised their 643*
leaders La-Nga and Noli that he would recognize and confirm their 175*
occupation of Muong-Yo and Boun-Neua as soon as he became king. 669
563

Submission of Intha-Som (1726). But the Mousseux (2), al-

2. The word "Mousseux" is the word which most nearly approaches the native appellation. With their slender figures, /142/ their rather white coloration, their prominent cheekbones and their well-shaped and not flattened noses, the "Mousseux" type has a greater affinity with the Indo-European type than with the yellow race type.

though they were supported by Nha-No- '184/ Muong of Muong-La,
failed in their march on Luang-Prabang and Intha-Som had no
other recourse than to make his submission. He gave up his
weapons, took an oath of obedience and fidelity in the pagoda of
Xieng-Thong, and was given permission to live in the capital,
where he settled near the Vat-Visoun with a large retinue of
Mousseux.

He was quite determined not to keep his word. The king,
moreover, was not at all worried and did not even have him watched.

149: Reinach--15a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Fig. 7 /p. 23/ A Laotian girl.

[p. 24 is blank]

149: Reinach--10la G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 36 /p.135/ Typical Khas of the province of Stung-Treng.

[114] of what has been observed, and because no better expression of the facts could be hoped for.

THE THAI RACE

142 "Laotians. Of all the Thais, the Laotian is the one who has
144 remained the purest, although he has a much higher proportion of Aryan blood than the other varieties, with the exception of the Lus. Fairly tall in stature, his hair cut short, elegant in his movements and more refined than all the other inhabitants of the land, he is the aristocratic type of Laos. His upbringing, his education, his religion and even his vices have a mark of distinction which make
438 them stand out above those of his neighbors. An excellent boatman,
505 and a trader rather than a farmer, he is the one who seems the master of the land, as much by virtue of his commercial aptitudes as by the
484 ease with which he ranges the country. Mounted on his long and narrow shaped pirogue, made in one piece of a tree trunk hollowed out by fire, he goes great distances to visit peoples of the most varied races [175] [Illustration] [176] [Blank page] [177] and serves as a link between all the human varieties which populate Laos. He is at home and at his ease everywhere, standing out clearly above all his countrymen in this respect.

[361] "The Laotian prefers to settle along navigable watercourses and in proximity to plains of ricefields. He is glad to have his land
[241] worked by mercenaries or by dependents of inferior race, and some-
[567] times by slaves (at least before our arrival). He himself, with quite an extensive knowledge of the needs and resources of the other inhabitants of the land, particularly likes to traffic in all kinds of merchandise. He it is who goes to buy forest products and cereal grains on the spot from the mountainfolk or from sedentary farmers, and sells them cloth, salt, tobacco, earthenware, farming implemen
[439] etc. in exchange. He it is who exports the products of Laos to neighboring countries and brings back the things which Laotian industry cannot produce. His business as a commercial traveler, which he likes and which gives him a good standard of living, occupies him for only a few months of the year but brings him into contact with all the neighboring peoples and also with the Europeans and Chinese in the Siamese, Annamite and Cochinchinese trading posts. Thence arises his veneer of civilization which strikes one at first glance.

462 Tilling the ricefields, hunting, fishing and managing rafts and pirogues take up about six months of the year. The rest of the time
241 they rest and enjoy themselves. The status of women in Laos, although not as low and painful as that of other women of Asiatic races, is nevertheless not as pleasant as that of their husbands. In fact, all the petty farming tasks fall on them. They perform all the household labors, care for the poultry yard and the livestock, etc. They do the cooking, decorticate the paddy, go and fetch wood and water, spin, weave and dye cotton and silk, take care of the children, etc. Less [182] fortunate than her husband, the Laotian woman has no leisure except on holidays, and even then she has to make all the preparations without letting her daily occupations suffer.

Of ordinary height, generally well made and even elegant of
• 142 figure, the Laotian woman has a friendly face and is not without
562 either grace or coquetry before her marriage. This does not mean that there are no homely girls, but these are rather an exception. As she grows older and worn from bearing children the Laotian woman loses much of her early grace, but in spite of everything she retains her joyousness, her high spirits and her very pronounced taste for celebrations when there is singing and feasting.

862 Laotian mothers worship their children. They take great care of them and often push their weakness for their children to such a
858 point as to prolong the period of breast-feeding, often beyond the child's fourth year.

342 Dwellings. Like all the representatives of the Thai family, the Laotians inhabit houses which are rectangular in shape and are always
574 raised one or two meters above the GROUND on piles. Wood and bamboo, in the form of beams, framing members, rafters, door and window casings, partitions, doors, windows, floors and shingles, are used to build houses, without the use of any nails, all joints and assemblies being fastened together with rattan.

The dimensions of the houses vary greatly and depend on the number of families that they are designed to shelter. Verandas with roofs which are sharply inclined and come down quite low are placed around the house, mainly on the south and west, to temper the heat of the sun and serve as a vestibule, a reception hall or a workshop. The family stays there during the day, as on a sort of neutral ground where people who are coming and going can be received without transgressing custom, which decrees that no one except members of the family and close friends shall have access to the inner apartments, which form the private home of the house's inhabitants.

149: Reinach--138a G-3 (no date)1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 47 /p.183/ Group of Laotians of Lower Laos.

149: Reinach--149a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

Fig. 50 /p.197/ Typical children of Muong-Son (Hua-Pahn). (Courtesy of M. Besson.)

149: Reinach--17/a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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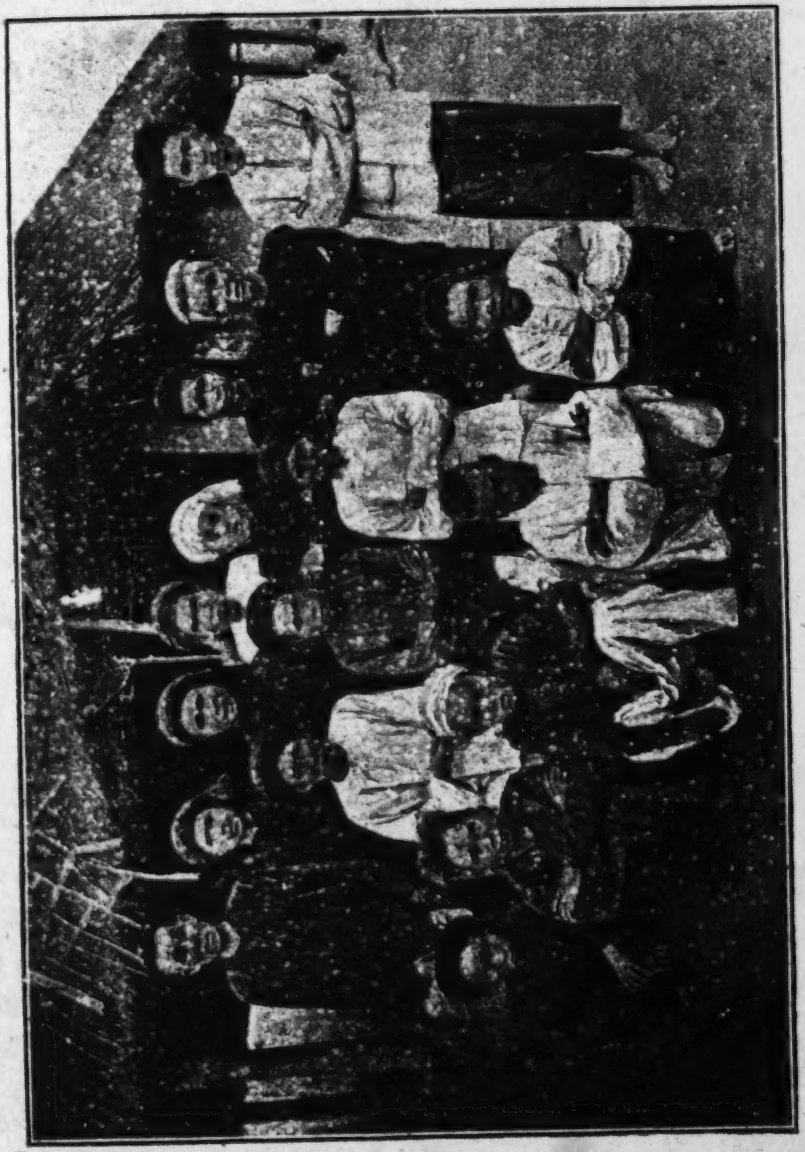

Fig. 57 /p. 324/ Group of Phou-Thai, (Sib-Song-Chau-Thai).

619 they bear come, as in the case of the Khao-Thais, from peculiarities
[291] of costume. In fact, whereas the Dam-Thais, both men and women,
563 only wear clothing which is dark blue and almost black, with no colored ornamentation, the Deng-Thais, although they wear the same kind of clothing, always add a few ornaments such as embroidery, galloons or red turbans.

Physical appearance. Costume. The Thais have strongly marked
● 142 features and stern faces. Their complexion is clear and rather swarthy,
461 and they are quite tall. They are more hardy and above all more industrious than the Laotians.

Like the Annamites, the men let their hair grow. They bind it
302 up in a coil on the top of the head and cover it with a vast turban,
291 the ends of which fall onto their shoulders on either side of the face. Men's clothing consists of a broad pair of trousers with a very low seat and a straight tunic buttoned along the side which comes down to the knees. A sort of sash made of the same kind of cloth hugs the
[286] waist over the tunic, as a belt would do. The material used by the Thais for clothing are made of cotton which is generally grown locally and which the [232] women spin, weave and dye themselves. Their garments, made with very coarse, irregular thread, have a rough appearance but are very solid.

The women's figures are thick-set but not fleshy. Their faces,
142 which are more rounded than elongated, are pleasant and their eyes are beautiful. But childbearing and the work of the fields soon destroy their gracefulness, and after the age of twenty-five their figures thicken, their wrists and ankles become heavy and their faces begin to harden and wrinkle. [Illustration alongside text here]

[286] The Thai woman wears a skirt which is quite similar to the Laotian skirt, but made of coarser cloth and dyed the same color as the men's
291 clothing. Over this she wears a very short jacket made of the same cloth which is buttoned down the front and sometimes embellished
563 with chased silver work. The height of elegance is for the jacket to be cut in such a way that when the woman moves in a certain way it lets a little skin be seen above the skirt waist. Outside the home and for ceremonies the women put on a sort of dressing gown which covers their other clothing and comes down to the ankle. Its sleeves are very close-fitting, and the garment buttons straight down the front to a point below the waist. A strip of dark violet cloth, for the Dam-Thais, and red for

149: Reinach--179 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai

Men's and women's clothing varies little in [244] form from that 291
of the Thais. Under their jacket, however, the women wear a breast-
cloth attached to the neck and waist by cords, like the Annamite and
Tonkinese women.

The Lus. Two centuries or so ago the Lus, who also belong to 619
the Thai race, used to live in the "Shan states" between the Salouen
and the Nam-Hon, where they were surrounded by a drifting popula- 175
tion composed of Burmese, Kunes, Ngieous, etc. [Illustration
alongside text here.]

Following emigrations, they came to Laos and formed two dis-
tinct agglomerations.

Some Lu families have settled in the course of this century on [563]
the territory of Luang-Prabang. Today these Lus form villages com-
posed exclusively of people of their race, but live on good terms with
the Laotians, whose language and customs they have adopted.

In the old Lu kingdom of Muong-Sing, on the other hand, this 101
people has retained its habits, that is to say its character and temper-
ament are like those of the Burmese.

There the Lu is boastful, full of arrogance, a braggart and in- [105]
solent, but a little firmness is enough to humble his pride.

Lus have a clear complexion, delicate features, keen eyes and 142
a swinging stride. The men are generally tattooed from the calf of
the leg to above the navel, and they also have tattoos on their chest, 304
[245] neck, shoulders and arms which are generally red and in the 302
shape of squares with rounded corners. They have long hair rolled in
a coil on top or slightly to one side of the head. This coil is wrapped
in an enormous turban which they wear tilted over one ear. Many of
them have a moustache. This they train upwards, a trait which gives
them a conquering air, and to keep it up they smear it with wax.
[Illustration alongside text here]

The men's costume consists of a pair of full trousers and a short 291
jacket buttoned along the side. It is made of cotton and is dark blue,
almost black, in color. The bottoms of the trousers, the edges of the
jacket, the cuffs of the sleeves and the armholes are ornamented with
three galloons (blue, white and red) which are quite narrow. Their
holiday clothes are often made of silk in varied colors.

The women wind their hair into a heavy coil on top of the head [302]
and on the side of the coil they place a broad circular plaque of [301]
chased silver. They wear skirts like the Laotian women, but the
stripes are very broad, run crosswise and are in bright colors. They

Tribal Tai
Kha

291 The men's costume is like that of the Laotians. A few, however, have adopted the Burmese costume, turban and all, in which case they let their hair grow and roll it in a coil instead of having a brush cut.

The women wear a very long skirt with broad stripes running across it which is fastened beneath the breasts. The bust is covered by a closed jacket or bodice which is cut straight and made of cotton or silk of varied colors. Their hair is rolled in a coil on the nape of the neck or is held in place around the head by a narrow band of cloth and allowed to fall freely down the back. Both sexes wear metal cylinders in their ears, like the Lus, and silver jewelry.

[302] [301]

The Youns are more robust than their fellows, and also more industrious. The women are perhaps less pretty than the Laotian women, but they are just as friendly and merry.

[142]

[251] Both men and women chew betel, and also "Mieng" (green tea, fermented and salted). They smoke tobacco in enormous cigarettes rolled in dried banana leaves. [Illustration alongside text here]

276

The Youns are primarily farmers and livestock breeders. They excel in breeding and training oxen as draft animals.

We have seen that the Youns, although they speak the same language as the Laotians, have their own form of writing which is generally used for religious writings. Their bonzes, who are highly learned for the most part, are renowned for their expert knowledge of the rites of the Buddhist religion.

212 292

Marriage, divorce, polygamy, births, funerals, celebrations and festivities are all the same among the Youns as among the Laotians, except for a few minor differences in detail which we need not mention here.

101

THE KHAS

619 Before entering into detail about the mores and customs of the main Kha families, we shall again have recourse to the learned work by the Superior Resident in Laos in order to give a general sketch of this race which represents at least a third of the population.

181

[252] "They are to be found throughout the territory, and are divided into more than sixty families. As much as those who inhabit northern Laos are docile, manageable and respectful, so are those who inhabit the southern part of Laos proud, independent and warlike, particularly the tribes inhabiting the mountains which separate us from Annam.

149: Reinach--183 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Kha

"The most varied types are to be found among the Khas. Some 142
are just like the American 'Redskins,' others have a heavier and more
bestial appearance, and still others are small and puny. Certain
of them are veritable savages who have never heard of clothing and 291
live in shapeless huts, taking to the trees or fleeing into the forest
at the slightest alarm, with monkey-like habits and the instincts of
wild animals.

"Others, on the other hand, wear clothing quite like that of the
Lus, build proper houses and enjoy a comparative degree of civiliza-
tion. But they all carry a bag of dark blue cloth which never leaves
them.

"It is a long way between the primitives which some of them are 563
and the half-civilized beings which the better policed among them
are. Thus the greater part of these poor folk have long been in servi-
tude, especially in the northern and central part, and have become
the humble servants of more highly refined races which exploit them.

"In the south, however, some tribes of particular origin have
been able to resist all outer authority and are still free and independ-
ent today." [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos),
"Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

The Khas of northern Laos. All the Khas of northern Laos have 361
been brought under control, and even emancipated, and live grouped
in villages or hamlets which are distributed over the mountainsides,
generally near some watercourse.

Houses. Kha houses, which are built on piles and in the same 242
style as those of the Laotians although in less careful fashion, are
set down without any care for symmetry or alignment. They are
generally much smaller and built for a single family. The houses
are extremely dirty.

The Khas have very little in the way of large livestock, and so 231
the under part of the houses shelter only pigs and poultry.

A few Kha tribes, such as the Khouenes (white and black), 361
Khmous and Lemets, which are the most civilized have quite fine
villages with well built and carefully aligned houses. A pagoda will
sometimes be found in these.

Costume. Khas of both sexes wear their hair long and wound in 291
a coil on the nape of the neck or top of the head. The [258] Lemets
comb part of their hair down over their forehead and cut it off
straight at the eyebrow level.

23: Franck--281-282 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 144, 644, 177.64 France
636.64

"The huge commissaire, now half invalid but still a great force in his province, and beloved apparently by all classes of its resident, was a survival of the earlier colonial days, when a man in his present position was virtually king [282] of all he surveyed. His half-dozen pure-blooded dogs all wore stout canvas pants to assure their offspring against mixture with the local mongrel breed. But some officials had not taken the same precautions with themselves, and had several brown-complexioned children at school in Hanoi, though they were bachelors."

26: Brodrick--60 [2] S-3 (1939) 1944 Laotians
116, 144, 171

"The inhabitants--or rather the civilized inhabitants--of the Laos country are of the same stock as the Siamese--at least they speak an allied language and they appear to be the same people as the Laos in northern and eastern Siam."

/9/

CHAPTER II
ETHNOGRAPHIC OUTLINE
PREHISTORIC HYPOTHESES

Laos is a geographical expression which does not correspond I
to any ethnographic reality. To be sure, within the last thirty L
years it has taken a place in the French Indo-Chinese Union, it 174
possesses an administrative life all its own, and a political status, /101/
although vague, which does not resemble that of any other country. But if one wishes to trace the main lines of its history, or more exactly to study the succession of peoples' migrations which resulted in the swarm of races which inhabit it today, one must abstract it from its present political limits and situate it in the whole of the Indo-Chinese peninsula. Its river frontier has, in /101/
fact, never constituted a genuine barrier in the west, for the basin of the Mékong is separated from that of the Ménam only by slight undulations. Thus the Laotian on the left bank and the Siamese on /10/ the right bank resemble one another like brothers.

The great obstacle is in the east. It is constituted by the I
Annamitic Chain which has divided the Indo-Chinese peninsula, L
from the point of view of race, religion and civilization, into 174
two distinct sides: the eastern slope, which is the domain of the 101
Annamites, a people of Mongol civilization; and the western /144/
slope which is occupied by Laos, Cambodia, Siam and Burma, "the abandoned rear guard of the peoples of Indo-European civilization" (1).

1. Cf. R. Meyer, Notice ethnographique.

Between these two ethnic zones "the antithesis is more striking than between the Germanic World and the Latin World. The one, the Chinese zone, contains the yellow, impenetrable world whose fabulous past has imposed on the people of Annam, crushed down as they are in their coastal plains, the sacred prestige of its 'characters' which are to it what Pali and Sanskrit are to the races of Hindu origin, and Latin and Greek are to European peoples. The other, the Indian zone, has nurtured the slow evolution of the gentlest peoples of the earth and favored the blossoming of the

I in northern Indo-China, whose inhabitants were obliged to have re-
L course to /13/ China in order to obtain iron farming implements.
172 According to the discoveries of Indo-Chinese geologists and the learned studies of Dr. Verneau (1), these primitive populations

I
L 1. Cf. R. Verneau, Les récentes découvertes prehistoriques
174 de l'Indochine (comptes rendus de l'Académie des
162 Sciences, 1924). -- H. Mansuy, Contribution à l'étude de
144 la préhistoire de l'Indochine, 1923-1925. -- E. Patte, Notes sur le préhistorique indochinois, 1925.

presented the same characteristics as may still be found "in the islands of Malaysia, from Sumatra to the center of Borneo, among the tribes which constitute the Indonesian group." Today they are known as Kha in Laotian lands, as Moï in Annam and as Pnong in Cambodia. Among these Khas, "There are unquestionably various types. In some of them we recognize without any difficulty the influence of Mongol blood which has modified the characteristics of the primitive race in varying degrees. But if we eliminate these half-breeds who are more or less impregnated with yellow blood, we are left with dolichocephalic, hypsicephalic individuals with pentagonal heads... who closely resemble the old race which once lived on the frontiers of China. It is therefore becoming increasingly probable that the Indonesians and the Khas are both descended from a stock which used to live /14/ in the north of the Indo-Chinese peninsula"(1).

1. R. Verneau, Les crânes humains du gisement préhistorique de Pho-Binh-Gia. -- L'Antropologie, pp. 558-559. Quoted by H. Mansuy in the Mémoires du Service géologique de l'Indochine. Vol. XII, fascicule II, 1925, vi, p. 9.

I From the state of his knowledge on the Indo-Chinese Neolithic
L period in 1925, H. Mansuy has concluded: "These Indonesians
174 form a group of remarkable homogeneity whenever they are not impregnated with the blood of the genuinely Mongoloid races in the midst of which they are disseminated... Through their cranial morphology and their short faces, they are linked to the disharmonic dolichocephalics of the end of the Pleistocene and to the Cro-Magnon type... The real similarity between the men of the last phase of the Pleistocene in Europe and the Indonesian group which

115: Le Boulanger--147 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8
Ho

Although not organized at first, their bands gradually formed 175*
into armed contingents which soon became known under the names 563
of /237/ black, yellow or red Flags, depending on the color of
their banners. In contrast to the Meos, who were called White
Flags (1) and whose settlement fifteen years previously had, on the

1. See above, pp. 212 and 213.

whole, been permanent and not too violent, the Hos waged a war
of brigandry which calls to mind the sinister exploits of the Grandes /579/
Compagnies which were dismembered by Du Guesclin. They razed
villages, held the terrorized inhabitants for ransom, or else hired
themselves out to the inhabitants to protect them against other
bands. The cantons of the Black River were the first to fall prey to
their pillaging, but then the leaders of the region came to terms
with them, interested them in their internal disputes, took them
with them to the Tonkinese delta to aid the Annamites against the
French, and finally sent one band against another in the Laotian
territories which they devastated as far as Nong-Khay. Both mili-
tary and diplomatic action had to be taken by France following the
first Pavie mission in order to suppress them. Those of them who /144/
did not go back to China abandoned their guns to become farmers,
married Thai or Kha wives and thus created a stock of mixed blood
which, by successive crossings, /238/ merged into the mass of the
population.

Restitution of the Prabang by Siam (1867). In the midst of all 648*
the cares which the threats of these invaders caused him, Tiantha- 175*
Koumane had the satisfaction of restoring the venerated statue of 778
the Prabang to his people.

Carried off to Vientiane by Thao-Nong in 1707 and ravished
successively by Chulalok in 1778 and by Bodin in 1828 (1), the

1. See above, pp. 47, 133, 156, 158 and 174.

kingdom's ancient palladium was finally returned by King Mongkut,
in 1867, to Fa-Ngoun's descendant, who sent the Oupahat Oun-Kham
to Bangkok to take solemn possession thereof.

Taken by land as far as Xieng-Mene (Luang-Prabang right bank),
it was displayed for seven days and seven nights at the landing of

149: Reinach--94 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

At the present time labor is what is needed to place under cultivation the land which is still lying fallow. Indeed, scarcely 30,000 square kilometers are cultivated out of the 80,000 which could be used. Once placed under cultivation these 50,000 square kilometers (1) could support from [126] 500,000 to 600,000 new inhabitants, 168 311

(1) About 15,000 square kilometers in northern Laos and 35,000 in southern Laos.

at the rate of ten or twelve inhabitants per square kilometer.

2. RACES

The population of Laos can be divided into four large distinct categories. These are: 162 144 197

1. The Thais, that is to say, all the people who speak, write or understand the Thai language with a few slight differences either in pronunciation, the construction of words, orthography or writing.

This race is subdivided into several types or varieties which are:

The Laotians (or Lao or Phou-Lao) (1).

(1) We have created the word Laotian by derivation to designate the inhabitants of Laos in general, but in reality there is one variety of the Thai family, the most numerous one moreover, which bears the name Lao or Phou-Lao. The whole of the region included in the Mékong basin above Cambodia and in the basin of the Upper Ménam is called Muong-Lao, Xieng-Lao, or land inhabited by the Phou-Lao.

The Phou-Thais.
The Khao-Thais.
The Dam-Thais.
The Deng-Thais.
The Neua-Thais.
The Phou-Eunes.
The Youns.
The Lus.

162
144
197

2. The Khas (2) or descendants of the prehistoric aborigines.

(2) In Laos the word Kha means slave, individual of inferior and scornful condition, or else one who lives as a savage. The name, which was applied by the last invaders of Laos to the races which had preceded them there, has the same meaning as Moï in Annamite, Stieng or Peunong in Cambodian and Orang Oulou in Malay.

They mixed with newcomers to form a large variety of secondary tribes which, despite their common origin, differ from one another in type, language, dialect or idiom, mores, customs, dress, etc.

[771 212]

The Khas have no form of writing, except for the Khouènes and the Khmous who have been partly converted to Buddhism while their [127] fellows have clung to a crude fetishism in which belief in spirits (Phis) prevails.

[641]

A few of these tribes have not yet submitted to our domination and do not pay any taxes.

The principal Kha tribes in Laos are the following:

a) In northern Laos. (The names below should be followed by the word Khas.)

1. PURE KHAS

Khouènes-Khao.	Koussoungs.	Bos.	Kouangs.
Khouènes-Dam.	Bits.	Sapouans.	Saks.
Lemets.	Phèng-Mis.	Kasèngs.	Mouçeus.
Leups.	Sos.	Tiols.	Khmous.
Lawas.	Siengs-Di.	Alous.	
Khos.	Giois.	Ouxas.	
Khouis.	Hock-Roï.	Panas.	

2. KHAS MIXED WITH LAOTIANS, THAIS, LUS AND YOUNS OR IN THE COURSE OF CHANGE

Oks.	Sos.	Phongs.	Phou-Thuongs.
Youngs.	Souès.	Laos-Niôs.	Phou-Oks.
Phou-Phays.	Sèks.	Phou-Thengs.	

149: Reinach--96 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

162
144
197

3. KHAS MIXED WITH HÔS, MÉOS AND YAOS

Khas-Hôs.
Ounis.
Hô-Kias.
Lolos.
Sidas.

b) In southern Laos.

1. PURE KHAS

Djaraïs.	Mane.	Katongs.	Cédangs.
Nia-Heuns.	Halang-Doang.	Katangs.	Radès.
Alaks.	Salèngs.	Niès.	Habans.
Tiem Poueûns.	Peunongs.	Phou-Khaos.	Goclars.
Lovès.	Tha-Hoïs.	Khon-Tou.	Bahnars.
Braos.	Vêns.	Banams.	Rognaos.
Souks.	Sos.	Bos.	Sèks.
Sèngs.	Hin.		

[128] 2. KHAS WHO ARE LAOTIAN-IZED OR IN COURSE OF CHANGE

Bolovens.	Pou-Bathièngs.	Lovès-Lao.	Phou-Oks.
Ongs.	Toueis.	Souk-Khok.	Phou-Phays.
Pou-Thongs.	Laos-Niôs.	Souk-Nîa.	Phou-Thuongs.

3. The Mongols who have immigrated from Yunnan.

TRIBES OF MONGOL ORIGIN FROM NEIGHBORING LANDS

Hôs.	Méos-Dam.	Yaos-Lantènes (black)
Méos-Khaô.	Méos-Dèng.	Yaos-Khao (horned)
		Yaos-Ao-Tchaine (with sapeks)

4. The foreign Asiatics.

Annamites.	Burmese.	Kûnes.
Cambodians.	Yunnanese.	Tsongs-Sous.
Siamese.	Ngieous or Nuons.	Malays.
Chinese.		

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"When the Annamites, who were of Chinese origin, succeeded, although not without difficulty, in destroying the Cham empire, they drove the conquered people back into the Mékong basin where a kingdom grew up which had Bassac as its capital and was known by the name of Champa-Sak by the Laotians. It was then that the Thais, driving the Khas and the Chams whom they could not absorb or who resisted them back towards the mountains, took possession of all the plains and all the valleys. From this last mixture, on top of so many others, there has resulted quite a large number of varieties which have a common origin and have had a parallel development and life, but which have not mixed with neighboring varieties. The generic name of Thais which is given to this collection of men implies a certain number of types which, if not different, are at least dissimilar in certain respects. Finally, there were two rather inconsiderable infusions of Aryan blood. The first occurred in the fifth century A.D. and went northward from Cambodia as far as Luang-Prabang. The second was in the seventh century, when the sacred books were brought from India through Burma and the north Mékong valley. A curious fact worthy of note is that the Chinese pilgrims Fa-Hiang and Huyen-Tchang, returning from the Indies where they had gone to study the Buddhist religion, wrote their well known works in China at about the same time. The influence of the Aryans, who were the bearers of the sacred books of Buddhist doctrine and also of many Brahminic superstitions, manifested itself especially in a physical way among the Thais of the northwest and less noticeably among the Thais on the very banks of the Mékong.

"Although the Aryans scarcely transformed or modified a small segment of the Thais from the physical point of view, without having any influence of this type on the rest, it may nevertheless easily be asserted that the moral influence which they exerted was felt by all the Thais and that all of them had their moral and intellectual life [123] modified by the Aryans to an appreciable degree. Only the Khas escaped this influence."

Finally, in conclusion, this author adds:

"The population of Laos can be naturally divided into three broad categories:

"1. The Thais, who include all the people speaking the Thai language with slight differences in accent and a few differences in vocabulary. The chief among them are:

"The Laotians, the Phou-Thais, the white, black and red Thais,

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the Thais-Neua, the Pou-Eums, the Les and the Yunns.

"2. The Khas, and the Khas who are evolving towards types of the first category;

"3. The inhabitants who come from neighboring countries: China, Yunnan, Annam, Cambodia, Siam, Burma."

We shall now give Dr. Lefèvre's version (1):

(1) Dr. Lefèvre, Un voyage au Laos, 1898.

"1. The first inhabitants of the peninsula or true aborigines were the Khas, a nearly savage fold without monuments and, so to speak, without any form of writing, who were driven back into the mountains by the successive invaders of their territory.

"2. The Malays or Chams were the first colonists to come to Indo-China. Little by little they succeeded in forming several principalities, the most important of which was the kingdom of Champa or Tiampa, which included the whole coast from Tourane to Baria.

"3. After the Malay infiltration came the arrival of the Brahmins, who had been driven out of Benares with their leader Pra-Thong. They struggled with the Malays and almost absorbed them in the end. The Brahmins were the first ancestors of the Cambodians.

"4. Under Açoka, emperor of Burma, took place the arrival of the Kmers who came from Pégou and Hansavadi and settled in Cambodia, thereby overshadowing the Brahmin caste.

"5. Tartars came down from the north and leveled all. They were followed by the Thais who came from Mongolia or Setchuen and who spread to Siam, Laos, Burma, Kouang-Si, Kouang-Toung, the north of Tonkin and the island of Haïnan.

"6. To the east, on the coast, are the Annamites, who came from Kouei-Tcheou and occupy all the territory included between the Annamitic Chain and the sea."

Dr. Lefèvre's conclusions are worthy of note, for they were based on documents which are reputed to be authentic. We [134] should, however, add one particular relating to the prehistoric period, that is to say to the epoch of polished stone and the bronze age. At that time there were human beings in the Mékong basin who had the same way of life, the same kind of tools and the same methods of work as our own ancestors in ancient Gaul. In fact, the interesting

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149: Reinach--103 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

177 Notice should also be taken of the transformation which has been
563 going on for half a century or so, in the fusion of Khas with Lus,
Laos and Thais. From these fusions have emerged the mixed-blood
144' races which are known as Phou-Thèngs, Phou-Thîlongs, Soués,
Phongs, Phou-Oks, Laos-Nîds, etc. [137] [Illustration] [138]
[Blank page]

[139] Later on in 1898 and 1899 the 1894 experiment was tried once more, thanks to the intelligent initiative taken by the Superior Commandant in Upper Laos. His Majesty the king of Luang-Prabang proclaimed the emancipation of the Khas in his kingdom on both banks of the Mékong and even of those who, while natives of Luang-Prabang, are employed in Siam in the lumber camps of the upper Ménam valley.

In résumé, the Khas of French Laos are anything but a negligible quantity, but rather constitute a force and a reserve of energy from which we may draw great profit.

3. LANGUAGES

197 It is impossible here to examine in detail the many Kha idioms
and dialects, which only a long and attentive special study could
194 succeed in coordinating, in grouping by similarities and in identifying
with other languages, idioms and dialects which contributed to their formation.

The Kha dialects have harsh consonant sounds, among which the R and K are particularly noticeable, in contrast to what is the case in the other forms of the Thai language spoken in Laos where R, except in Siamese, is replaced by L or H.

Insofar as it is possible to judge, the primitive languages must have been corrupted when the land was invaded by foreigners. From that time on they dissolved, changed and became subdivided into idioms, and then into varied dialects. Besides the regional and racial
211 idioms and the various local dialects the Khas, who do not (except for the Khouènes) have any form of writing, use various means to translate their thoughts, and symbolic objects such as strips of wood in which they make notches in accordance with a conventional system.

This method may be compared to that of a great many illiterate persons, who sometimes succeed in keeping quite complicated accounts by this means.

If one were to entrust a letter to a Kha courier, for example, one [140] would give him the following symbolic objects grouped together:

[114] of what has been observed, and because no better expression of the facts could be hoped for.

THE THAI RACE

142 "Laotians. Of all the Thais, the Laotian is the one who has remained the purest, although he has a much higher proportion of
144 Aryan blood than the other varieties, with the exception of the Lus. Fairly tall in stature, his hair cut short, elegant in his movements and more refined than all the other inhabitants of the land, he is the aristocratic type of Laos. His upbringing, his education, his religion and even his vices have a mark of distinction which make
438 them stand out above those of his neighbors. An excellent boatman, and a trader rather than a farmer, he is the one who seems the master
505 of the land, as much by virtue of his commercial aptitudes as by the
484 ease with which he ranges the country. Mounted on his long and narrow shaped pirogue, made in one piece of a tree trunk hollowed out by fire, he goes great distances to visit peoples of the most varied races [175] [Illustration] [176] [Blank page] [177] and serves as a link between all the human varieties which populate Laos. He is at home and at his ease everywhere, standing out clearly above all his countrymen in this respect.

[361] "The Laotian prefers to settle along navigable watercourses and in proximity to plains of ricefields. He is glad to have his land
[241] worked by mercenaries or by dependents of inferior race, and some-
[567] times by slaves (at least before our arrival). He himself, with quite an extensive knowledge of the needs and resources of the other inhabitants of the land, particularly likes to traffic in all kinds of merchandise. He it is who goes to buy forest products and cereal grains on the spot from the mountainfolk or from sedentary farmers, and sells them cloth, salt, tobacco, earthenware, farming implement
[439] etc. in exchange. He it is who exports the products of Laos to neighboring countries and brings back the things which Laotian industry cannot produce. His business as a commercial traveler, which he likes and which gives him a good standard of living, occupies him for only a few months of the year but brings him into contact with all the neighboring peoples and also with the Europeans and Chinese in the Siamese, Annamite and Cochinchinese trading posts. Thence arises his veneer of civilization which strikes one at first glance.

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[525]
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Tribal Tai

s the long pirogue, and the jockeys are the oarsmen. Nor will it be in vain to remark that, as in our races, heavy wagers are often laid by the owners and the lovers of this kind of sport.

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Thais or Phou-Thais. The Thais or Phou-Thais are divided into four distinct groups. These are:

1. The Khao-Thais (white);
2. The Dam-Thais (black);
3. The Deng-Thais (red);
4. The Neua-Thais (northern).

The Khao-Thais are the result of marriages between Chinese men and Dam-Thai women, or vice versa, although the former case is the most frequent. They do not form large agglomerations, but only isolated family groups in the midst of the surrounding population. They are found only in the northern part of the Sib-Song-Chau-Thais, a territory which is dependent on Laos from the ethnographic point of view but administratively attached to Tonkin.

The following is what is known of their origin: [229] [Illustration] [230] [Blank page] [231]

"Around 1600 a rebel Chinese leader assembled a few partisans, set sail from Canton and landed at Haiphong. From there he went on to Bac-Ninh, continually increasing the number of his men. At Bac-Ninh the rebel leader received an envoy from the king of Annam, who asked him to help put down the Thais and the Muongs of the Black River. The Chinese leader accepted, and after leaving Bac-Ninh he went to Lao-Kay, from which point he soon entered the province of the Sib-Sing-Chau-Thais. After defeating the Thais and the Muongs he was given this province out of gratitude for his help. His troops, worn out by the campaign, settled in the country and lost no time in marrying Thai women. It was from such unions that the white Thais were born" (1).

(1) E. Picanon, op. cit. [Le Laos français, Paris, 1901.]

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Dam-Thais and Deng-Thais. These two varieties have a common origin and belong to the same family (2). The different names which

(2) Thais are found in nearly all of Laos, where they are scattered among the Laotian population. They are particularly numerous in the Hua-Pahn, where they are in the majority in certain muongs.

149: Reinach--400 G-3 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[102]

APPENDIX XVII
ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLES OF LAOS
I

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Which was the truly autochthonous race, whence did it come, and what were its mores and customs? No one can answer this question, and the only statement which can be advanced is that the savage peoples must have settled in the Indo-Chinese peninsula at a time when present-day Indo-China did not yet exist, geologically speaking, and when a greater or lesser part of the Asiatic continent was covered by water.

Coming from the Malay Archipelago, the Khas occupied the south of the peninsula at first and immediately entered into a struggle with the aborigines. Stronger and more intelligent, they drove the aborigines back into the forests and mountains and founded groups and colonies in their midst which gradually absorbed the first occupants, until that day when the victorious Khas came up against men of the yellow race who drove them back into the mountains in their turn, and into the poorest and most remote parts of the land.

Coming down from the high plateaus of central Asia, probably from Tibet, the men of yellow race came in through the northwest and at first occupied the northern provinces of the immense territory which was later to make up the Chinese empire. These natives, whom the Chinese chroniclers designate by the name of Y, that is to say "Bearers of large bows," and by the name of "Miao-Tse," or "Sons of the uncultivated fields," were driven back in their turn by new invaders. They then fell back into the southern provinces and sought refuge on little-accessible peaks where more or less pure types of their ancient race may still be found today, and from there they spread into the valleys of the Mekong, the Menam, the Salouen and the Irrawaddy. Isolated from one another as a consequence of their expansion, these individuals of primitive race became mixed with one another and with the first inhabitants of the conquered regions, and gave birth to intermediary sub-races and to distinct groups whose character and even number is very difficult to determine. Language became [103] differentiated, the kind of handwriting used was influenced by the proximity of more powerful peoples, dress changed, and yet all of them preserved analogous usages and beliefs which militate in favor of a common origin. Thence arises the necessity of seeking the origin of these peoples in the diversity of families, tribes, sub-races and races which sucessively shared the extreme provinces of present-day

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China and Indo-China (1)
DE PRANON LE LAOS français 1901 CHAUMEL [FAR

149: Reinach--401 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

China and Indo-China (1).

[113] (1) E. Picanon, Le Laos français. 1901, Challamel. [Paris.]

II

173 Laos, Thais and Khas. Although the Laotian legends
563 attribute the same origin to all of these (Mueng-Theng or Dien-Bien-
144 Phu) and say that they all came from the same "gourd" (Nam-Tao-Phoun), it is hardly likely that the Laotians and the Khas have a common origin. Indeed, the characteristics which serve to distinguish the two races are too numerous and too marked, both from the point of view of the racial types themselves and as regards language, mores and religious beliefs.

144 Nor can it be affirmed that the Khas are the representatives of
174 the aboriginal population, for before any of their people had mounted the throne of Luang-Prabang, six kings foreign to their race had already occupied it--if we may regard the list of the first kings of the land which is preserved in the Phong-Sa Va-Dan (annals of the kingdom) as correct--and of these conquering princes the first is said to have come from India, and the second from Cambodia.

In any case, the Khas are said to have preceded the Laotians in the land, and it was not until the reign of their fourth and last king that they are supposed to have been conquered and driven out or enslaved by the Laotians, who had come down from Dieu-Bien-
[609] Phu. Since that time, and despite many revolts of which the last is almost recent, the Khas have never ceased being "a folk taillable and liable to forced labor at pleasure" for their vanquishers, and their name has become a synonym for a low person or slave in the current
[56] idiom. Not until 1895 were the Khas once and for all freed--freed is perhaps not the word, for in the strict sense they were never slaves--or at least summoned to enjoy a system of rule similar to that of the other natives and which left no margin for arbitrariness and vexations.

173 In designating Dien-Bien-Phu as the cradle of the Laotian people, or at least in attributing to the Laotians and the Thais a common origin, legend seems to be in agreement with reality. There are indeed many points of resemblance and contact between the two peoples. The type is invariably the same, although finer in the native of Luang-
175 Prabang than in the native of Lai-Chau or Dien-Bien-Phu. Not more
291 than two hundred years ago the Laotians still wore, like the black Thais, the Annamite costume and their hair wound in a coil. It
177 was doubtless after contact with the Siamese--who had themselves

175 [104] taken after the Cambodians in this respect--that they later
291 adopted the "sampot" and formed the habit of cutting their hair very
177 short, just as the Thais of Lai-Chau today dress like their Chinese neighbors and wear their hair in a long pigtail. The same reasons may also explain modifications in language and writing, which must have been identical in the beginning.

563 Of the Phou-Thais who are settled today in the territory of
144 Luang-Prabang, some--and these make up the greater number--are black Thais (aborigines) from Dien-Bien-Phu, with a darker coloration than the inhabitants of Lai-Chau, who are called white Thais for this reason. The others belong to this second variety.

The ones who sacked Luang-Prabang in 1887 under the leadership of Deo-Van-Tri were white Thais.

Youns. The Laotians living on the right bank of the Mekong at Xieng-Mai, Xieng-Sen, Muong-Nan, etc. are called Youns.
[304] The only feature which distinguishes them from their fellows on the left bank is that they generally tattoo their stomachs, whereas the others tattoo the thighs and upper part of the legs, whence the names "Lao-Phoung-Khao" (white-bellied Laotians) and Lao-Phoung-Dam (black-bellied Laotians) which are used in designating the ones and the others.

Phais. Neither do the Phais constitute a separate racial group. They are Khas who are in the process of being transformed, Khas crossed with either Lus or Laotians according as their neighbors have been representatives of the first or the second of these races. Although after this contact they have begun to police themselves and to bring their way of life into conformity with that of the Lus or Laotians, they are nonetheless subject to the same regime as the Khas in respect to taxes and other matters.

Lus. The Lus, who are natives of the Sip-Song Pan-Nas, did
563 not come and settle in any great numbers in the territory of Luang-
175 Prabang until long after the Laotians, and then only in order to flee the war which was desolating their own land, or simply because they hoped to find better living conditions in this territory. The immigration took place in an entirely peaceful manner, and since that time the Lus have not ceased to live on good terms with the Laotians, whose mores and dress they have generally adopted and by whom they will soon be completely assimilated.

563 Khos, Meos, Yaos. These various names designate natives whose racial type, dress and hairdo ending in a queue unquestionably denote a Chinese origin, and who do not differ from one another except

149: Reinach--260 G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

Dry rice may be grown in the plains, but is generally cultivated in mountain rais, for the peoples who consume it are settled in the highlands. Indeed, the Khas are the ones who mainly practice its cultivation. The ratio of total dry rice production to that of glutinous rice is about one to four. 243

It is difficult to give any official figures, even approximate ones --for the reasons given above--regarding the total quantity of rice, whether the year be a good or bad one, which Laos produces. It differs, moreover, from one year to the next because of meteorological variations and also because of the damaging epizootic diseases which recur periodically, decimating the farming animals and forcing the inhabitants to reduce the area of their plantings. [231]

[355] One can, however, given the amount necessary for the subsistence of a family of five, deduce the approximate weight of rice which is indispensable for feeding any given group of people. 262 146

It is estimated that the average yearly consumption by a family of five is 28 piculs of paddy (1,700 kilograms), which yield about 17 piculs of threshed rice (1,026 kilograms). 243

Now the total population of Laos, which is estimated at 470,000, will normally contain 94,000 families of five, or groupings of five individuals of all ages and both sexes. On this basis it is easy to calculate that the amount of paddy needed to feed these 94,000 groups will be 2,632,000 piculs (159,800,000 kilograms) of paddy and 1,598,000 piculs (96,440,000 kilograms) of threshed rice.

In addition to this indispensable minimum merely for feeding the inhabitants, other quantities of rice are also necessary: 1) For fodder for certain animals and for making alcohol, pastry, etc., a consumption figure which we estimate at one-fifth of the above figure, or 526,400 piculs of paddy (31,794,560 kilograms) or 319,608 piculs of threshed rice (19,308,840 kilograms); 2) For seed and emergency reserves. These latter may be calculated at the rate of 5 piculs of paddy per house or per family of five, and require about 600,000 piculs of paddy (36,240,000 kilograms). 243 262 273

In recapitulation, it is clear that the amount of paddy which Laos ought to produce for food for its inhabitants, fodder for certain animals, the manufacture of alcohol, miscellaneous uses, seed and reserves is some 3,758,000 to 3,800,000 piculs or 226,983 to 229,520 tons, giving an average ratio of 1) 485 kilograms or 8 piculs of paddy per inhabitant; or 2) 2,425 kilograms or 40 piculs per family.

7: Thompson--375-376 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 147, 461, 464, 621

"Labour, as is the case in so many tropical countries of great potential wealth, is the second greatest need. The Laotians' inadequacy, both numerically and psychologically, combined with the country's inaccessibility are almost insuperable obstacles to industrial or commercial progress. This was plainly seen when Laos's vast mineral wealth, especially in tin, attracted capitalist investment in the discreditable wave of mining speculation that spread over Indo-China in the late [376] 1920's. The Laotians have no sense of time, and a thousand obstacles and superstitions interfere with the accomplishment of work at a fixed date. Their physical stamina is not proof against epidemics, especially those maladies brought from foreign countries. Whole villages displace themselves at the slightest provocation. One Laotian proverb says: 'At the end of three days change your house; at the end of three years change your village.' What started as a necessity to escape invaders or soil exhaustion has become a habit, and a means of escaping any regular irksome task. The ease with which the Laotians drift across the Mekong into Siamese territory makes the French authorities very loath to take strict measures with them. Moreover, the European residents themselves, who would normally be the motive force behind any change, succumb to the prevailing atmosphere of su-su, the Oriental equivalent of dolce far niente."

10: d'Orleans--305 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 147, 157, 463, 563, 609 Ethnic subgroups

"The Kas of Luang Prabang appear to be very shy, and I could not induce them, even by the promise of presents, to let me photograph them, the only means by which I succeeded being an order from the Siamese Colonel, while, when brought up, they were so intimidated that I could count their pulses beating at more than eighty to the minute. When walking in the streets they proceed as if they were afraid that some one was going to hurt them, and, being more laborious if less educated than the Laotians, they are employed by the latter to fashion the metals, to look after the stock and to cultivate the soil, so that they fill much the same part that the Lacædemonians of old did, except that they are not so badly used."

68: Mouhot--141 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 147, 155, 164

"Muang-Moune-Wa. [HD: northwest of Pak Lai] -- This place is surrounded by mountains. I am very feverish and tremble with cold, although the thermometer shows 80 degrees of heat. I am getting tired of these people, a race of children, heartless and unenergetic. I sigh and look everywhere for a man, and cannot find one; here all tremble at the stick, and the enervating climate makes them incredibly apathetic."

149: Reinach--136 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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who work gold mines--and by the inhabitants of several regions, whose state of fortune would nevertheless enable them to use a more [563] precious metal.

Jewelry and examples of the goldsmith's art are found in different forms and types which vary greatly with the region and race, as will be seen by the nomenclature given in Chapter IX.

Food. The Laotian scorns the pleasures of the table, and is 262
generally a moderate eater and drinker. Steam-cooked glutinous rice forms the basis of his food supply. To this he adds salt, peppers, various other spices, fresh or preserved fish, etc. Besides these, but less frequently, his day-to-day diet may be varied with poultry, eggs, buffalo meat, beef and pork, as well as venison. To be sure, it is mainly on the occasion of public or private festivals, which are fairly numerous in the course of the year, that the Laotian improves on his usual rather frugal fare in this way.

The customary beverage is water which may be taken directly 271
from the rivers or first be hastily decanted into jars or water-coolers 273
of porous earthenware. In general, Laotians prefer water taken directly from the river to that which has been filtered. Finally, the people of Laos consume rice brandy which is obtained by distillation, and a kind of beer made by cold fermentation of rice mixed with paddy husks.

The use of these drinks, aside from rare exceptions, is reserved [527]
for holidays.

Physical appearance, character, occupations. The Laotian's 152
character is, in general, mild, friendly and happy. His physiognomy is [181] open and smiling. Not quarrelsome by nature, he even shrinks from coming to blows in extreme cases and prefers to end a dispute with an outburst of laughter rather than with blows.

Since, all in all, it has few needs and inhabits a land with luxuriant vegetation which is abundantly favored with products to be had for the scavenging, this happy people can easily satisfy its needs and be content with its fate. [Illustration alongside text here.]

It is assuredly lazy, but out of indifference much rather than 461
out of any deliberate intent. It cannot grasp the advantage or utility of a regular and prolonged effort beyond what is strictly necessary to provide it with a living and a few distractions to which, in reality, its own joyous disposition makes the greatest contribution.

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To the men are reserved the chief tasks, which have a more
virile and noble character than those which are the women's lot. 241

10: d'Orleans--314-315 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 153, 823

"The truth is that they have not much learning, these Laotians, despite the religious instruction [315] which they have received; but upon the other hand they know their country well, are fairly familiar with geography, possessing a good idea of distances, and also having a good memory for historical occurences, while their annals are in good order and are well kept."

I0: d'Orleans--321-322 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 153, 609, 793, 871

"At first, we received several visits from an aged bonze, also occupying an important position, who had been for many years friendly to the French. 'They are fathers and brothers to me,' he would say. During the second half of our visit, he had been [322] seized with a wasting illness, and we frequently went to see him. One of the interpreters of the Consulate was teaching his pupils French, and they struck me as being very intelligent, while their lessons were well done."

68: Mouhot--141 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 147, 155, 164

"Muang-Moune-Wa. [HD: northwest of Pak Lai] -- This place is surrounded by mountains. I am very feverish and tremble with cold, although the thermometer shows 80 degrees of heat. I am getting tired of these people, a race of children, heartless and unenergetic. I sigh and look everywhere for a man, and cannot find one; here all tremble at the stick, and the enervating climate makes them incredibly apathetic."

68: Mouhot--272 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 155, 834, 515

"The men of this nation [HD: i. e. Luang Prabang] are dull and apathetic and full of small vices. The women are generally better, and some of them are even pretty in spite of their yellow skins, but they have little idea of modesty. The men and women all bathe together without any clothing. But for the people, Louang Prabang would be one of the most charming places in the world: the lake of Geneva does not present scenes more beautiful than many here by the river."

as a blessing.

One fact worthy of note is that the "Phi-pop"--men, women and even adolescents--are extremely intelligent folk with lively eyes and full of a strong will and energy. They know [Illustration here] a host of recipes and therapeutic formulas which have been handed down to them by their parents. They might be described as bonesetters or people who have medicine as a sideline, and who act on weak minds and nervous temperaments by the power of suggestion. "Phi-pop" women and girls are usually quite pretty. 791 755 156

One of the methods most widely used to gain the favor of the "Phis" is to play deafening music. 755

"It is not at all unusual to hear diabolic and uninterrupted music in a Laotian house for several days and nights running. In this house there is a person who is seriously ill. All the noise is designed to frighten or to assuage the spirit in the sick person's body and to persuade or force it to [153] leave the body of the invalid. The sick person generally succumbs under the waves of this curative but noisy harmony" (1). 533

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.] [113]

Religion of the Thais. They have neither pagodas nor bonzes, but practice ancestor worship and have a great veneration for the "Spirits or Genii," to whom they make offerings on all occasions. 771 769

In the first room of the house there stands a bamboo altar. The "Spirits" or "Phis" of dead forbears are supposed to inhabit this altar, which is composed of two different levels, the highest one for the male Phis and the other for the female Phis. At its foot there is an opening covered with an elliptical wooden ornament shaped like a mouth. It is there, on this "ancestors' mouth," that the head of the family places offerings and prayers, especially when a member of the family is sick. In principal an animal is never killed without some scrap of food or a few drops of blood being offered to the ancestors' mouth.

"Spirits, whether genii or demons, are everywhere--in the sky, on earth, in the forests, in the water. They are the object of a widespread cult over which individuals who might be described as 776 793 755

Tribal Tai

291 the Deng-Thais, is applied to the edges of the gown. It is further
563 ornamented [233] on the outside edge opposite the buttonholes with colored silk embroidery which does not go down below the waist.

This garment is also folded in half lengthwise and worn rolled around the body with the sleeves left hanging.

302 The women wear their hair parted down the middle in front and rolled into a sort of long tassel behind which is contained within
301 the folds of a little turban. The latter is wound above the forehead and the free end inserted under the first turn, on the nape of the neck. This headdress is quite similar to that of the Annamite women in Tonkin.

In certain regions of Laos, Thai women wind their hair into a sort of coil which girls wear loosely down their neck and betrothed or married women wear on top of the head. Thai jewelry is made of heavy silver and is of the same type as Laotian jewelry. The men wear bracelets on their wrists.

262 Food. The Thai diet is like that of the Laotians, but they prefer non-glutinous white rice and use chopsticks like the Chinese and
264 Annamites.

The use of betel is quite widespread among the Thais, but in
276 contrast to the Laotians they keep their teeth white. The Thais smoke the oily, opiated tobacco of Tonkin and China in bamboo waterpipes whose tiny bowls only contain a small pinch of tobacco. They also smoke a local variety of tobacco, either in cigarettes or in pipes with a highly worked clay bowl into which a long stem ending in a glass or jade mouthpiece is inserted.

156 Character. Although serious and reflective, the Thais have a vivacious and friendly character. They are somewhat cold in appearance, but are sound friends and highly affable when one gets to know them better.

[701] Gentler and more timid than the Laotians, they have no taste for the art of war and it is difficult to get them to stay in the native militia.

433 They are very self-seeking and much more miserly than the Lao-
438 tians. [234] It should be noted, moreover, that since they produce everything themselves and are a people of farmers and livestock breeders, they do not have, by virtue of their ever sedentary occupations,
156 the opportunities which these latter have to enjoy fairly high profits resulting from commercial transactions, nor the special habits which contact with different races gives.

181 The Thais love pleasure and celebrations. Guaranteed their daily
461

10: d'Orleans--305 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 147, 157, 463, 563, 609 Ethnic subgroups

"The Kas of Luang Prabang appear to be very shy, and I could not induce them, even by the promise of presents, to let me photograph them, the only means by which I succeeded being an order from the Siamese Colonel, while, when brought up, they were so intimidated that I could count their pulses beating at more than eighty to the minute. When walking in the streets they proceed as if they were afraid that some one was going to hurt them, and, being more laborious if less educated than the Laotians, they are employed by the latter to fashion the metals, to look after the stock and to cultivate the soil, so that they fill much the same part that the Lacædemonians of old did, except that they are not so badly used."

643* Khamone-Noi seems to have been a most unusual man, and it
157 is to be regretted that we cannot paint a more precise picture of
175* him. Brought up at first as an exile in Vientiane, far from his native land, then the companion of Souligna's grandsons in their peregrinations, and finally king of Luang-Prabang which he had to leave in order to combat the Burmese and mount the throne of Xieng-Mai, this wandering prince experienced a thousand adventures which he faced with equanimity, manifesting on all occasions, both good and bad, a surprisingly philosophical humor and a most un-
/224/ usual carefreeness. He had one passion, hunting, to which he devoted all his time and which gained him the surname "Ong-Nok," the /185/ prince of the birds (unless it meant the prince who was "always out").

669 Intha-Som's bold stroke (1727). One day in 1727 when he was
643* away from Luang-Prabang and, as the Annals say, in the company
175* of Phya-Keo, Thai-Sang, Chabane, Thao-Bang-Khom and Thao-Bang-Houak, Intha-Som suddenly closed the gates of the city and occupied the palace. The maneuver was not accomplished without some disturbance, and on the way back Khamone-Noi had wind of some kind of treachery. He sent Thao-bang-Houak up to the approaches of the capital to find out what was going on. When he learned of the defection of all those in whom he had placed his confidence he halted, bewildered, and broke a gold carafe which he was holding in his hands. Then, as if ashamed of a gesture of anger which he had not been able to repress, he turned on his heel, leaving his companions free to follow him or not as they wished, and set out calmly in the direction of Xieng-Mai where new destinies awaited him.

This is how tradition relates the last part of this odd man's life:

643* Odyssey of Khamone-Noi. "The inhabitants of Luang-Prabang
175* had grown tired of seeing /186/ their king always absent from the palace and neglecting the management of their affairs. One day as he was returning from a long outing he was surprised to find the gates of his palace solidly closed. The people whom he met avoided him or fled when he approached. Some children who had gathered round and who were looking at him curiously said to him: 'You are never there, the leaders and the people are not satisfied, they have closed the gates of your palace so that you can leave it.' Then Khamone-Noi went away sadly, entered the pagoda of

What would he have said -- and what would not have been 132
his delight -- if he had reached the smiling capital not in July
when the tropical sun does indeed alternate its hottest rays with
cataracts of the most violent downpours, but in December or
January during the delicious Laotian winter which spreads the
sweet coolness of Mediterranean springtime over an autumnal
decor? He could scarcely have been able, in the course of his /361/
hunts for insects, to grasp /223/ a fugitive vision, between two
tornadoes, of the golden minaret of the Phou-Si, the sacred hill
in the heart of the city, or of the harmonious suburbs all trembling
in their mantles of verdure, or of the flaming twilights on the
misty mountains at whose feet winds the capricious Nam-Khane, a
true river of diamonds by moonlight...

"The city," he explains, "is built on both banks of the river, 361
but the greater number of dwellings are built on the left bank. The
largest part surrounds an isolated peak which is a hundred and some
meters high and at the summit of which a pagoda has been estab-
lished."

On August 5 he was presented "to the princes who govern this 643*
little State and who bear the title of kings." He depicts them
(Tiantha-Koumane and his brother the Oupahat Oun-Kham) with a
dash of bantering irreverence, then immediately acknowledges that
the king is "kind and good" to him (1).

1. "He takes care of my letters. He himself will take them 643*
to Bangkok where he goes, I believe, to take his oath of /648*/
allegiance and vassaldom." "I do not know why," he con-
tinues, "but they display in my behalf all that they are
capable of imagining in the way of pomp and splendor."

He is thus the first to note the dominant character trait of this 609
kind, open-hearted /224/ and hospitable people. Tiantha- 157
Koumane was certainly ignorant of his guest's capacities and had 643*
no opinion on the naturalist Mouhot, who was still quite unknown
in Europe. It was therefore not the scholar whom he intended to
honor, but simply the stranger and the traveler whose visit was a
happy event for the kingdom, an event which should be celebrated
with great pomp and with general rejoicing. All the Frenchmen
from Pavie down to our own day who have explored the principality
have been given a welcome which has been just as spontane-
ous and have been received with the same eager and smiling good
grace.

2: Gourou--182-183 N-5 (1939 ?) 1945 Laotians
116, 161

Laos

Laos, in its hilly and its flat areas, belongs entirely to the sparsely peopled Indochinese regions. Statistical documents are particularly dubious for Laos: the regular 1: 100,000 maps of the Service Géographique de l'Indochine do not yet cover more than the smaller part of it; the areas of the communes or ban are not known, which are reasons for not attempting an exhaustive study of the population distribution. We shall be [183] content with some general data, which represent all that can be found out at the present time about the quantitative distribution of the Laos population.

Laos has an area of 231,000 sq. km. and a population of one million inhabitants, or a density of 4.3 per sq. km.

3: Robequain--53 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians

161

"Laos, the only country in Indo-China which does not extend to the deltas, has an average of only four. [EJ: persons per square kilometer]"

6: Goudal--5 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-1-4
116, 101, 161, 141, 463, 177.65 France
636.65

"The Tai are of Mongolian race. They came from China and formed various groups, including the Laotians (and the Siamese) and the predominant ethnical group in Upper Tonking. Their numbers are assessed at a million. They are of less than average height (1.59 metres). As a people they are very gay and hospitable. Like the Cambodians, the Laotians are Buddhists, but their religious sense goes hand in hand with very great moral freedom. They are indifferent farmers but engage frequently in fishing and hunting and are excellent boatmen. As traders they possess remarkable qualities.

For a long time the Laotian was considered as an apathetic creature, hating all effort and anxious only to enjoy the present without worrying about the morrow or without trying to improve his moral well-being or his material existence by persevering labour. It cannot be denied that this people, whose country was repeatedly laid waste throughout the centuries by invasions from the north and the west, seemed at the time of our arrival in Indo-China to be doomed to decadence. . . At the present time the country has roads and tracks, and its doors are open to commercial and industrial undertakings which have already done much for the development of the land and its mineral wealth. The local authorities have no difficulty in securing the very active co-operation of the inhabitants in the contruction of roads and tracks. . . The legend

6: Goudal--5 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-2
116, 101, 161, 141, 463, 177. 65 France
636.65

of the Laotian as an idle creature, exercising passive resistance to any attempt to make use of his intelligence or his physical labour, had disappeared. Far from taking no interest in public welfare as was long asserted, the Laotians on the contrary seem to take a lively interest in it, and in particular in the progress of the development of the country and of the schools and medical institutions that are being established. (2)

2. Léon Archimbaud: Rapport au nom de la Commission des finances sur le budget général des Colonies (1928), pp. 88-89. This point of view is confirmed by the following statement:

'It has been repeatedly alleged that the Laotian abhors work and does only what is strictly necessary to provide for his own needs and for those of his family. He is said to have two serious defects: a very idle mind and a hatred of effort. This view is mistaken. It is certainly true that there is a certain fundamental apathy and indolence about the Laotian but this can be quite naturally explained by his background and the circumstances

in which his material existence has so far been passed.

'Times have now changed, the country is entirely pacified and war and piracy are merely a memory. . . . Exports of raw materials which were practically non-existent a mere 15 years ago are now increasing rapidly and this is clearly proof that the Laotian worker is not, as has been said, indifferent to gain, but that he can collaborate effectively with the settlers.

'The whole question is one of making use of his services in a manner suited to his special mentality, customs, qualities and defects. It is essential to treat him fairly and kindly; his intelligence and his docility of character enable him to adapt himself gradually to modern working methods. The tin mines in the province of Cammon have for several years been employing Laotian workers who have proved completely satisfactory both for mining the ore and for its treatment.

'Similarly, in connection with road making, in Upper and Lower Laos groups of workers have been used for cutting down

6: Goudal--5 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-4
116, 101, 161, 141, 463, 177.65 France
636.65

trees and clearing away stumps and undergrowth in the heart of a mountainous country where conditions of work are difficult and resources are slight. Under the skilful direction of our administrators and engineers the use of Laotian labour has proved satisfactory in almost every case.' (M. Bosc: Rapport d'ensemble sur le Laos. Conference on Native Communities held at the International Colonial Exhibition, Paris, 1931.)"

10: d'Orleans--301-302 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 161

"The population of the town [LSS: Luang Prabang] itself, estimated by Macleod in 1836 at 5,000, by Pallegoin at 80,000, by Monhot at 7,000 or 8,000 and by Garnier at 15,000, strikes me as being nearest to the last mentioned total. My reasons for thinking so are as follows. [302] From the summit of the hill which overlooks the town I mentally divided it into twelve or fourteen squares of about the same area, and in one of these squares I counted 110 houses. Allowing eight inhabitants to each house, we should have a total of 12,000, and this cannot be far from the truth, for the Siamese Colonel's list of taxpayers makes the total about 11,000.

With regard to the total population of the State, Macleod's estimate was only 50,000, but Garnier puts it at treble, and this is not, I fancy, much off the mark."

23: Franck--302 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 101, 161, 634

"Laos has eight divisions, of which Luang Prabang is the largest and the only one still boasting a king of its own. A century ago most of it belonged to ethnologically related Siam. I have already mentioned that this greatest division of French Indo-China, about as large and of much the same shape as Italy, has fewer inhabitants than Detroit. This is largely because it was so often sacked, and its people killed by the Chinese, who wanted the land, or carried off by the Siamese to populate her sparsely settled regions along Menam."

23: Franck--330-331 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
161 Ethnic subgroup

"Of the aboriginal tribes driven into the mountains by the Tai invasion of nearly two thousand years ago, it is estimated that there are still a hundred thousand of these Kha [331] and other more or less indigenous stock."

66: Dobby--299 [3] N-5 (no date) 1950 Laotians
116, 105, 161, 171

"Laos, the state of the Middle Mekong, is peopled by Laotians who are ethnically related to Tais. They live in small agricultural hamlets and have strong Buddhist associations and semi-feudal customs, with a disinterest in mime and dancing, therein differing from Cambodians farther south."

China Geographical Service /Service géographique de l'Indochine/ 131
and the road surveys made by administrators at the heads of prov- 654
inces nevertheless agree substantially in estimating the area of Laos at approximately 250,000 square kilometers, or about half that of France.

Population. This is the largest of the five countries in French 161
Indo-China, and it is also the least densely populated. According to information collected on the spot, the population must be be- /162/
tween a million and 1,200,000 inhabitants, a figure appreciably larger than the one figuring in the official documents, which estimate it to be only 800,000. Persons of the Laotian race in the strict /3/ sense form the majority. They populate the plains 162
which are watered by the Mékong and its tributaries and the low altitude plateaus. The mountains are inhabited by highly diverse races belonging to various ethnic types, some of which are related to the Chinese, and others to the Tibetan branch, while still others are grouped under the generic name of "Khas." These various groups are scattered over the western side of the Annamitic Chain, the foothills of the plateau of Trân-Ninh and in the upper valley of the Mékong.

The extremely low population density is to be explained by the 162
Siamese and Chinese invasions in the course of the nineteenth 166
century. The "Hos," plunderers who came from Yunnan, massa- 648*
cred the inhabitants after they had burned their villages and forced 175
those who escaped famine or torture to settle in another region. The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical manner and depopulated the country by transporting inhabitants, livestock and elephants to the right bank of the Mekong and oftentimes taking them as far as the valley of the Ménam.

Upper Laos. Upper Laos, a ramification of the Tibetan pla- 133
teau, "is an inextricable tangle /4/ of wild and wooded mountains in the midst of which paths wind like gigantic Russian mountains" (1). The country has a savage look. These high 133
137

1. Dr. Lefèvre, "Le Haut-Laos" (Bulletin de la Société de Géographie commerciale, 1898).

mountain chains, which are cut here and there by deep valleys where torrents which are often invisible flow, are covered with

victorious (1), and this expedition, which would seem to have 648*
643*

1. With the help of Trân-Ninh. 728
175*

been imposed on him, is the only campaign which is related during his long forty-three year reign.

According to the Annals he strictly observed the Buddhist teaching and followed, in a more docile manner than his father had 643* 175*
done, the pious counsels of Pha-Maha-Pasaman-Thala-Tiao, his /645
spiritual director, "and so his kingdom knew a long period of 792/
peace and prosperity." He was a great builder of temples, and erected the pagodas of Manorom, Ouposot (with a library which was given the manuscripts which had been brought from Angkor), and Xieng-Kang which was built in memory of his daughter, the young princess Sivayaka, who died of smallpox at the age of twelve.

The Three Hundred Thousand Thaïs. In 1376 he gave orders 161
for a general census of the inhabitants of Lang-Xang. The results 175*
gave 300,000 "registered" Thaïs, not counting women, children, 654
bonzes, foreigners, slaves and Khas (2), and Oun-Hueun took /53/

2. The number of registered non-Thaïs was about 400,000.

/C.A.M. Translator's note. Page 53 is devoted to a map: "Lan-Xang and surrounding regions at the death of Fa-Ngoun (1374)./
as his reigning name Phaya-Sam-Sène-Thaï, the King of the Three Hundred Thousand Thaïs.

Social Organization. These folk then constituted a society 631
grouped by families and divided into Nobles and Commoners. The 565
Nobles were given certain privileges and helped to administer the 175*
kingdom, from the dignitaries who were princes of royal blood down to the simple officials who were responsible for collecting taxes, for assembling labor drafts, for transporting goods, etc.

In the provinces the heads of circumscriptions (Muongs) were elected either from the Nobles or from the Commoners, but the choice of the electors generally fell on the son or some relative of the person who was to be replaced, unless there were some unworthiness or notorious incapability.

la Sainte-Chapelle, a la seconde boutique, a l'enseigne 175*
du Voyageur. 114
/127/

naivete, the work /111/ does not have the ring of sincerity which constitutes the merit of the Dutch account. It was probably written from the reminiscences of Father J. M. Leria (1) and is of value

1. Father Giovanni-Maria Leria, a Piedmontese Jesuit, left Cambodia in April 1642 accompanied by some Cochinchinese neophytes with a caravan of Laotian traders who were returning to their country. He remained in Laos for five years "despite the opposition and the intrigues of the bonzes" and did not leave Vientiane until December 2, 1647. (Cf. Fr. Garnier, 1871, and Father Alex. de Rhodes, 1651.)

only as a document at second hand. It will nevertheless be of some interest to extract the following passages:

"In the East it (the kingdom of the 'Langiens') has the kingdom 131
of Tonkin which stretches to the southwest towards Cochinchina, 175*
and further to the South that of Cambodia; in the southwest and the west the kingdom of Pegou; and in the north that of Ava and the province called U or Lu (2), and still further again to the north as

2. See below, p. 176, note 1.

far as the frontiers which limit it in this direction, where there are certain peoples who are called Gnai. . . .

"Because of its fertility and because the things necessary to life 421
are found there in abundance, the kingdom is so heavily populated 433
that only a little while ago in the census which was taken of per- 161
sons who were /112/ judged fit to serve the king at war and to bear arms, 500,000 were counted, not including the old people who are so numerous and so rubust that even of those who are a hundred years old a very large army might be formed for the defense of the kingdom if the need should arise. . .

"The chief city and the one in which the king ordinarily stays 633
is situated in the middle of the kingdom, eighteen degrees toward 174
our Arctic pole, and is called Langione. It has good moats and 344
extremely high walls on one side, and on the other the great river to defend it against the undertakings of enemies. . . . The royal palace, the structure and symmetry of which are admirable, can

Laotian provinces, over which it exercised only nominal authority as yet (2). It must, however, combat the rights which Annam /161/

2. Even over the old principality of Vientiane, now three- /631/
quarters depopulated, where it had had the wisdom, or the weakness, to leave the old chiefs of muongs in charge of the government and had required of them only an oath of fidelity and the payment of personal and land taxes in the form of one large annual tribute.

might one day be led to assert over these regions, and it must place them under military occupation so as to present the emperor Tu-Duc, and eventually the Quai d'Orsay, with a fait accompli without further delay. The great invasion of Tran-Ninh by the Hos was to furnish it a pretext in 1873.

/242/ Invasion of Tran-Ninh by the Hos (1872). A large band 563
of "Red Flags," numbering about two thousand pirates who had 175*
been driven out of the Black River by the "Yellow Flags" towards /167/
the end of 1871, fell upon the plateau by way of Xieng-Ko, which /579/
it sacked despite the desperate resistance of the inhabitants, and entrenched itself in the island of Bandon near the village of Banban. A first column which Chao-Hung sent against it fled bravely at the first contact with the invaders, and since everything ends in a song in the land of Laos, their panic was at once turned to ridicule and put in couplets which are still sung today (1).

1. The following is a translation of the first of these 539
couplets:

Sanousit leaves his opium pipe which is lost.
Sisania throws away his opium lamp.
Chao-un-Vico abandons his Annamite gong.
All is lost, all is thrown away.
They hide in the forest, gasping with fear.
They do not even keep so much as a pin.
They hasten homewards through the brush.
By the shortest road.
For three days it is impossible to eat.
Chao-un-Vico's face is no longer human (fear has distorted his features).

"It seems that this refrain was sung whenever Sanousit, 563
175*

in an almost exactly north and south direction through rich and extremely fertile plains where villages succeed one another almost without interruption. Halfway between Bassac and Khong there is another large island, called Don-Saï, which like Don-Dèng is highly populated and well-cultivated. Upstream from the island of Khong the river becomes much wider (eight to ten kilometers) and contains an important [96] group of islands which, by reason of their number, are known as Si-Pan-Don (4000 islands). The island of Khong is by far the most important. It is twenty kilometers long, seven wide, contains several fine villages and has a total population of 10,000 (1).

(1) In all Laos, this is the point where the population density is greatest with respect to the area (1500 inhabitants per 100 square kilometers).

On this island is located the city of Khong, the former capital of Lower Laos. [Illustration here]

Slightly below the 14th parallel is found the island of Khône, famed for its waterfalls which form an absolute obstacle to navigation. Francis Garnier has given us a detailed description of the falls, which he calls cataracts. A few lines of his description are given below (2):

(2) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

"The two largest channels and the most beautiful cataracts are found on the outermost arms of the river, the Salaphe branch and the Paphèng branch. There one may see waterfalls more than fifteen meters in vertical height and which [97] sometimes reach a width of one kilometer. The broken line of cataracts has a total extent of twelve or thirteen kilometers. Upstream the river narrows momentarily until it occupies not more than half this extent, then it spreads out again over the immense plateau of rocks which precedes the falls, losing itself in the midst of numberless islands and embracing between its two banks a space of nearly five leagues."

We have already seen that a railway was established from north to south across the island of Khône to serve as a link between the reaches of Kratié and Bassac. [Illustration here]

The reach of Bassac can be navigated by steam launches during

149: Reinach--92 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[123] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER IV

1. POPULATION

161

The population of Laos is extremely sparse. For an area of 267,000 square kilometers there are only about 470,000 inhabitants (1),

(1) Official figure, taken from a report by the Superior Resident in Laos.

or an overall average of 176 inhabitants per hundred square kilometers. Southern Laos or Lower Laos has 300,000 inhabitants for 112,000 square kilometers, or 270 inhabitants per hundred square kilometers. Northern or Upper Laos, with an area of 155,000 square kilometers (33,000 more than the above), has only 170,000 inhabitants, or 110 inhabitants per hundred square kilometers.

[124] At the beginning of our occupation, and before a complete census of the country had been taken, it was supposed that the population was much larger. Some travelers even spoke of a population exceeding two million. A scholarly dictionary which appeared two years ago gives Laos from one to two million inhabitants, and the notice on Indo-China which was published on the occasion of the Exposition of 1900 has the figure vary between 600,000 and 800,000.

The low population density can be attributed to two causes:

1. The nature of the terrain;
2. Political events.

161
311

Certain parts of Laos are poorly adapted to the cultivation of cereal grains, rice in particular, because of mountain peaks, thick forests or bare sandy spaces which are not at all favorable to the settlement of human groupings of any size.

The area of cultivable land is estimated at about 80,000 square kilometers, or about one-third of the total surface. These 80,000 square kilometers are not, moreover, evenly distributed. The southern part has a number of vast, low plains formed by the old alluvia of the Mekong. These are well irrigated or can easily be irrigated, and lend themselves particularly to farming. The northern part, on the other hand, is formed almost entirely of close-spaced mountain peaks with only comparatively narrow valleys between them

[312]

161 and a few plateaus of small extent which are the only spots suited to
311 farming and, in consequence, suited to settlements by human groups.

The uneven disposition of the country is the first cause of the low population density. It is not the only one.

161 For more than a century the Hôs and the Siamese have taken
175 turns in sacking the country, especially the northern part. Their
727 methods differed, but the final result was the same. The former
648 massacred the inhabitants after burning the villages, and forced those who had escaped famine and torture to go and settle in another region. The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical fashion, and depopulated the [125] land by making the inhabitants, livestock and elephants cross over to the right bank of the Mékong and oftentimes then taking them as far as the valley of the Ménam.

Fortunately this state of affairs, which prevailed when we took possession of Laos, is far from being immutable and there is every hope that the causes which gave birth to this forced departure will never again occur. The French occupation has safeguarded the population against the return of the old invasions, and in the same way the equity and justice of our administration make it possible for the natives to count on interior tranquillity and on the products of their labor.

Great efforts have also been made by our consuls in Siam and our administrators in Laos towards repopulating the country, and appreciable results have already been achieved in this direction. Thus by virtue of the agreement appended to the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, two thousand families including a minimum of eight thousand individuals of both sexes and a great deal of livestock who had previously been taken to Siam were able to return and settle on the left bank of the Mékong, the land of their origin.

168 Nothing, moreover, would stand in the way of an appeal to the other parts of Indo-China to repopulate Laos. The deltas, for example, are overflowing with people and their industrious population is so dense that the part of the land which is cultivable is by far too limited for each individual.

By offering these people a few advantages, especially in the beginning, it would be easy to attract them to Laos. By dint of hard work they would doubtless find existence comparatively easy there instead of being reduced, as they are today in certain regions, to a difficult struggle for survival.

149: Reinach--201 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

631 [287]
635
161

PROVINCE OF MUONG-HOU

Area: 4,500 square kilometers

Population: 4 Europeans, 8,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 187

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages	Registered inhabitants
Hou-Neua	49	1,362 (?)
Hou-Tai	35	

Muong-Hou-Neua (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Luang-Prabang: 766 kilometers.

Population:

4 Europeans, 250 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Muong-Hou-Neua.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Muong-Hou-Neua.....Complete office.

149: Reinach--202 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

631
635
161

PROVINCE OF VIEN-POUKHA

Area: 13,000 square kilometers.

Population: 6 Europeans, 23,986 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 167

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of Villages	Registered inhabitants
Vien-Poukha Xieng-Khong Xieng-Sene Luong-Nam-Tha Mugne Sing	524	10296

Muong-Sing (capital).

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Xieng-Khong and Luang-Prabang: 876 (?) kilometers.

Population:

3 Europeans, (?) natives.

Posts occupied by the Native Guard:

Muong-Sing..... 1 chief guardsman.
Xieng-Khong: 1 chief guardsman performing the functions of commercial agent.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Vien-Poukha
Muong-Sing
Xieng-Khong } Complete offices.

149: Reinach--203 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotian: AM8

635
631
.161

[289] PROVINCE OF THE HUA-PAHN-HA-TANG-HOC

Area: 8,000 square kilometers.

Population: 3 Europeans, 15,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 188

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages	Registered inhabitants
Son	78	4,800 (?)
Xieng-Kho	139	
Het	49	
Hua-Muong	83	

Muong-Son (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Luang-Prabang: 744 kilometers.

Population:

3 Europeans, 228 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Muong-Son.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

none.

149: Reinach--204 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

635
631
161

[290] PROVINCE OF LUANG-PRABANG

(right and left banks)

Area: 73,750 square kilometers

Population: 13 Europeans, including 1 merchant; 121,900 natives
(67,500 on the left bank)

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 165

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages	Registered persons
Luang-Prabang	108	29,494
Pak-Hou	145	
Houng-Sa	27	
Pak-Ta	297	
Sagabouri	76	
Outhai-Thani-Si-Pak-Lay	114	
Houng-Sieng-Houne	224	
Sai	206	
Ngoi	222	
Pak-Seng	206	
Xieng-Ngeun	108	
Khassy	59	

149: Reinach—205 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

633
161

Luang-Prabang (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane:
1. By the Mekong, 426 kilometers;
2. By land, 290 kilometers.

Population:

10 Europeans, 5,900 natives.

Posts occupied by the Native Guard:

Luang-Prabang.....1 chief guardsman.

Muong-Sai.....2 chief guardsmen.

Postal and Telegraph service:

1 inspector, head of the service.

Luang-Prabang.....Complete office.

Ban-Nam-Bac.....Complete office.

Muong-Sai.....Secondary office.

Health service:

1 hospital with 1 colonial physician.

Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet:

Agency at Luang-Prabang with 1 European agent.

149: Reinach--206 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[291] PROVINCE OF TRAN-NINH

635
631
161

Area: 20,000 square kilometers.

Population: 5 Europeans, including 2 merchants; 35,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 175.

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of Villages	Registered persons
Khat	34	8,000
Kham	209	
Khang	25	
Soui	110	
Sen	67	
Khouang	220	
Mok	35	

Xieng-Khouang (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Tourakhome: 240 (?) kilometers.

Population:

5 Europeans, 150 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Xieng-Khouang.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

none.

631 [292] PROVINCE OF VIEN-TIANE

635

Area: 20,000 square kilometers.

161 Population: 22 Europeans including 4 merchants; 50,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 205

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages	Registered persons
Vien-Tiane	222	11,500 (?)
Pat-Choum	54	
Borikane	41	
Tourakhome	185	

Vien-Tiane (capital).

Seat of the Superior Residency

Population:

21 Europeans, 2,700 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Vien-Tiane..... 1 inspector, 1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Vien-Tiane..... Complete office.
Pat-Choum..... Secondary office.

Health service:

[743] 1 infirmary with 1 colonial physician.

149: Reinach--211 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

633
161

Savannakhet (capital).

Distance from Vien-Tiane: 483 kilometers.

Population: 13 Europeans, 300 natives.

Posts occupied by the native guard:

Savannakhet.....1 inspector.

Muong-Phin.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Savannakhet.....Complete office.

Song-Khone.....Complete office.

Muong-Phin.....Secondary office.

Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet:

Main agency at Savannakhet with workshop and slipway (3 Europeans).

Launches:

"Trentinian" with 3 Europeans.

"Colombert" with 3 Europeans.

"Massie," a replacement for the other two in case of damages.

149: Reinach--218 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[301] COMMERCIAL AGENCIES
(on the right bank of the Mekong)

439

1. Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sene (residence at Xieng-Khong).
2. Pak-Lay and Xieng-Khan (residence at Pak-Lay).
3. Nong-Khay (residence at Vien-Tiane).
4. Outhene (residence at Pak-Hin-Boun).
5. Lakhone.
6. Ban-Mouk-Dahan, Kemmarat (residence at Savannakhet).
7. Bassac (residence at Ban-Mouang).

It will perhaps be of interest to compare some of the data contained in these tables with information which we have cited previously (1).

(1) Chapters II and IV.

161

Thus, by adding the figures given in the above tables, we find 259,750 square kilometers for the total area of Laos instead of 267,000, including 139,250 for northern Laos instead of 155,000, and 120,500 for southern Laos instead of 112,000. These differences may seem large, but in view of the fact that no complete triangulation has yet been carried out in Laos the figures 259,750 and 267,000 are close enough to one another so that they need occasion no observation.

The same cannot be said for the population. The figure 470,000 (including 170,000 for Upper Laos and 300,000 for Lower Laos) given by the Superior Resident seems to be a minimum. We [302] believe that the figure of 517,100 (199,500 for Upper Laos and 317,600 for Lower Laos) which results from adding together the figures in the tables more closely approaches reality. It is given, moreover, by the most recent notices published on each province.

In sum, it may be said today that the total population varies between these two figures and that it is approximately 500,000 inhabitants. What is more, the population of Laos is tending to increase with each passing day.

The figure 49,221 for registered persons in Lower Laos, or approximately one registered person for every six inhabitants, seems fairly correct. That for Upper Laos (65,452) is much too high and should certainly be decreased by half. It is to be supposed, moreover,

161 that the registered persons in the kingdom of Luang-Praban, who inhabit the right bank, have been included in this figure. The Laotian budget for 1898 anticipates revenues of 60, 000 piasters from personal taxes in Lower Laos, while only 35, 000 piasters are anticipated from Upper Laos, a fact tending to prove that the number of registered persons in Upper Laos is scarcely more than half those in Lower Laos.

Finally, as regards the average population density, it should be remembered that the density in France is 6, 700 inhabitants per 100 square kilometers. If the latter had a density equal to that of Laos, there would be a million inhabitants in France.

The muong of Khong has the highest population density in all Laos, or 1, 508 inhabitants per 100 square kilometers.

/303/ /Illustration at top/

CHAPTER VI

1. FLORA--FOREST RESOURCES AND THEIR EXPLOITATION

137 Since Laos has the same orographic center as Burma, Yunnan, Siam and the Malay Peninsula, the nature of the soil, the configuration of the land and the distribution of the various geological formations are also similar. It follows that its flora and, in general, all of its forest riches are like those of the above countries, which have long been studied from this particular point of view.

There are quite probably botanical studies of great interest to be made in Laos, where the flora is so varied and so rich that it has been called the "naturalist's paradise." Here, however, our purpose is quite a different one, and we shall merely try to enumerate the types of plants and trees which are already known and used as of /304/ the present time, leaving it to others who are more competent to identify the different varieties.

In addition to the arborescent varieties which will be listed further on, the forests contain many different types of plants and flowers, most of which are unknown and which are as noteworthy for the diversity of their colors and the grace of their forms as for their delicious perfumes. There are also mosses of great delicacy and sweetness, as well as dwarf and arborescent ferns with elegant serrations and harmoniously shaded colors varying from yellow to poppy-red.

2: Gourou--183-185 N-5 (1939 ?) 1945 Laotians-1-8
116, 162

[HD: The Laotian] population is composed of varied elements, in which the Laotians, who are a T'ai people, and the Kha--the name given by the Laotians to the Indonesian populations-predominate. (1) It is dispersed in hamlets, each mustering a few dwellings and

1. L'Annuaire Statistique de l'Indochine (Hanoi, Ideo, 1937) gives 665,000 T'ai and 247,000 Indonesians.

a few dozen inhabitants. The urban population is no more numerous in Laos than in the rest of Indochina: it represents only 5% of the whole, 50,000 inhabitants out of 1,000,000 and this only by counting as towns agglomeration that certainly contain more agriculturalists than townsmen. (2)

2. According to the official documents, the "towns" of Laos were as follows in 1936:

Province	Town	Inhabitants
Fifth military district	Phong Saly	1,602
	Bountay	413
	Outay	636

2: Gourou--183-185 N-5 (1939 ?) 1945 Laotians-2
116, 162

Haut Mékhong (Upper Mekong).	Ban Houei Sai	335	
Luang Prabang.....	Luang Prabang	6,040	
	. Pak Loy	1,139	
	Sayaboury	289	
	Pak Leng	394	
	Xieng Ngeun	232	
	Moung Ngoi	604	
	Hong Sa	628	
	Muong Pak Tha	385	
	Muong Pak Beng	505	
	Muong Pak Ou	235	
	Muong Say	427	[183 A]
Houa Phan.....	, Sam Neua	2,580	
Tranh Ninh.....	Xieng Khouang	1,397	
	Muong Khan	1,241	(?)
	Muong Moc	322	
	Lat Boua	289	
Vien Chan.....	Vien Chan	15,878	
	Ban Keun	5,170	(?)
	Muong May	950	

2: Gourou--183-185 N-5 (1939 ?) 1945 Laotians-3
116, 162

	Vang Vieng	865
Cammon.....	Thakhek	3,394
	Hinboun	384
	Mahaxay	788
	Khamkeut	286
	Mines du N. Patène (mines of North Patène)	1,900
Savannakhet.....	Savannakhet	4,085
	Keng Kok	1,711
	Song Khonet	1,216
	Dong Hène	476
	Tchè Pone	429
	Muong Phine	322
	Kong Mong	555
	Kong Samoi	105
Saravane.....	Saravane	577
Bassac.....	Paksé	3,414

This enumeration is incomplete, but, as far as it goes, gives a correct idea of the small size of the "towns" of Laos. [184]

2: Gourou--183-185 N-5 (1939 ?) 1945 Laotians-4
116, 162

We do not possess sufficiently detailed information to be able to attempt a geographical description of the population distribution in Laos, that is to say, a description based on natural regions and not on administrative divisions. But the documents we have been able to assemble, thanks to the kindness of the Governor-General of Indochina, do permit a slightly closer approach to reality than has been achieved up to now. (1)

1. Detail of the demographic information we have been able to collect concerning Laos:

Province	Administrative District	Inhabitants	Sq. Km.	Inhabitants (per sq. km.)
Fifth military District...	Muong Phong Saly	23,855	8,500	2.8
	Bountay	3,911	2,000	1.9
	Ouneua	3,255	2,100	1.5
	Outay	3,110	1,557	2.0
Haut Mekhong	.....	30,774	12,900	2.3
Luang Prabang..	Luang Prabang	18,254	1,110	16.0
	Pak Lay	34,025	9,309	3.6

	Sayaboury	22,735	6,975	3.2
	Pak Seng	17,629	6,570	2.6
	Xieng Ngeun	17,768	6,317	2.8
	Moung Ngoi	16,660	5,603	3.0
	Hong Sa	17,523	4,075	4.3
	Pak Tha	13,081	3,717	3.5
	Pak Beng	8,198	2,039	4.0
	Pak Ou	9,347	1,912	4.9
	Moung Say	19,970	8,632	2.3
Houa Phan...	Sam Neua	9,338	1,970	4.7
	Muong Xoi	4,640	1,580	2.9
	Xieng Kho	22,901	3,500	6.5
	Muong Sone	4,898	3,900	1.2
	Houa Muong	6,637	4,080	1.8
	Sam Teu	8,003	4,970	1.6
Tran Ninh...	Muong Khoune	21,969	13,000	1.6
	Muong Kham	18,675	9,500	2.0
	Muong Moc	8,177	6,000	1.3
	Muong Pek	12,322	8,500	1.4 [184 a]
Cammon.....		105,000	26,400	3.9

2: Gourou--183-185 N-5 (1939 ?) 1945 Laotians-6
116, 162

Vien Chan....	Muong de Vien Chan (without the town)	54,508	8,160	6.8
	Muong Tourakhom	25,520	4,485	5.6
	Muong Borikhane	14,284	5,601	2.5
	Muong Vang Vieng	9,108	3,372	2.6
Savannakhet..	Muong de Savannakhet.....	44,700	8,000	5.5
	Muong Kong Kok	31,584	4,000	7.7
	Muong Song Kone	30,637	8,000	3.8
	Muong Dong Hène	21,933	4,000	5.4
	Muong Tché Pone	18,463	8,000	2.3
	Muong Phine	8,929	8,000	1.1
	Muong Nong and Samoi	5,661	4,000	1.6
Saravane....	Muong de Saravane	24,108	3,500	6.9
	Muong de Wapikhamthong.....	29,143	3,000	9.7
	Kong de Ta Hoi	9,780	2,400	4.0
	Kong Lao Ngam	2,678	400	6.9
	Kong Tha Teng	4,800	800	6.0
	Kong Laman	7,223	1,100	6.6

	Tam Pril	6,206	2,500	2.5
Bassac.....	Delegation d'Attopeu	42,000	12,500	3.4
	Remainder of the Province.....	115,000	14,000	8.2

We have modified the figures given us for the Kong of Lao Ngam (province of Saravane): the documents of the province assigned to this district (circonscription) a population of 10,678 inhabitants, or 26 per sq. km., --an exceptional density in Laos. The map (sheet No. 134) in the regular 1:100,000 series of the Service Géographique de l'Indochine does not indicate this remarkable population concentration. The Kong of Lao Ngam, situated on the northern slope of the Boloven plateau, is composed of savanna-forest, broken by clearing in which wet-field rice is cultivated. But the inhabitants do not appear more numerous here than in the plains of Saravane. [185]

High densities are not found anywhere in Laos: the most populous district (circonscription) is the Koueng of Luang Prabang, which, exclusive of the town of Luang Prabang itself, has 16 inhabitants per sq. km. over an area of 1,110 sq. km. in its environs.

True, we must remember that our study is based on areas too large to permit us to notice small districts with high densities (for example, the most densely populated part of the province of Vien Chan, the Muong of Vien Chan, has 54,500 inhabitants in an area of 8,160 sq. km., or nearly 7 per sq. km.; we need to be able to reduce the data to elements of small territorial extent); nevertheless, we may be sure that even in the plains Laos has no densities approaching 100 inhabitants per sq. km. The general average for Laos (4.3 inhabitants per sq. km.) is not made up of excessively disparate elements.

There are vast stretches where the density falls below 2 inhabitants per sq. km., chiefly in the north, in the part of Laos that belongs to the mountains between the Red River and the Mekong; 68,000 sq. km. have this sparse population, of which 56,000 are in Tran Ninh, Hous Phan and Phong Saly. Tran Ninh is particularly sparsely populated. In southern Laos, the district (circonscription) of Muong Phine is the emptiest area (8,929 inhabitants for 8,000 sq. km.). It belongs to the sparsely populated regions of the Annam Chain.

10: d'Orleans--302 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 101, 162, 563

"The inhabitants [LSS: of Luang Prabang] are Kas, Laotians, Lus and Meos, while there are also a few Chinese traders and shopkeepers. The Kas, divided into seven tribes, according to the information obtained by Holt, Hallett and Neis, are four times more numerous than the Laotians."

10: d'Orleans--312-313 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 162, 589, 793

"All the members of the religious corporation reside in the buildings near the pagodas, and they comprise nearly a tenth of the population, as a portion of the [313] body is constantly shifting. Moreover, women dressed in white, generally old maids or widows, also have their heads shaved and become female priests, their special duty being to make the collections at the pagodas."

23: Franck--330-331 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 162

"Of the aboriginal tribes driven into the mountains by the Tai invasion of nearly two thousand years ago, it is estimated that there are still a hundred thousand of these Kha [331] and other more or less indigenous stock. Thus there is a great mixture of races under King Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah, besides the 'black paunch' and 'white paunch' Laosians of his own race. At Muongsing, chief town of the military territory, administered by Luang Prabang, in a far corner of Laos, a French official counted thirty-two races, each in its own costumes and with its own customs, at the weekly market day."

25; Brodrick--90 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 162, 361, 175.63

"Only ten Europeans lived in Houaphan.

Xieng-Khouang, about three thousand six hundred feet up, lies, all the same, in a valley surrounded with high hills. There is a new European quarter, by no means exclusively inhabited by Europeans, and the pagodas are among the most archaically planned of all the Laos land. (2)

2. Tran-ninh was for long ruled by independent chieftains until the province was annexed in 1830 by the King of Vientiane who, six years later, had to cede the territory to the Annamese Emperor. It was the French who added the province to the realm of Luang-Prabang."

25: Brodrick--91 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 142, 162, 291, 361

"The Laotians who, in their land, keep to the river valleys and avoid the hills and plateaux, are fairly easy to recognize, since there is no confusing them with the strangely garbed men and women of the northern hills or with the semi-savage 'Khas' of the mountains. The Laotians are, as a rule, of more sturdy build than any Annamese, and compared with the stolid and serious-looking Cambodians, the men of the Laos are gay and smiling. Their dress is quite unlike that of the Cambodians. Only the saffron-clad monks will be familiar if you come up from the south. The girls, especially, love bright colours. The usual costume is a skirt reaching to the ankles and often, if not generally, of light tint, puce, mauve, yellow or red. At the waist and the hem is a band of polychrome embroidery, green and white, purple and yellow or green, red and yellow. The women wear usually a white shift, sleeveless and cut rather low back and front, but all are girt about with a long, generally, yellow scarf, draped either as a bandolier with a long end hanging down one side or slung as a gigantic necklace like an Hawaian garland."

25: Brodrick--102-103 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-2
116, 162, 631

"The Kingdom of Luang-Prabang, despite its meagre population, does extend over what, in almost any other part of the world, would be a great area. In addition to the province of Luang-Prabang itself, and that of Houaphan, . . . there is northern Phong-Saly marching with Chinese Yünnan and the jumbled mountains of western Tongking. In all this Phong-Saly there are no more than fifty Europeans and few enough Laotians. . . . Phong-Saly is a region of a hundred peoples, many of whom burn the vegetation to sow their hardy crops. A region of a hundred peoples, immigrants from the north like the Thais themselves, of the tall and graceful Lu, of the Phu Noi, of the Meo, broad-faced and cheerful, whose women wear immense turbans rolled and rolled and twisted to inverted cones, of tribes half-naked, of tribes gorgeously robed in complicated fashions, of the A Kha from Yünnan, a people whose jingling, bold-eyed women induce some fanciful Frenchmen to call them the gypsies of Indo-China. And then there are the Kha Khmu, negroid, dark and squat, without doubt an ancient stock showing something of that pre-Indonesian type once spread far and wide in all Indo-China. And each group lives isolated from its neighbours by language, customs and tradition, and even by style of architecture. One would hardly think that such variety could be displayed in setting up a bamboo hut. . .

There is a relatively small area known as the Haut-Mékong wedged in between Luang-Prabang, China, Burma and Siam, but the Haut-Mékong is no part of the Realm of Ten

Thousand Elephants and is directly administered by the French, who gained their footing here during the negotiations, quarrels and manoeuvring between France and Britain in the eighties and nineties of the last century. [103] The capital of the Haut-Mékong, Ban-Houei-Sai, on the left bank of the Mekong, is full of immigrant Burmans."

28: Crawfurd--215-216 G-3 (1821) 1830 Laotians - 1-2
116, 162, 361, 631

"The country of the Lao, a people speaking a dialect of the Siamese language, appears to be divided between the Siamese, the Chinese, and the Burmans. It is composed of petty states, tributary to those three powers. Four of these are under the dominion of Siam; namely, Changmai, Lan-chang, Pasak, and Luang-phra-bang. Their chiefs are hereditary princes. The first of those named places, has sometimes been written Zimai and Jang-mai, and is evidently the district which the authors of the Modern Universal His- [216] tory have converted into a kingdom, under the name of Jangoma. The town is situated upon the Menam, where it is so shallow as only to be navigable for small canoes. The distance from Bangkok to it was described to me as a month's journey, chiefly by water. Lan-chang, always considered the capital of Lao, is situated in about 15° 45' North latitude, on the great river of Kamboja, which is here as broad and as large as the Menam at Bangkok. It was described to me as being as populous as this last place; of which I have great doubt, because it has comparatively little foreign trade, is not much resorted to by Chinese, and is not the seat of a court. Among its inhabitants are said to be about eight thousand Chinese of the neighbouring province of Yunan, commonly known to the Siamese by the names of Ho and Nung-seh. Besides the four towns, with their provinces, above stated, a fifth considerable place was mentioned to me by a native of the country, under the name of Siang-kwang, situated about fifteen days' journey to the north-east of Lang-chang. An alphabet, and other specimens

of the language of the inhabitants of this portion of Lao, was shown to me at Bangkok. It appeared to be rude, and did not, as usual, follow the classification of the Nagri. The Siamese reckon, in all their portion of Lao, one hundred and one towns, large and small."

35; Ennis--1[3] H-3 (no date) 1936 Laotians
116, 131, 162

"Laos has 321,200 square kilometers, containing 420 French and 832,000 natives. It is the largest country of the group but contains the smallest number of people, as well as the most backward, on account of the lack of communication with the outside world."

68: Mouhot--85-86 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
Siam

116, 131, 728, 631, 162, 177.63
636.63

"A great number of the inhabitants of this province [HD: i.e. Saraburi, in Siam] are natives of Laos, and are principally captives brought from Vien Chang after the insurrection there. The provinces of Boatioume and Petchaboune are peopled by Siamese, for Laos proper only commences at M'Lôm. Boatioume, Petchaboune, Sôm, and some other provinces in the north and east, are governed by Siamese mandarins of rank more or less elevated; that is to say, several of them have the power of life and death, and are [86]then considered as viceroys. The most distant provinces belong to the empire of Siam, and form a part of it."

68: Mouhot--90-91 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 162, 164, 342, 361

"At Khao-Khoc, [HD: north of Saraburi in Siam]although the second king often visits it, there is no landing-place, nor even steps cut in the steep banks to aid the ascent.

Immediately after landing I set off to look for a lodging, having been informed that I should find numerous vacant houses belonging to mandarins, amongst which I might make my choice. My men and I hunted amid the brushwood, often sinking up to our knees in mud, but could discover only seven or eight Laotian huts, the inhabitants of which form the nucleus of the population of this future stronghold, now peaceful and hospitable agriculturists, who would be deeply afflicted, and still more terrified, if ever their echoes should repeat the roar of cannon and varied sounds of war. As for the royal habitations, I could not reach them, for the whole ground, excepting a strip about fifty feet broad next the river, is a swamp; and the narrow paths are obstructed by bushes and tall grass, which had had time to grow during the six or eight months that have elapsed since the King has visited the place.

Not being able to find a lodging, some men from the village joined us, and we all set to work to cut down bamboos, with which to construct one, which was soon accomplished; and in this hut, open to every wind, we took up our abode.

I was told that a white elephant had just been taken in Laos, and had been sent off to Bangkok under the care of a mandarin. [91]

All the inhabitants of the village, amounting perhaps to about fifty, have brought their children to me, begging for remedies; some for fevers, others for dysentery or

68: Mouhot--90-91 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 162, 164, 342, 361

rheumatism. I have not heard of any cases of leprosy here, as at Khao-Tchioulaü, but the children are repulsively dirty; they are covered with a coating of filth, which makes them resemble little negroes, and the greater number of them are shaking with fever."

68: Mouhot--113 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 579, 162, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"These precautions are very necessary, for Korat is a nest of robbers and assassins, the resort of all the scum of the Laotian and Siamese races. Bandits and vagrants, escaped from slavery or from prison, gather here like the vultures and wolves which follow armies and caravans. It is not that they enjoy complete immunity, for the [HD: Siamese] governor, son of Bodine, the general who conquered Battambong and the revolted provinces, is viceroy of the state, has absolute power of life and death, and is, they say, very severe, cutting off a head or a hand with little compunction. But still it is Siamese justice, 'non inviola:' there are neither gendarmes nor police; the person robbed must himself arrest the offender and bring him before the judge. Even his neighbour will give no assistance in the capture."

68: Mouhot--137 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 361, 162

"On the 25th of July [HD: 1861] I reached Louang Prabang, a delightful little town, covering a square mile of ground, and containing a population, not, as Mgr. Pallegoix says in his work on Siam, of 80,000, but of 7000 or 8000 only. The situation is very pleasant. The mountains which, above and below this town, enclose the Mekon, form here a kind of circular valley or amphitheatre, nine miles in diameter, and which, there can be no doubt, was anciently a lake. It was a charming picture, reminding one of the beautiful lakes of Como and Geneva. Were it not for the constant blaze of a tropical sun, or if the mid-day heat were tempered by a gentle breeze, the place would be a little paradise.

The town is built on both banks of the stream, though the greater number of the houses are built on the left bank. The most considerable part of the town surrounds an isolated mount, more than a hundred metres in height, at the top of which is a pagoda."

68: Mouhot--140 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 162, 437

"The Chinese and Indians alone traffic here; [HD: i.e. in the area between Loeui and Kenne Thao south of Pak Lai] it requires a day's journey to conclude the smallest bargain, and a whole village is assembled to make sure that the money is not spurious. On my route here I have not met a single Siamese, but in every village have seen Birmans, Kariens, and people from Western Laos. I have found men in Lao-Pouene moulded like athletes and of herculean strength, and thought that the King of Siam might raise in this province a fine regiment of grenadiers. In all the villages I have visited, the inhabitants, including even the priests, set to work to collect insects for me, glad to receive in return a few copper buttons, glass beads, or a little red cloth."

68: Mouhot--275-276 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 162, 579

"Korat Ongcor Aithe of the Cambodians was formerly the bulwark of Cambodia on the north and west: a solid rampart supported by a large épaulement, the work of Khmer Dôme (the ancient Cambodians), still surrounds the town. It is at present governed by a Siamese mandarin of the first class, a kind of viceroy, but the ancient inhabitants have nearly disappeared, and it contains only about 300 Chinese or their descendants, small resident merchants, 300 other individuals who go about the country trading, and 1500 or 2000 Laotians, Cambodians, and Siamese, who, like wolves or jackals which follow an army or caravan, have come there from all parts of the kingdom, or have remained there after the wars of Laos and Cambodia, in [276] order to lead a life in harmony with their inclinations, attacking travellers and Chinese merchants, in fact a band of miscreants, with few exceptions destitute of all good qualities."

China Geographical Service /Service géographique de l'Indochine/ 131
and the road surveys made by administrators at the heads of prov- 654
inces nevertheless agree substantially in estimating the area of
Laos at approximately 250,000 square kilometers, or about half
that of France.

Population. This is the largest of the five countries in French 161
Indo-China, and it is also the least densely populated. According
to information collected on the spot, the population must be be- /162/
tween a million and 1,200,000 inhabitants, a figure appreciably
larger than the one figuring in the official documents, which esti-
mate it to be only 800,000. Persons of the Laotian race in the
strict /3/ sense form the majority. They populate the plains 162
which are watered by the Mékong and its tributaries and the low
altitude plateaus. The mountains are inhabited by highly diverse
races belonging to various ethnic types, some of which are related
to the Chinese, and others to the Tibetan branch, while still others
are grouped under the generic name of "Khas." These various
groups are scattered over the western side of the Annamitic Chain,
the foothills of the plateau of Trân-Ninh and in the upper valley of
the Mékong.

The extremely low population density is to be explained by the 162
Siamese and Chinese invasions in the course of the nineteenth 166
century. The "Hos," plunderers who came from Yunnan, massa- 648*
cred the inhabitants after they had burned their villages and forced 175
those who escaped famine or torture to settle in another region.
The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical manner and depopu-
lated the country by transporting inhabitants, livestock and ele-
phants to the right bank of the Mekong and oftentimes taking them
as far as the valley of the Ménam.

Upper Laos. Upper Laos, a ramification of the Tibetan pla- 133
teau, "is an inextricable tangle /4/ of wild and wooded moun-
tains in the midst of which paths wind like gigantic Russian
mountains" (1). The country has a savage look. These high 133
137

1. Dr. Lefèvre, "Le Haut-Laos" (Bulletin de la Société de Géographie commerciale, 1898).

mountain chains, which are cut here and there by deep valleys
where torrents which are often invisible flow, are covered with

I in northern Indo-China, whose inhabitants were obliged to have re-
L course to /13/ China in order to obtain iron farming implements.
172 According to the discoveries of Indo-Chinese geologists and the learned studies of Dr. Verneau (1), these primitive populations

I
L
174
162
144

1. Cf. R. Verneau, Les récentes découvertes prehistoriques de l'Indochine (comptes rendus de l'Académie des Sciences, 1924). -- H. Mansuy, Contribution à l'étude de la préhistoire de l'Indochine, 1923-1925. -- E. Patte, Notes sur le préhistorique indochinois, 1925.

presented the same characteristics as may still be found "in the islands of Malaysia, from Sumatra to the center of Borneo, among the tribes which constitute the Indonesian group." Today they are known as Kha in Laotian lands, as Moï in Annam and as Pnong in Cambodia. Among these Khas, "There are unquestionably various types. In some of them we recognize without any difficulty the influence of Mongol blood which has modified the characteristics of the primitive race in varying degrees. But if we eliminate these half-breeds who are more or less impregnated with yellow blood, we are left with dolichocephalic, hypsicephalic individuals with pentagonal heads... who closely resemble the old race which once lived on the frontiers of China. It is therefore becoming increasingly probable that the Indonesians and the Khas are both descended from a stock which used to live /14/ in the north of the Indo-Chinese peninsula"(1).

1. R. Verneau, Les crânes humains du gisement préhistorique de Pho-Binh-Gia. -- L'Anthropologie, pp. 558-559. Quoted by H. Mansuy in the Mémoires du Service géologique de l'Indochine. Vol. XII, fascicule II, 1925, vi, p. 9.

I From the state of his knowledge on the Indo-Chinese Neolithic
L period in 1925, H. Mansuy has concluded: "These Indonesians
174 form a group of remarkable homogeneity whenever they are not impregnated with the blood of the genuinely Mongoloid races in the midst of which they are disseminated... Through their cranial morphology and their short faces, they are linked to the disharmonic dolichocephalics of the end of the Pleistocene and to the Cro-Magnon type... The real similarity between the men of the last phase of the Pleistocene in Europe and the Indonesian group which

It is generally admitted that towards the beginning of our era I
the geographical distribution of the /22/ /C. A. M. Translator's L
note. Page 22 is entirely devoted to a map: "The Indo-Chinese 162
Peninsula in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries."/ /23/ 174
various populations which inhabited Indo-China was approximately as follows:

The Chams inhabited southern Annam;

The Kmers occupied not only the present-day Cambodian region, but probably also present-day Cochinchina and the greater part of Laos;

The Burmese, in conjunction with their Tibetan congeners, were doubtless already established along the Upper Irrawaddy, and the Pégouans (Mon or Talain, related to the Kmers) in the lower valley of this river;

The Thaïs, who came from central Asia and were divided into six native principalities or "tchao," occupied Yunnan;

Finally, the Annamites occupied the north of Annam and Tonkin, which were organized as a Chinese province (1).

1. Cf. R. Grousset, Histoire de l'Extrême-Orient, pp. 285, 287, 548 and 549. "The study of phonetics has led H. Maspero to find that Annamite is related to the Thaï /197/
family." (Ibid., p. 599.)

149; Reinach--94 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

At the present time labor is what is needed to place under cultivation the land which is still lying fallow. Indeed, scarcely 30,000 square kilometers are cultivated out of the 80,000 which could be used. Once placed under cultivation these 50,000 square kilometers (1) could support from [126] 500,000 to 600,000 new inhabitants, 168 311

(1) About 15,000 square kilometers in northern Laos and 35,000 in southern Laos.

at the rate of ten or twelve inhabitants per square kilometer.

2. RACES

The population of Laos can be divided into four large distinct categories. These are: 162 144

1. The Thais, that is to say, all the people who speak, write or understand the Thai language with a few slight differences either in pronunciation, the construction of words, orthography or writing. 197

This race is subdivided into several types or varieties which are:

The Laotians (or Lao or Phou-Lao) (1).

(1) We have created the word Laotian by derivation to designate the inhabitants of Laos in general, but in reality there is one variety of the Thai family, the most numerous one moreover, which bears the name Lao or Phou-Lao. The whole of the region included in the Mékong basin above Cambodia and in the basin of the Upper Ménam is called Muong-Lao, Xieng-Lao, or land inhabited by the Phou-Lao.

The Phou-Thais.
The Khao-Thais.
The Dam-Thais.
The Dèng-Thais.
The Neua-Thais.
The Phou-Eunes.
The Youns.
The Lus.

162
144
197

2. The Khas (2) or descendants of the prehistoric aborigines.

(2) In Laos the word Kha means slave, individual of inferior and scornful condition, or else one who lives as a savage. The name, which was applied by the last invaders of Laos to the races which had preceded them there, has the same meaning as Moï in Annamite, Stieng or Peunong in Cambodian and Orang Oulou in Malay.

They mixed with newcomers to form a large variety of secondary tribes which, despite their common origin, differ from one another in type, language, dialect or idiom, mores, customs, dress, etc.

771
212

The Khas have no form of writing, except for the Khouènes and the Khmous who have been partly converted to Buddhism while their [127] fellows have clung to a crude fetishism in which belief in spirits (Phis) prevails.

641

A few of these tribes have not yet submitted to our domination and do not pay any taxes.

The principal Kha tribes in Laos are the following:

a) In northern Laos. (The names below should be followed by the word Khas.)

1. PURE KHAS

Khouènes-Khao.	Koussoungs.	Bos.	Kouangs.
Khouènes-Dam.	Bits.	Sapouans.	Saks.
Lemets.	Phèng-Mis.	Kasèngs.	Mouçeus.
Leups.	Sos.	Tiols.	Khmous.
Lawas.	Siengs-Di.	Alous.	
Khos.	Giois.	Ouxas.	
Khouis.	Hock-Roï.	Panas.	

2. KHAS MIXED WITH LAOTIANS, THAIS, LUS AND YOUNS OR IN THE COURSE OF CHANGE

Oks.	Sos.	Phongs.	Phou-Thuongs.
Youngs.	Souès.	Laos-Niôs.	Phou-Oks.
Phou-Phays.	Sèks.	Phou-Thengs.	

149: Reinach--96 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

162
144
197

3. KHAS MIXED WITH HÔS, MÉOS AND YAOS

Khas-Hôs.
Ounis.
Hô-Kias.
Lolos.
Sidas.

b) In southern Laos.

1. PURE KHAS

Djarais.	Mane.	Katongs.	Cédangs.
Nia-Heuns.	Halang-Doang.	Katangs.	Radès.
Alaks.	Salèngs.	Niès.	Habans.
Tiem Poueûns.	Peunongs.	Phou-Khaos.	Goclars.
Lovès.	Tha-Hôls.	Khon-Tou.	Bahnars.
Braos.	Vêns.	Banams.	Rognaos.
Souks.	Sos.	Bos.	Sèks.
Sèngs.	Hin.		

[128] 2. KHAS WHO ARE LAOTIAN-IZED OR IN COURSE OF CHANGE

Bolovens.	Pou-Bathièngs.	Lovès-Lao.	Phou-Oks.
Ongs.	Toueis.	Souk-Khok.	Phou-Phays.
Pou-Thongs.	Laos-Niôs.	Souk-Niâ.	Phou-Thuongs.

3. The Mongols who have immigrated from Yunnan.

TRIBES OF MONGOL ORIGIN FROM NEIGHBORING LANDS

Hôs.	Méos-Dam.	Yaos-Lantènes (black)
Méos-Khaô.	Méos-Dèng.	Yaos-Khao (horned)
		Yaos-Ao-Tchaine (with sapeks)

4. The foreign Asiatics.

Annamites.	Burmese.	Kûnes.
Cambodians.	Yunnanese.	Tsongs-Sous.
Siamese.	Ngieous or Nuons.	Malays.
Chinese.		

149: Reinach--209 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

63/ [293]
635
162

PROVINCE OF CAMMON

Area: 30,000 square kilometers.

Population: 8 Europeans including 1 merchant, 30,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 100.

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Tha-Khek	113		1,480	
Pak-Hin-Boun	94		1,271	
Mahasay	200		1,262	
Kham-Keut	63		665	
Cammon	48		702	

Pak-Hin-Boun (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane: 348 kilometers.

Population: 4 Europeans, 250 natives.

Posts occupied by the Native Guard:

Pak-Hin-Boun.....1 chief guardsman.
Nape.....1 inspector.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Pak-Hin-Boun..... Secondary office.

Religion:

1 seminary at Don-Done
1 director.
2 missionaries.

[97]

149: Reinach--210 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

631
635
162.

[294] PROVINCE OF SONG-KHONE

Area: 21,000 square kilometers.

Population: 16 Europeans, 45,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 214.

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Khantabuli (Kongs--Savannakhet and Sapang-Tong	130		2,914	
Champone(Muong--Samumane)	119		2,856	
Song-Khone (Muong-Lahanam)	88		1,345	
Phong	53		320	
Tchepone(Muong--Xieng-Hom)	16	34	404	463
Vang (Muong-Vang--Kham and Kong-Atsapone	42	16	584	111
Phabang	6	4	28	42
Phalane	18	31	300	358
Phin	4	13	112	86
Nong	1	8	20	80

149: Reinach--212 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

631
635
162

[295] PROVINCE OF SARAVANE

Area: 12,000 square kilometers.

Population: 3 Europeans, 30,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 250

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Khamthong-Niai	63	56	1,050	770
Kong	15		483	
Saphat	13	5	250	57
Smia	5	2	135	54
Wapy	34	16	693	201
Southabali	11	18	150	160
Saravane	48	100	1,315	1,364
Khamthong-Noi	14	3	225	57
Lakhone-Peng	5		92	

Saravane (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane:
1. by land as far as Savannakhet by way of Muong-Kong, 728 kilometers
2. by river via Pak-Se-Done, 895 kilometers.

Population: 3 Europeans, 650 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Saravane.....1 chief guardsman

Postal and Telegraph service:

Saravane, Kamthong-Niai.....Secondary offices.

149: Reinach--213 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

635 [296]
631
162

PROVINCE OF BAN- MOUANG

Area: 6,000 square kilometers.

Population: 7 Europeans including 2 merchants, 36,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 600.

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Fiafay	43	51	1,816	854
Pak-Sedone	47	71	1,978	1,114
Sa-Phai	20	5	1,062	67
Souvannakhili	11		405	

Ban-Mouang (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane: 760 kilometers.

Population: 4 Europeans, 350 natives.

Post occupied by the native guard:

Ban-Mouang.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Ban-Mouang.....Complete office.

Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet:

Agency at Don-Kho with 1 European agent.

149: Reinach--214 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

635
631
162

[297] PROVINCE OF ATTOPEU

Area: 18,000 square kilometers.

Population: 11 Europeans, 64,600 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 360.

Administrative Divisions

Muong	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Attopeu	28	59	1,300	1,956

Attopeu (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Fiafay: 927 kilometers.

Population:

3 Europeans, 900 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Attopeu.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Attopeu.....secondary office.

Religion:

Catholic mission of the Bahnars.

1 provical superior, 7 missionaries, 7 Christian communities.

Kon-Toum, Kon-Money, Kon-Ketou, Kon-Xabang, Kon-Ngo, Kon-Trang, Ro-Hay.

149: Reinach---215 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

635
631
162

[298]

PROVINCE OF KHONG

Area: 3,000 square kilometers.

Population: 14 Europeans, 26,800 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 900 (?)

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Khong	76	13	4,323	147
Siempang	19	24	540	392

Khong (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane: 862 kilometers.

Population: 7 Europeans, 600 natives.

Administrative post at Khone: 1 delegate of the commissioner.

Posts occupied by the Native Guard:

Khong
Khone } 1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Khong.....Complete office.
Khone.....Secondary office.

Health service: 1 infirmary at Khong with 1 colonial physician.

Laotian Fleet: Launch "Haiphong" with 1 European engineer.

Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet: Agency at Khone with 3 European agents.

Steam launch: "Garcerie" at Ban Dong with 3 Europeans.

149: Reinach--216 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

635
631
162.

[299] PROVINCE OF STUNG-TRENG

Area: 20,000 square kilometers.

Population: 9 Europeans including 2 merchants, 60,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 300.

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Stung-Treng	61	114	1,441	3,201

Stung-Treng (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane: 942 kilometers.

Population: 9 Europeans, 1,500 natives.

Posts occupied by the Native Guard:

Stung-Treng
Ban-Phi } 1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Stung-Treng.....Complete office.

Laotian Fleet: Launch "Argus".

Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet:

Agency at Stung-Treng with 1 European agent.

Launches: "Cygne", "Mouette".

149: Reinach--217 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[300] PROVINCE OF DARLAC

635
631
.162

Area: 10,500 square kilometers.

Population: 4 Europeans, 25,200 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 250 (?).

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Darlac	1	98	60	6,000

Darlac (capital).

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Stung-Treng: 1,282 (?) kilometers.

Population: 3 Europeans, (?) natives.

Posts occupied by the Native Guards

Ban-Don.....1 chief guardsman.

Darlac.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph services

None.

23: Franck--341 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 164, 291

"Women were bathing children and themselves here also, especially now toward sunset, but no one came to stare at me, though in China there would have been a regular circus audience. Nor was this for lack of energy, for on the whole these were a well built, muscular, and very healthy-looking people, with few if any signs of a social disease so common in Annam and China and with almost none of the filth diseases. Though the women all showed their breasts and thought nothing of it, one never saw even a bathing man completely naked. So-called barbarian peoples, though they commonly wear only a loin-cloth or its feminine equivalent, are usually as exacting about having that in place as we are with our own clothing."

68: Mouhot--90-91 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 162, 164, 342, 361

"At Khao-Khoc, [HD: north of Saraburi in Siam]although the second king often visits it, there is no landing-place, nor even steps cut in the steep banks to aid the ascent.

Immediately after landing I set off to look for a lodging, having been informed that I should find numerous vacant houses belonging to mandarins, amongst which I might make my choice. My men and I hunted amid the brushwood, often sinking up to our knees in mud, but could discover only seven or eight Laotian huts, the inhabitants of which form the nucleus of the population of this future stronghold, now peaceful and hospitable agriculturists, who would be deeply afflicted, and still more terrified, if ever their echoes should repeat the roar of cannon and varied sounds of war. As for the royal habitations, I could not reach them, for the whole ground, excepting a strip about fifty feet broad next the river, is a swamp; and the narrow paths are obstructed by bushes and tall grass, which had had time to grow during the six or eight months that have elapsed since the King has visited the place.

Not being able to find a lodging, some men from the village joined us, and we all set to work to cut down bamboos, with which to construct one, which was soon accomplished; and in this hut, open to every wind, we took up our abode.

I was told that a white elephant had just been taken in Laos, and had been sent off to Bangkok under the care of a mandarin. [91]

All the inhabitants of the village, amounting perhaps to about fifty, have brought their children to me, begging for remedies; some for fevers, others for dysentery or

68: Mouhot--90-91 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 162, 164, 342, 361

rheumatism. I have not heard of any cases of leprosy here, as at Khao-Tchioulaü, but the children are repulsively dirty; they are covered with a coating of filth, which makes them resemble little negroes, and the greater number of them are shaking with fever."

68: Mouhot--134 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 291, 302, 164, 826

"The Laotians [HD: in the territory between Loeui and Pak Lai] much resemble the Siamese: a different pronunciation and slow manner of speech being all that distinguishes their language. The women wear petticoats, and keep their hair long, which, when combed, gives the younger ones a more interesting appearance than those have who live on the banks of the Menam; but, at an advanced age, with their unkempt locks thrown negligently over one temple, and their immense goîtres, which they admire, they are repulsively ugly."

68: Mouhot--141 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 147, 155, 164

"Muang-Moune-Wa. [HD: northwest of Pak Lai] -- This place is surrounded by mountains. I am very feverish and tremble with cold, although the thermometer shows 80 degrees of heat. I am getting tired of these people, a race of children, heartless and unenergetic. I sigh and look everywhere for a man, and cannot find one; here all tremble at the stick, and the enervating climate makes them incredibly apathetic."

68: Mouhot--158 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 164

"3rd September. [HD: 1861] -- We left Bane-Nakhau, [HD: a village north of Pak Lai in Luang Prabang province] and arrived about midday at a rice-field, where we passed the night. All the women here have goîtres, often enormous and most repulsive. Even young girls of nine or ten are to be seen with them, but rarely the men."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

acknowledge in the street a lady with whom one happens to be on 584
particularly good terms. These things in Laos are fraught with an 576
etiquette which is the legacy of a highly organized society not too
far gone in decay.

The charm of Vientiane lies in the life and the customs of the 346
people. Unless one is an amateur of pagoda architecture there is 531
little else to be seen. The Laotians have preferred to work in wood,
rather than stone, and their art, confined chiefly to the decoration by
religious artists of the doors, pillars and interiors of pagodas,
quickly perishes in such a climate.

Outside the town there is a great, grey, half-decayed *stupa*, built 771
as a tomb for a hair of the Buddha. It is surrounded by a cloister, 755
containing perhaps a thousand Buddha images; a collection of 778
which the people of Vientiane are very proud. But even here,
where the religion is practised in its purest form, there is a little
degeneration, a little backsliding from the lofty philosophic conception; and the taint of magic practices shows itself. Selecting one of
the numerous images as a personal tutelary divinity, the devotee
subjects it to a kind of bribery similar to that sometimes practised
in Southern Europe with images of the saints. In this case the image's
chief function is healing, and when the sufferer recovers from any
complaint he hastens to the pagoda to apply gold-leaf to the part of
the Buddha corresponding to that where he has felt the pain in his
own body. I was interested to deduce from this practice that the
people of Vientiane are much plagued by headaches – perhaps [164] ●
those which accompany malaria.

Standing in a corner of the sanctuary was an ancient ithyphallic 778
statue, an old Hindu divinity, no doubt, which had been worn 789
smooth in the appropriate parts by the feminine adoration of a 892
thousand years. I was told that the women of the French colony
who wish for a child frequently emulate their husbands' pose of
Laos-ization by coming here secretly to pay their respects. I 000
wondered whether this clandestine tribute might not be extended

gilt and jewels. The wily merchants accepted all these kindnesses 439
in the hope of extracting great profits from their packet (1). 175*

1. Cf. Cabaton, op. cit. /Le Laos et les Neerlandais au dix-septieme siecle (1913). /

The audience took place near the pyramid of That-Luong which was entirely covered with gold plate. The king, surrounded by all his court, stood in a great temple and had the newcomers sit on mats under the gallery. The following day danses, combats and /574/
water jousts were given in their honor on the river bank. Souligna-Vongsa was present, carried on a golden chair, and came and sat on a /108/ balcony erected over the river. In the evening more than two hundred fiery pirogues went down the Mekong. "The river seemed to be on fire."

As time passed the merchandise sold well, thanks to the gifts distributed to the king, the princes, the princesses and the officers. The Dutch cleverly disparaged the Siamese of Ayuthya as traders of little faith, offered to settle a misunderstanding which had arisen between the sovereigns of Lan-Xang and Cambodia, and obtained the Laotians' promise to deliver them enormous quantities of benzoin and gum lac. They finally left on December 24, "profoundly impressed with the wealth and splendor" of the kingdom of Vientiane (1).

1. Van Wusthof left without his two assistants, whom he left with the king to await the gifts destined for Van Diemen and the Laotian "ambassador" who was to accompany them. (Francis Garnier, Bulletin de la Societe de geographie, 1871.)

If we are to believe Van Wusthof, this city then had a huge 174
population, while Luang-Prabang was nothing more than a deserted 164
city. A terrible cholera epidemic had decimated its population, 369
and those who were left had come to life in Vientiane.

He also confirms the kingdom's frontiers as stated by the Annals and the perfect relations which /109/ Lan-Xang maintained with all its neighbors.

On the other hand he does not shed any light -- rather the con- 439
trary -- on the obscure period which preceded Souligna's accession 643*
to the throne. Indeed he writes with perfect serenity: "the present 175*
king inherited the crown three years ago from his brother, who died

132 Vegetation dries out then, and some plants and trees even lose their leaves. The earth cracks and pulverizes under the action of the drought and sun.

2. METEOROLOGICAL STATIONS

[654] The meteorological system of Laos includes:

1. Main stations:

Vien-Tiane, administrative capital of Laos and seat of the Superior Residency.

[112] 2. Secondary stations:

Luang-Prabang, Savannakhet, Khong, Attopeu.

3. SANITARY CONDITIONS

132 164 At the beginning of the rainy season the body is tired out after the excessive drought and heat of the last two months, and is predisposed to attack by the fever-bearing mosquitoes and various bacillae for which river water serves as a vehicle after it has watered the vegetation. It is then that the many different kinds of fever strike, with their characteristics varying depending on season, region, race, individual and temperament. Attacks which take a pernicious form are rare, however, both in the natives--who are nevertheless without preventive treatment--and in Europeans, who are better protected by a good diet and specific medication.

To be sure, in a form which may be more or less benign these attacks of paludism end, in the long run, by damaging even those temperaments which are most robust in appearance, especially if the latter suffer from any kind of stomach, liver or intestinal disorder. It is also at this time of the year, as well as during the first cold spells, that dysenteric diarrhea and diarrhea in the strict sense occur, striking both natives and Europeans.

The cause of these afflictions may be attributed, in May and June, to excessive ingestion of insufficiently ripe fruits and vegetables, and in November and December to nocturnal abdominal chills. The various liver ailments also strike during the changes in season.

Cholera is epidemic in the country, and reappears at more or less distant intervals. Each year, however, diarrheic cholerine claims a number of victims among the native population.

149: Reinach--84 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Europeans are usually immune to attacks by Asiatic cholera and only rarely suffer from its effects. 164 •

Smallpox is endemic in Laos. Very few persons above [113] a certain age have escaped this terrible disease, and nearly all the natives bear more or less apparent marks thereof. In the last two years vaccination has been widespread among the Laotian populations and has immunized children and the adults not stricken. 744

Tubes of vaccine serum are sent to all the provinces of Laos by the Pasteur Institute of Saigon. [Illustration here] Fresh batches are sent every two weeks so that the serum will retain its effectiveness. Since vaccination tours would absorb almost all the time of the three colonial physicians in Laos because of the extent of the country and the slowness of communication, the commissioners who are heads of provinces have trained mandarins as student vaccinators. The latter are supplied with inoculation needles [plumes "vaccinostyles"] and "serum" which is renewed as need arises, and practice vaccination in the interior of the provinces, where they themselves train other pupils. In sum, mutual vaccination is the rule (1).

(1) In Laos as in Cambodia, vaccination is making constant progress.

Lower Laos may be regarded as being almost completely free of smallpox epidemics. It is more difficult to protect Upper Laos. By way of the Mékong the tubes of vaccine sent out by the Pasteur Institute of Saigon used to take eighty days to reach Luang-Prabang, and because of this long delay the vaccine, which only retains its properties for about seventy days, used to lose all its effectiveness by the time it reached its destination. Nowadays the Institute sends the tubes by way of Tonkin (Black River as far as Lai-Chau and from Lai-Chau to Luang-Prabang by tram), and the percentage of successes obtained has considerably increased.

(Report of the Superior Resident.)

[114] There are also three other afflictions endemic in Laos. 164
These are rheumatic pains, purulent ophthalmia and various skin disorders. The rheumatic pains, which cause the death of a number of individuals every year, generally appear in August and September, that is to say at the end of the period when the ricefields are plowed

[243] and prepared. This affliction is doubtless due to the Laotian peasants' prolonged stay in the hot and nauseating mud of the ricefields.

164 Cases of purulent ophthalmia make their appearance between December and March and, in addition to a special predisposition of the race to this disease, its cause must be attributed to the many air currents and drafts which find their way between the walls of houses during the season of great winds.

This affliction, which affects mainly children and adolescents, is aggravated by uncleanliness and by the use of already contaminated bandages. Even the most serious cases of ophthalmia disappear, often within a few days, when treated with boric acid solution or zinc sulphate applied by means of antiseptic cotton wool or gauze.

The skin disorders are leprosy, alopecia, frambesia, prurigo, a variety of watery skin disorders and types of pityriasis,and stubborn sores caused by wounds by sharp weapons, tools or splinters.

At the beginning of 1900 Dr. Janselme of the Saint-Louis Hospital went on a mission in Laos the purpose of which was to diagnose and identify the existing skin disorders as well as to study treatments which might be applied.

[115] Goiter is also quite widespread among the mountainfolk, especially among those who drink water which has flowed over calcareous rock or serpentine. One sees men, women and even children afflicted with monstrous double and triple goiters, the volume of which often exceeds that of a man's head.

Syphilis is also prevalent in Laos. It was imported by Siamese soldiers and is widespread only in the regions where they stayed most. Sufficient proof of this fact is seen in its absence in the regions inhabited by the Khas.

744 Ever since our settlement in Laos the health service has maintained a strict surveillance and its dispensaries have cared for sick persons of both sexes (1).

(1) There are three field infirmaries in Laos directed by Colonial physicians and located at Khong, Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang. Unfortunately, the reports sent by these physicians to the head of the health service have not been published.

149: Reinach--86 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

4. HYGIENE

164 361 133 342

The choice of dwelling sites is of prime importance from the point of view of hygiene. Insofar as necessities permit, Europeans in Laos should seek to satisfy the following conditions:

1. Avoid building in regions which are low, hemmed in, formed of damp alluvia or near swamps or stagnant ponds.

2. Also avoid living on the banks of small watercourses and choose instead, insofar as possible, the larger rivers, especially near the point where they join a sea-going river or on the banks of the sea-going river itself (2).

(2) We have seen in Chapter II that the Mekong is the only river in Laos which flows into the sea.

3. Build houses on an eminence, no matter how small, and preferably on a rock foundation or on sand or on alluvia which are sandy and permeable to water.

4. Houses may be of brick or quarry-stone. They may be roofed [116] with tiles, wooden shingles, bamboo lath or ordinary thatch, depending on the local resources. They must be raised above the ground (at least 1.5 meters), and air must be able to circulate underneath.

5. However, a house made of wood or of a double thickness of bamboo lath can be as healthy as a brick house if it is carefully built.

6. Houses should be large, well ventilated and surrounded by [Illustration here] broad verandas provided with awnings made of strips of rattan. There should at least be verandas on the south and west.

7. Floors must be such that they can be washed with running water, while mats and rugs must be kept to a strict minimum and be easy to move. The best procedure is to use a colored plaster or an encaustic and apply it to the floor of the rooms and verandas and to the bottoms of walls and partitions half a meter up from the floor.

8. Furniture must be light and easy to move, clean and even wash. Bent wood, in the Thonet style, and rattan fulfill these two conditions perfectly.

/117/ 9. Avoid hangings and draperies insofar as possible. Have only folding doors and windows with two interchangeable sets of panels for each (glass for winter and shutters for the hot season).

000

563 It is thus that the Missionaries, for example, whose resources
262 are extremely limited and do not enable them to use imported food-stuffs, remain in the land for many long years without any great damage to their health. It goes without saying that one should avoid overindulgence in food, and especially in alcoholic beverages. Drinking iced tea at and between meals gives excellent results, but then it is well to take a small quantity of pure wine. Coffee is an indispensable tonic and stimulant for aiding digestion and fighting off the heaviness which generally manifests itself after meals.

000 One should avoid long siestas immediately after the noonday meal. Newcomers will do well not to succomb to this damaging habit, which slows digestion, softens the organism and in the long run robs the brain of its lucidity and vigor. It is preferable to move about a bit immediately after meals on the verandas or in the rooms of the house. Billiards provide excellent exercise in this case.

Around two o'clock, when digestion is complete and before business is resumed, a cold shower is extremely hygienic. [120] According to one's tastes and temperament one may take a shower bath, pour water over oneself with the help of a basin held in the hand, or bathe in a tub with a large sponge.

In the evening after sunset it is well to take a little exercise in the form of horseback riding, bicycling, tennis, etc. But one should avoid going too far and becoming tired, since all that is needed is enough effort to maintain the suppleness and elasticity of the muscles. After such exercise one should take a quick shower or tub bath, then, if desired, a small glass of generous or tonic wine such as quinquina, cola, coca, Dérilles wine, etc.

One should avoid all the so-called alcoholic aperitifs, which necessitate the use of a great deal of water and ice, for they cause overabundant perspiration and, by filling the stomach, retard the secretion of the gastric juices. It is precisely this secretion which gives the sensation of appetite.

164 In the matter of general preventive hygiene, a great many
757 persons will do well to follow the regimen outlined below. Every day one should take a few centigrams of salts of quinine, hydrobromide, bihydrobromide, sulfate, etc. If excessive fatigue is anticipated as a consequence of prolonged exposure to the sun, a long march or a stay in the forest, one should take a larger dose of quinine. The dose may be as large, depending on temperament and experience, as one gram for the sulphate and fifty centigrams for the hydrobromide.

149: Reinach--90 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

This preventive measure is recommended by Laveran, who discovered the haematozoon of paludism, and is followed by a great many persons. It has always yielded excellent results, even among the natives who are also subject to the fever (1). 164 757

(1) According to a report by the Superior Resident in Laos, in which mention is made of a note by M. Morin, the government commissioner in Vien-Tiane, there is a kind of liana in this province which is quite common in the region and which the Laotians call Khua-Khao-hô. 278

This liana, which the Siamese call Bora-phet, is no other, according to the dictionary by Pallegoix, than the Cocculus verrucosus of the Menispermaceae family.

The taste of the sap which it contains, when newly cut, is particularly bitter. When dried the liana itself retains a very pronounced taste of quinine.

Native doctors use it in various preparations for treating obstinate fevers and jaundice in its various forms.

At the same time as the Khao-hô, pieces of heartwood from two hardwood trees are generally used. We have been unable to discover their exact names, but the active medicinal agent, according to the natives, is primarily Cocculus verrucosus (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, August 1, 1900). [113]

[121] The daily ingestion of a small quantity of quinine keeps the blood in a toxic state for fever-bearing microbes, and it must be constantly saturated if one wishes to prevent their invasion and growth. 757

Some persons also get along very well on a treatment which consists in taking a purgation of sodium or magnesium sulphate, or else an emetic of ipecacuanha, every three months (April, July, October and January).

Whenever a feeling of torpor, stiffness in the nape of the neck or the shivers which are the forerunners of fever manifest themselves, one and a half to two grams of ipeca and one gram of quinine, after vomiting has stopped, will overcome the illness and reduce the attack to its most benign form.

In sum, one can keep in excellent health in Laos, by following these few recommendations, if one has a good stomach, solid insides and an intact liver. A stay in this country can therefore not be 000

10: d'Orleans--268 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 166, 651, 177.65 Siam
636.65

"Fishing is one of the principal resources of the inhabitants of the valley of Nam Ou; they are forced to turn everything into money, for they are crushed by the taxes imposed upon them by Siam. The village, on the right bank, in which we spend the night, is inhabited by some people from Traniuh, who tell us that they left their homes three years ago on account of the cholera, they came to Luang Prabang in five nights, and from there they have come up here; but they do not appear to have gained any advantage from their change of place; they have fled from the frying-pan into the fire, for their new conquerors make each man pay eight rupees a year poll tax; they can remember a time before these heavy burdens were laid upon them, but now they can never satisfy the revenue collectors. A great many of them are forced to sell all their possessions."

China Geographical Service /Service géographique de l'Indochine/ 131
and the road surveys made by administrators at the heads of prov- 654
inces nevertheless agree substantially in estimating the area of Laos at approximately 250,000 square kilometers, or about half that of France.

Population. This is the largest of the five countries in French 161
Indo-China, and it is also the least densely populated. According to information collected on the spot, the population must be be- /162/
tween a million and 1,200,000 inhabitants, a figure appreciably larger than the one figuring in the official documents, which estimate it to be only 800,000. Persons of the Laotian race in the strict /3/ sense form the majority. They populate the plains 162
which are watered by the Mékong and its tributaries and the low altitude plateaus. The mountains are inhabited by highly diverse races belonging to various ethnic types, some of which are related to the Chinese, and others to the Tibetan branch, while still others are grouped under the generic name of "Khas." These various groups are scattered over the western side of the Annamitic Chain, the foothills of the plateau of Trân-Ninh and in the upper valley of the Mékong.

The extremely low population density is to be explained by the 162
Siamese and Chinese invasions in the course of the nineteenth 166
century. The "Hos," plunderers who came from Yunnan, massa- 648*
cred the inhabitants after they had burned their villages and forced 175
those who escaped famine or torture to settle in another region. The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical manner and depopulated the country by transporting inhabitants, livestock and elephants to the right bank of the Mekong and oftentimes taking them as far as the valley of the Ménam.

Upper Laos. Upper Laos, a ramification of the Tibetan pla- 133
teau, "is an inextricable tangle /4/ of wild and wooded mountains in the midst of which paths wind like gigantic Russian mountains" (1). The country has a savage look. These high 133
137

1. Dr. Lefèvre, "Le Haut-Laos" (Bulletin de la Société de Géographie commerciale, 1898).

mountain chains, which are cut here and there by deep valleys where torrents which are often invisible flow, are covered with

7: Thompson--376 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 177, 167, 186, 464

"It is obvious that the future development of the country, as in Cambodia, cannot depend on any but imported labour. As ever, it is the prolific and industrious Chinese and Annamites who are flowing into Laos to the economic betterment of the land, but equally to the moral distress of its people. Middle Laos, from Savannakhet to Vientiane, is the region most subject to infiltration. Upper and Lower Laos will probably be cut apart by a wedge of foreign colonizers. The French cannot but favour this immigration. Laos is a terrestrial paradise offering an easy living, undisputed by the timid Laotians, to the miserable Annamites from the over-crowded Tonkinese delta. The Laotians, like the Khmers, prefer to withdraw rather than to struggle with their old enemies. A terse Laotian proverb crystallizes this ancient antagonism: 'Dog and cat, Annamite and Laotian.' In addition to taking their land and their women the Annamite has introduced vices like gaming and theft, and diseases like tuberculosis and syphilis. The contempt of the industrious and formalistic Annamite for the lazy and carefree Laotian is only matched by the latter's impotent hatred. Yet the evil is without remedy. Rich, unoccupied land will inevitably attract an industrious and prolific people like the Annamites, who are able and willing to do what Laotians cannot and will not do."

10; d'Orleans--262 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 167, 484, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"We accept an offer from a Thai family encamped upon a sand bank, who invite us to warm ourselves at their fire. We begin to talk and find that our hosts were forcibly deported from the plain of Dien Bien, and that, after ten years' absence, they are returning to their home. They have a pirogue and a raft made of bamboos tied together, which carries their animals, fowls and pigs; we leave them after buying some cocoa-nuts which they have brought from the south."

devoted to an illustration: "Junction of the Nam-Khane and the 643*
Mekong at Luang-Prabang." --Translator/ /183/ whom he had 595
chosen in Luang-Prabang itself from the families of his mandarins. 175*

KHAMONE-NOI, KING 1726-1727.

Khamone-Noi succeeded him and took as wives two of the dead /595/
king's daughters, Thene-Sao and Thene-Kham. But Intha-Som at 175*
once began to agitate. Not daring to hope that the family of the 669
Sip-Song-Panas would lend him aid against one of its children, he 643*
addressed himself to some newcomers to the land who had been 563
infiltrating for some time into the valley of the Nam-Ou. These /167/
were the "Mousseux," mountainfolk driven out of Yunnan by the
religious wars (1). Although their temperament was not at all war-

1. Violent Moslem rebellions were then devastating southern China.

like, these fugitives nevertheless agreed, since they had no choice, 721
to lend their aid to Intha-Som. In return the latter promised their 643*
leaders La-Nga and Noli that he would recognize and confirm their 175*
occupation of Muong-Yo and Boun-Neua as soon as he became king. 669
563

Submission of Intha-Som (1726). But the Mousseux (2), al-

2. The word "Mousseux" is the word which most nearly approaches the native appellation. With their slender figures, their rather white coloration, their prominent cheekbones and their well-shaped and not flattened noses, the "Mousseux" type has a greater affinity with the Indo-European type than with the yellow race type. /142/

though they were supported by Nha-No- '184/ Muong of Muong-La, failed in their march on Luang-Prabang and Intha-Som had no other recourse than to make his submission. He gave up his weapons, took an oath of obedience and fidelity in the pagoda of Xieng-Thong, and was given permission to live in the capital, where he settled near the Vat-Visoun with a large retinue of Mousseux.

He was quite determined not to keep his word. The king, moreover, was not at all worried and did not even have him watched.

648 In the meantime the carefree populace of Luang-Prabang lived
175• happy and at peace. This is at least the opinion of its annalists who, in confirmation of the adage which states that happy peoples have no history, begin and end their account of Souka-Seum's reign with this categorical assertion.

175• The Meo Migration. It was about this time that the first migra-
563 tion of "Meos" occurred in the principality. The chroniclers make
167 no mention of it, doubtless because it was peaceful on the whole and did not affect the tranquillity of the Laotian peoples. Indeed, the newcomers settled on the highest summits of Tran-Ninh and Luang-Prabang, in completely uninhabited regions where even the Khas had never ventured and which were outside the scope of the natives and their leaders.

Farmers and caravaneers, the Meos were above all among the worst denuders of the forests. They must have been driven south out of Se-Tchouen and Yunnan by the need to find new territories which were rich in forests, and also by their undisciplined temperament which could not endure /213/ the authority of the Chinese mandarins. They settled first on the wooded peaks of the Houa-Phan and of Tonkin, then on those of Upper Laos where they found the same kind of habitat as in the cold lands which they had fled. Without religion, without priests, without writing and obedient only to sorcerers who held absolute sway over their essentially vain and credulous character, they lived there in small independent groups, laying waste to the forest in order to grow poppies and maintaining with the neighboring groups only those relations which were strictly indispensable to marketing their opium (1).

/113/ 1. Settlement by the Meos encountered more resistance in Tonkin. "I recall," writes Deo-van-Tri in his Memoires, "having seen my country (Lai-Chau) invaded by the Meos who were called 'White Flags' about 1848. They disturbed the tranquillity of the land, but my honorable father Cam-Sinh finally came to an agreement with them and put them at liberty to settle wherever they wanted on the high plateaus of the region." In the following year, in order to spare his sons from violent family dissensions, Cam-Sinh entrusted Deo-van-Tri and his brother Cam-Heune to the king of Luang-Prabang, who placed them in a pagoda with his own children (Revue indochinoise, August 31, 1904.)

648* attempt, moved with all haste towards the banks of the Mekong,
175* followed by four thousand families and carrying off the archives "in order to prevent any later pretexts to claims" (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896. /

Annam reacted immediately and installed another Quan-Phu in Muong-Kham with two thousand men, but it had learned its lesson. The new delegate inaugurated an administration of flexibility and concessions, placed Chao-Pho, the eldest son of Chao-Noi, at his side, and after four years yielded all power to him (1855).

Chao-Pho did not remount his ancestors' throne, but took control of affairs with the simple title of the emperor's mandatory. Tiantha-Koumane, however, most probably at Bangkok's instigation, took the point of view that the kingdom of Xieng-Khouang had been reconstituted and demanded tribute.

Long negotiations ensued, in the course of which Chao-Pho maneuvered with sufficient skill to avoid any offense on the part of Luang-Prabang and any disavowal on the part of Annam. Finally Tran-Ninh paid /236/ ninety bars of silver to Emperor Tu-Duc every year and sent Luang-Prabang the traditional triennial bounty.

175* Chao-Pho therefore restored comparative tranquillity to his
563 countrymen for a few years. Tu-Duc had come to grips with the
/167/ French and seemed to lose interest in Tran-Ninh's affairs, and the memory of evil days was beginning to be blurred in the mists of the plateau ricefields which were once more being cultivated, when the first bands of "Hos" appeared whose devastations were to achieve the total ruin of the unfortunate principality.

First incursions of "Hos" (1864). Driven from China by the wars of Yunnan, these hordes of ravenous fugitives (1) suddenly poured

1. "Ho" means "Chinese" in the Thai dialect.

into northern Indo-China. Their invasions began about 1864 and were to unroll in successive waves for more than twenty years against the Sip-Song-Panas, Tonkin, the Houa-Phan, Tran-Ninh and as far as the gates of Luang-Prabang.

Laotian provinces, over which it exercised only nominal authority as yet (2). It must, however, combat the rights which Annam /161/

2. Even over the old principality of Vientiane, now three- /631/
quarters depopulated, where it had had the wisdom, or the weakness, to leave the old chiefs of muongs in charge of the government and had required of them only an oath of fidelity and the payment of personal and land taxes in the form of one large annual tribute.

might one day be led to assert over these regions, and it must place them under military occupation so as to present the emperor Tu-Duc, and eventually the Quai d'Orsay, with a fait accompli without further delay. The great invasion of Tran-Ninh by the Hos was to furnish it a pretext in 1873.

/242/ Invasion of Tran-Ninh by the Hos (1872). A large band 563
of "Red Flags," numbering about two thousand pirates who had 175*
been driven out of the Black River by the "Yellow Flags" towards /167/
the end of 1871, fell upon the plateau by way of Xieng-Ko, which /579/
it sacked despite the desperate resistance of the inhabitants, and entrenched itself in the island of Bandon near the village of Banban. A first column which Chao-Hung sent against it fled bravely at the first contact with the invaders, and since everything ends in a song in the land of Laos, their panic was at once turned to ridicule and put in couplets which are still sung today (1).

1. The following is a translation of the first of these 539
couplets:

Sanousit leaves his opium pipe which is lost.
Sisania throws away his opium lamp.
Chao-un-Vico abandons his Annamite gong.
All is lost, all is thrown away.
They hide in the forest, gasping with fear.
They do not even keep so much as a pin.
They hasten homewards through the brush.
By the shortest road.
For three days it is impossible to eat.
Chao-un-Vico's face is no longer human (fear has distorted his features).

"It seems that this refrain was sung whenever Sanousit, 563
175*

161 and a few plateaus of small extent which are the only spots suited to
311 farming and, in consequence, suited to settlements by human groups.

The uneven disposition of the country is the first cause of the low population density. It is not the only one.

161 For more than a century the Hôs and the Siamese have taken
175 turns in sacking the country, especially the northern part. Their methods differed, but the final result was the same. The former massacred the inhabitants after burning the villages, and forced those
727 who had escaped famine and torture to go and settle in another region. The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical fashion, and
648 depopulated the [125] land by making the inhabitants, livestock and elephants cross over to the right bank of the Mékong and oftentimes then taking them as far as the valley of the Ménam.

Fortunately this state of affairs, which prevailed when we took possession of Laos, is far from being immutable and there is every hope that the causes which gave birth to this forced departure will never again occur. The French occupation has safeguarded the population against the return of the old invasions, and in the same way the equity and justice of our administration make it possible for the natives to count on interior tranquillity and on the products of their labor.

Great efforts have also been made by our consuls in Siam and our administrators in Laos towards repopulating the country, and appreciable results have already been achieved in this direction. Thus by virtue of the agreement appended to the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, two thousand families including a minimum of eight thousand individuals of both sexes and a great deal of livestock who had previously been taken to Siam were able to return and settle on the left bank of the Mékong, the land of their origin.

• 168 Nothing, moreover, would stand in the way of an appeal to the other parts of Indo-China to repopulate Laos. The deltas, for example, are overflowing with people and their industrious population is so dense that the part of the land which is cultivable is by far too limited for each individual.

By offering these people a few advantages, especially in the beginning, it would be easy to attract them to Laos. By dint of hard work they would doubtless find existence comparatively easy there instead of being reduced, as they are today in certain regions, to a difficult struggle for survival.

149: Reinach--94 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

At the present time labor is what is needed to place under cultivation the land which is still lying fallow. Indeed, scarcely 30,000 square kilometers are cultivated out of the 80,000 which could be used. Once placed under cultivation these 50,000 square kilometers (1) could support from [126] 500,000 to 600,000 new inhabitants, 168 311

(1) About 15,000 square kilometers in northern Laos and 35,000 in southern Laos.

at the rate of ten or twelve inhabitants per square kilometer.

2. RACES

The population of Laos can be divided into four large distinct categories. These are: 162

1. The Thais, that is to say, all the people who speak, write or understand the Thai language with a few slight differences either in pronunciation, the construction of words, orthography or writing. 144 197

This race is subdivided into several types or varieties which are:

The Laotians (or Lao or Phou-Lao) (1).

(1) We have created the word Laotian by derivation to designate the inhabitants of Laos in general, but in reality there is one variety of the Thai family, the most numerous one moreover, which bears the name Lao or Phou-Lao. The whole of the region included in the Mékong basin above Cambodia and in the basin of the Upper Ménam is called Muong-Lao, Xieng-Lao, or land inhabited by the Phou-Lao.

The Phou-Thais.
The Khao-Thais.
The Dam-Thais.
The Dèng-Thais.
The Neua-Thais.
The Phou-Eunes.
The Youns.
The Lus.

10: d'Orleans--348-351 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 171, 527, 535, 796

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"Whatever be the origin of these two 'monsters,' [LSS: dancers in masks] they seem to amuse the crowd very much, and when after having knelt in front of the pagoda and wished the spectators a happy new year, they begin to dance, I am surprised beyond measure to find that it is the [pages 349 and 350 contain illustration] [351] self-same dance which I saw when travelling through Thibet with M. Bonvalot two years before. The steps and the attitudes are exactly the same, and it would be interesting to know whether this is a mere chance or due to the existence of the same traditions between peoples living so far apart. The tam-tam, which is beaten by hand, without any rhythm, is the music used as an accompaniment, and from time to time the monsters make a charge and send the crowd flying, one of them chasing a young girl round a tree. I can see only Laotians among the spectators, the Kas holding aloof. When the dances are over, the procession starts on its way back, the priests being escorted back to their several pagodas."

15: Benedict--388-389 L-5 (no date) 1947 Laotians
116, 171, 212, 538

"The Lao script was derived from Khmer writing, probably in the thirteenth century. It is a simpler archaic version of Siamese writing, which is also of Khmer (and ultimately Indian) origin. The White Tai and Black Tai of Tonkin employ similar alphabets, possibly later derivatives of the Lao alphabet. Remarkably enough, the White Tai of Nghê-an, under Annamese influence, write this script in vertical lines, from right to left, as in Chinese! Lao literature naturally has much in common with Khmer literature, as described above, and bears the same deep imprint of Buddhist India. Native Lao (Thai) features are apparent in the more folkloristic aspects of the literature, however, and the poetic forms are [389] much freer than those of Khmer."

15: Benedict--389 L-5 (no date) 1947 Laotians
116, 171, 178

"The present-day position of Lao is to be contrasted with that of Khmer. The Lao of French Indochina are simply an eastern extension of the much larger Lao group within Siam itself, the Mekong river being a political rather than ethnic or cultural boundary. Siamese, although spoken only in central and southern Siam, has a dominant cultural position and is gradually encroaching on the Lao-speaking areas of northern and eastern Siam. With further political growth in Siam, coupled perhaps with a Pan-Thai movement, we may look forward to further extension of Siamese at the expense of Lao, Shan, and lesser Thai speeches. If the Mekong river boundary is maintained, however, the Lao of French Indochina (Laos) may be sufficiently buffered to stand up under these linguistic influences. In any event it is apparent that Thai speech, whether Lao, Siamese or some newly evolved dialectical variant, will long continue to play a leading role in this part of Indochina."

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26: Brodrick--60 [2] S-3 (1939) 1944 Laotians
116, 144, 171

"The inhabitants--or rather the civilized inhabitants--of the Laos country are of the same stock as the Siamese--at least they speak an allied language and they appear to be the same people as the Laos in northern and eastern Siam."

66: Dobby--299 [3] N-5 (no date) 1950 Laotians
116, 105, 161, 171

"Laos, the state of the Middle Mekong, is peopled by Laotians who are ethnically related to Tais. They live in small agricultural hamlets and have strong Buddhist associations and semi-feudal customs, with a disinterest in mime and dancing, therein differing from Cambodians farther south."

satisfaction and finds a pleasant test of his abilities in setting words to refrains whose meaning is unknown and in stimulating laughter or pleasant and amusing ideas in his audience, either by vaunting the joys of love and the plastic perfections of the human body, or by recalling [217] useful or pleasant memories, or by honoring justice and goodness. The morals of these folk, who are indolent because they are content with very little and are happy and healthy, and to whom all our subtleties are unknown, permit the greatest license in songs and improvisations and the greatest realism and crudity in the expression of thoughts. 538 538 831

In spite of this, there is not the least unhealthy intention in either the poet or his audience. As we have seen above in connection with burials, children of both sexes attend all these festivities accompanied by their parents. They all take pleasure in the same refrains and laugh at the same funny sayings, not because they are vicious but because they are pure pagans for whom enjoyment and pleasure are like gods. The songs are animated by graceful gestures, and together with the music form a whole which is poetic according to their particular esthetic canons and which is simply a manifestation of art and not an indication of loose morals. [535

Theater. The Laotians also have a dramatic repertory consisting of longwinded plays, epics, religious and warlike stories, romantic tales, ancient legends, etc. These poems are played by several actors, with an orchestra and supernumeraries, and require many very ornate costumes which have not varied in form since the earliest times. Usually, however, the costumes are mere tinsel. 536

Like the Cambodian and Siamese theater from which it comes, the Laotian theater interprets age-old works taken from the Védas, the Ramayana or the Mahabharata. To this repertory are added purely Kmer plays and various adaptations of Burmese origin which are performed in the classical costumes and in which a strong tinge of comedy and modernism and a bit of satire are mingled with the ancient traditions. [171 178]

Women are excluded from the theater, and the female roles are played by young men. As in the case of songs and improvisations, dramatic knowledge, the repertory of plays and the art of acting are handed down from father to son. The actors are called Lakhone and plays are called Kam-Kong-Lakhone or Kam-Kong [218] Fone-Lakhone if they include dances or ballets. Finally, one last dramatic genre [462]

149: Reinach--165 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Sports and games. These are widespread in Laos. 526

"Boxing has fervent disciples there, as does flat-handed wrestling. Some of the champions have remarkable professional skill, agility and cleverness which never lose their elegance.

"The Laotians play with balls and shuttlecocks, but without using either their hands or rackets. Any other part of the body, for example, from the foot to the head, may be used to return a ball or shuttlecock. Nearly all young people play this extremely graceful game, which requires great suppleness, a quick eye and perfect ease of movement, which in this game should be neither jerky nor violent (1).

(1) This game is also played in Burma, whence it was doubtless imported into Laos. The ball is made of large-mesh rattan latticework and is spherical in form with a diameter of ten to twelve centimeters. The shuttlecock is half-spherical. It is of similar construction, covered with cloth and provided with feathers along the edge. (Author's note.) [171]

"Like all Orientals, Laotians have a passion for games of chance in any form. This is the race's only real vice, and the French administration is obliged to maintain active surveillance over it. 525

"A form of chess, more complicated than the game played in Europe, is widely played, and a few players are highly reputed for their perfect grasp of the game." (Le Laos français.) 524

Celebrations and festivals. In addition to the legal public holidays, the temperament of the Laotians leads them to celebrate a great many others, for the most diverse and the most futile reasons. In principle, the Laotian makes no expenditures to ameliorate his daily fare and the pleasures of the table, as far as choice foods go, are indifferent to him. This does not prevent him, however, from organizing celebrations among relatives, friends and neighbors which anyone can attend without being specially invited. This custom of giving public festivities, or "Ngans" to use the native term, where everyone eats and drinks, has a good time, jokes and makes love, shows the friendly side of the Laotian character and the extreme sociability of the people. Those whose personal resources are too limited to cover the expenses of a "Ngan" either join with others in similar straits or go skirmishing through the city or village in search of the money, food, brandy and wax needed to accomplish their plan. 527 [476]

527 Those desirous of obtaining special graces give similar celebrations
182 which last several days and several nights, and the offerings are more beautiful and more varied. It is generally on occasions of this sort that assumptions of the habit by bonzes and their pupils are particularly likely to occur.

Being present at these ceremonies confers certain indulgences, and that is why they are so punctually followed and why all those who take part try [224] to help in celebrating them by offerings of all sorts.

[796] On the spot where the celebration is to be held, a sort of pulpit is constructed beforehand where the bonzes stand as they come up by turns to read passages chosen for the occasion from the sacred books. They never allow themselves to be disturbed by the surrounding noise, but stand as if transfixed in the middle of the songs and shouts.

It is readily understandable that this should be an agreeable way to procure one's salvation, but since it is very costly it is not within
[565] everyone's means. Fortunately, there are ways of compromising with heaven which enable even the poorest to associate themselves in these great celebrations, in accordance with their resources, by means of even very modest offerings and to benefit therefrom both spiritually and materially.

There is no doubt but that a belief in the efficacy of plenary and partial indulgences enters into their consideration, but it is equally reasonable to suppose that the attraction of the profane pleasures which one enjoys in the course of these gatherings is not the least of the motivating causes which lead the Laotian people to frequent them so zealously.

[71] Pirogue races. We have seen that pirogue races and regattas took place during some of the legal holidays, and a few words of
526 explanation on this matter are given below.

This custom must have been introduced by the Malays and then
501 handed down from the Kmers to the Laotians, following an ascending direction from south to north.

The pirogues used in the "Souang-Hua" (1) regattas are specially

(1) Literally, pirogues which run.

built and exclusively reserved for this use. Sometimes as much as twenty-five meters in length, they are hewn out of specially chosen wood and have most elegant delicate and elongated lines. Their extremities are armed with what appear to be slender gilded horns. The exterior is lacquered black with gold ornamentation and the

149: Reinach--400 G-3 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[102]

APPENDIX XVII

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLES OF LAOS

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Which was the truly autochthonous race, whence did it come, and what were its mores and customs? No one can answer this question, and the only statement which can be advanced is that the savage peoples must have settled in the Indo-Chinese peninsula at a time when present-day Indo-China did not yet exist, geologically speaking, and when a greater or lesser part of the Asiatic continent was covered by water.

Coming from the Malay Archipelago, the Khas occupied the south of the peninsula at first and immediately entered into a struggle with the aborigines. Stronger and more intelligent, they drove the aborigines back into the forests and mountains and founded groups and colonies in their midst which gradually absorbed the first occupants, until that day when the victorious Khas came up against men of the yellow race who drove them back into the mountains in their turn, and into the poorest and most remote parts of the land.

Coming down from the high plateaus of central Asia, probably from Tibet, the men of yellow race came in through the northwest and at first occupied the northern provinces of the immense territory which was later to make up the Chinese empire. These natives, whom the Chinese chroniclers designate by the name of Y, that is to say "Bearers of large bows," and by the name of "Miao-Tse," or "Sons of the uncultivated fields," were driven back in their turn by new invaders. They then fell back into the southern provinces and sought refuge on little-accessible peaks where more or less pure types of their ancient race may still be found today, and from there they spread into the valleys of the Mekong, the Menam, the Salouen and the Irrawaddy. Isolated from one another as a consequence of their expansion, these individuals of primitive race became mixed with one another and with the first inhabitants of the conquered regions, and gave birth to intermediary sub-races and to distinct groups whose character and even number is very difficult to determine. Language became [103] differentiated, the kind of handwriting used was influenced by the proximity of more powerful peoples, dress changed, and yet all of them preserved analogous usages and beliefs which militate in favor of a common origin. Thence arises the necessity of seeking the origin of these peoples in the diversity of families, tribes, sub-races and races which sucessively shared the extreme provinces of present-day China and Indo-China (1)

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D.E. PRANION. LE LAOS français. 1701 CHALLAMEL. [PARI

from the linguistic point of view to the Mon-Khmer group, possessing a two-class social system (Lévy). But one must reach the seventh century of the Christian era to arrive at the solid ground of historic realities. 174

HISTORIC PERIOD. THE KHMER INFLUENCE

Just as the countries of the Far East received in their early stages of development the imprint of foreign civilizations--all are aware of their debt to the Graeco-Roman civilization which each one has known how to adapt to its particular genius--so in the same manner Laos has benefited in the beginning from the neighboring civilizations. 171

In the present state of our knowledge (this phrase will recur frequently in our writings, but it is necessary to put "not initiated" in face of the difficulties encountered by the researcher), the traces of this Khmer influence appear only at very different epochs according to the regions studied. Thus, we find them as early as the sixth to eighth centuries up until the thirteenth century of our era in the province of Champassak--moreover there was in this region a large kingdom known as Wen-Tan in the Chinese annals--then from the tenth to the thirteenth century in the neighborhood of Vientiane, and finally from the twelfth to the fourteenth century at Luang Prabang.

[13] The most important monument of Champassak is the Vat-Phou (See appendix). 172

In the province of Savannakhet future explorations in the region of Keng-Kok will probably furnish valuable information. A rapid trip we made through this area revealed sites which had never been mentioned before. Apparently a strong Cham influence occurred in this province, but the question is still too new for one now to reach any conclusions. 171

At Vientiane, the most ancient Khmer vestiges are most probably found in the neighborhood of the pagoda called Vat Si Muong. A magnificent Khmer bust of the thirteenth century, recently discovered a few hundred meters from this pagoda, seems to confirm this hypothesis. But there again the novelty of the problem forbids any hasty conclusion.

The Khmer influences in That Luang, which had been anticipated at the time of the restoration of this monument by the French School of the Far East in 1931, begin to be revealed. The Buddha said to be that of Fertility, which is in the cloister, is no more than the

172 transformation of a Khmer dvarapala (guardian of the gate) into a
171 Buddha of Laos. The pious hands of the faithful have restored this sculpture according to the rules of the artistic canon of Laos by means of limestone mortar. Finally, the discovery at the beginning of the year 1951 of a magnificent Khmer Jaya Buddha of the thirteenth century opens up new horizons on the influence of King Jayavarman VII in this southern part of his empire, although his role in this country was already known to us by the discovery in 1903 at Say Fong of the inscription named "stele of the hospitals" (see appendix: Vientiane).

At Luang Prabang the stele of the 900 Vishnu discovered in 1917 had already shown that Brahmanism [14] had apparently been in vogue here for a short while. When a certain number of Buddhist sculptures of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries were brought to light during the war, the theory had to be revised according to which Buddhism was not introduced into the kingdom of Luang Prabang before the fourteenth century of our era.

175 Thus, it is principally in the thirteenth century that the Khmer empire exerted its maximum influence on the provinces of northern Laos. But, as Mr. Coedès very correctly observes, the thirteenth century found the whole of Eurasia under the hands of the Mongols. Ever since his accession as grand Khan, Kubla Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan and conqueror of China, sought to obtain the oath of vassalage from the foreign sovereigns who were in the habit of giving it to the Chinese T'ang dynasty. Although these same Sino-Mongolian armies were always defeated or only temporarily successful, their attack produced deep repercussions. The most important of these was the advent of the power of the Thais in the basin of the Menam and in Burma with all its results for Cambodia, the principalities of the Mekong and those of the Malay Peninsula.

HISTORICAL LAOS OF THE XIVth CENTURY TO THE PRESENT DAY

The end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries saw the establishment of principalities in the valley of the Menam and their internal struggles. The weakening of the principality of Soukhotai favored the formation of the state of Laos.

Fa Ngoum (1316-1374) reigned from 1353 to 1374. This king was the true founder of the kingdom of Laos. He spent part of his childhood as an exile in Cambodia where he was brought up by a religious scholar of the capital. When he was sixteen years old, King Jayavarmanparamecvara [15] gave him in marriage to his

I L 174 101 prodigious Hindu civilization" (2).

2. Ibid.

/11/ We should not, however, conclude from these premises that the Annamitic Chain has always constituted an insurmountable barrier and that these two worlds which are so dissimilar never communicated with one another. On the contrary, they had quite frequent and extremely violent encounters which partially explain the kind of Tower of Babel which the basin of the Mékong forms today.

"Long ago," as J. Moura has judiciously written in his Royaume du Cambodge, "Indo-China was the closed field where the civilizations of India and China and doubtless too those of the peoples of central Asia came to try themselves and do battle with one another. These Mongol and Tibetan migrations must have occurred before the Christian era and must correspond to the time when internal wars devastated these regions and resulted in an overflow of the peoples of the North towards the Occident, the Orient, and probably too towards the South. In resume, it may be said that Indo-China was once the theater of political struggles, the land of confusion of religious ideas and mixture of races. The difficulties which we have encountered in all our studies, in seeking a solution to the problems relative to this region, have no other cause."

I L 172 /12/ Which was the truly aboriginal race in Laos? No one can say, and at the very most all we can do is to suggest the hypothesis that the first inhabitants must have settled there at a time when present-day Indo-China did not yet exist, geologically speaking, and when a relatively large part of the Asiatic lands was covered by water. The interesting collections obtained in Luang-Prabang by Massie and Lefèvre-Pontalis in the course of their explorations in behalf of the Pavie missions show us instruments and weapons of the Polished Stone Age and the Bronze Age. "There existed, therefore, during this prehistoric epoch in the basin of the northern Mékong, human beings who had the same way of life, the same tools and the same methods of work as our own ancestors in old Gaul" (1). This

1. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos, 1911/

period, however, must have lasted much longer in the peninsula than in Europe, if we are to believe the "Imperial Annals of Annam" according to which bronze was still in use in the second century B.C.

I in northern Indo-China, whose inhabitants were obliged to have re-
L course to /13/ China in order to obtain iron farming implements.
172 According to the discoveries of Indo-Chinese geologists and the learned studies of Dr. Verneau (1), these primitive populations

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L 1. Cf. R. Verneau, Les récentes découvertes prehistoriques
174 de l'Indochine (comptes rendus de l'Académie des
162 Sciences, 1924). -- H. Mansuy, Contribution à l'étude de
144 la préhistoire de l'Indochine, 1923-1925. -- E. Patte, Notes sur le préhistorique indochinois, 1925.

presented the same characteristics as may still be found "in the islands of Malaysia, from Sumatra to the center of Borneo, among the tribes which constitute the Indonesian group." Today they are known as Kha in Laotian lands, as Moï in Annam and as Pnong in Cambodia. Among these Khas, "There are unquestionably various types. In some of them we recognize without any difficulty the influence of Mongol blood which has modified the characteristics of the primitive race in varying degrees. But if we eliminate these half-breeds who are more or less impregnated with yellow blood, we are left with dolichocephalic, hypsicephalic individuals with pentagonal heads... who closely resemble the old race which once lived on the frontiers of China. It is therefore becoming increasingly probable that the Indonesians and the Khas are both descended from a stock which used to live /14/ in the north of the Indo-Chinese peninsula"(1).

1. R. Verneau, Les crânes humains du gisement préhistorique de Pho-Binh-Gia. -- L'Antropologie, pp. 558-559. Quoted by H. Mansuy in the Mémoires du Service géologique de l'Indochine. Vol. XII, fascicule II, 1925, vi, p. 9.

I From the state of his knowledge on the Indo-Chinese Neolithic
L period in 1925, H. Mansuy has concluded: "These Indonesians
174 form a group of remarkable homogeneity whenever they are not impregnated with the blood of the genuinely Mongoloid races in the midst of which they are disseminated... Through their cranial morphology and their short faces, they are linked to the disharmonic dolichocephalics of the end of the Pleistocene and to the Cro-Magnon type... The real similarity between the men of the last phase of the Pleistocene in Europe and the Indonesian group which

is today scattered throughout the Far East and Malaysia makes it I
possible to consider this hypothesis. We know that the present- L
day Indonesians preceded -- both in the southwest of the Asian 174
continent and in Indonesia -- the arrival of populations bearing Mongoloid characteristics, such as the Chinese, Thaïs, Muongs, Mans, Annamites, Malays, etc., and that wherever these yellow populations have penetrated and settled the Indonesians have been dispossessed of the greater /15/ part of the territories which they originally occupied and have been forced back into remote and inaccessible regions where they still live today. These classical facts, of an ethnic, demographic and geographical order, agree with the results of the first methodical research by prehistoric anthropologists in Southeast Asia."

It is therefore to be presumed that the first inhabitants of Laos had only very rudimentary tools and weapons at their disposition, that they lived in complete independence, that their evolution was excessively slow and that they underwent "contact with, the imprint of, and then the yoke of more intelligent and better armed neighbors who had a broader and less individual social organization." Thence arose crossings, metamorphoses, transformations and an intermingling of individuals which subsequently gave birth to intermediate sub-races and to distinct groups the characteristics or even the numbers of which are difficult to determine today, and whose present-day representatives, clinging to the sides of the mountains, "embody before our eyes the traditional type of the savage" with their swarthy skins, their straight noses, their non-slitted eyes, their huts, their arrows and their dialects which are "evidently /16/ related to the Malayo-Polynesian idioms" (1).

1. Cf. E. Chassigneux, Géographie physique, the first I
chapter of the "Indochine" published in 1929 under the L
direction of G. Maspero. 172 ●
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Who, then, were the first invaders? In the absence of any vestiges which can be attributed to a period antedating the beginning of the Christian era, the answer to this question is still more difficult than the question of the first occupants. Formless ruins (or ruins of which it is usually impossible to determine the use, such as the "jars" of Tran-Ninh), crumbling statues and a few fragments of steles buried in the thick undergrowth -- such

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are the sole documents which have so far presented themselves to the sagacity of rare seekers who are charmed and disturbed by the very mystery which enveloped them. In vain did the imagination -- and sometimes the picturesque imagination -- of a few Frenchmen among the first men who explored the country in the steps of Auguste Pavie, endeavor to use Laotian folklore to establish a kind of chronological classification of the races which successively populated the basin of the Mékong before the formation of the historically reconstructed political groupings. We cannot, without the risk of grave error, follow them in /17/ their hazardous hypotheses, the complete fragility of which has been demonstrated by the subsequent work of more expert historians (1).

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1. Here nevertheless, as a curiosity, is the summary of the hypothesis formed by Dr. Lefèvre in the stimulating Appendix to his Voyage au Laos (Paris, Plon, 1898):

1. The first inhabitants of the peninsula, and the true aboriginals, were the Khas, an almost savage people without monuments and, so to speak, without any writing, who were driven back into the mountains by the successive invaders of their territory;

2. The Malays or Chams were the first colonists to come to Indo-China. They gradually succeeded in forming several principalities, the most important of which was the kingdom of Champa, comprising the whole coast from Tourane to Baria. A second Cham kingdom was founded in the basin of the Nam-Moun about 543 B.C.;

3. A century later there arrived 12,000 Brahmans coming from Benares with their leader Pra-Tong, the son of a king of Delhi. They struggled with the Chams, who were driven out of the basin of the Nam-Moun and came and founded the kingdom of Champassac (Bassac) whose capital was... Ventiane! (sic, p. 285). The Brahmans were the first ancestors of the Cambodians. They organized the conquered territory on the Hindu system and gave it the name of Krung (kingdom) Inthapat (of Indra). They founded Inthapataboury, the capital, to the south of the Dangrek, Saniaboury (Xania, victory; boury, city), Sakon-Lakon (Salaka, peace), Batanaboury (precious stones) and Souvanapoum (city of gold);

4. Under Açoka, emperor of "Burma" /"Birmanie"/

When he returned to his States, Setthathirath endeavored to 726
win over permanently to his cause the chieftains of Lakhone, 643*
Xieng-Khong, Xieng-Hai, /80/ Muong-Pray and Muong-Nan who 648*
had not supported Bureng-Naung, and when he was sure of their 175*
support he advanced as far as Xieng-Sen. But there he soon learned
that the governor of Xieng-Hai had been taken prisoner by the
Burmese and that his sister Nang-Kalay had been treacherously ab-
ducted. In spite of his anger, he judged it prudent to withdraw in
the company of his allies, who left their governments in the hands
of Bureng-Naung's lieutenants.

Treaty of alliance with Ayuthya (1560). In order to oppose the 728
common danger, he took the first steps towards reconciliation with 643*
the king of Ayuthya, to whom he proposed a treaty of alliance. 648*
The Siamese, who were rebuilding the ruins of their capital with 175*
courage but not without disquietude, joyfully accepted and their
prince gave one of his daughters to Setthathirath. A frontier
pyramid was built on the watershed between the basin of the Mekong
and that of the river of Nan which flows down to the Ménam. Sol-
emnly surrounded by their courts, the two kings swore reciprocal
friendship and assistance: "May the ties that bind us be prolonged
from father to son down to our grandchildren and great-grandchil-
dren; may quarrels be unknown between us and peace continue to
reign /An unpaged photograph is inserted between pp. 80 and 81:
"The That-Luong at Vientiane."--Translator/ /81/ until the day
when the sun and the moon fall to the surface of the earth" (1).

1. Cf. Lefevre-Pontalis, La lutte des Thaïs contre les
Birmans au seizieme siecle.

Vientiane, capital of Lan-Xang (1563). In order to avoid any 643*
surprise by the common enemy as well as to maintain the connec- 648*
tion with Ayuthya, Setthathirath left Luang-Prabang permanently 175*
and transferred the capital of Lan-Xang to Vientiane.

He was the true founder of this city which owes to him the 633
splendor with which it shone during all of the seventeenth century 643*
and part of the eighteenth. He first surrounded it with solid bas- 175*
tion fortifications (2), then in the center near the river built the 172

2. From the vestiges which still remained around 1900 be- /712/
fore the canal was dug and the circular boulevard laid out,

633 Lunet de la Jonquiere has deduced that the ramparts of
643• Vientiane were composed of brick walls from four to six
175• meters in height with an earth banquette inside. They in-
172 cluded three sections, the salients of which were provided
/712/ with circular forts about eight meters high. Two gates which were fortified and crowned with spearhead ornaments gave entrance to the second section, one on the east towards the That-Luong, and the other on the west at the exit of the present Luang-Prabang road.

royal palace in the pagoda of which the emerald Buddha (Pra-Keo), the sign of power and command /82/ which he had brought from Xieng-Mai in 1548 (1), was placed.

/778/ 1. The emerald Buddha was in reality cut from a block of green jasper. The Siamese were to capture it in 1778 and take it to Bangkok, of which it became the tutelary divinity and where the sumptuous temple which rises today in the first court of the royal palace was built for it in 1785.

172 Of the eighty some pagodas which Vientiane was to boast, the
633 Wat Pra-Keo was assuredly one of the greatest and most beautiful.
175• "The trees which veil it (today), the lianas which tie it to the columns and spread a mysterious shadow over its ruins make the visitor feel something of what the soul of the ancients felt on the threshold of a sacred wood. Brick openwork forms the enclosure and monumental staircases lead to the parvis. A dragon writhes on the ramps and raises its menacing head in a last coil. The columns of the gallery are graceful, tall, slender and without a base, but end in a capital of long, sharp leaves which fold outwards and look as though they were raised by the weight which they bear..." (2).

2. De Carne, op. cit. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois. Paris, 1872./

175• The sanctuary was built on a terrace with three levels. The facade
172 opened onto a monumental portico whose three gateways and side
346 windows were richly framed /83/ /Page 83 is devoted to an illustra-
532 tion: "Ruins of the Pra-Keo at Vientiane"--Translator./ /84/ with many-colored sculptures. The whole edifice was entirely gilded on the outside.

The roof, the greater part of which still existed when Pavie 175*
went to Vientiane, has since collapsed and the two colossal statues 172
of Buddha which sit on the abandoned altar remain exposed to the 346
elements. Even as it is this grandiose ruin is wonderfully allied to 532
the natural vegetation which holds it in its grasp and one cannot, without some emotion, evoke before it the past splendor of the kingdom of Lan-Xang.

But the capital accomplishment of Setthitharath is the That-Luong, located about two kilometers away from the city. It is /341/ doubtless also the masterpiece of this Laotian architecture which has no powers of endurance but which cannot be denied grace and elegance. Miraculously spared by the Siamese at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the That-Luong was overthrown in 1873 by the Yunnanese pirates and partly restored, in rather a clumsy manner, in 1897-1898.

This pyramidal edifice, called the "plume of the world" by its founder, was the "reliquary of the kingdom" and is still a highly frequented center of pilgrimage. A stele commemorating its erection bears /85/ the date 1566, and according to legend the original that was built about the eleventh century on one of Buddha's hairs.

The first enclosure, which has today crumbled away, is almost confused with the large group of ruined temples which surrounds it. It was formed by an open cloister which was colored with frescoes and in which the faithful and the priests assembled. The second enclosure is formed by a ledge along which runs a garland of bulging ornaments. "One would be tempted to call them the petals of a gigantic lotus bloom on the point of opening. Heavy pedestals covered with inscriptions support thirty-four slender pinnacles. Leaning on these pedestals as on buttresses, the mass on which the pyramid is set begins to deploy its curves and the pyramid itself springs from a sheaf of broad leaves, like the stem of a plant. . . . It once sparkled with gold applied on a lead base, shreds of which can still be seen" (1).

1. De Carne, ibid. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois. Paris, 1872./, quoted by Aymonier, Voyage dans le Laos. See below, Laotian Architecture, p. 124.

First Burmese invasion (1563-1565). Solidly entrenched in his 643*
new capital, Setthathirath waited to see what the turn of events 648*
would be. /86/ He did not have long to wait, for Bureng-Naung 726
175*

they at least preserved their individuality and the prerogatives of 648*
their government. 175*

/98/ Xieng-Khouang, the capital, was then a large and beautiful city whose numerous inhabitants were protected by an enclosure 633
of deep moats and by forts which crowned the surrounding hillocks. 175*
The immense stone jars scattered pell-mell over its plain in the 172
time when the Khas dominated the region (1) and "the wealth of

1. Legend has it that these jars were constructed by the /415/
aboriginal Khas. For what purpose? -- A mystery. They may originally have been storehouses which served to shelter provisions on a road which has been frequented in all periods by migrating peoples. Perhaps rather they were designed to collect rainwater. Perhaps, finally, these monumental vases were simply mausoleums in which offerings were piled up to the shades of the dead.

its sixty-two pagodas and of its shining Thats whose sides concealed treasures" had given it a renown which went far abroad.

Friendly relations were therefore resumed, as in the past, be- 648*
tween the two States. Lan-Xang was again preparing to live in 643*
peace in its rediscovered autonomy when Nokeo-Koumane died 175*
while still very young and without leaving any survivors, in 1596 after a five years' reign.

THAMMIKARATH (1582), KING 1596-1622.

New disorders were to be feared, /99/ /Page 99 is devoted to 643*
an illustration: "Tran-Ninh. The Plain of the Jars."--Translator/ 175*
/100/ and new competitions for the throne. Such was not the case, for the moment, thanks to the authority of Vongsa, a cousin by marriage of the dead king, who although was only fourteen years old was able to rally the suffrage of the court to his name. His mother was a sister of Setthathirath's last wife. The dynastic link was thus rather tenuous and the local chronicles do not fail to point out that on this date the power passed to the "junior" branch of the Khoun-Lo succession.

Vongsa reigned under the name of Thammikarath. In 1598 a 557
son Oupagnouvarath was born to him, who had scarcely reached 643*
man's age when he developed a keen interest in the administration 175*
of his country. By virtue of his intelligence and his precocious maturity of mind he soon acquired a genuine popularity both among

115: Le Boulanger--65 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

172
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Fig. 7 Tran-Ninh. The Plain of the Jars.

/Facing p. 98/

545 and a barb of satire are mingled with the ancient traditions."
/177/ (L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 191.)

341 The other arts: architecture. Carefree artists: this is what the
346 Laotians seem to have been throughout the ages. And this is what
172 explains the extreme fragility of the innumerable monuments with which they adorned their land and which the pitiless tropical vegetation is today strangling for the most part. Under the Kmer influence
/177/ in the south and the Burmese in /125/ the north they built temples, chapels, pagoda-libraries, and reliquaries in the shape of "lotus blossoms" or pyramids or cones which were without any originality of their own but almost always charming in the grace, prettiness and elegance of their details. The reigning princes, from Fa-Ngoun to Souligna, were all great builders of temples, but if we except three or four edifices in Luang-Prabang, a few pagodas and chapels, the That-Luong in Vientiane and the Vat Sisaket which is only a century old, practically nothing is left of this abundant flowering (1).

1. There can be no question here of the important monastery of Vat-Phou (Bassac), which is really Kmer and belongs in some way to the Angkor group.

Everywhere in Laos one encounters impressive ruins of brick pagodas which were clumsily built but in which the plaster which covered them still frames the openings with many-colored ornaments and exquisite arabesques. For several years the French have tried, albeit somewhat tardily, to save the chief of these mutilated vestiges of an Edenic past from total destruction. Even the Vat Prakeo itself is today, alas! irrevocably destined to final disintegration.

"More fragile still (was) the style of building /126/ in wood which may well have yielded the most beautiful of the country's achievements. One of the most interesting of these exists today only in the memory which was recorded by a drawing of Delaporte at the time of the expedition of Doudart de Lagree... This was a pagoda located in the vicinity of Luang-Prabang... its form was highly individual, and reminds one of a feeding trough or a bread-pan. Delaporte compares it to an Oriental tomb. Rectangular in shape, its walls flared out up to the first roof. The latter was surmounted by a second recessed story which flared out again to support a second richly ornamented roof..."

115: Le Boulanger--81 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

"The wooden panels which formed the walls, the corbels, and 341
the beams were all carved with great delicacy. This pagoda was 346
as pretty in the fineness of its details as it was elegant in its gen- 172
eral lines.

"But nothing is left of it" (1).

1. Cf. G. Maspero, L'Indochine /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930/, p. 186.

Sculpture. For these sanctuaries, the Laotians made hordes of 532
statues out of stone, brick, and especially bronze, which were 175*
wholly or partly covered with gold. Of the latter, which were al-
ways molded from wax models, some attained gigantic size. /127/
All of them strike the various attitudes of the Buddhist liturgy. The
bodies are sketchily draped and may be seated, standing, walking
or lying down, their arms outspread. The faces are surmounted by
a sort of tiara and are frozen in a hieratic smile which is not very
expressive and seldom varies.

Painting. As for the fresco paintings which brighten the walls
of certain pagodas, they are not of any special interest. Most of /177/
them were "primarily the work of Burmese, Cambodians or Chinese
of whom the native artists (were only) the pupils" (1).

1. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 342.

The art of the gold and silver smith. On the other hand, the 326
Laotian jewelers and silversmiths knew and still know, with only
the most meager of tools, how to work gold and silver admirably--
primarily silver--and how to chase and engrave it. Their motifs
show an attractive decorative invention, and it is chiefly in this
"minor art" which borders on small-scale industry that we find the
most original manifestations of old-time Laotian life /128/ --
betel services, vases, cups, sword and dagger hilts; bracelets,
necklaces, rings, headpins, earrings, etc.

Basketwork and weaving. Finally, "like all the peoples of the 285
Far East, the Laotians are skilled in all kinds of basketwork. A 531
very pretty object which seems to be peculiar to this land is the
small basket for women in which the basketwork is covered with

been the vassal of Annam and used to pay a triennial trib- 643•
ute. The Tayson revolt forced it to submit to the Siamese, 648•
who are mistreating the people. Today, seeing the glory 175•
and power of Emperor Gia-Long, the prince of Vientiane asks to serve Annam once again and to pay tribute as in the past.' The embassy was received in a solemn audience by Gia-Long, who questioned it at length on the administration of the country, and was sent back, after a month's stay, with magnificent gifts. . . . The ambassadors brought back to the prince of Vientiane a letter from Gia-Long conceived in the following terms: 'Your predecessor Chao-In was my vassal, and my policy with respect to your kingdom has always been marked by gentleness and goodwill. Remain faithful to your duty and show yourself ever humane towards your people, and you will thereby comply with my wishes.' The question of tribute was settled. It was to be paid every three years, and the time of payment set in such a way that the embassy responsible for bringing it might greet the king during the holiday of the Tet." (Cf. Annals of the court of Hue.)

to /161/ detach Luang-Prabang from Bangkok (1). After the Bassac

1. See below, p. 201.

campaign he had sent Chao-Ngo to fortify Oubone. A triple-entrenched camp was built there and recruits trained, supposedly to defend Siam against any attack from inside or outside.

In Vientiane, he governed in the midst of a brilliant court. 369
The city of Setthathirath and Souligna, although fallen from its 175
former splendor, still contained more than ten thousand families and prided itself on its royal /162/ palace (1) and its many pagodas

1. When the Doudart de Lagree mission visited the city in /172/
1867 the mass of its fallen stones stretched from the Prakeo to the ruins -- which were then still imposing -- of the Wat-Kang. (De Carne, op. cit. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'empire chinois. Paris, 1872./) See above, p. 122, the account by Father Marini.

whose gilt glittered above the walls of its fortifications. In 1818 /346/

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the Thais-Neua, the Pou-Euns, the Lus and the Youns;

"2. The Khas, and the Khas who are evolving towards types of the first category;

"3. The inhabitants who come from neighboring countries: China, Yunnan, Annam, Cambodia, Siam, Burma."

We shall now give Dr. Lefèvre's version (1):

(1) Dr. Lefèvre, Un voyage au Laos, 1898.

"1. The first inhabitants of the peninsula or true aborigines were the Khas, a nearly savage fold without monuments and, so to speak, without any form of writing, who were driven back into the mountains by the successive invaders of their territory.

"2. The Malays or Chams were the first colonists to come to Indo-China. Little by little they succeeded in forming several principalities, the most important of which was the kingdom of Champa or Tiampa, which included the whole coast from Tourane to Baria.

"3. After the Malay infiltration came the arrival of the Brahmins, who had been driven out of Benares with their leader Pra-Thong. They struggled with the Malays and almost absorbed them in the end. The Brahmins were the first ancestors of the Cambodians.

"4. Under Açoka, emperor of Burma, took place the arrival of the Kmers who came from Pégou and Hansavadi and settled in Cambodia, thereby overshadowing the Brahmin caste.

"5. Tartars came down from the north and leveled all. They were followed by the Thais who came from Mongolia or Setchuen and who spread to Siam, Laos, Burma, Kouang-Si, Kouang-Toung, the north of Tonkin and the island of Haïnan.

"6. To the east, on the coast, are the Annamites, who came from Kouei-Tcheou and occupy all the territory included between the Annamitic Chain and the sea."

Dr. Lefèvre's conclusions are worthy of note, for they were based on documents which are reputed to be authentic. We [134] should, however, add one particular relating to the prehistoric period, that is to say to the epoch of polished stone and the bronze age. At that time there were human beings in the Mékong basin who had the same way of life, the same kind of tools and the same methods of work as our own ancestors in ancient Gaul. In fact, the interesting

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172 collections which have been assembled in Luang-Prabang by M. Massie (1) and by Prince Henri d'Orléans contain tools and weapons

(1) The Massie collection (Pavie mission) is in the museum of Saint-Germain.

of polished stone and bronze which attest the antiquity of the Khas or Laotian aborigines.

174 The autochthonous races, the first occupants of the soil of Indo-
563 China, the ancestors of the folk whom we now call Khas, possessed means of action which were doubtless identical to those of the neighboring peoples (2). But their evolution towards the grouping of

(2) See Appendix, No. XVII.

families into tribes and of tribes into clans was a great deal slower. Their tools and weapons remained at a fixed stage of development, and thus they were subjected to contact with and then the influence and yoke of more intelligent neighbors who were better armed and had a broader and less individualistic social organization.

Who can say, in the absence of any kind of historical monument relating to this remote epoch, and especially after the terrible Tartar invasion, how many crossings, metamorphoses and fundamental transformations these first inhabitants of Laos underwent? Always driven back, fleeing and scattered, they formed what might be called ethnic stratifications which were broken from place to place by numerous faults but the traces of which are clearly visible at the various levels of the mountain slopes and on the plateaus where Kha villages were successively established.

Disseminated, with no bond to unite them, dispersed so as to offer less resistance, speaking different dialects, and deprived of common interests, it may be truly said that the various Kha tribes and clans appear to us in a degenerate light.

000 It would, however, be wrong to suppose that this state of affairs is immutable and incurable. The physical and moral regeneration [135] of these races must not be thought of as a utopian dream, but is essential both as an instrument of domination and as a stimulus to our other subjects in Laos who are descended from the conquering races.

It will be greatly to our interest, and we may even say that it

149: Reinach--235a, G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

Fig. 82 /p. 319/ Vegetation in the ruins of Hueum-Hin, between Kemmarat and Savannakhet. (Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

323 The potters' methods and equipment do not differ from those which are in widespread use everywhere.

The method of firing depends on the nature of the article, and firing may be done either in kilns dug out of the clay soil, in the banks of watercourses, or under stacks of rice straw. Wood or rice straw is used to fire the kilns.

In some regions articles are given a shiny black patina resembling graphite by firing them for a second time in paddy husks.

326 778 411 415 Brass-founding. One has only to explore the pagodas of Laos in order to realize that brass-founding used to be held in honor. Religious statues can be found which are sometimes of great [458] weight and usually of quite fine workmanship and taste, taking into account, to be sure, the quite special manner in which they conceive esthetics.

Although the crucibles have not been fired for many long years for casting such large pieces, the industry of brass-founding continues to be exercised by a certain number of specialists who are content with producing religious statuettes, necessities for betel, bells for elephants and livestock, various kinds of vases, cuspidors, etc.

This industry is an extremely ancient one in the land. It was certainly practiced during the Bronze Age, as is attested by the spear-heads, daggers, hatchets and halberds which have been found in northern Laos and which can now be seen in the Saint-Germain museum.

[821 172] It is interesting to note that the inhabitants of Laos attribute a meteoric origin to objects of the Bronze Age, as also to those of the Age of Polished Stone. They believe that these objects fall from the sky when it thunders, and that they are produced by lightning.

The following are some of the methods used by Laotian founders. Casting is always done by the lost wax process.

325 532 Casting statues. On an initial rough clay model, the artist applies a layer of fine, soft and well-pugged clay which he shapes in a more careful manner. Then after covering the statue, which is already much more than a rough draft, with a layer of bees-wax of the proper thickness, he finishes modeling the statue on the wax, inserting all the details and all the ornaments which it is to include. Polishing a bit here, engraving there, setting precious stones or simply glass between the eyelids to represent eyes, and inserting gold lips where the mouth is to be located, he gives the

127 numerous than the solid paths.

For ancient documents are indeed rare. As in Cambodia, one has to admit that the manuscripts of Laos, written in chalk on blackened skins or carved with a stylus on palm leaves, have resisted neither the passage of time nor termites. As for inscriptions, they only appear during [8] the sixth century A.D., and even they are of Khmer origin, the first inscription in Thai writing dating only from A.D. 1292 in the reign of Râma Kamhêng of Soukhodaya.

What then remains for us? Fortunately the earth has preserved what the memory of man has forgotten. Prehistoric studies and archeology enable us partially to fill in certain gaps. Let us therefore examine the documents they provide and find out from them what we can learn of the past of the Muong Lao.

ANTECEDENTS OF LAOS. PREHISTORIC PERIOD.

172 The most ancient vestiges of civilization which have so far been found in Laos are located in three well-defined regions:

A) Region of Luang Prabang.

During the year 1940 Mr. Paul Lévy discovered a prehistoric deposit of exceptional importance because of its extent, the abundance of stone material and the composition of this material. This discovery was made in the immediate neighborhood of Luang Prabang (villages of Xieng-Lek, of Phon-Muat and of Pha-Khom). This area has always been inhabited since the time when man's only tools were roughly chipped pebbles. But the paleolithic study of Indochina is interesting in showing that in Indochina, as in the valley of the Somme, man of the most remote prehistoric epochs already lived on the banks of rivers (Lévy). This epoch is characterized by tools of worked stone and by the almost complete absence of pottery. In Indochina this period is usually called the Hoabinian epoch, because the first tools of this type were found in the grottoes of Hoa-binh (Southern Tonkin). We may [9] mention that the human remains found on Hoabinian sites show characteristics which relate them to Australian and Papuan-Melanesian races. But all this is still in an embryonic state and should not lead to any conclusions without observing the greatest prudence.

B) Province of Kham-mouane.

The findings of Madeleine Colani in the grottoes of Mahaxay bring us more reliable information. These natural shelters are undoubtedly necropolises; the furnishings are poor, but they reveal two series of facts.

1. The neolithic people who left in these places vestiges of their occupation were in the habit of hiding the corpses or skeletons of their relatives in cracks of limestone rocks, with funeral furnishings of many axes.

2. A prehistoric culture similar to that of the coast of central Vietnam is found in this part of Kham-mouane. Marine shells played a large part in this culture. Commerce in shells used as ornaments obliged merchants or buyers to travel hundreds of kilometers through the most difficult and dangerous country. This neolithic civilization therefore crossed the Annamite chain in one direction or the other.

These neolithic people are believed to have been Indonesians.

C. The Bronze Age and the Protohistoric Epoch in Tran-Ninh.

According to legend, the jars of Tran-Ninh were the work of giants, ancestors of the present-day Khas, who used these urns for drinking rice alcohol. They carried the urns under their arms when they went [10] hunting or when they went to war. The cap-shaped stones which are placed in a circle in the mixed funereal fields around certain monolithic remains are said to be the stools on which these giants sat to converse while they drank.

The research of Madeleine Colani has enabled the "mystery of the jars" to be partly elucidated. The discoveries made in several of these jars (remains of calcinated bones, various objects in pottery, glass beads, bronzes and iron tools) leave hardly any doubt as to their funereal destination. The most important object brought to light is a bronze statuette 9 centimeters high representing a man. The industries represented in the funereal furnishings are the polishing of stone, glassware in the form of working beads, metallurgy of bronze and iron. The objects made of bronze and glass seem to have been imported. The iron implements might have been manufactured on the spot, for they are sometimes accompanied by pieces of ore. A careful examination of certain jars shows that they might have been worked with a metal object. However, it has been ascertained that as the number and capacity of these jars diminish, objects of stone become more numerous and vases made of baked clay increase in number. The study of prehistoric immigrations to the Celebes establishes the fact that a nation of stone cutters was followed by one of potters. The former made large, more or less cylindrical, monolithic urns, while the latter made earthenware vases for the ashes of their dead. Would similar facts apply to Tran-Ninh?

173: Deydier--5 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

•172 A considerable agglomeration of human remains was found in the neighborhood of the burial places. One can state with certainty that the area of the Jars, with innumerable funereal monoliths accompanied by rich furnishings, was the center of a social organization which was [11] well constructed with a well-organized hierarchy. That the food for so many people necessitated a large amount of agriculture cannot be disputed. Without doubt, cereals were then cultivated in this region. The peasants were also breeders, for a quasi-sedentary army of men cannot be fed by the products of hunting. As for fishing, it is out of the question due to the hydrography of the country. The funereal furnishings are those of a people who live from working the land. Besides, the present-day peasants of the region of Ban-Ang or of the former aerodrome of Lat-Sen often dig up scattered prehistoric pieces in greater or lesser quantity. Judging from the iron implements unearthed, it can be said that there were two modes of life at the time of the builders of monoliths: that of the mountain people of the forests, who lived in the manner of the present-day Khas and Meos, using the rai method of agriculture; and that of the plains people, assembled from the plain of the Jars, who had cleared the land and cultivated it perhaps by ploughing.

These inhabitants had intercourse with the outside. The two fragments of road which go from this central plain, the one towards Luang Prabang, the other towards Borikan, are strewn at intervals and along the mountain passes with small fields of urns or simply with cemeteries of funeral stones. These routes must have been traveled by caravans of salt merchants. One must not lose sight of the fact that the principal economic activity of prehistoric times was the commerce in this product, and we remind the reader that the whole country east of Tran-Ninh is very rich in rock-salt.

174 To summarize, judging from their workmanship, the megaliths already belong to the age of metals, that is to say, to the protohistoric epoch. But whether they are menhirs or monolithic urns, [12] one is in the presence of monuments of funereal purpose, related to the cult of dead ancestors and chiefs.

Again we are faced with an obscure abyss. How many links are missing in this chain of events! However, a dim ray of light is shed on the dawn of the historical period by linguistics, thanks to the study of the onomastic doublets of the ancient name of Luang Prabang: Xieng-T'ong, Xieng-Dong. One is led to admit the existence of exogamic human groups (doubtless Indonesians) most likely attached,

from the linguistic point of view to the Mon-Khmer group, possessing a two-class social system (Lévy). But one must reach the seventh century of the Christian era to arrive at the solid ground of historic realities. 174

HISTORIC PERIOD. THE KHMER INFLUENCE

Just as the countries of the Far East received in their early stages of development the imprint of foreign civilizations--all are aware of their debt to the Graeco-Roman civilization which each one has known how to adapt to its particular genius--so in the same manner Laos has benefited in the beginning from the neighboring civilizations. 171

In the present state of our knowledge (this phrase will recur frequently in our writings, but it is necessary to put "not initiated" in face of the difficulties encountered by the researcher), the traces of this Khmer influence appear only at very different epochs according to the regions studied. Thus, we find them as early as the sixth to eighth centuries up until the thirteenth century of our era in the province of Champassak--moreover there was in this region a large kingdom known as Wen-Tan in the Chinese annals--then from the tenth to the thirteenth century in the neighborhood of Vientiane, and finally from the twelfth to the fourteenth century at Luang Prabang.

[13] The most important monument of Champassak is the Vat-Phou (See appendix). 172

In the province of Savannakhet future explorations in the region of Keng-Kok will probably furnish valuable information. A rapid trip we made through this area revealed sites which had never been mentioned before. Apparently a strong Cham influence occurred in this province, but the question is still too new for one now to reach any conclusions. 171

At Vientiane, the most ancient Khmer vestiges are most probably found in the neighborhood of the pagoda called Vat Si Muong. A magnificent Khmer bust of the thirteenth century, recently discovered a few hundred meters from this pagoda, seems to confirm this hypothesis. But there again the novelty of the problem forbids any hasty conclusion.

The Khmer influences in That Luang, which had been anticipated at the time of the restoration of this monument by the French School of the Far East in 1931, begin to be revealed. The Buddha said to be that of Fertility, which is in the cloister, is no more than the

172 transformation of a Khmer dvarapala (guardian of the gate) into a
171 Buddha of Laos. The pious hands of the faithful have restored this sculpture according to the rules of the artistic canon of Laos by means of limestone mortar. Finally, the discovery at the beginning of the year 1951 of a magnificent Khmer Jaya Buddha of the thirteenth century opens up new horizons on the influence of King Jayavarman VII in this southern part of his empire, although his role in this country was already known to us by the discovery in 1903 at Say Fong of the inscription named "stele of the hospitals" (see appendix: Vientiane).

At Luang Prabang the stele of the 900 Vishnu discovered in 1917 had already shown that Brahmanism [14] had apparently been in vogue here for a short while. When a certain number of Buddhist sculptures of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries were brought to light during the war, the theory had to be revised according to which Buddhism was not introduced into the kingdom of Luang Prabang before the fourteenth century of our era.

175 Thus, it is principally in the thirteenth century that the Khmer empire exerted its maximum influence on the provinces of northern Laos. But, as Mr. Coedès very correctly observes, the thirteenth century found the whole of Eurasia under the hands of the Mongols. Ever since his accession as grand Khan, Kubla Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan and conqueror of China, sought to obtain the oath of vassalage from the foreign sovereigns who were in the habit of giving it to the Chinese T'ang dynasty. Although these same Sino-Mongolian armies were always defeated or only temporarily successful, their attack produced deep repercussions. The most important of these was the advent of the power of the Thais in the basin of the Menam and in Burma with all its results for Cambodia, the principalities of the Mekong and those of the Malay Peninsula.

HISTORICAL LAOS OF THE XIVth CENTURY TO THE PRESENT DAY

The end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries saw the establishment of principalities in the valley of the Menam and their internal struggles. The weakening of the principality of Soukhotai favored the formation of the state of Laos.

Fa Ngoum (1316-1374) reigned from 1353 to 1374. This king was the true founder of the kingdom of Laos. He spent part of his childhood as an exile in Cambodia where he was brought up by a religious scholar of the capital. When he was sixteen years old, King Jayavarmanparamecvara [15] gave him in marriage to his

daughter, Princess Nang Yot Keo. At an indeterminate date which must come between 1340 and 1350, he was given the command of an army destined to reconquer the kingdom of his fathers. According to the Laotian chronicle, the victorious advance of this army enabled Fa Ngoum to declare himself king of Lan Xan. He immediately demanded the submission of all the Thai princes of Mekong. The center of resistance to Fa Ngoum was Phai Nam (spiny bamboos) because of the impenetrable vegetable belt which protected it like veritable ramparts. Fa Ngoum seized it by means of the classical trick of ornamenting missiles with gold and silver, then pretending to retreat and then pouncing on the enemy at the moment when they had scattered to gather the precious metal. In memory of this episode, the town was baptized Vieng Kham which means "circled with gold" and which later became Vientiane, "circled with sandalwood." Fa Ngoum organized his kingdom with force and reigned as a despot. Complaints were made and the king of Cambodia advised him to be moderate. Fa Ngoum then requested that a mission be sent him from Cambodia consisting of religious and lettered men, and of artisans. This mission introduced the orthodox books of Buddhism and a statue of the Buddha (Prabang) which had been presented in the eleventh century to the Khmer sovereign by the king of Ceylon. Prabang thus became the safeguard of the kingdom.

175 [723] 103 175 641 177 779

Up until recent years this tradition led one to believe that the introduction of Buddhism into Laos dated from Fa Ngoum. The discovery of a certain number of Buddhist sculptures of Khmer manufacture of the twelfth century A. D., has destroyed this theory (see below: Introduction of Buddhism to Laos).

[172]

After a series of wars, Fa Ngoum died in 1373 at the age of fifty-eight. His successor Sam Sen Thai reigned from 1373 to 1416. He kept [16] peace in his kingdom and passed on to his successor a prosperous kingdom, well established and living in peace, and at the same time dreaded by its neighbors.

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The fifteenth century saw a succession of sovereigns about whom history has nothing in particular to tell. Let us mention, however, a war with the emperor of Annam. The first part of the sixteenth century passes under the reign of King Phothisarath (1506-1547), a pious Buddhist. One of his most famous actions is the edict against the cult of Phis. Setthathirath came into power in 1548 after a war with the Burmese. His death was followed by a troubled period. The beginning of the seventeenth century is particularly obscure, but in 1637 a great king called Souligna Vongsa (1637-1694) ascended

[171]

538 inscriptions, some of which go back to the fourteenth century and are
[172] in the Laotian language. For the earlier period we have seen above that these inscriptions were either in Sanskrit or in Khmer (Cf. Stele of Sayfong, appendix: Vientiane).

Music

533 Laotian songs belong to the field of poetry and are of two kinds:
538 the one consists of poems celebrating the exploits of legendary heroes,
883 transmitted from father to child, from master to pupil, and often expanded by imaginary improvisations; the others embroider the love theme.

[86] Alternate chants are used, particularly in the courts of love. A young girl sings, a boy answers. These songs have become a traditional game whose social function has been forgotten. They consist of a series of questions and answers. Often the questions are even real puzzles or simple guessing questions. By asking each other questions, the young people try to get to know each other.

It seems as if the origin could be found here of what the Indians call the svayamvara which is the choice of the husband by the woman. This custom is very persistent among the white Thai of the Phongtho region.

534 While vocal music is very prevalent in Laos, there exists also instrumental music which should not be neglected. We summarize here the excellent account given by his Highness Tiao Souvanna Phouma on Laotian music.

"There are three kinds of instruments: a) wind (the khouy and the khene), b) string (the So I and the So O), c) percussion (the Nang Nat and the Khong Vong).

The khene consists of a series of thin bamboos of various and decreasing lengths placed side by side in pairs like the flutes of Pan. Usually these are in seven consecutive rows. These bamboos are joined together by two half gourds attached with wax which form the blowing chamber and have a small circular opening to serve as mouthpiece. On the inside, the bamboos are pierced with holes. The most curious thing about the way the khene functions is that several notes are simultaneous and are absolutely continuous.

The khouy is a flute without any keys, generally made of bamboo and giving very clear tones.

The so, violins with two strings, consist of a long carved wooden handle and a sounding box. [87] The latter is a half coconut closed by

173: Deydier --58 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

[141]

• 172

Fig. 1. Field of the Urns at Tran-Ninh (Cl. École Française d'Extrême Orient [French School of the Far East]).

10: d'Orleans--275-276 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 101, 173, 197, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"They [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian.] are easily recognised as Laotians, but they appear inferior and weaker, though they are lively and prepossessing; they originally came from Ban Lasa (near Muong Ngoi), but they call themselves Khamouks, and count seven principal tribes of Kas; but their dialects differ, so that several of them cannot understand each other.

The Kasings (whose language approaches that of the Yaos).
The Khakos.
The Khabits. [276]
The Khakoos.
The Kahoks (who wear cotton drawers as their only garment).
The Khapai's.
The Khamouks.

They say that they do not know anything of their history, but add: that the Laotians are their brothers, therefore the Kas had compassion upon them and retired to the mountains, leaving the plain and the young shoots of bamboo to them."

10: d'Orleans--316-319 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 101, 173, 197, 771, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"The Meos live upon the eastern frontier of the kingdom, close to the Pouons plateau. I never met any in the town, but I had an opportunity of [pages 317 and 318 contain illustration] [319] conversing with one who was employed by M. Counillon, the French consul. He was a man of small stature, but well proportioned, with very pale complexion and regular features, and he told me that the Meos originally came from China and could make themselves understood by the caravan-men from the Yunnam. I gathered from his expressions that the Meos dialect is very like that of Van Bou, the word Meos, being rather the Laos designation, while they call themselves Mongs. I do not know whether this name has any connection with that of the ancient empire of the Mongs and the Möns of Burmah, but, according to the man with whom I conversed, the tribes to which he belongs have no religious creeds, though there is a word in his language which denotes the Deity."

10: d'Orleans--329-330 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 173, 436

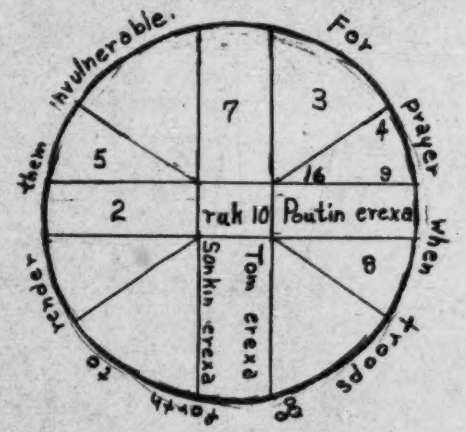
[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "The money in circulation is the English rupee, the Siamese tical, the piastre, native coins in copper and silver, shaped like canoes, and cowries strung together like chaplets, these latter coming by way of Burmah [330] or Siam from the Gulf of Bengal. I am told a curious story about one piece of money formerly coined in the Principality of Nan; the legend is that a queen who formerly ruled over the country, was so ugly that she could not find any one to fall in love with her, and that, in order to show that, however beautiful their features may be, all women are alike, she had a certain part of her body represented on this coin."

10: d'Orleans--331-332 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 173, 532, 778

"With the exception of the principal statue, the gods are not seated, and in this pagoda of Ouate Mai, the divinity held in the greatest veneration is one with outstretched hands as if in the act of giving the benediction. This is the Prabang or 'Buddha of the gold washings,' as he is made out of the gold found in the district. Tradition has it that this deity was brought here by the Laotians, when they emigrated from Muong-Theng, and that, after being carried off to Bangkok by the Siamese, it was brought back to Luang Prabang about twenty years ago. Another legend is that the statue was sent about 200 years ago by the king of Cambodia; but in any case it has given its name to the town, and it is covered with embroideries and chasubles, and placed in the recess of a reliquary to which diverse ornaments are suspended. In front of this is a movable bronze grating, ending in two dragons with intertwined tails, called Nâk, while to the left of the altar is a pulpit very similar to a sedan chair, from which the bonzes [332] give their lessons and recite their prayers."

10; d'Orleans--340-343 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, ~~173,~~ 346, 777, 782

"Behind the altar [LSS: of the pagoda of Ouate Uisoune in Luang Prabang] is a semi-circular black stone upon a wooden pedestal and covered with Laotian inscriptions. Upon one side of this stone, it is related how the king of Muong Hay (near Muong Yan), having come for a festival with the king of Luang Prabang, left in the pagoda images of Buddha and books made of palm branches about 1198. The date is 1198 after Tiaoman Ta, who is supposed to have lived sixty-six centuries ago, so that it is one difficult to verify. Upon the reverse is a cabalistic sign which, worn by a soldier on the [pages 341 and 342 contain illustration] [343] breast, renders him invulnerable. This sign is as follows:-



10: d'Orleans--340-343 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-2
116, 173, 346, 777, 782

The figures are in Laotian.
Ruk is an invocation to the gods.
Poutin erexa means (Pra god) pout, protect me.
Tom (in) erexa means (Teonda god) protect me.
Sonkin erexa means, bonzes protect me.
In this, as in the other temples are to be found the conduit for the holy water, the pulpit, the sunshades, the divinities which lay hands on the faithful, the adorned gods and the Buddhas with clasped hands (Pra Hopokoute), while in the adjoining pagoda of more recent construction are twenty rows of small gilt Buddhas placed close beside one another against the wall."

10: d'Orleans--367-368 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 133, 173

[LSS: between Luang Prabang and Paklay] "Some of the rocks have a story of their own. In the afternoon of the 20th we leave on our left a chalk cliff, which descends precipitously from a height of some 650 feet into the stream. On the sides of the mountain the trees manage to cling somehow or other, and numerous fissures, forming here and there [368] grottoes visible up to a great height, while black portions of the rock, harder than the rest and washed by the rain, hang in gigantic stalactites.

In vain I search with my glass the nooks and corners in the hope of finding a pagoda. There are no statues, but at about 160 feet from the top, on a white surface, I make out a sort of escutcheon, filled with small rows of Buddhas.

This rock is called Pakao (the white rock). A Kha, runs the tradition, having ventured upon the summit to look at the river, was carried over the edge by a strong wind, and touched the water. But far from being killed he swam for some miles down stream and was received by the canoes of a village. The inhabitants, marvelling at what had occurred, fell prostrate before the Kha, gave him presents and named him their king."

is [Illustration here] a duty for us, to restore the Khas to the normal status to which their imposing number in the total population as well as the special qualities which they possess give them a right. 000

Once emancipated from their strict servitude and from the rapacity of the Laotian and Thai mandarins, and once commanded by leaders who have been chosen by them and from members of their own race, the Khas will rise rapidly and, as [136] time passes, will certainly give a most effective impetus to the development of our possession's riches.

Moreover, they have not lost the tradition of their original status. They are conscious of their own antiquity and say, not without scorn, that the peoples who are newcomers to Indo-China are only their younger brothers. Their race has fallen back on its own resources, has divided into small groups, has opposed ~~a force of absolute~~ inertia to the invader and the conqueror and has thus kept itself free for many long centuries from mixtures with other peoples. Today there are still many descendants of these first possessors of the land and one may find in them, in a latent state, the energy and courage so conspicuously absent in the conquering races which drove them back to the mountains and reduced them to a kind of slavery or ostracism from which the latter greatly profited. 563 173

Nor can it be denied that the Khas are capable of moral and material improvement. There are many, for example, who have adopted Buddhism (1), and still others Catholicism (2). These Khas 563 795 797

(1) Khouène Khas and Khmou Khas.

(2) Bahnar Khas, Rognaos, etc.

have yielded up to persuasion and gentle treatment what they refused for many centuries to constraint and force. The future is therefore encouraging.

What is more, the question of emancipating the Khas has left the domain of theory and pure speculation. In 1894 M. Macey, one of our political agents, emancipated the Khas in the territories of Xieng-Khong, Muong-Mugne, Poukha, etc. The terrain was well chosen for the experiment, since this daring attempt was applied precisely to the Khouène, Khmou and Lemet Kha groups whose moral regeneration had already begun through the practice of Buddhism. 563 177

China and Indo-China (1).

[113] (1) E. Picanon, Le Laos français. 1901, Challamel. [Paris]

II

173 Laos, Thais and Khas. Although the Laotian legends
563 attribute the same origin to all of these (Muong-Theng or Dien-Bien-
144 Phu) and say that they all came from the same "gourd" (Nam-Tao-Phoun), it is hardly likely that the Laotians and the Khas have a common origin. Indeed, the characteristics which serve to distinguish the two races are too numerous and too marked, both from the point of view of the racial types themselves and as regards language, mores and religious beliefs.

144 Nor can it be affirmed that the Khas are the representatives of
174 the aboriginal population, for before any of their people had mounted the throne of Luang-Prabang, six kings foreign to their race had already occupied it--if we may regard the list of the first kings of the land which is preserved in the Phong-Sa Va-Dan (annals of the kingdom) as correct--and of these conquering princes the first is said to have come from India, and the second from Cambodia.

In any case, the Khas are said to have preceded the Laotians in the land, and it was not until the reign of their fourth and last king that they are supposed to have been conquered and driven out or enslaved by the Laotians, who had come down from Dien-Bien-
[609] Phu. Since that time, and despite many revolts of which the last is almost recent, the Khas have never ceased being "a folk taillable and liable to forced labor at pleasure" for their vanquishers, and their name has become a synonym for a low person or slave in the current
[56] idiom. Not until 1895 were the Khas once and for all freed--freed is perhaps not the word, for in the strict sense they were never slaves--or at least summoned to enjoy a system of rule similar to that of the other natives and which left no margin for arbitrariness and vexations.

173 In designating Dien-Bien-Phu as the cradle of the Laotian people, or at least in attributing to the Laotians and the Thais a common origin, legend seems to be in agreement with reality. There are indeed many points of resemblance and contact between the two peoples. The type is invariably the same, although finer in the native of Luang-
175 Prabang than in the native of Lai-Chau or Dien-Bien-Phu. Not more
291 than two hundred years ago the Laotians still wore, like the black Thais, the Annamite costume and their hair wound in a coil. It
177 was doubtless after contact with the Siamese--who had themselves

has created a center for the study of Laos which will enable the country to be better known and better loved. From these works new elements will arise which will serve as a base for more detailed works which the reader can study to his advantage, while awaiting the publication of a new edition of this modest tract, whose only ambition is to increase the understanding of the habits, customs, and traditions of the Muong Lao. 114

May we express here our profound gratitude to His Royal Highness Prince Savang Vathana, heir to the throne, for the friendly interest he has ever shown in our work. We express our thanks to His Highness Boum Oum, Prince of Champassak, who has kindly pointed out to us monuments till now unknown. To L. L. E. E. Thao Kou Abhay, president of the King's Council and to Thao Nhouy Abhay, former minister, we are also indebted for certain information for which we are grateful. We thank Mr. Michaudel for the friendly and constant help he has given to the French School [5] of the Far East in Laos, and we also thank Mr. Malleret, director of this school, who has made useful suggestions. Finally, we express our thanks to Prince Souvanna Phouma and to the Princess for the consideration they have shown us on many occasions and for the encouragement they have given to this work. 122

[6 blank page]

[7]

HISTORICAL SKETCH

"...Then, Phou Lan Xon, messenger of Phaya Then, king of the sky, took a red-hot iron and pierced the gourd. Immediately a crowd of men sprang forth. There were so many that the opening was not large enough to let them through, so larger openings were made with scissors." 173 563

Such is the origin of the two groups of people of Laos. The Khas, who came out of the opening made by the red-hot iron, were blackened by the cinders; the Thais, who came through holes made by scissors, kept their fair complexion.

However original, this charming legend is far from giving us precise information about the first inhabitants of Laos. As a famous scholar has already bitterly remarked, it is the beginnings about which we know the least. Alas, Laos is no exception to this rule. The historian who attempts to retrace the events which have occurred in this country from the origins to the 13th century, at which period documents with substantial proofs are available, finds himself in much the same position as an ant lost in a sieve. The holes are more 127

5: Brodrick--71 S-3 (1939) 1942 Laotians
116, 197, 174

"Siam has territorial ambitions. The Thai irredentists claim the Laos country (for the Laotians speak a language akin to Siamese, and they are evidently a Thai tribe left north when the ancestors of the present-day Siamese settled in the Menam plains), and they dream of lordship over the Thôs and all the Thai-speakers wherever they may be found—from the Burmese Shan States far into South-western China.

'You see,' said one of the Siamese to me, 'these people understand perfectly what I say.' And the stocky Thôs certainly did seem to have a general idea of what he was talking about."

7: Thompson--371 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 101, 174, 621

"The origin of the Laotian people is the object of much speculation. In all probability they were driven southward from Thibet and China in successive waves. They were and are to-day governed by petty chieftains and divided into families, each of which forms a community under the authority of the eldest son of its most ancient branch."

25: Brodrick--92 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-2
116, 174

"[HD: The Thais in Indochina] cannot have immigrated so very long ago,(1) since widely

1. In using the word 'Thai' to indicate 'speakers of Thai languages' there is no implication that the mass of the Thai-speakers in geographical Indo-China are necessarily of the same physical type as the Thai speakers in ancient China. Probably the mass of the Thai-speakers in Indo-China to-day are the descendants of men who adopted a Thai language from their conquerors.

separated groups such as the Shans in Burma, the Siamese, the Laotians and the Thos in Upper Tongking still speak languages which are so near akin that their speakers are mutually intelligible.(2)

2. It is quite possible that Chinese and Thai are just one language split a long time ago into two halves each of which has followed very different fortunes from its fellow. Spoken Chinese of the third century B.C. as 'reconstructed' very plausibly in recent years by sinologues, looks and sounds startlingly different from any sort of spoken Chinese to-day.

25: Brodrick--92 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-2
116, 174

Indeed, although, as might be expected, the early history of the Siamese and of the Laotians is mythical, we can probably set the time of the Thai-speakers immigrations into Indo-China at some time after the beginning of our era."

68: Mouhot--276-277 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 122, 174, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"Notwithstanding the small population of Korat, it is the chief town of a province, or rather an extensive state, containing eleven towns or boroughs, chief towns of districts, and a great number of villages, more or less populated. Fifteen days' [277] journey brings you from Korat to Bassac on the banks of the Mekon, and in the same latitude.

My intention was to proceed northwards, only stopping in the province of Louang Prabang, and then to descend the river as far as Cambodia. I hired elephants, and five days after, having passed through several villages inhabited by the descendants of ancient Siamese colonists who had taken refuge there in time of war, passing continually through forests of resin trees thinly scattered, I arrived at Ban Prang, a village where I discovered a ruined tower, and also the remains of an ancient temple. The next place I arrived at was Chaiapoune, the principal Laotian town in the north, and the chief town of the district. Here also I found ruins; but they were inconsiderable, and seemed more like a Laotian imitation than the work of Khmer Dôme. The inscriptions on the other temples in the province of Korat resemble those of Ongcor: here I found upon a block of broken slate-stone an inscription in Laotian characters, but which is unintelligible even to the inhabitants of the country. These, with some remains of idols and towers at the foot of a mountain in the district, were the only vestiges of that ancient

68: Mouhot--276-277 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 122, 174, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

civilization which I discovered in the north. Everything leads me to suppose that here also were the limits which separated the kingdom of Cambodia from that of Vieng Thiane, destroyed during the last war which the Siamese raised against the Western Laotians or white-bellies. It was in this district that I was stopped in my travels by the authorities of the country, who treated me with great rudeness, and who forbade the people to let me have any means of transport, even after seeing my passport. I was therefore obliged to retrace my steps, deploring the expense and loss of time in the best part of the year, and which will cause me serious inconvenience."

/9/

CHAPTER II
ETHNOGRAPHIC OUTLINE
PREHISTORIC HYPOTHESES

Laos is a geographical expression which does not correspond I
to any ethnographic reality. To be sure, within the last thirty L
years it has taken a place in the French Indo-Chinese Union, it 174
possesses an administrative life all its own, and a political status, /101/
although vague, which does not resemble that of any other country. But if one wishes to trace the main lines of its history, or more exactly to study the succession of peoples' migrations which resulted in the swarm of races which inhabit it today, one must abstract it from its present political limits and situate it in the whole of the Indo-Chinese peninsula. Its river frontier has, in /101/
fact, never constituted a genuine barrier in the west, for the basin of the Mékong is separated from that of the Ménam only by slight undulations. Thus the Laotian on the left bank and the Siamese on /10/ the right bank resemble one another like brothers.

The great obstacle is in the east. It is constituted by the I
Annamitic Chain which has divided the Indo-Chinese peninsula, L
from the point of view of race, religion and civilization, into 174
two distinct sides: the eastern slope, which is the domain of the 101
Annamites, a people of Mongol civilization; and the western /144/
slope which is occupied by Laos, Cambodia, Siam and Burma, "the abandoned rear guard of the peoples of Indo-European civilization" (1).

1. Cf. R. Meyer, Notice ethnographique.

Between these two ethnic zones "the antithesis is more striking than between the Germanic World and the Latin World. The one, the Chinese zone, contains the yellow, impenetrable world whose fabulous past has imposed on the people of Annam, crushed down as they are in their coastal plains, the sacred prestige of its 'characters' which are to it what Pali and Sanskrit are to the races of Hindu origin, and Latin and Greek are to European peoples. The other, the Indian zone, has nurtured the slow evolution of the gentlest peoples of the earth and favored the blossoming of the

I prodigious Hindu civilization" (2).
L
174 2. Ibid.
101

/11/ We should not, however, conclude from these premises that the Annamitic Chain has always constituted an insurmountable barrier and that these two worlds which are so dissimilar never communicated with one another. On the contrary, they had quite frequent and extremely violent encounters which partially explain the kind of Tower of Babel which the basin of the Mékong forms today.

"Long ago," as J. Moura has judiciously written in his Royaume du Cambodge, "Indo-China was the closed field where the civilizations of India and China and doubtless too those of the peoples of central Asia came to try themselves and do battle with one another. These Mongol and Tibetan migrations must have occurred before the Christian era and must correspond to the time when internal wars devastated these regions and resulted in an overflow of the peoples of the North towards the Occident, the Orient, and probably too towards the South. In resume, it may be said that Indo-China was once the theater of political struggles, the land of confusion of religious ideas and mixture of races. The difficulties which we have encountered in all our studies, in seeking a solution to the problems relative to this region, have no other cause."

I /12/ Which was the truly aboriginal race in Laos? No one can
L say, and at the very most all we can do is to suggest the hypothesis
172 that the first inhabitants must have settled there at a time when present-day Indo-China did not yet exist, geologically speaking, and when a relatively large part of the Asiatic lands was covered by water. The interesting collections obtained in Luang-Prabang by Massie and Lefèvre-Pontalis in the course of their explorations in behalf of the Pavie missions show us instruments and weapons of the Polished Stone Age and the Bronze Age. "There existed, therefore, during this prehistoric epoch in the basin of the northern Mékong, human beings who had the same way of life, the same tools and the same methods of work as our own ancestors in old Gaul" (1). This

1. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos, 1911/

period, however, must have lasted much longer in the peninsula than in Europe, if we are to believe the "Imperial Annals of Annam" according to which bronze was still in use in the second century B.C.

I in northern Indo-China, whose inhabitants were obliged to have re-
L course to /13/ China in order to obtain iron farming implements.
172 According to the discoveries of Indo-Chinese geologists and the learned studies of Dr. Verneau (1), these primitive populations

I
L 1. Cf. R. Verneau, Les récentes découvertes prehistoriques
174 de l'Indochine (comptes rendus de l'Académie des
162 Sciences, 1924). -- H. Mansuy, Contribution à l'étude de
144 la préhistoire de l'Indochine, 1923-1925. -- E. Patte, Notes sur le préhistorique indochinois, 1925.

presented the same characteristics as may still be found "in the islands of Malaysia, from Sumatra to the center of Borneo, among the tribes which constitute the Indonesian group." Today they are known as Kha in Laotian lands, as Moï in Annam and as Pnong in Cambodia. Among these Khas, "There are unquestionably various types. In some of them we recognize without any difficulty the influence of Mongol blood which has modified the characteristics of the primitive race in varying degrees. But if we eliminate these half-breeds who are more or less impregnated with yellow blood, we are left with dolichocephalic, hypsicephalic individuals with pentagonal heads... who closely resemble the old race which once lived on the frontiers of China. It is therefore becoming increasingly probable that the Indonesians and the Khas are both descended from a stock which used to live /14/ in the north of the Indo-Chinese peninsula"(1).

1. R. Verneau, Les crânes humains du gisement préhistorique de Pho-Binh-Gia. -- L'Antropologie, pp. 558-559. Quoted by H. Mansuy in the Mémoires du Service géologique de l'Indochine. Vol. XII, fascicule II, 1925, vi, p. 9.

I From the state of his knowledge on the Indo-Chinese Neolithic
L period in 1925, H. Mansuy has concluded: "These Indonesians
174 form a group of remarkable homogeneity whenever they are not impregnated with the blood of the genuinely Mongoloid races in the midst of which they are disseminated... Through their cranial morphology and their short faces, they are linked to the disharmonic dolichocephalics of the end of the Pleistocene and to the Cro-Magnon type... The real similarity between the men of the last phase of the Pleistocene in Europe and the Indonesian group which

is today scattered throughout the Far East and Malaysia makes it I
possible to consider this hypothesis. We know that the present- L
day Indonesians preceded -- both in the southwest of the Asian 174 ●
continent and in Indonesia -- the arrival of populations bearing Mongoloid characteristics, such as the Chinese, Thaïs, Muongs, Mans, Annamites, Malays, etc., and that wherever these yellow populations have penetrated and settled the Indonesians have been dispossessed of the greater /15/ part of the territories which they originally occupied and have been forced back into remote and inaccessible regions where they still live today. These classical facts, of an ethnic, demographic and geographical order, agree with the results of the first methodical research by prehistoric anthropologists in Southeast Asia."

It is therefore to be presumed that the first inhabitants of Laos had only very rudimentary tools and weapons at their disposition, that they lived in complete independence, that their evolution was excessively slow and that they underwent "contact with, the imprint of, and then the yoke of more intelligent and better armed neighbors who had a broader and less individual social organization." Thence arose crossings, metamorphoses, transformations and an intermingling of individuals which subsequently gave birth to intermediate sub-races and to distinct groups the characteristics or even the numbers of which are difficult to determine today, and whose present-day representatives, clinging to the sides of the mountains, "embody before our eyes the traditional type of the savage" with their swarthy skins, their straight noses, their non-slitted eyes, their huts, their arrows and their dialects which are "evidently /16/ related to the Malayo-Polynesian idioms" (1).

1. Cf. E. Chassigneux, Géographie physique, the first I
chapter of the "Indochine" published in 1929 under the L
direction of G. Maspero. 172
114

Who, then, were the first invaders? In the absence of any vestiges which can be attributed to a period antedating the beginning of the Christian era, the answer to this question is still more difficult than the question of the first occupants. Formless ruins (or ruins of which it is usually impossible to determine the use, such as the "jars" of Tran-Ninh), crumbling statues and a few fragments of steles buried in the thick undergrowth -- such

I are the sole documents which have so far presented themselves to
L the sagacity of rare seekers who are charmed and disturbed by the
172 very mystery which enveloped them. In vain did the imagination --
114 and sometimes the picturesque imagination -- of a few Frenchmen among the first men who explored the country in the steps of Auguste Pavie, endeavor to use Laotian folklore to establish a kind of chronological classification of the races which successively populated the basin of the Mékong before the formation of the historically reconstructed political groupings. We cannot, without the risk of grave error, follow them in /17/ their hazardous hypotheses, the complete fragility of which has been demonstrated by the subsequent work of more expert historians (1).

I 1. Here nevertheless, as a curiosity, is the summary of the
L hypothesis formed by Dr. Lefèvre in the stimulating Ap-
● 174 pendix to his Voyage au Laos (Paris, Plon, 1898):
114 1. The first inhabitants of the peninsula, and the true aboriginals, were the Khas, an almost savage people without monuments and, so to speak, without any writing, who were driven back into the mountains by the successive invaders of their territory;

2. The Malays or Chams were the first colonists to come to Indo-China. They gradually succeeded in forming several principalities, the most important of which was the kingdom of Champa, comprising the whole coast from Tourane to Baria. A second Cham kingdom was founded in the basin of the Nam-Moun about 543 B.C.;

3. A century later there arrived 12,000 Brahmans coming from Benares with their leader Pra-Tong, the son of a king of Delhi. They struggled with the Chams, who were driven out of the basin of the Nam-Moun and came and founded the kingdom of Champassac (Bassac) whose capital was... Ventiane! (sic, p. 285). The Brahmans were the first ancestors of the Cambodians. They organized the conquered territory on the Hindu system and gave it the name of Krung (kingdom) Inthapat (of Indra). They founded Inthapataboury, the capital, to the south of the Dangrek, Saniaboury (Xania, victory; boury, city), Sakon-Lakon (Salaka, peace), Batanaboury (precious stones) and Souvanapoum (city of gold);

4. Under Açoka, emperor of "Burma" /"Birmanie"/

(sic, pp. 287 and 298; Dr. Lefevre does not seem to be aware of the fact that the emperor Açoka was one of the greatest sovereigns of Indian history), took place the arrival of the Kmers coming from Pegou and Hangsavadi, who settled in Cambodia and thus lessened the cast of Brahmans; I L 174 114

5. But the Tartars swept down from the north and leveled everything. They were followed by the Thaïs who came from Mongolia or Séchouen and spread to Siam, Laos, Burma, etc.;

6. To the east along the coast were the Annamites who came from Kouei-Tcheou and occupied all of the land between the Annamitic Chain and the sea.

/18/ Given the present state of our knowledge we may only suppose that "hardy navigators" (?) coming from the Malay Archipelago occupied the Indo-Chinese coasts several centuries before our era. They must have settled first on the thin strip of land between the Annamitic Chain and the sea, where they must subsequently have formed the powerful kingdom of Champa. Then they ventured into the basin of the Mékong and went up the river at least as far as the point where it is joined by the Nam-Moun, where they entered into conflict with the Khas. They were stronger, more intelligent and better organized, and drove these aboriginals back into the forests and mountains. They were then solidly established until the day when they encountered other men coming down from the northern regions, doubtless the Kmers or Cambodians (or their ancestors) who drove them back in their turn or absorbed them. The Chams and Kmers were strongly Hinduized, either because they were already Sivaites when they arrived in the country or because apostles of Buddhism later came to preach their faith /19/ and disseminate Indian culture in the southwest of the peninsula (1).

1. This theory of the "prehistoric" Chams, developed by E. Aymonier in his important work on Cambodia, has been strongly opposed by P. Pelliot who objects that no text has so far confirmed "any vague native traditions." -- Cf. "Deux itinéraires de Chine en Indes" (Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, 1904, Vol. IV, Nos. 1-2.)-- See, however, G. Ferrand who also believes that the Indianization of Cambodia and Champa must have begun

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about the fourth century B.C. Cf. Le Kouen-louen et les anciennes navigations, 1919, and L. Finot, Les origines de la colonisation indienne en Indo-chine.

At the same time, "large junks carrying hundreds of men (from the northeast) could, we must presume, have introduced certain industries into Indo-China... then, starting in the third century B.C., the Tsins who were the real founders of Chinese power and had given the empire its practically final limits, began to think of a sort of universal domination and gave to their relations, which had become more active, a character of conquest and study of neighboring countries..." (2).

2. Cf. ibid. Contested by P. Pelliot who, in the same study, claims that "the great migrations of men from the north in centuries which antedate our era belong to fiction and not to history."

Thus in this remote epoch there was foreshadowed a division of the peninsula into two zones of /20/ civilization, such as we have already observed in the Indo-China of today: the Chinese zone which will extend over the Annamite territory (which ten centuries of submission will profoundly "sinify"); and the Indian zone which will include Champa and Cambodia with its future extensions into the basins of the Mékong and the Ménam.

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CHAPTER III
THE HISTORICAL PERIOD. -- THE BEGINNINGS

The Annals of the various Laotian kingdoms of the Mékong basin, supported by precise written evidence, mention events which did not begin until just before the fourteenth century of our era. For the earlier period we have only a rather small number of traditions and local legends. Thus in order to establish certain historical facts and try to show the connection between them, we must have recourse to the chronicles of neighboring lands which are all too often obscure and fabulous themselves. A great many hypotheses on this, so to speak, medieval epoch have been formulated, all of which are both possible and questionable. It is by trying to classify them and by taking inspiration from those which seem to be the most likely that the following guiding points have been established:

115: Le Boulanger--16 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina AM1
Laotians AM8

It is generally admitted that towards the beginning of our era I
the geographical distribution of the /22/ /C. A. M. Translator's L
note. Page 22 is entirely devoted to a map: "The Indo-Chinese 162
Peninsula in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries."/ /23/ 174
various populations which inhabited Indo-China was approximately as follows:

The Chams inhabited southern Annam;

The Kmers occupied not only the present-day Cambodian region, but probably also present-day Cochinchina and the greater part of Laos;

The Burmese, in conjunction with their Tibetan congeners, were doubtless already established along the Upper Irrawaddy, and the Pégouans (Mon or Talain, related to the Kmers) in the lower valley of this river;

The Thaïs, who came from central Asia and were divided into six native principalities or "tchao," occupied Yunnan;

Finally, the Annamites occupied the north of Annam and Tonkin, which were organized as a Chinese province (1).

1. Cf. R. Grousset, Histoire de l'Extrême-Orient, pp. 285, 287, 548 and 549. "The study of phonetics has led H. Maspero to find that Annamite is related to the Thaï /197/
family." (Ibid., p. 599.)

Thaïs of the Mékong The genésis of Thaï settlement in the 174
valley of the Mékong is infinitely more obscure. There is a com- 773
plete lack of documentary evidence if we overlook the Laotian legends which are indeed charming in their animation and naïveté but which do not offer any guarantee of authenticity or even, in most cases, of probability (2). We must nevertheless admit that

2. Cf. Mission Pavie, Études diverses, Vol. II, "Recherches sur l'Histoire du Cambodge du Laos et du Siam" (manuscripts translated by Auguste Pavie's Cambodians).

the wonderful tales of Muong-Theng's gourd and of the division of the earth between the sons of Khoun-Borom do not contradict our notions as to the expansion of the Thaï race in Indo-China, and that they constitute an obvious allusion to the arrival of the invaders in eastern Laos.

Here is the legend, of which there are several versions, in as 539
"denuded" and condensed a form as possible (3): 174
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3. This legend of the gourds very probably takes its inspiration from the passage in the Ramayana which tells how "Loumati, the second wife of Sagara, gave birth to a green calabash. It broke, and sixty thousand sons came out of it. The nurses put this 'little' family out to grow in a bed of butter." (Ibid., Introduction, p. xxxvii.)

/31/ The king of Heaven Phya-Theng sent the sage Khoun-Borom to reign on earth with two divine wives, Nang-Et-Keng and Nang-Yoma-kara. Mounted on a white elephant with black ears and tusks which were curved, transparent and crossed, Khoun-Borom came down to the vast plateau of Muong-Theng (the land of angels, known today by the Annamite name Dien-Bien-Phu) in the spot called Na-Noï. There a gourd plant of prodigious dimensions had grown in the center of Kouva pond and had fastened onto a fig tree on the bank which was itself of unrivaled size and which helped the plant to support two enormous fruits. The celestial envoy had the gourds pierced, and out of them, in incalculable quantities, there at once came gold, silver, cloth, perfume, plant seeds, men, women, oxen, buffalo, pigs, dogs, chickens, ducks, etc., which spread throughout the world. And since his two wives had given him seven sons, Khoun-Borom

539 separated the peoples and divided them among his sons:
●174 1. Khoun-Lo received Muong-Swa, the land of millions of ele-
773 phants and of white parasols (Lan-Xang-Hom-Khao);

2. Chet-Chuong received Muong-Phoueun (plateau of Tran-Ninh and valley of the Nam-Nhiep as far as the vicinity of Borikane);

/32/ 3. Nhi-Fa-Lane received Muong-Ho (Sip-Song-Panas, the land of the Twelve Thousand Ricefields);

4. Chu-Song received Prakan (the Thai regions of Upper Tonkin and of the Black River);

5. Saya-Phong received Muong-Nioun (Xieng-Mai or Lan-Na, the land of millions of ricefields);

6. Kham-In received Muong-Louvo (Siam or Lan-Piyea, the land of millions of granaries);

7. Louk-Poun, finally, received Hongsavadi (Pegou and Pagan).

Before sending them forth Khoun-Borom said to the seven kings who were his children: "You shall live peacefully and as good neighbors, the elder ones not quarreling with their younger brothers... Go forth, and remember that you were born of the same womb."

174 It is not impossible that this division, in spite of its fabulous
631 character, should mark the first stage of the history of the Thaïs in the Mékong valley, at a time which the legend does not indicate but which might belong to the second half of the thirteenth century. This date would indeed correspond approximately to an inscription of Rama-Khameng, king of Sukhothaï, "written in Cambodian characters on the four sides of a sandstone stele" and translated by Father Schmitt, in which are mentioned for the first time the names of Vientiane and Vien-Kham (Tran-Ninh) in /33/ the basin of the "Khong river" (1). But whereas the Thais of the Ménam had suc-

1. Cf. Mission Pavie, ibid. /Études diverses, Vol II, "Recherches sur l'Histoire du Cambodge du Laos et du Siam" (manuscripts translated by Auguste Pavie's Cambodians)/, pp. 175ff., and G. Maspero, "Le Royaume de Vieng-Chan" (Revue indochinoise, 1904, pp. 497 and 498).

ceeded, in the course of relatively brief stages, in forming a compact Siamese kingdom which was rapidly freed from Kmer domination, the Thaïs of the Mékong remained divided for a much longer time.

Having probably come from their land of origin through the secondary valleys of the Nam-Ta, the Nam Ou and the Nam-Ngun, they founded more or less rival principalities: Cri Cudhamanagari (Muong-Swa-Luang-Prabang); Muong Phoueun (Xieng-Kham, later

Xieng-Khouang) and Candanapuri (Sayfong-Vientiane). At 174
first all these had to recognize the suzerainty of Angkor (2), then 631

2. Cf. G. Maspero, Ibid., and "Sayfong, une ville morte" (Bulletin de l'E.F.E.O., Vol. III, No. 1, January-March 1903).

they were conquered by the king of Sukhothai, as is revealed to us precisely by the inscription of Rama-Khameng.

This lack of unity between the principalities is to be ex- 174
plained in large part by the geographical configuration of the 631
country. The many level stretches of the Mékong, "separated 133
by rapids which were difficult to negotiate" and by this very fact "almost /34/ foreign to one another" (1), placed serious obstacles

1. Cf. G. Maspero, ibid. (Moeurs et coutumes de l'ancien Laos, p. 225.)

in the way of any political fusion of groups which were nevertheless of the same race and the same language and whose frontiers touched one another. It required all the energy of Fa-Ngoun "the Conqueror," the prince of Muong-Swa, to achieve Laotian unity in the following century after many campaigns, and even then chiefs of provinces (muong) continued to govern their fiefs in a spirit of independence which unceasingly impelled them to shake off the yoke of the sovereign. This vestige of feudalism was to remain, in the last analysis, the dominant characteristic of the whole history of these principalities which were shut off from one another in a natural isolation which favored the persistence of local authorities

/35/ CHAPTER IV
THE KINGDOM OF LAN-XANG (1353-1707)

Previous to 1315 A.D., the date of birth of Fa-Ngoun, the 175
tradition of Muong-Swa has preserved only a long list of names of native chieftains which unrolls into a tortuous labyrinth where Ariadne's thread is often broken. From the fables contained in the manuscripts on latania leaves which Auguste Pavie searched through meticulously during his first stay in Paklay, it is possible

gilt and jewels. The wily merchants accepted all these kindnesses 439
in the hope of extracting great profits from their packet (1). 175*

1. Cf. Cabaton, op. cit. /Le Laos et les Neerlandais au dix-septieme siecle (1913). /

The audience took place near the pyramid of That-Luong which was entirely covered with gold plate. The king, surrounded by all his court, stood in a great temple and had the newcomers sit on mats under the gallery. The following day danses, combats and /574/
water jousts were given in their honor on the river bank. Souligna-Vongsa was present, carried on a golden chair, and came and sat on a /108/ balcony erected over the river. In the evening more than two hundred fiery pirogues went down the Mekong. "The river seemed to be on fire."

As time passed the merchandise sold well, thanks to the gifts distributed to the king, the princes, the princesses and the officers. The Dutch cleverly disparaged the Siamese of Ayuthya as traders of little faith, offered to settle a misunderstanding which had arisen between the sovereigns of Lan-Xang and Cambodia, and obtained the Laotians' promise to deliver them enormous quantities of benzoin and gum lac. They finally left on December 24, "profoundly impressed with the wealth and splendor" of the kingdom of Vientiane (1).

1. Van Wusthof left without his two assistants, whom he left with the king to await the gifts destined for Van Diemen and the Laotian "ambassador" who was to accompany them. (Francis Garnier, Bulletin de la Societe de geographie, 1871.)

If we are to believe Van Wusthof, this city then had a huge 174
population, while Luang-Prabang was nothing more than a deserted 164
city. A terrible cholera epidemic had decimated its population, 369
and those who were left had come to life in Vientiane.

He also confirms the kingdom's frontiers as stated by the Annals and the perfect relations which /109/ Lan-Xang maintained with all its neighbors.

On the other hand he does not shed any light -- rather the con- 439
trary -- on the obscure period which preceded Souligna's accession 643*
to the throne. Indeed he writes with perfect serenity: "the present 175*
king inherited the crown three years ago from his brother, who died

la Sainte-Chapelle, a la seconde boutique, a l'enseigne 175*
du Voyageur. 114
/127/

naivete, the work /111/ does not have the ring of sincerity which constitutes the merit of the Dutch account. It was probably written from the reminiscences of Father J. M. Leria (1) and is of value

1. Father Giovanni-Maria Leria, a Piedmontese Jesuit, left Cambodia in April 1642 accompanied by some Cochinchinese neophytes with a caravan of Laotian traders who were returning to their country. He remained in Laos for five years "despite the opposition and the intrigues of the bonzes" and did not leave Vientiane until December 2, 1647. (Cf. Fr. Garnier, 1871, and Father Alex. de Rhodes, 1651.)

only as a document at second hand. It will nevertheless be of some interest to extract the following passages:

"In the East it (the kingdom of the 'Langiens') has the kingdom 131
of Tonkin which stretches to the southwest towards Cochinchina, 175*
and further to the South that of Cambodia; in the southwest and the west the kingdom of Pegou; and in the north that of Ava and the province called U or Lu (2), and still further again to the north as

2. See below, p. 176, note 1.

far as the frontiers which limit it in this direction, where there are certain peoples who are called Gnai. . . .

"Because of its fertility and because the things necessary to life 421
are found there in abundance, the kingdom is so heavily populated 433
that only a little while ago in the census which was taken of per- 161
sons who were /112/ judged fit to serve the king at war and to bear arms, 500,000 were counted, not including the old people who are so numerous and so rubust that even of those who are a hundred years old a very large army might be formed for the defense of the kingdom if the need should arise. . .

"The chief city and the one in which the king ordinarily stays 633
is situated in the middle of the kingdom, eighteen degrees toward 174
our Arctic pole, and is called Langione. It has good moats and 144
extremely high walls on one side, and on the other the great river to defend it against the undertakings of enemies. . . The royal palace, the structure and symmetry of which are admirable, can

633 be seen from a great distance. To be sure, it extends over a prodigi-
174 ous area and is so large that one would take it for a city... The king's
344 apartments, which are embellished with a superb and magnificent portico and a large number of beautiful rooms accompanied by a large parlor, are all made of wood which will not decay and ornamented inside and outside with excellent bas-reliefs so delicately gilded that they seem rather to be covered with flakes of gold than gold leaf.

"From that point one enters the courtyards which are extremely spacious, and one first sees a long line of houses built entirely of brick and roofed /113/ with tile in which the second wives usually stay, and outside another row of houses built alongside in the same symmetry for the mandarins' officers. I could write a whole volume if I undertook a minute description of all the other parts of the palace, the riches, the departments, the gardens and a number of other such things...

565 "The houses of the principal lords and of well-to-do persons are
342 very high and beautiful, and are all made of wood with a great deal
352 of artifice and a greater or lesser number of ornaments, depending on the expense to which the individuals are willing to go, but I must confess that the common people and the poor are housed extremely badly
/793/ and that their dwellings are cabins and huts rather than houses. Only the talapoins (bonzes), who are the priests of the idols, have permission to build their monasteries and houses out of brick and stone. Instead of rugs and other such furnishings, persons of quality use small reed mats in which the weave is so delicate and so highly ornamented with figures and various leaf patterns that, to my mind, there is nothing more beautiful nor more pleasing to the eye. They ordinarily use them to cover the walls of /114/ their rooms and houses inside and outside, which they keep very clean and of which they take particular care...

643* "The king is absolute and independent... all the land belongs to
/423/ him, and he disposes as absolute lord of all that his subjects possess...
631 offices, employment, honors and wealth depend absolutely on the
174 king, who raises those persons who please him most to the highest offices in the kingdom.... The principal dignities and offices of the kingdom are eight in number. The first is that of viceroy general... and because the kingdom is divided into seven provinces seven other viceroys are appointed... there are also other governments of less consequence which depend on the former both in respect to civil affairs and to those which concern war.... Each of these provinces has
/701/ its militia, which consists of infantry and cavalry.

"But in regard to the kingdom's laws, it is a certain fact that 671
there are very few of them, because, in my opinion, there is no 571
great need of any in order to live in accordance with the customs 626
of the land. The people are brought up to work, to have very little
to do with foreigners, not to undertake anything which might dis-
turb them and to live an idle and /115/ listless life although not
lacking any of the things necessary to preserve it. The king's will,
which does not greatly interfere with his people, takes the place
of a great many laws for them. . . . The manner in which the in-
habitants of the land live with one another is highly civil and
obliging. Unfriendliness and quarrels are banished. . . they all have
enough to live on and get along on, so that one does not hear of
thieves except as a thing quite out of the ordinary. . . . But the /565/
mandarins do not behave in the same way. Indeed, their insolence
and their insulting and criminal conduct dim the praise which the
common people merit on this account, because they abuse the
power which they have in the kingdom, and when they see some-
thing which pleases them. . . they act in such wise as to find means
for taking possession of it.

"But if we should now pass to the person of the king in order to 643*
describe him, there is no monarch, no matter how powerful, whom 174
he does not regard as beneath him, and it would indeed seem that 648
he affects not to yield in any particular to the emperors of China. . .
Only rarely does he appear in public. . . preferring to be worshiped
by his people as a hidden God rather than as a man like themselves
and of the same nature. . . He allows himself to be seen only twice
/116/ a year, for a period of three days, by his people, who re-
ceive this grace from their prince with such gratitude and joyous
sentiments that he forgets nothing on these occasions which might
contribute to their amusement. For this purpose there are several /527/
elephants which are trained to do a thousand little tricks and several wild
animals which are kept chained and made to fight. . . finally there
are wrestlers and gladiators and others, with their skirmishes which
last until last until evening and terminate all this rejoicing. . .

"Of all the prerogatives which he (the king) has, and which are 643*
a further mark of the extent of his power, that of having several 576
petty tributary kings in his dependency who come to his court to do
him homage and acknowledge him as their sovereign and who give
him superb presents, is by no means the least. He receives these
ambassadors in a great parlor seated on an extremely high throne
and garbed in his ceremonial robes, and replies to their civilities

648* Ong-Hue cared only about receiving his tribute, and therefore
643* straightway abandoned his protege, whose life and liberty Ong-Lo
175* had spared, and received his "vassal" with all the regard due to his rank.

Severance of Bassac. His authority does not seem to have gained any greater acceptance in the southern provinces, if we dare refer to the unconnected and improbably manuscripts which constitute what have come to be called the Annals of Bassac. The prince who /147/ governed this latter country from 1713 to 1747, Chao-Soi-Sisamout by name, clearly seems to have turned to Siam and Cambodia, while Ong-Hue was powerless to expose himself in his turn to the risks which Setthathirath had once run in a hazardous and distant expedition. He had to bow helplessly before this new consequence of the schism in order to concentrate all his attention on Luang-Prabang, where his cousins King-Kitsarath, Intha-Som and Khamone-Noi were agitating "for the crown" (1). He died around 1735 without having

1. See below, "Luang-Prabang," p. 179 ff.

had a chance to intervene in the affairs of the dissenting principality (2).

127 2. Since the chronicles of Vientiane were completely de-
174 stroyed when the city was sacked in 1828, the events which
● marked the last century of the kingdom's existence are known only through the Annals of the neighboring States. The country, emptied of its inhabitants, has preserved no oral tradition and no exact memory of this period of decadence. The result is that no claim for rigorous exactitude can be made even for the dates of the different reigns which are indicated in the course of the present study. Most of them were arrived at by trial and error and are given with reservations.

ONG-LONG, KING 1735-1760.

643* His son Ong-Long succeeded him. The first years of his reign
648* do not seem to have been troubled by the age-old struggle between
175* the /148/ Burmese and the Pegouans, which had nevertheless flared up suddenly and threatened to overflow into the neighboring States.

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It is true that all the races and varieties enumerated above can be found in Laos, but it is impossible to say what their exact origins were or to gain a complete knowledge of their history, their migrations and the details of their settlement in the land.

For certain regions inhabited by several races we do possess, however, either Phong Savadan or local annals, or else legends written on palm leaves, or even accounts which have been handed down by word of mouth. The manuscripts are, in general, rather incorrect and full of interpolations and embellishments inevitably due to the scribes. They are the only written documents.

The architecture might also give us useful information on all these questions, but the monuments are either too recent and contain nothing of any interest or else they are mute on the events which motivated their edification, as well as on the events contemporaneous with them. None of this evidence, whether it be in the form of manuscripts, temples or pagodas, offers the guarantees of authenticity and the ensemble of precise details which are needed in order to leave the realm of hypotheses and [129] [Illustration] [130] [Blank page] [131] deductions, no matter how adroit and logical these may be, when we attempt to settle in exact fashion the evolution of races in the basin of the Great River.

Various theories, based on documents which are questionable in varying degrees, have been put forth by explorers and travelers. We shall here submit to the reader's judgment those which seem to afford the best summary of this somewhat obscure question.

Here, first, is the opinion of the Superior Resident in Laos (1).

[113] (1) Le Laos Français. (Revue indo-chinoise, Nos. 82 ff., 1900.)

"Laotian legends claim that all the races which now inhabit Indo-China came out of one and the same gourd in Dien-Bien-Phu (Annamite style) or Muong-Thèng (Laotian style), a vast plateau situated in the northeast part of the valley of the Nam-Hou. The sons of this gourd are said to have spread eastward towards the China Sea, southward along the Mékong and the Ménam, and westward towards Burma. Whether we will or not, this gourd reminds us of Noah's Ark.

"On the other hand, if we consult the chronological list of the kings of Luang-Prabang, we note that after six kings of foreign origin, the first of which came from India and the second from Cambodia, there were four kings of Kha race, after which Laotians coming from

563
174

Dien-Bien assumed power and never again relinquished it.

"In the absence of local documents offering sufficient guaranties of authenticity, we can only formulate hypotheses on the evolution of races in the Mékong valley, by using the better known history of the East Indies and the Empire of Annam.

"In the present hypothesis we shall assume that the autochthonous population in prehistoric times was a highly colored race of which no traces are left, but whose presence can alone explain, here as in the East Indies or in Annam, the quite marked coloration of the present-day population despite repeated infusions of yellow and white blood.

"By virtue of its location the valley of the Mékong was destined to be one of the major outlets of the races coming from Tibet, and one of the entries for the red races which came up the rivers from the south.

"By virtue of their location, too, the basins of the Mekong and the Ménam, separated from one another by dividing chains low in altitude, were destined to be the refuge of races driven from the east and west by victorious invaders. We know that the first invaders of India were Tibetans. It is probable that a similar invasion took place in the basin of the Mékong and brought about a first mixture between the pseudo-negroes whom we have supposed to have been the original inhabitants and the invaders.

[132] "Later on the Touranians who had penetrated into the Indies (1) from the west and who left so strong an imprint of their

(1) And also into Yunnan and Malaysia, where they introduced Islamism. (Author's note.)

type in the land must have gone back eastwards in considerable numbers when they were driven out by the Aryans, and founded an ephemeral dynasty in Laos.

"Meanwhile the Malays who had occupied the Indo-Chinese coastline went up the Mékong and came, in their turn, to mix with the races already in the land. They do not seem, however, to have gone beyond Savannakhèt, for the northernmost Cham monument of which we know is that of Hueun-Hin (the stone house) which is to be found somewhat north of the mouth of the Sé-Bang-Hien.

"It is possible that the mixture of aborigines, Tibetans, Touranians and Malays produced the race of Khas with its many varieties which are slightly different depending on the dominant blood type.

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144

"When the Annamites, who were of Chinese origin, succeeded, although not without difficulty, in destroying the Cham empire, they drove the conquered people back into the Mékong basin where a kingdom grew up which had Bassac as its capital and was known by the name of Champa-Sak by the Laotians. It was then that the Thais, driving the Khas and the Chams whom they could not absorb or who resisted them back towards the mountains, took possession of all the plains and all the valleys. From this last mixture, on top of so many others, there has resulted quite a large number of varieties which have a common origin and have had a parallel development and life, but which have not mixed with neighboring varieties. The generic name of Thais which is given to this collection of men implies a certain number of types which, if not different, are at least dissimilar in certain respects. Finally, there were two rather inconsiderable infusions of Aryan blood. The first occurred in the fifth century A.D. and went northward from Cambodia as far as Luang-Prabang. The second was in the seventh century, when the sacred books were brought from India through Burma and the north Mékong valley. A curious fact worthy of note is that the Chinese pilgrims Fa-Hiang and Huyen-Tchang, returning from the Indies where they had gone to study the Buddhist religion, wrote their well known works in China at about the same time. The influence of the Aryans, who were the bearers of the sacred books of Buddhist doctrine and also of many Brahminic superstitions, manifested itself especially in a physical way among the Thais of the northwest and less noticeably among the Thais on the very banks of the Mékong.

"Although the Aryans scarcely transformed or modified a small segment of the Thais from the physical point of view, without having any influence of this type on the rest, it may nevertheless easily be asserted that the moral influence which they exerted was felt by all the Thais and that all of them had their moral and intellectual life [123] modified by the Aryans to an appreciable degree. Only the Khas escaped this influence."

Finally, in conclusion, this author adds:

"The population of Laos can be naturally divided into three broad categories:

"1. The Thais, who include all the people speaking the Thai language with slight differences in accent and a few differences in vocabulary. The chief among them are:

"The Laotians, the Phou-Thais, the white, black and red Thais,

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the Thais-Neua, the Pou-Euns, the Lus and the Youns;

"2. The Khas, and the Khas who are evolving towards types of the first category;

"3. The inhabitants who come from neighboring countries: China, Yunnan, Annam, Cambodia, Siam, Burma."

We shall now give Dr. Lefèvre's version (1):

(1) Dr. Lefèvre, Un voyage au Laos, 1898.

"1. The first inhabitants of the peninsula or true aborigines were the Khas, a nearly savage fold without monuments and, so to speak, without any form of writing, who were driven back into the mountains by the successive invaders of their territory.

"2. The Malays or Chams were the first colonists to come to Indo-China. Little by little they succeeded in forming several principalities, the most important of which was the kingdom of Champa or Tiampa, which included the whole coast from Tourane to Baria.

"3. After the Malay infiltration came the arrival of the Brahmins, who had been driven out of Benares with their leader Pra-Thong. They struggled with the Malays and almost absorbed them in the end. The Brahmins were the first ancestors of the Cambodians.

"4. Under Açoka, emperor of Burma, took place the arrival of the Kmers who came from Pégou and Hansavadi and settled in Cambodia, thereby overshadowing the Brahmin caste.

"5. Tartars came down from the north and leveled all. They were followed by the Thais who came from Mongolia or Setchuen and who spread to Siam, Laos, Burma, Kouang-Si, Kouang-Toung, the north of Tonkin and the island of Hainan.

"6. To the east, on the coast, are the Annamites, who came from Kouei-Tcheou and occupy all the territory included between the Annamitic Chain and the sea."

Dr. Lefèvre's conclusions are worthy of note, for they were based on documents which are reputed to be authentic. We [134] should, however, add one particular relating to the prehistoric period, that is to say to the epoch of polished stone and the bronze age. At that time there were human beings in the Mékong basin who had the same way of life, the same kind of tools and the same methods of work as our own ancestors in ancient Gaul. In fact, the interesting

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172 collections which have been assembled in Luang-Prabang by M. Massie (1) and by Prince Henri d'Orléans contain tools and weapons

(1) The Massie collection (Pavie mission) is in the museum of Saint-Germain.

of polished stone and bronze which attest the antiquity of the Khas or Laotian aborigines.

174 The autochthonous races, the first occupants of the soil of Indo-China, the ancestors of the folk whom we now call Khas, possessed
563 means of action which were doubtless identical to those of the neighboring peoples (2). But their evolution towards the grouping of

(2) See Appendix, No. XVII.

families into tribes and of tribes into clans was a great deal slower. Their tools and weapons remained at a fixed stage of development, and thus they were subjected to contact with and then the influence and yoke of more intelligent neighbors who were better armed and had a broader and less individualistic social organization.

Who can say, in the absence of any kind of historical monument relating to this remote epoch, and especially after the terrible Tartar invasion, how many crossings, metamorphoses and fundamental transformations these first inhabitants of Laos underwent? Always driven back, fleeing and scattered, they formed what might be called ethnic stratifications which were broken from place to place by numerous faults but the traces of which are clearly visible at the various levels of the mountain slopes and on the plateaus where Kha villages were successively established.

Disseminated, with no bond to unite them, dispersed so as to offer less resistance, speaking different dialects, and deprived of common interests, it may be truly said that the various Kha tribes and clans appear to us in a degenerate light.

000 It would, however, be wrong to suppose that this state of affairs is immutable and incurable. The physical and moral regeneration [135] of these races must not be thought of as a utopian dream, but is essential both as an instrument of domination and as a stimulus to our other subjects in Laos who are descended from the conquering races.

It will be greatly to our interest, and we may even say that it

197 In résumé, the study of the Thai language and its derivatives is an attractive one. The language is gentle, musical and euphonic, and is easy for us as well as for the other Latin peoples to pronounce.

It is considered to have many analogies with Malay and most of the Polynesian idioms.

Siamese, Youn and Lu have become localized in certain parts of Laos or have been set aside for special uses. Thus Youn, as we have seen, is the sacred language of Laos.

Lao, however, or the Laotian form of the Thai language, is quite widespread.

[146] In fact, outside of Laos this language is still spoken in Yunnan, in Tonkin, in the two Kouangs and, it would seem, as far away as Hainan.

4. RELIGIONS

174 In prehistoric times Laos must have been in the same situation
771 as the other parts of the world, from the moral and religious point of view. [Illustration here.]

In the age of polished stone, as in the bronze age, there were probably great similarities between the Orient and the Occident with respect to tools and weapons, and also with respect to speculative, religious and philosophical ideas.

175 This state of affairs continued for many centuries until the time when, with the first peaceful migrations from the north and north-
771 west, Vedic precepts and a knowledge of the laws of Manou--laws which were moral, social and above all physiological--began to infiltrate the region. Later on, between 900 and 700 B.C., more militant invaders brought in the already age-old dogmas of Brahminism, together with ancestor worship and many superstitions.

Finally, after another period of fifteen to thirteen centuries, Buddhism made its appearance in Indo-China by two different routes, the south and the northwest.

These various doctrines were transformed as time passed and
771 underwent additions, diminutions and numerous changes both in form and content. Struggles, invasions and migrations and civil wars profoundly modified races and made their impression on minds, always leaving ineradicable traces on body and spirit.

It is because of these constant upheavals that we note in Laos today a great host of dogmas and practices which range all the way

149: Reinach--400 G-3 (no date) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[102]

APPENDIX XVII
ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLES OF LAOS
I

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Which was the truly autochthonous race, whence did it come, and what were its mores and customs? No one can answer this question, and the only statement which can be advanced is that the savage peoples must have settled in the Indo-Chinese peninsula at a time when present-day Indo-China did not yet exist, geologically speaking, and when a greater or lesser part of the Asiatic continent was covered by water.

Coming from the Malay Archipelago, the Khas occupied the south of the peninsula at first and immediately entered into a struggle with the aborigines. Stronger and more intelligent, they drove the aborigines back into the forests and mountains and founded groups and colonies in their midst which gradually absorbed the first occupants, until that day when the victorious Khas came up against men of the yellow race who drove them back into the mountains in their turn, and into the poorest and most remote parts of the land.

Coming down from the high plateaus of central Asia, probably from Tibet, the men of yellow race came in through the northwest and at first occupied the northern provinces of the immense territory which was later to make up the Chinese empire. These natives, whom the Chinese chroniclers designate by the name of Y, that is to say "Bearers of large bows," and by the name of "Miao-Tse," or "Sons of the uncultivated fields," were driven back in their turn by new invaders. They then fell back into the southern provinces and sought refuge on little-accessible peaks where more or less pure types of their ancient race may still be found today, and from there they spread into the valleys of the Mekong, the Menam, the Salouen and the Irrawaddy. Isolated from one another as a consequence of their expansion, these individuals of primitive race became mixed with one another and with the first inhabitants of the conquered regions, and gave birth to intermediary sub-races and to distinct groups whose character and even number is very difficult to determine. Language became [103] differentiated, the kind of handwriting used was influenced by the proximity of more powerful peoples, dress changed, and yet all of them preserved analogous usages and beliefs which militate in favor of a common origin. Thence arises the necessity of seeking the origin of these peoples in the diversity of families, tribes, sub-races and races which sucessively shared the extreme provinces of present-day

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China and Indo-China (1)

D.E. PRANOIL, LE LAOS français. 1701 CHAMAEL. [PARI

149: Reinach--401 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

China and Indo-China (1).

[113] (1) E. Picanon, Le Laos français. 1901, Challamel. [Paris]

II

173 Laos, Thais and Khas. Although the Laotian legends
563 attribute the same origin to all of these (Mucng-Theng or Dien-Bien-
144 Phu) and say that they all came from the same "gourd" (Nam-Tao-Phour), it is hardly likely that the Laotians and the Khas have a common origin. Indeed, the characteristics which serve to distinguish the two races are too numerous and too marked, both from the point of view of the racial types themselves and as regards language, mores and religious beliefs.

144 Nor can it be affirmed that the Khas are the representatives of
174 the aboriginal population, for before any of their people had mounted the throne of Luang-Prabang, six kings foreign to their race had already occupied it--if we may regard the list of the first kings of the land which is preserved in the Phong-Sa Va-Dan (annals of the kingdom) as correct--and of these conquering princes the first is said to have come from India, and the second from Cambodia.

In any case, the Khas are said to have preceded the Laotians in the land, and it was not until the reign of their fourth and last king that they are supposed to have been conquered and driven out or enslaved by the Laotians, who had come down from Dien-Bien-
[609] Phu. Since that time, and despite many revolts of which the last is almost recent, the Khas have never ceased being "a folk taillable and liable to forced labor at pleasure" for their vanquishers, and their name has become a synonym for a low person or slave in the current
[56] idiom. Not until 1895 were the Khas once and for all freed--freed is perhaps not the word, for in the strict sense they were never slaves--or at least summoned to enjoy a system of rule similar to that of the other natives and which left no margin for arbitrariness and vexations.

173 In designating Dien-Bien-Phu as the cradle of the Laotian people, or at least in attributing to the Laotians and the Thais a common origin, legend seems to be in agreement with reality. There are indeed many points of resemblance and contact between the two peoples. The type is invariably the same, although finer in the native of Luang-
175 Prabang than in the native of Lai-Chau or Dien-Bien-Phu. Not more
291 than two hundred years ago the Laotians still wore, like the black Thais, the Annamite costume and their hair wound in a coil. It
177 was doubtless after contact with the Siamese--who had themselves

173: Deydier--5 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

172 A considerable agglomeration of human remains was found in the neighborhood of the burial places. One can state with certainty that the area of the Jars, with innumerable funereal monoliths accompanied by rich furnishings, was the center of a social organization which was [11] well constructed with a well-organized hierarchy. That the food for so many people necessitated a large amount of agriculture cannot be disputed. Without doubt, cereals were then cultivated in this region. The peasants were also breeders, for a quasi-sedentary army of men cannot be fed by the products of hunting. As for fishing, it is out of the question due to the hydrography of the country. The funereal furnishings are those of a people who live from working the land. Besides, the present-day peasants of the region of Ban-Ang or of the former aerodrome of Lat-Sen often dig up scattered prehistoric pieces in greater or lesser quantity. Judging from the iron implements unearthed, it can be said that there were two modes of life at the time of the builders of monoliths: that of the mountain people of the forests, who lived in the manner of the present-day Khas and Meos, using the rai method of agriculture; and that of the plains people, assembled from the plain of the Jars, who had cleared the land and cultivated it perhaps by ploughing.

These inhabitants had intercourse with the outside. The two fragments of road which go from this central plain, the one towards Luang Prabang, the other towards Borikan, are strewn at intervals and along the mountain passes with small fields of urns or simply with cemeteries of funeral stones. These routes must have been traveled by caravans of salt merchants. One must not lose sight of the fact that the principal economic activity of prehistoric times was the commerce in this product, and we remind the reader that the whole country east of Tran-Ninh is very rich in rock-salt.

174 To summarize, judging from their workmanship, the megaliths already belong to the age of metals, that is to say, to the protohistoric epoch. But whether they are menhirs or monolithic urns, [12] one is in the presence of monuments of funereal purpose, related to the cult of dead ancestors and chiefs.

Again we are faced with an obscure abyss. How many links are missing in this chain of events! However, a dim ray of light is shed on the dawn of the historical period by linguistics, thanks to the study of the onomastic doublets of the ancient name of Luang Prabang: Xieng-T'ong, Xieng-Dong. One is led to admit the existence of exogamic human groups (doubtless Indonesians) most likely attached,

from the linguistic point of view to the Mon-Khmer group, possessing a two-class social system (Lévy). But one must reach the seventh century of the Christian era to arrive at the solid ground of historic realities. 174

HISTORIC PERIOD. THE KHMER INFLUENCE

Just as the countries of the Far East received in their early stages of development the imprint of foreign civilizations--all are aware of their debt to the Graeco-Roman civilization which each one has known how to adapt to its particular genius--so in the same manner Laos has benefited in the beginning from the neighboring civilizations. 171

In the present state of our knowledge (this phrase will recur frequently in our writings, but it is necessary to put "not initiated" in face of the difficulties encountered by the researcher), the traces of this Khmer influence appear only at very different epochs according to the regions studied. Thus, we find them as early as the sixth to eighth centuries up until the thirteenth century of our era in the province of Champassak--moreover there was in this region a large kingdom known as Wen-Tan in the Chinese annals--then from the tenth to the thirteenth century in the neighborhood of Vientiane, and finally from the twelfth to the fourteenth century at Luang Prabang.

[13] The most important monument of Champassak is the Vat-Phou (See appendix). 172

In the province of Savannakhet future explorations in the region of Keng-Kok will probably furnish valuable information. A rapid trip we made through this area revealed sites which had never been mentioned before. Apparently a strong Cham influence occurred in this province, but the question is still too new for one now to reach any conclusions. 171

At Vientiane, the most ancient Khmer vestiges are most probably found in the neighborhood of the pagoda called Vat Si Muong. A magnificent Khmer bust of the thirteenth century, recently discovered a few hundred meters from this pagoda, seems to confirm this hypothesis. But there again the novelty of the problem forbids any hasty conclusion.

The Khmer influences in That Luang, which had been anticipated at the time of the restoration of this monument by the French School of the Far East in 1931, begin to be revealed. The Buddha said to be that of Fertility, which is in the cloister, is no more than the

301 The use of these magic shirts is also known in Cambodia. The designs
262 usually consist of flowers, geometric figures, tools, flowers, vegetable
757 branches, and of animals. Sometimes pictures drawn from Buddhist iconography can be recognized.

[174] Apparently the origin of tattooing is to be found in totemism. By analyzing the Laotian tattooing designs, [63] it has been possible to
301 recognize traces of sun worship, as well as the mythological role of the dog. But at the present time Laotians seem only to value tattooing as an artistic ornament.

The Divining Rod.

787 Among the curios which the tourist looks for in Laos, the most
823 easily found is a carved bamboo cane. Immediately below the head, which is often of chased silver, there is a sort of checkered diagram
825 made up of twenty-five little squares. Below this divining diagram are found, in succession from top to bottom, a zebu, a horse, a rakshasha or ogre, a tiger, a buffalo, a deer, an elephant. These animals correspond respectively to the days of the week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

It should be noted that, except for the buffalo and the deer, the others are the symbolical animals of the zodiac and correspond to the different cardinal points.

The Laotians consult these figures at different actions of their lives: choice of a wedding day, the hour for burial, etc. The diagram is used to calculate the hour, and the animals indicate the cardinal point which should be followed.

This cane is also found among the Man.

[64] THE NEW YEAR AND THE FEASTS OF THE FIFTH MONTH

521 The Laotian New Year always takes place between the 6th day
805 of the crescent moon of the 5th month and the 5th day of the crescent moon of the 6th month. The very core of the feast includes three days: the last day of the past year, the intermediate day and the New Year's day, properly so-called. The most picturesque ceremonies are those of Luang Prabang, for there tradition has been best preserved.

The programme of the feasts begins with a procession of royal
527 elephants. Their heads ornamented with red and black painted designs, their drivers dressed in red tunics with yellow lapels, on their backs, the fifteen elephants go to the pagodas of Xieng Tong, Vat

3: Robequain--5 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 175, 177.64 France
636.64

"Laos was the last great country to become part of French Indo-China. French influence there had spread gradually, coming first from Cambodia and then from Tonkin and Annam. This peaceful expansion is forever connected with the name of Pavie, the explorer who set out 'to conquer hearts.' Nevertheless, there were clashes with Siam which was eager to acquire all the countries where Thai dialects were spoken. The French protectorate over Laos was not established until the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, under which Siam renounced all claims to territory on the left bank of the Mekong."

7: Thompson--363 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175

"The early period of Laotian history is that of confused invasions by the Javanese, Thibetans, Indians, and Mongols. The last-mentioned in the thirteenth century opened Laos to the tribes of South China, and to the long struggles of the indigenous Khas with the invaders, the most formidable of whom were the Thais, who arrived in the fourteenth century. This beginning of Laos's historic period was also that of the Thai Empire which, though it centred around the Menam Valley, spread over Siam, Northern Laos, and part of Yunnan and Burma."

7: Thompson--363 [3] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175, 648

"One able Thai, Phya Ngam, succeeded in carving a kingdom for himself out of the Laotian principalities, whose capital he established at Luang-Prabang. This remained the capital until the middle of the sixteenth century when it was abandoned for Vientiane. The Thai invasions finally succeeded in dispersing the Khas into small isolated groups.

Phya Ngam was related by marriage to the Khmer kings, and his reign marked the beginning of close relations between Cambodia and Laos. At Ngam's request Buddhist missionaries were sent to the kingdom and with them came Khmer workmen and scholars. The eastward expansion of this bellicose monarch brought him into contact with the Emperor of Annam, who made a boundary treaty with him, as did the King of Siam on the Western frontier. The peaceful period that followed was duly interrupted in 1478 by an invasion from Annam, now freed from Cham warfare. This war-like interlude was a strange lapse on the part of the gentle and amiable Laotians, whose pacific nature soon re-asserted itself by re-knitting friendly relations with their Eastern neighbours. The only shadow cast over this period was the slight religious intolerance of a pious Buddhist monarch who tried unsuccessfully to forbid the cult of Brahmanism in his domain."

7: Thompson--363-364 J-4 (no date) ~~1957~~ Laotians
116, 175, 648

"The rise of Vientiane in the sixteenth century was due to its greater [364] proximity to Cambodia and Siam, and to its commercial prosperity. Cordial relations were maintained by the Prince of Vientiane with the now decadent Khmers, and with the King of Siam against Luang-Prabang and Burma. This alliance provoked three successive invasions on the part of the Burmese, who, though invariably victorious, were defeated by the country itself and forced eventually by famine and sickness to withdraw. The seventeenth century brought a period of needed peace both foreign and domestic. European travellers of the time have left accounts of the brilliance of contemporary Vientiane. The best narrative is by a Dutchman, Van Wusthoff, in 1641, who came to establish trade relations between Vientiane and Batavia, and it is corroborated by the accounts of two Jesuits, Martini and Marini."

7: Thompson--364 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175, 648

"Early in the eighteenth century a series of civil wars over succession to the throne brought this peaceful period to a bloody close. Annamite support of one candidate provoked a fatal rift between Vientiane and Luang-Prabang. These now mutually jealous principalities called in foreign support, to the inevitable annihilation of Laotian independence. Vientiane was totally eclipsed as a result and Luang-Prabang fell under the double tutelage of Annam and Siam."

7: Thompson--364 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175

"When Luang-Prabang was an independent state, two kings, one for peace and one for war, headed its government. The former was the real ruler, and he could select as his successor any one of his direct heirs. Five Ministers were appointed by the king as his aides. There was also an assembly, the Séna, to which certain families automatically belonged by hereditary right. Land was divided into provinces and sub-divided into districts, each with an appropriate official taken from the five classes of mandarins. The people furnished requisitioned labour, soldiers for the army, and paid a head tax. Further revenues were brought in by opium, salt, and alcohol farms, by taxes on ivory and metals, and by tariff duties."

7: Thompson--364-365 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175

"The Siamese naturally had a different organization for the lands which they successively conquered around the Mekong. The country was divided into muongs and subdivided into menangs, cantons, and villages (bans). A Siamese official, the Kha Luong, visited the provinces annually, as a sort of arbiter of disputes between the mandarins and the peoples, to collect taxes, and to see in general that the country ran smoothly. The Siamese left a remarkable amount of liberty to their Laotian subjects. Bangkok respected local institutions and customs, exacting only an annual tribute, military service and corvées, like a mediaeval feudal state. A governor, chau-muong, was named for life, [365] but he could be recalled for neglect of his duties. He was responsible for taxes, order, and justice. A list of candidates to serve as provincial mandarins was sent to Bangkok for approval. The kromakana, or village mayors, were appointed locally from among the rich landowners, merchants, or citizens noted for their wisdom and virtue. All officials were required to have a spotless judicial past, and to take an annual oath of loyalty to the Siamese king. Land and head taxes were paid by the male population between the ages of eighteen and fifty according to lists drawn up on the basis of a tri-annual census. Corvées and taxes, in theory, were graded according to age, position, health, and poverty. The Chinese farmed indirect taxes with their usual acumen and profit."

7: Thompson--365 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175

"The judicial organization was the weakest feature of Siamese rule. Judgments were arbitrary and confused, especially where national customs played no part. The venality of the judges, both mandarinal and village, was notorious. Cases could be dragged out indefinitely through the lifetime of several judges and at great expense to the litigants. Only those suits were settled quickly where the social and economic position of one party was definitely superior to that of its rival. Only those litigants who could furnish neither money nor guaranty of bail were put into prison. The principle of collective responsibility existed here as elsewhere in Indo-China. The chief judicial flaws were in the application of the law, and not in the code itself. The Siamese were remarkable for their use of native law wherever possible."

7: Thompson--365-366 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175

"In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Laos, like Cambodia, was the scene of Siamese and Annamite rivalry, interrupted by Annamite warfare with the Chams and Taysons, and the Siamese with the Burmese and Pegouans. At the time of the French conquest the Siamese had definitely the upper hand. They contented themselves with leaving nominal power to the King of Luang-Prabang and to the feudal chieftains, who governed Laotians muongs from father to son, and among [366] whom they fostered rivalries. The Siamese, unfortunately, practised a policy which they had learned, to their sorrow, from the Burmese--that of forced expatriation. To populate their own provinces, depleted by warfare, the Siamese drained Laos of thousands of its inhabitants. The fact that the country thus became so much the less desirable to Annam was to them no minor consideration. The Annamites proceeded to annex the principality of Xieng-Khouang in retaliation. Siamese action was mainly inspired by the ideal of constituting a great Thai Empire. Such a policy involved consolidating their recent conquests on the left bank of the Mekong, and creating an hereditary fief at Bassac. Getting this hegemony recognized by their neighbours, notably the Annamites, was complicated enough without taking the newly-arrived French into consideration."

7: Thompson--366 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175

"A series of invasions by the Chinese Hos was another factor in the situation. They came first in 1864, when civil war in Yunnan drove the famished refugees South. They came originally in scattered groups, but later organized themselves into armed bands which carried on regular brigandage. They had plenty of scope for their activities, since rival Laotian princes called upon their services only too frequently in their local conflicts.

The innumerable and systematic atrocities to which the Hos subjected the Laotians met with absolutely no resistance from them. The people simply fled at their approach, even from the capital Luang-Prabang. The Siamese made vague gestures of protection, but did nothing more than hasten their policy of wholesale deportations across the Mekong. Pavie, who happened to be in Luang-Prabang at the time, has left a moving description of this tragic exodus and of his own efforts to save the hopelessly be-muddled king. It was due almost entirely to Pavie that France began to interest herself in Laos's fate and to ruin--temporarily at least--Siam's dream of a Thai Empire."

7: Thompson--366-367 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians-1-2
116, 175, 648

"France's 1883 treaty with Hué, and her pre-occupation with Tonkin, did not escape the notice of Siam. Backed by England, who saw in Laos a safe outlet for Siamese ambitions, Bangkok redoubled its efforts to get control of the lands belonging to the senile and insouciant king of Luang-Prabang. The Siamese expedition was prepared with such secrecy that De Kergaradec, the French envoy at Bangkok, only knew of it after the troops' departure. The Court of Hué, though feeling none too cordially towards the French, was not slow in pointing out this breach in Annam's sovereign rights in Laos, for which France was now [367] responsible. A protest to Bangkok was necessarily vague because of the ill-defined rights of both Siam and Annam in the North, but it eventuated in the signing of a seven-years agreement between Siam and France on May 7, 1886. France profited by this arrangement to the extent of having a consul at Luang-Prabang and certain extra-territorial rights in Siam. The ratification of this treaty for the first time raised definitely the problem of Annamite-Siamese-Laotian frontiers. Pavie was dispatched again to gather the information necessary to drawing boundary lines in Upper Laos. He returned not only with the technical knowledge required, but with the conviction that the oppressed people of Luang-Prabang would relish a French Protectorate as a defence against Siamese encroachments and Hos invasions. His efforts led to the conclusion of an agreement on March 27, 1889, by which the Siamese were to stop the eastward march of their troops, evacuate the region of Cammon, where however, a Siamese khaluong had a right to provisional residence, and the French to a

military post at Napé.

As time went on the French claimed that the Siamese had fulfilled none of these conditions and were pushing steadily ahead in Laos. In proportion as these grievances piled up, the Metropolitan government was unwilling to take any action against Siam, especially as Tonkin was giving them quite enough trouble as it was. The English were simultaneously expanding in Upper Burma and in the Shan States, and getting ever nearer to Upper Laos."

7: Thompson--367 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175, 484, 654

"Not until 1889, when Pavie was given a semi-official mission and numerous collaborators to study the economic possibilities of the upper country, did France's interest there re-awaken. Despite Siamese opposition the mission was able to obtain precise and exhaustive information about the country, all the way from Yunnan to Cambodia, for the government and the newly formed French Commercial Syndicate of Upper Laos."

7: Thompson--367-368 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175, 726, 728

"The fuse which set off the accumulating grievances against Siam was the suicide of the French consul at Luang-Prabang, worn out by his struggles with the Siamese. His death shocked the Chamber of Deputies into voting unanimously for action, which had also the Commercial Syndicate's backing and Pavie's documentation on which to act. The military campaign which followed in 1893 drove all the Siamese from the east bank of the Mekong, from Cambodia to Khemmaret. These operations against Siam centred around three points, but the most important was the naval demonstration at Pak Nam. A treaty was subsequently concluded on the basis of the ultimatum which called [368] for evacuation of the Mekong's left bank and indemnity for Siamese aggression. Siam found to her sorrow that too much faith had been placed in English backing and France's indifference and preoccupation with Tonkin. If in carrying out the evacuation clause Siam forced wholesale deportations of the Laotians to her territory it was the final manifestation of her drang nach Osten."

7: Thompson--368 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175

"Almost at the same time complications with England began to develop over her encroachments in the Shan States. A commission was named in 1894 to study the problem, and Pavie headed the French delegation. Its work proved to be too slow for the English, who hastened matters by raising their flag at Muong Sing, despite Pavie's protests. New discussions and surveys resulted in another move on the part of the English, who this time occupied Tong-Muong-Sing. France seemed hopelessly weak and vacillating by contrast with England's strong action. While Pavie was engaged in this struggle Commandant Fournier was working on the South Chinese frontier, between the Black River and the Mekong. The treaty of Shimonoseki hastened the prompt solution of these frontier problems by an agreement that was favourable to the French and hostile to the British. This influenced the agreement signed between these two powers in May 1896, in which they renounced mutually aggression against Siam. England abandoned Muong Sing to France, thus giving the latter control of all the left bank of the Mekong from Yunnan to the Cambodian frontier."

"It may be remarked that the centre of Indo-China, and especially the region traversed by the upper course of the Mekong, is made up of kingdoms and principalities, formed for the most part out of the same territory which surrounds a town, always at loggerheads with one another, absorbed one after the other by the strongest States and only maintaining their independence in the interval through the rivalry of their powerful neighbours. Paying tribute first to the one side and then to the other, sometimes [292] to both at once, these Laos States have often been as reasonably considered Burmese as Annamite, or later on, as Siamese. At war with Annam now and again, the Laotians of this region conquered Tonquin eight centuries ago, but it is, none the less, with the Court of Hué that Luang Prabang preserves the closest ties. The chronicles of the town, which have been very conscientiously kept and which were saved from the flames by M. Pavie, testify in many passages to this state of dependency; and among these annals may be found the narrative of an invasion of Annamite troops in the seventeenth century which led to the suicide of the sovereign of Luang Prabang. (1) At a more

1. The legend has it that the king, when on the point of being made prisoner, had himself attached to the trunk of an elephant and the animal taken down into the river. A pagoda was erected in memory of the drowned ruler.

recent date eye-witnesses have related the expedition of Deo Van Tri referred to in a previous chapter, the Laĩ chief assuming his right to treat with the king upon behalf of the Emperor of Annam."

10: d'Orleans--316 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 175, 197, 241, 511, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"In speaking of the inhabitants of the principality of Luang Prabang, I referred to the Lus, the Meos and the Chinese, and a few words must be said about all three.

The first mentioned strike me as being, from an ethnographical point of view, very similar to the Laotians, whose language they speak, with a few slight differences of dialect, but they are smaller, punier and in a more poverty-stricken state. We saw one of their villages, just behind Luang Prabang, and its poverty was the most salient feature about it. Coming originally from Sibsompanas, where they form the principal element of the population, they have been driven south by Chinese wars and invasions, and several of them told me that they had not the means of returning home. Moreover, they are just as well off where they are, for, like the Kas, they cultivate the soil, planting rice fields for the Laotians."

15: Benedict--381-382 L-5 (no date) 1947 Laotians-1-2
116, 175, 197

"Lao, a Thai language spoken throughout most of the middle Mekong basin (Laos), is a much more recent as well as more successful invader of Indochina. The early home of the Thai peoples was southern and southwestern China, whence they migrated southward and eastward into present-day Siam and Indochina. The Lao, together with the Siamese, made up the southern front of this expansion, which at the turn of the first millenium A. D. began to exert gradually increasing pressure on the Mon-Khmer civilization to the south. The famous Rama Khamheng inscription of 1292, the earliest monument of the Siamese language, signalizes the final disruption of Mon-Khmer civilization by the economically and politically more aggressive Thai culture. Other Thai groups, smaller and less cohesive, made their way eastward into the mountainous areas of northern and western Tonkin. Linguistically these groups are represented by Tho, Black Tai, and White Tai. Thai languages are also spoken through much of southern China (Dioi, Nung), in Burma (Shan, Khamti), and until recent times were even represented far to the west in Assam (Ahom). They are monosyllabic and tonal like Chinese, and a Thai-Chinese language family has traditionally been accepted by most scholars. On closer view, however, the basic root affinities appear to lie with Indonesian (Malayo-Polynesian) rather than with Chinese, the Chinese lexical elements belong to a later cultural horizon and must be ragarded as [382] ancient borrowings--contrast, for example, Thai *nok 'bird,' Indonesian * manuk 'fowl, bird.' with Thai *kai, Chinese *kiei 'fowl' (the domesticated bird, belonging to a later cultural level). Chinese, it would

seem, exerted a dominant influence on Thai as regards monosyllables and tones, while Thai in turn exercised a similar influence on Annamese (see the discussion below). (3)

3. See the discussion in P.K. Benedict, 'Thai, Kadai, and Indonesian: a new alignment in Southeastern Asia,' American anthropologist, 44 (1942), 576-601.

Here we are presented with a striking example of the intricate patterning shown in the linguistic and cultural history of Southeast Asia."

23: Franck--280 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 175, 609 Ethnic subgroup

"In Xieng Khuang there stands a monument to six Frenchmen, five of them killed in France during the war, and one, like the dozen native soldiers whose names also appear on it, tué par les Méos rebelles. It seems there was a great Miao uprising in the Laos during the winter of 1918-19, the bloodiest battle of which took place at Nong-het, between the 'rebels' and the French, more exactly the native soldiers of the French. It was no surprise to be told that German agents and money had fomented the rebellion, though saner French residents admit that the Miao had long wished to be ruled by their own rather than by Laosian chieftains. That was no unnatural demand, and by the terms of the peace now reigning between them and the French it has been granted. Nor does this change seem to put any great burden upon Miao justice, for in cases involving more than five piastres the contestants may appeal to the French authorities, whom they evidently trust more than they do their own chieftains. The end of the rebellion was typical of these stiff-necked mountaineers. The French issued an ultimatum that the Méo must submit by 9 p.m. on a certain day; and at 8:59 exactly, while the French commanders sat with their watches in their hands, the Miao chieftain strode in and capitulated. The puzzle still remains how a race without clocks managed to time themselves so dramatically. Now they seem quite friendly, though it is not they who put their palms together above their heads and come to the squat when a white man goes by."

23. Franck--302 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 175

"Languid as it is, Luang Prabang's history is not without its exciting moments. For its origin one must go back to that great Nan-chao kingdom, with its capital at Tali-fu in the southwestern corner of China, founded in 629 A. D. and destroyed six centuries later (1234), not by the Chinese but by their Mongol ruler, Kublai Khan. The Kingdom of the Divine Buddha is one of the remnant kingdoms of the great Tai race which, once holding a part of what is now China, was gradually driven west and south, losing or attaining culture until it varied from the high civilization of the Khmer to almost illiterate tribes, according to where its new lot was cast. Best known to the outside world by the Siamese word for man (lao), or as shan, from a Chinese word used in Burma, this people still prefers to be called Tai."

23: Franck--302-303 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 175, 361

"A traveler who visited Luang Prabang in 1872 found it the most compactly built city of Siam, with the single exception of Bangkok, which it in some respects resembled. But of several disasters the greatest seems to have been in 1887, when the Black Flags of Taiping days in China burned and almost completely destroyed and depopulated it, so that perhaps it is not by [303] choice of its up-and-coming citizens that it is so roomy, pastoral, and ideal a city to-day."

23: Franck--303 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 175, 648, 177.64 France
636.64

"The same altruism and love of their fellow-man that has given the French the arduous task of protecting the rest of Indo-China led to their present position in the affairs of Laos. About the time the Chinese from Yünnan were pillaging Luang Prabang kingdom a Frenchman named Pavie was sent there on a mission. The father of the present king, born Tiao Kham Souk, who lived from 1837 until 1904 and reigned under the name of Ritthithamaronjsac--though he was more popularly known as King Zacharine, and probably not entirely on account of his sweet disposition--was an absolute despot, descended from a long direct line of similar rulers. For the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha has been a kingdom as far back as the memory of its people goes. Zacharine became a great friend of Pavie, at least according to such data as was available in the French government offices of Luang Prabang, and when the Siamese failed to protect him, as they had promised, against the Chinese, he went to Siam under Pavie's wing; and later, in a quarrel with the Siamese, who had burned and looted and carried off most of the people of Vientiane and Xieng Khuang, he made the mistake, like his royal neighbors of Annam and Cambodia, of calling in the French. By 1893 Siam had been compelled to give up all claim to this ancient kingdom and to the magnificent highlands of Tran-ninh, and all Laos became a European dependency under the protection of France."

23: Franck--348 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 175

"Vieng-chan, which under the French has become Vientiane, is a place of former glory and power of the Tai race, capital of another of those kingdoms of earlier days. Its last great period of prosperity was between 1628 and 1652, after which civil wars dispersed its power and Luang Prabang declared its independence, though even in the eighteenth century it was still powerful. Then, in 1828, the Siamese destroyed the city, carried off and dispersed the people, and it has never been rebuilt. In 1893, when a treaty with Siam gave all Laos, all the land east of the Mekong and some west of it, to France, Vieng-chan became the French capital of Laos, as Luang Prabang is the chief native center."

25: Brodrick--92-93 S-5 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-2
116, 175

"In the Mekong Valley, the Thai-speakers or Laos were long under Khmer suzerainty, although it is difficult to judge now to what extent the Khmers imposed their civilization in these outposts of their empire. But by the end of the twelfth century the northern [93] frontier of the Khmer realm stretched up to the site of the present-day Vientiane. However, a hundred years later, the Siamese rulers of Sukhothai, independent of the Khmers, extended their sovereignty to the Mekong's banks.

By the middle of the fourteenth century, we get a glimpse of the first independent Laotian ruler, one Fa-Ngum, said to have been a son-in-law of the Khmer king of Angkor. Fa-Ngum counts as the founder of the realm of Luang-Prabang, to which he imported Buddhist monks from Cambodia. But this later Cambodian influence does not seem to have been very far-reaching and certainly not long-lasting.

In the fifteenth century, Luang-Prabang had, for a time, to recognize the suzerainty of the Annamese ruler. In 1556, in 1563 and in 1571, the land of the Laos was, like all the Thai principalities, invaded by the expanding Burmese, who transferred the capital to Vientiane.

By the eighteenth century the Laotian lands were fallen apart and ruinous. Only the principalities of Luang-Prabang and of Vientiane retained their autonomy, but it was an autonomy menaced by the Siamese on the west and by the Annamese on the east. In fact, the Land of the Laos was being squeezed, as was the Land of the Khmers farther

south, and there can be little doubt that had not Europeans intervened, both Cambodia and the Laos would have disappeared and the Siamese and the Annamese would have fought out who was to control the Mekong Valley.

In 1827, the Siamese invaded the realm of Vien-Tian, the 'Moon Province' (Vientiane) and annexed it to their country. The Siamese yoke was comparatively light, the conquerors respected the customs, the laws and the language of the conquered. In fact, Vientiane was held in peace for tribute. The Annamese emperors claimed a shadowy suzerainty over most of the remainder of the Laos' land, including the kingdom of Luang-Prabang."

26: Brodrick--60 [4] S-3 (1939) 1944 Laotians
116, 175

"Luang-Prabang town stands at the northern limit of the Mekong's navigation and on the left bank at the foot of a pagoda hill that rises about two hundred feet above the plain on a jut of land round which the Nam-Kan curls to the Mekong. In 1887 the city was sacked by the Haw or 'Black Flag' Chinese 'Pirates' and in 1893, after the French occupation, the Siamese renewed their claim to the left bank of the Mekong (3) (which they

3. The Siamese undertook to keep the royal mausolea on the right bank open to visitors from Indo-China.

again claimed in 1940-41) including Luang-Prabang and the magnificent highlands of the Chieng-Kwang-- the right bank, however, remained Siamese until 1904 with a stipulation that a demilitarized zone of 16 kilometres wide should be maintained."

68: Mouhot--119-120 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 122, 175, 487

"To consult any existing maps of Indo-China for my guidance in the interior of Laos [HD: i.e. territory which is now central and northeastern Siam] would have been a folly, no traveller, at least to my knowledge, having penetrated into east Laos, or published any authentic information respecting it. To question the natives about places more than a degree distant would have been useless. My desire was to reach Louang-Prabang by land, to visit the northern tribes dependent on that state, and then again to descend the Mekong to Cambodia. Setting out from Korat, [HD: in Siam, northeast of Bangkok] I had but to proceed northwards as long as I found practicable roads and inhabited places; and if I could not go by a direct route to Louang-Prabang, I [120] should only have to diverge to the east when I judged it necessary."

115: Le Boulanger

AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

● 175

[For the history of Laos, see category 116, throughout.]

China Geographical Service /Service géographique de l'Indochine/ 131
and the road surveys made by administrators at the heads of prov- 654
inces nevertheless agree substantially in estimating the area of Laos at approximately 250,000 square kilometers, or about half that of France.

Population. This is the largest of the five countries in French 161
Indo-China, and it is also the least densely populated. According to information collected on the spot, the population must be be- /162/
tween a million and 1,200,000 inhabitants, a figure appreciably larger than the one figuring in the official documents, which estimate it to be only 800,000. Persons of the Laotian race in the strict /3/ sense form the majority. They populate the plains 162
which are watered by the Mékong and its tributaries and the low altitude plateaus. The mountains are inhabited by highly diverse races belonging to various ethnic types, some of which are related to the Chinese, and others to the Tibetan branch, while still others are grouped under the generic name of "Khas." These various groups are scattered over the western side of the Annamitic Chain, the foothills of the plateau of Trân-Ninh and in the upper valley of the Mékong.

The extremely low population density is to be explained by the 162
Siamese and Chinese invasions in the course of the nineteenth 166
century. The "Hos," plunderers who came from Yunnan, massa- 648*
cred the inhabitants after they had burned their villages and forced 175
those who escaped famine or torture to settle in another region. The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical manner and depopulated the country by transporting inhabitants, livestock and elephants to the right bank of the Mekong and oftentimes taking them as far as the valley of the Ménam.

Upper Laos. Upper Laos, a ramification of the Tibetan pla- 133
teau, "is an inextricable tangle /4/ of wild and wooded mountains in the midst of which paths wind like gigantic Russian
mountains" (1). The country has a savage look. These high 133
137

1. Dr. Lefèvre, "Le Haut-Laos" (Bulletin de la Société de Géographie commerciale, 1898).

mountain chains, which are cut here and there by deep valleys where torrents which are often invisible flow, are covered with

115: Le Boulanger--17 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Fig. 2. /Facing p. 23/

115:Le Boulanger--36 : H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

175-
102

Fig. 4. / Facing p. 52/

Lan-Xang and surrounding regions at the death of Fa-Ngoun (1374).

643* merchandise).
648* His life was also a short one. He died at the age of thirty-three,
175* handing down the crown to an only son born two years after his accession to the throne.

SOM-PHOU (1488-1502), KING 1496-1501.

643* This child, Som-Phou, who gave only his name to his reign, was
175 removed from power by the ministers, for reasons unknown, when he reached the age of thirteen. He then died in the following year.

/71/ VISOUN (1467), KING 1501-1520.

643* His uncle Phé-Sai (1) was summoned to the throne in his place in
175

1. Next to the last son of Tiakaphat.

/821/ 1501. According to the Annals, the sky was streaked with lightning and thundered unceasingly on the coronation day. Struck by this phenomenon, in which they saw a manifestation of divine satisfaction, the Council of Ministers gave him the name of Phaya-Visoun (lightning)
/787/ In 1506 a son was born to him who was named Phothisarath in consequence of a dream which Visoun's mother had a few days before the queen's delivery. "Banyans in flower (Kok-Pho) had appeared to her in which innumerable birds warbled joyfully." When consulted, the priests predicted that the expected child would be a Saint, and in the royal family everyone rejoiced at the thought that the newborn would come into the world under the sign of the sacred tree in whose shade Buddha had attained the triple science and found the secret of the destinies.
346 In order to magnify in anticipation, so to speak, the marvelous
643* events of his reign, King Visoun built many temples around his palace.
175* /72/ The foundations of a pagoda which was erected under his auspices to the memory of a daughter who had died young can still be seen today in Luang-Prabang (1).

1. Another pagoda, "Posot-Luang," which was located on the present site of the ice-house, has completely disappeared. Great celebrations were held there in honor of the birth of Photisarath.

643* PHOTHISARATH (1506), KING 1520-1547.
His son Phothisarath, who succeeded him in 1520, was an extremely

643* through the mouth of his chancellor and never speaks to them ex-
576 cept through a go-between..."

643* A "Trojan War" in Tran-Ninh (1651-1652). Under the firm hand
648* of such a monarch, the vassals and tributary princes eagerly com-
175 plied with the slightest of their sovereign's orders. Great was the
584 astonishment, therefore, when it was learned in 1651 that Chao-Kham-Xan, king of Xieng-Khouang, whom Souligna had asked for the hand of his daughter Nang-Ken-Chan in marriage, had dared to reply that the princess was not free and that he declined the honor of this alliance. Enflamed by the accounts which had been given him of the beauty and wisdom of the "pearl" of Tran-Ninh, the king of Lan-Xang pretended not to notice the affront but gallantly persisted and sent a messenger to take rich gifts to the girl. In vain. Then Souligna sent for the princess manu militari. The detachment was brought to an abrupt halt by the troops of King Chao-Kham-Xan and had to retrace its steps, while the people of Xieng-Khouang foresaw the worst and hastily built a fortress at Pana to protect their capital (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique." Revue indochinoise. Hanoi, 1896./

643* Souligna decided that a small army of two thousand men would
648* be enough to punish Chao-Kham-Xan for his insolence. This force
721 did in fact take the stronghold of Pana by surprise and penetrate into
175* Xieng-Khouang on a bridge /118/ thrown over the ramparts. The king, a prisoner in his own palace, had to give in. But although he surrendered to force he kept a stubborn rancor over this misadventure which was inherited by his son Chao-Kham-Lan who succeeded him in 1688. This prince raised a thousand difficulties in paying the traditional tribute to Lan-Xang, and friendly relations between the two sister states were ended for good and all. In the eighteenth century Xieng-Khouang was to be engaged in a permanent struggle with Souligna's successors, and in the nineteenth century Chao-Noi, a king of Tran-Ninh, was to deliver up the unfortunate king Anou, the last monarch of Vientiane, to Siam.

643* But let us not anticipate further on these events but rather re-
175* turn to the year 1652, when Lan-Xang was shining with all its splendor and when the minor expedition in Xieng-Khouang meant no more to its king than a simple demonstration of his power and his authority.

115: Le Boulanger--91 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

175
102

Fig. 9. The Indo-Chinese Peninsula at the Dawn of the Eighteenth Century.

/Facing p. 142/

been the vassal of Annam and used to pay a triennial trib- 643*
ute. The Tayson revolt forced it to submit to the Siamese, 648*
who are mistreating the people. Today, seeing the glory 175*
and power of Emperor Gia-Long, the prince of Vientiane asks to serve Annam once again and to pay tribute as in the past.' The embassy was received in a solemn audience by Gia-Long, who questioned it at length on the administration of the country, and was sent back, after a month's stay, with magnificent gifts. . . . The ambassadors brought back to the prince of Vientiane a letter from Gia-Long conceived in the following terms: 'Your predecessor Chao-In was my vassal, and my policy with respect to your kingdom has always been marked by gentleness and goodwill. Remain faithful to your duty and show yourself ever humane towards your people, and you will thereby comply with my wishes.' The question of tribute was settled. It was to be paid every three years, and the time of payment set in such a way that the embassy responsible for bringing it might greet the king during the holiday of the Tet." (Cf. Annals of the court of Hue.)

to /161/ detach Luang-Prabang from Bangkok (1). After the Bassac

1. See below, p. 201.

campaign he had sent Chao-Ngo to fortify Oubone. A triple-entrenched camp was built there and recruits trained, supposedly to defend Siam against any attack from inside or outside.

In Vientiane, he governed in the midst of a brilliant court. 369
The city of Setthathirath and Souligna, although fallen from its 175
former splendor, still contained more than ten thousand families and prided itself on its royal /162/ palace (1) and its many pagodas

1. When the Doudart de Lagree mission visited the city in /172/
1867 the mass of its fallen stones stretched from the Prakeo to the ruins -- which were then still imposing -- of the Wat-Kang. (De Came, op. cit. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'empire chinois, Paris, 1872./) See above, p. 122, the account by Father Marini.

whose gilt glittered above the walls of its fortifications. In 1818 /346/

369 Anou had built the new temple of Sisaket not far from the deconse-
175 crated Prakeo "with the purpose of attracting the grace of Heaven
/346/ to the souls of his parents as well as to those of all his relatives and to all the souls which people Hell and the world" (2). The corner-

2. Cf. inscription on the stele.

stone was laid on "Thursday, the ninth day of the waxing moon of the year Kap-San" (1824), in the midst of a large assembly of the populace.

778 Inauguration of the temple of Sisaket (1824). On this occasion
796 the king made innumerable gifts to the bonzes (clothing, sandals,
346 fans, iron pen points to write on latania leaves, mats, mattresses,
175* copper betel services, rice baskets, vases, metal drinking cups, carafes, goblets, etc.). He gave /163/ pieces of cloth to the poor, and generous bounties to artisans and musicians. The people walked in procession around the royal palace, carrying oriflammes and effigies of animals which were flowered and perfumed with incense. The holiday lasted three days, to the accompaniment of general rejoicing (1).

1. Ibid. /Inscription on the stele./

346 This temple was the only one which the French found still standing when they reached Vientiane. Of the first enclosure there remain two 'thats', which have recently been restored, and an elegant square pavilion-library whose quadruple pinnacled roof is supported by a graceful colonnade. Three other pavilions have disappeared (2).

2. A bath pavilion, one for worship and one for the tom-toms and gongs.

A cloister pierced by a porch on each side surrounds the central sanctuary, the outer gallery of which discloses a gateway and finely worked windows under the triple porch roofs. The inside walls are
/532/ illuminated by frescoes surmounted by many niches in the form of lotus leaves where thousands of statuettes are grouped in pairs. A wooden ceiling is embellished with gilded panels, and on the altar stands a giant Buddha entirely covered with gold leaf.

The attempt on Keng-Kiec (June 2, 1893). In Cammon 648*
Resident Luce persuaded the Pra Yott (1) to evacuate the capital, 175

1. See above, pp. 287 and 288.

with apparent resignation, and decided that a detachment of twenty militiamen under Inspector Grosgurin would be enough to escort him back and protect him, for the Siamese commissioner was heartily detested by the populace, whom he had been molesting for four years (2). But the Pra Yott had secretly asked for reinforce-

2. Cf. Mission Pavie, Vol. VII, pp. 333-334.

ments by rapid courier from the governors of Nongkhay and Outene, and on June 2, profiting by a halt at Kieng-Kiec, he had the little force surrounded by three hundred Siamese soldiers. The house where the French inspector was lying was riddled with rifle fire, while the latter lay delirious where he had been stricken two days ago by a violent fever...

Only three militiamen escaped from the fusillade. All the rest of the escort was massacred, its leader was hit by two bullets and the house where his body lay was burned.

News of this attack stirred up enough emotion in France to "determine the government /310/ to substitute its own action for that of the Indo-Chinese authorities. But to its protests and to the sending of M. Le Myre de Vilers as plenipotentiary to Bangkok, Siam replied by claiming that the ambush at Keng-Kiec was a regular battle and by placing the mouth of the Menam in a state of defense" (1).

1. On June 28 it sank two old ships to the right and left of the pass of Paknam so as to narrow it.

Forcing the pass of Paknam (July 12, 1893). Admiral Humann, commander of the China naval division, was then hastily summoned to Saigon and two warships -- the sloop Inconstant (Frigate Captain Bory) and the gunboat Comete (Lieutenant Commander Dartige du Fournet) -- were immediately dispatched to Bangkok. On July 8 Pavie informed the court that these two ships were coming to reinforce the Lutin which had been anchored in the Menam since March and requested, in accordance with Article 15 of the treaty of

115: Le Boulanger--208 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(20th Cent.) Laotians AM8

175
102

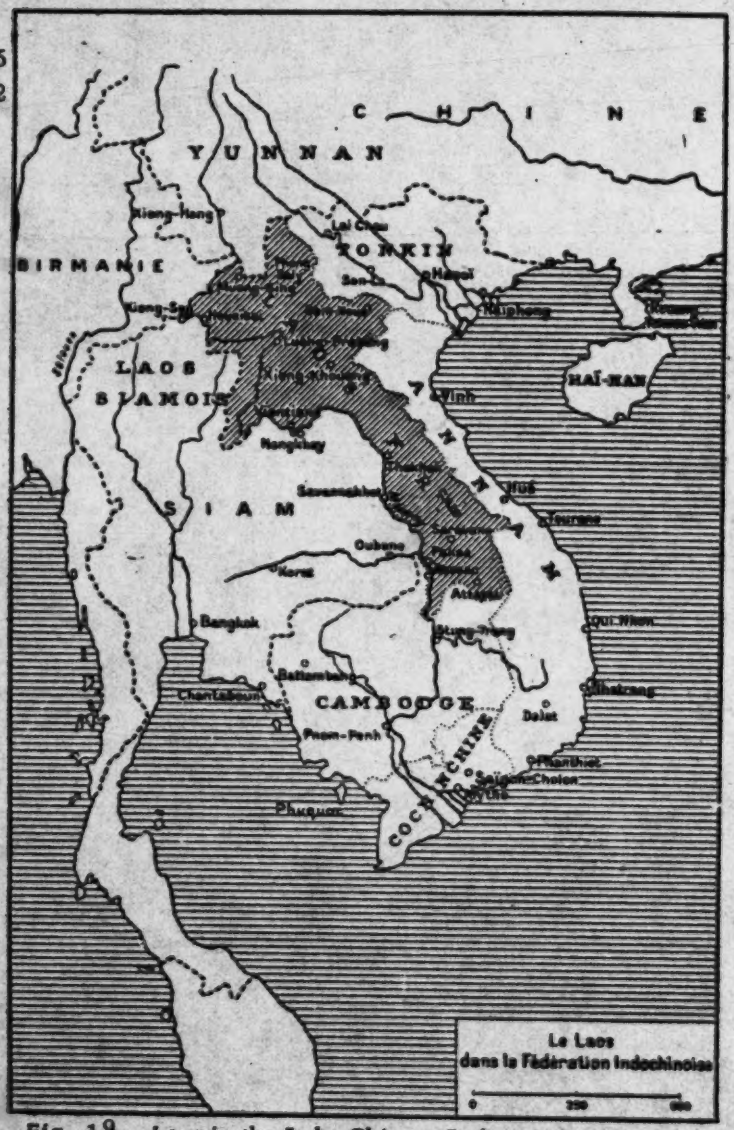

Fig. 19. Laos in the Indo-Chinese Federation.

/Facing p. 341/

149: Reinach--1 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

[1] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER I

175
101
642
468

THE POLITICAL STATUS OF LAOS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO THE CAPTURE OF VIEN-TIANE IN 1827

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the territories situated in the basin of the Mékong River were designated by the name of Laos or Lao, and from the political point of view formed two autonomous States.

Their autonomy was much more apparent than real, and existed in fact only for the internal administration of the two kingdoms. As far as their foreign relations went, they were tributaries of the more powerful nations which surrounded them.

The kingdom of Luang-Prabang (or Lan-Xang--of the million elephants) was the northernmost of the two and bordered on Yunnan, Tonkin, Annam, Vien-Tiane (or Vieng-Chang), the Burmese States [2] (or Sib-Song-Pahn-Na) and the You-Eûn States (or Lao-Xieng). It was supposed to provide China, Annam and Siam, either annually or every three years, with tribute consisting of certain valuable products and of precious metals, and called "Gold and silver flowers."

The other, or kingdom of Vien-Tiane, was the southernmost and was bordered on the north by Luang-Prabang, on the east by Annam, on the south by Cambodia and on the west by Siam. It was the tributary of Annam and Siam in the same right and under the same conditions as the first.

This state of affairs was profoundly modified in the beginning and middle of the nineteenth century by various events of capital importance.

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At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth the Thai kingdom, or Siam, had often appealed to the Laotian princes for help in repulsing Burmese invasions or repressing the insurrections of Ngiéous, Shans and You-Eûns which were frequent at this time. The princes' devotion was ill rewarded. Around 1825, in fact, when the kingdom of Vien-Tiane seemed to want to shake off Siamese suzerainty, it saw its territory invaded by Siamese armies. After two years of war the land had been dismembered, depopulated

Colonial 175

and stripped of its livestock and elephants, which were taken to the Ménam valley, and had been fully conquered by the Thai sovereign. 648

Siam then created the hereditary fief of Tiama-Sak (Bassac) in the southeast of the former kingdom and placed a cousin of the king of Vien-Tiane over it in order to reward him for his double treachery towards the king and towards his brother, the prince of Oubone, both of whom he had delivered up to the Siamese general Phiéa-Le-Bô-Dyn, vanquisher of the Laotians. 726

Of the former kingdom of Vien-Tiane Siam made a Siamese province bearing the name Lao-Pou-Eûn and, completely ignoring Annam's rights, it had its troops occupy the basin of the Sé-Bang-Hien in the Phu of Kam-Lô, which was situated on the left bank of the Mékong.

[3] SIAM'S ENCROACHMENTS TO THE EAST GROUNDS FOR FRENCH INTERVENTION IN THE MÉKONG BASIN ARRANGEMENT OF MARCH 27, 1889

Siamese expansion was not limited to these conquests. Thanks to a skilful policy, it was awarded the provinces of Mélou-Prey and Tonlé-Répou, located on both banks of the Mékong, by Cambodia about 1840. Following their annexation Siam reigned as master over the whole basin of the river from the province of Outhaï-Thani-Si-Pak-Lay (Luang-Prabang) to Siemboc, that is to say, from the eighteenth to the thirteenth parallel. 175 648

But the establishment of the French in Cochinchina placed an obstacle in the way of Siamese ambitions and of any plans for conquest which they may have nurtured. Since Cambodia was the hinterland of our new possession we were led to intervene in its foreign relations and finally guarantee it a stable political situation. Here a word of praise may well be said for Admiral de La Grandière who, by his diplomatic skill and his steadfastness, was able in 1863 to impose a treaty on King Norodom which counterbalanced another Siamo-Kmer agreement of the same year and placed the kingdom of Cambodia under a French protectorate. (1)

(1) See Appendix I.

This accord was far from being satisfactory to Siam, for the introduction of a great European nation in the Far East, on the banks

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of the Mékong, with effective dominance over several millions of individuals, meant the ruin of its secret hopes. What is more, its plans for territorial expansion up to the Annamitic Chain found in us adversaries to be reckoned with. It also feared that Cambodia, which was already our ally and strong by virtue of its new status, might claim the territories of which it had been despoiled.

Since it could not enter into open struggle against us, Siam stealthily sowed discords in the Kmer kingdom and, [4] in co-operation with the British agents in Bangkok, schemed to create palace revolutions and thereby try to induce the versatile Norodom to abandon our protection for a Siamese vassaldom which would be stricter than before but disguised under the appearance of great honor.

So as not to lose all the fruits of our action, and to bring an end to the ambiguous status of a double protectorate--French and Siamese--in Cambodia, our government had to take strong action. It was then that the Franco-Siamese treaty of July 15, 1867, was concluded(1).

(1) See Appendix II.

Despite many irreparable errors, this treaty sanctioned Siam's recognition of the French protectorate over Cambodia, annulled the Siamo-Kmer agreement of 1863, established the status quo as a policy, granted to nationals of both countries reciprocal facilities for trade, residence, property, travel, navigation and passports, set up rules governing jurisprudence, etc.

Unfortunately it gave Siam the rich provinces of Battambang and Angkor (2), with vague provisions for later delimitation of

(2) At the beginning of the nineteenth century Siam had purely and simply annexed these provinces, without any treaty having sanctioned the coup.

these territories. The comparative calm of this period made it possible to settle various matters for good and all which had theretofore been left hanging.

Colonial 175 648 [206]

Thus the agreement of July 14, 1870, regulated fishing conditions on the Great Lake [Grand Lac] (3). In 1882 it was decided to set up

(3) See Appendix III.

a telegraph line between Bangkok and Pnom-Penh (4). And finally, [439]

(4) See Appendix IV.

on May 23, 1883, an agreement was reached which regulated the commerce and sale of French wines and spirits in Siam (5).

(5) See Appendix V.

This fine state of affairs soon took a turn for the worse at the time of the Tonkin expedition.

The agents of Great Britain in Siam were afraid that our penetration into the valley of the Red River and into Upper Laos [5] [Illustration] [6] [Blank page] [7] would hinder British plans for commercial establishments in Yunnan and would prevent British predominance in the two Kouang. Since they were bent on preserving their influence in this region, they induced the Siamese sovereign to act first on the Chinese frontiers, where he was to bar our progress, and then in Laos with Annam as the objective, in the hope that he might create difficulties for us and perhaps succeed in concluding some form of alliance against us.

The king's pride was flattered by his foreign advisers. Feeling that he was to play the part of the sovereign of a "great nation," he abandoned his prudent reserve, no longer kept the balance equal between the rival nations, and began his adventurous course. These were his first steps towards great disappointments, and also towards territorial losses such as those resulting from the treaty of 1893 and the London convention of 1896.

Circumstances at the time, moreover, seemed to favor Siam's action and even to excuse its behavior in some measure.

The invasion of Laos by the Hôs (1) enabled the sovereign of 648 175 726

(1) Chinese bandits from Yunnan.

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Colonial

Siam to preserve an appearance of neutrality, and even of cordiality, towards us.

It gave him the opportunity to pose as the defender of Annam's vassals and of the subjects of his most honorable vassal the king of Luang-Prabang. When the time came King Chulahlong-Khorn would thus be able to profit skilfully, and according to the circumstances, from the advantages which he had gained in order to transform an ill-founded vassaldom over Luang-Prabang into an absolute possession and, thanks to our difficulties, to impose the law of greater might all the way to the Annamitic Chain.

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The Hô invasion, which extended all the way to Nong-Khay across the Sib-Song-Chau-Thaï, the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc, Tran-Ninh and Vien-Tiane, was never seriously opposed by the Siamese no matter what they may say. Their pretended action did, however, enable the king to keep Vien-Tiane and to drive the Chinese bandits out of Laotian territory.

[8] The whole affair may have created some momentary illusion, but the actual fact was that Chulahlong-Khorn's troops, except for a few rare and unimportant skirmishes, merely followed the Hôs as they returned towards Yunnan and abandoned the territories which they had invaded after they had sacked them.

Profiting by inattention on the part of France and Annam, which were occupied [Illustration here] elsewhere, and on the fallacious pretext that it was protecting the provinces which had been devastated by the Hôs and was preventing them from returning in the future, Siam covertly established itself as master in the land.

In the meantime the Chinese bandits, after leaving Vien-Tiane and Tran-Ninh, invaded the kingdom of Luang-Prabang. The latter still paid tribute to Siam, in the form of "Gold and silver flowers," yet it had remained free of direct domination and enjoyed an autonomy comparable to [Map, unpaged, inserted between pp. 8 and 9] [9] that of Vien-Tiane before its conquest, and paid an honorary bounty to China and Annam.

Still on the pretext of driving out the Hôs, the Siamese troops entered the territory of Luang-Prabang and established themselves there as in a conquered land. Their general was given the title of royal commissioner. He administered the country, recruited troops, levied [Illustration here] taxes and behaved exactly as if the country belonged to him (1885).

149: Reinach--6 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial 648 175

Such overt acts were the certain prelude to a more complete annexation, and finally shook off our torpor and quickened our vigilance.

Since the king of Annam, our new protégé, had rights over this region which were equal and in several cases superior to those of Siam, our intervention became necessary. It resulted in the treaty of May 7, 1886 (1).

(1) See Appendix VI.

[10] So that the treaty should not remain mere words, the Government of the French Republic sent M. Pavie (1) on a geographical and 175 727 654

(1) Now minister plenipotentiary.

political mission in Upper Laos and named him consul in Luang-Prabang, but without Siam's exequatur.

The work of this first mission provided precious information on all the regions invaded by the Hos and later occupied by the Siamese.

With the help of Commander Pennequin (2), our valiant consul

(2) Now brigadier general; former interim governor general of Madagascar.

succeeded in driving the last bandits back to China and made the advance outposts which had been established by the Siamese withdraw to the far limits of the Mékong basin. Turning this situation to their profit, and now strong in the knowledge which they had acquired, our diplomats concluded with the court of Bangkok, so as to be able to face any difficult eventuality in the future, as well as to give us time for reflection, the arrangement of March 27, 1889, by the terms of which Siam agreed to respect the status quo (3).

(3) "By the terms of this agreement the Siamese troops were to halt their eastward march, and then evacuate the region of Cammon. A Siamese 'Kha-luong' was allowed to remain in this province for the time being, and we obtained the right to construct a military post at Napé." E. Picanon, 1900. Le Laos français. [648]

149: Reinach--7 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

SIAM'S VIOLATION OF THE 1889 ARRANGEMENT
VARIOUS INCIDENTS
OCCUPATION OF LOWER LAOS--NAVAL DEMONSTRATION AT PAK-NAM
ULTIMATUM AND TREATY OF OCTOBER 3, 1893

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The arrangement of 1889 was unfortunately much too lenient. Even several years after the fall of the great and clairvoyant patriot Jules Ferry, however, and as a consequence of the profound discredit into which the whole colonial idea and cause had fallen among us, our political situation made it impossible for us to take more effective measures and to assert the rights of our protégé, the emperor of Annam, in a more pressing way. [11] Nor could we give full satisfaction to the completely legitimate requests for protection which were made by the king of Luang-Prabang.

Our political difficulties were perfectly well-known to the Siamese government. Emboldened by our hesitation, it consented, in agreement with Great Britain, to arrangements and delimitations of frontiers in the Shan States which annihilated the plan conceived by Jules Ferry in 1883 and canceled all the results of the Deloncle treaty concluded in 1884 (1) with Upper Burma, which was then

(1) See Appendices VII and VIII.

independent. This treaty, in effect, recognized as limits of "French Tonkin the Mékong River, from the point where it leaves China as far as Xieng-Sèn," including the Pahn-Na on the left bank, the principality of Muong-Sing and the States of Pou-Kha, Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sèn to the west of Nam-Hou.

In exchange for this territory--a gracious gift which cost it all the less in that it did not belong to it--Great Britain obtained Karennée (or Karèng) from Siam. The latter territory was situated in the valley of the Salouen, and had been under Siamese domination for centuries.

The delimitation of the Anglo-Siamese frontiers, including those of the Shan States of Xieng-Maï, Lam-Poun and Muong-Haut, was completed only in 1892.

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In 1889 M. Pavie was sent on another mission and was accompanied by many civil and military assistants whose particular province was to be topography and the natural sciences. A

commercial and industrial mission was attached to the former, and it was to study the question of means of communication by land and river, to create trading posts, to collect samples, to examine the commercial methods in use and to determine the nature and value of the products of the Mékong basin. Funds for this mission, which left France with an initial stock of fifteen tons of various kinds of merchandise, were provided by a syndicate which had just been formed, with an initial capital of 100,000 francs, under the name of French Syndicate [12] of Upper Laos. It included representatives of Parisian trade and industry who had united for the experiment thanks to the initiative of M. Léon Tharel, the president of the group.

All throughout 1890 and 1891 the missions fulfilled their tasks with ardor, not without constant struggle against the implicit hostility of the Siamese, which although occasionally concealed under an [Illustration here] affable outward mask nonetheless continued to manifest itself and created obstacles everywhere in the hope of discouraging the valiant explorers and causing their work to fail.

In spite of the difficulties which they encountered, the two missions were successful in their delicate enterprise and the results of the latter were most significant. From that point on we were in possession of precise information concerning the whole region extending from Yunnan to Cambodia.

What was more, by continuing the tradition begun by Mouhot, the [13] Lagrée mission, Harmand, Néis, etc. we had made contact with the Laotian people and made them know and love the French name. In us they saluted their future liberators and the ones who would come to free them from the brutal and detested Siamese yoke.

Finally--a fact of no less importance--thanks to the activities of the commercial mission, to the trading posts which it had established and to the contacts and arrangements which it had prepared, we were in possession from that time on of private commercial interests in the Mékong basin. Thus greater force was given to the rights which we already had to intervene in Laos against Siamese intrigues in the name of our protégés, the emperor of Annam and the king of Cambodia.

Frightened and surprised by the results which France had achieved in so short a time in the Mékong valley, despite the ambushes which it had laid on all sides and the hostile maneuvers which it had supported, Siam began to fear that France might invade its Laotian territories. It then invoked the friendship of Great Britain and

648 surrounded itself with official advisers from that nations.

175 In a short time, and with remarkable rapidity, it organized an army and navy which were trained and commanded by European officers. It reinforced all its detachments in Laos, levied additional troops, and after providing supplies of arms and munitions it constructed forts. In a word, it prepared for war. It announced to the people that all these steps had been taken in order to "drive out the French and extend the Thai kingdom into Annam."

726 The 1889 arrangement establishing a status quo was then violated
175 Siamese troops and commissioners advanced towards the Annamitic Chain and crossed it at several points, particularly at Hatraf and Ai-Lao, and thus reached a point only forty kilometers from Hué. In the course of their forward march various incidents occurred which obliged the French Government to abandon the reserve which it had heretofore maintained when confronted with the intrigues of the court of Bangkok. At last it made ready to act vigorously.

175 In January 1892 the greater number of the members of [14] the Pavie mission had returned to France. Only three of them had
648 remained in Laos, two in Luang-Prabang and one in Stung-Treng.

439 It was at this time that the French Syndicate of Upper Laos, which had become the French Syndicate of Laos and had doubled its capital, sent out a new six-man mission as well as a large stock of merchandise. Its purpose was to reoccupy the old trading posts in Luang-Prabang and Nong-Khay and to found new ones at Bassac, Outhène and Xieng-Hong in a line along the Mékong. Its activity would thus extend from Cambodia to Yunnan. The Syndicate's new mission was to support and strengthen the commercial interests already in existence in the Mékong basin. It also placed vigilant agents in all the posts who would be able to keep an eye on the maneuvers of the Siamese and instil confidence in the people by showing them that in spite of Siam's threats and warlike preparations we should not abandon them. The Laotians were thus conscious of our support at a time when their invaders were becoming harsher and more arrogant and were threatening to extract reprisals from them as a punishment for having placed their trust in us and solicited our protection.

In these critical circumstances the Government decided to place a consul general in Bangkok so as to render France's political action in Siam more effective. It chose M. Pavie to occupy this high post,

Colonial

both for his special knowledge of the country and the questions at issue and as a reward for the exceptional service which he had rendered to France in the course of his previous missions. Shortly thereafter, so as to place our chief agent in Siam on the same level as those of other nations, the title of Resident Minister of France was conferred on him. 175 648 439

At the same time, in order to extend our activity in the Mékong basin, the Government discontinued the vice-consulate in Luang-prabang, which had always remained without Siam's "exequatur", and replaced it with a commercial agency. Three other agencies of the same type were established in Outhène, Bassac and Stung-Treng.

The first three of these posts were managed by the agents, [15] [Illustration] [16] [Blank page] [Unpaged map inserted between pp. 16 and 17] [17] who were heads of trading posts in the French Syndicate, and the last was managed by a chief clerk in the Posts and Telegraphs. They were given the title of commercial agents of the Government and, even while they continued to carry on commercial operations, they received salaries from the Colonies budget. They corresponded directly with the Governor General of Indo-China and the Resident Minister in Bangkok, to whom they sent telegrams and official reports.

Meanwhile the Siamese, thinking that they were to be permitted to do anything and secretly impelled by the British agents, continued to advance eastward terrorizing the people and mistreating our subjects, protégés and nationals in Siam as well as in Laos and in Cambodia, in the region of Great Lake [Grand Lac]. 648 175

Their audacity reached its climax in a serious offense to our flag in Tong-Kieng-Kham, and the accumulation of all these grievances drove the French Government to vigorous action. Following an interruption and a patriotic speech by M. Deloncle, a deputy, the Chamber decided to safeguard the rights of our protégés and to recall Siam to respect for the treaties and arrangements which had been agreed on. The following are the terms in which M. Deloncle placed the question before Parliament on February 4, 1893. [C.A.M. Translator's note. The following speech (through p. 17, line 5 in this translation) is presumably taken from French legislative records. It is set in small, contrasting type in the source.]

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President.--M. Deloncle has the floor.

M. François Deloncle.--Gentlemen, after the brilliant speeches which you have just heard I believe that the Chamber is in some haste to close the general discussion. I have therefore come simply to ask the Government a few questions.

The first of these questions supplements the observations which my honorable colleagues and friends the Messrs. Martineau and Le Roy have addressed to the tribune concerning the encroachments of the Siamese on our Indo-Chinese empire.

The Siamese are ignorant or pretend to be ignorant of Annam's rights over its old vassal, the principality of Luang-Prabang. The Siamese are ignorant or pretend to be ignorant of Annam's rights over the small Laotian States to the north of old Cambodia on the right bank of the Mékong, some of which used to send, up until the last few years, tribute to Hué. The Siamese are ignorant or wish to be ignorant of Annam's absolute rights over all the territory situated between the sea and the left bank of the Mékong, that is to say the lands of Attopeu and Saravane, the phus of Cam-lô, Lac-bien and Tran-tinh, Tran-dinh, Tran-ninh, Tran-bien, Muong-lu, etc., which from time immemorial have been a part of [18] the Annamite empire and must be purely and simply attached to the direct administration of our residences. Finally, the Siamese are ignorant or pretend to be ignorant of Cambodia's rights over the old provinces of the Cambodian kingdom which Siam holds illegally and in spite of the treaty of 1867, which provides for a delimitation of frontiers which the court of Bangkok has always refused to consider.

It is in this way that, patiently and noiselessly, the Siamese are usurping one by one all the dependencies of our protégés, the emperor of Annam and King Norodom. In vain do our protégés protest and clamor for our protection against this invasion. We have let matters take their course, in the last few years, with such an appearance of resignation that Siamese audacity is growing every day and that good patriots are worriedly asking how far it may not go. Look at the Siamese outposts at the gates of Hué. There they are a few days away from Hanoi. They do not hesitate to treat our political agents with the most perfect scorn and to mistreat our traders, as witness the expulsion from Houten of M. Champenois who is claiming on these grounds, and not without reason, an indemnity of 100,000 francs. To put it bluntly, the weakness of our representatives and sometimes of our Government in these regions is so great that two

149: Reinach--12 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial 648
175

Siamese functionaries were not at all afraid, in September 1891, to tear down the French flag at the Pouens. Not only were they not bothered, but one of them received the rosette of officer of the Legion of Honor and the other was made a chevalier through the diplomacy of the Republic. (Various movements.)

Truly, it seems to me that we have been too long-suffering. It is not possible that we should have conquered Cambodia, Tonkin and Annam, and acquired rights over all of Laos on both banks of the Mékong, by virtue of solemn and undisputed treaties, only to abandon the best fruits of our conquest to Siam. We have been the dupes of Siam for five or six years, and that is enough.

Let us return to the virile policy which, in 1882, under M. Harmand as consul general and under the administration of the honorable M. Le Myre de Vilers, placed Siam under our influence because France then knew how to speak clearly and not beat about the bush. Let us remind Siam of the limits to which it must confine itself and which it respected very well until the expedition of the Hôs, until our war in Tonkin and until the Cambodian rebellion of Si-Votha.

Doubtless there were, during this period, a few Siamese mandarins who occasionally went in search of adventure among the Laotians of the Mékong, but this was pure tolerance on the part of the Cambodians and Annamites and there was not, as there are today, brothers of the king and generals in chief camped as absolute masters on both banks of the river. The regular and official administration of the court of Bangkok did not go beyond the Ménam basin in the strict sense and the Malay Peninsula, and the kingdom contained only those provinces listed in the four classes reproduced by the printed laws of Siam, of which the Siam Directory, the official annual, [19] gives authentic extracts which are published under the supervision of the king himself. This document is absolutely conclusive. Let us bring Siam back to it. Let it reign in peace, in full integrity and independence, over the provinces listed in the Siam Directory, but let it no longer attempt to establish itself with impunity in the territories dependent on our empire.

Do not fear, Mr. Undersecretary of State, to impress on Bangkok our determined intention not to be made fools of any longer by the pleasant smiles, the lulling diplomacy and the complicated intrigues with which, since 1884, the best intentions of our agents have been paralyzed. (Hear! Hear!)

149: Reinach--13 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians: AM8
Colonial

175
648

The Siamese are like all the other people of the Orient. They believe that they are strong because we have accustomed them to regard themselves as such. They have a great deal of pride, because we have been and are too humble towards them. They make much, in their dealings with us, of pretended aid which they confidently expect from England or from Germany. But I ask you, gentlemen, what can England or Germany have to say in a question of frontiers between Siam, Cambodia and Annam which has to do only with France? Are we concerned in the frontier delimitation now in progress in the Shan-Burmese States between Siam and Britain? Have we ever for a single instant hindered German or Italian commercial activity in Bangkok?

No, gentlemen, there are no international interests involved in this matter. We have only one question to settle with Britain in this region, that of the upper Mékong from the point where this river leaves China upstream from Xieng-hong to the point in Xieng-sen where it touches the northwest frontier of Siam. There, as you know, the left bank of the Mékong constitutes the limit between French Tonkin and the Shan-Burmese States, by the terms of the Burmese declaration which I brought back in 1884 from Mandalay, and by the terms of other arrangements which enabled the honorable M. Ribot, then minister of Foreign Affairs, to declare before the Chamber two years ago that he would never accept any other frontier line between Tonkin and the Shan-Burmese States which depend on Britain.

I shall add only that, since that time, Lord Salisbury has admitted in the House of Lords that his government could not possibly have anything to say in the frontier difficulties pending between Siam and France. Our hands are therefore free, on condition that we respect the integrity and independence of Siam in the strict sense.

The Government well knows what measures are to be taken under the present conditions, and I defer to the resolute spirit of my honorable friend the Undersecretary of State.

These will not be extensive military measures for, and you will learn this not without some surprise, Siam has accomplished its work of invasion with the aid of a mere 150 or 200 Siamese soldiers. With this small number of troops they are occupying a region larger than half of France.

[20] You must admit, gentlemen, that it would be enough merely to turn to with a good will and have a genuine consciousness of France's rights, in order to restore order once again. Unfortunately

149: Reinach--14 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

I fear that our agents all too often lack this genuine consciousness. (Hear! Hear!) 175 648

Once that we had decided to intervene in Indo-China, operations were begun at three different points: in the region of Ai-Lao, in Cammon and in the north of Cambodia.

Our agents remained isolated in the Mékong valley.

Those of Luang-Prabang, who had taken refuge in the buildings of the old consulate on the right bank of the Mékong, were proscribed, blockaded and besieged. Threats of death were made against all natives who should enter into contact with them or serve them in any way whatever.

Our commercial agent in Outhène was expelled by order of the viceroy of Nong-Khay, and his merchandise was first confiscated and then almost all sold by the Siamese. The agent in Bassac escaped similar treatment thanks only to the goodwill of Prince Prit-Chit, the viceroy of Oubone and a friend of France, and they were content merely to keep a close watch on him. He was guarded so closely that he could neither send nor receive correspondence or merchandise.

The instructions given out by M. de Lanessan, the Governor General of Indo-China, for the campaign which was beginning were quite clear. He directed that open battle should be avoided insofar as possible. He said that we must seek to gain the sympathies of the inhabitants and always prefer diplomacy and peaceful means to uncertain military engagements. In order to attain this end, the Governor General recommended the use of native troops commanded by inspectors of the militia and placed under the higher authority of a few chosen residents. 648 175 726

It was in this capacity that Messrs. Luce, Dufrénil and Bastard took part in the operations.

One column, with Muong-Phin as its objective, was placed under the command of M. Dufrénil, the vice-resident in Dong-Hoi, who was assisted by M. Garnier, an inspector of militia. Following the instructions [21] of the Governor General, that is to say without entering open combat, this force reached Muong-Phin after a rapid march, which it entered on May 14, 1893. On the 26th of the same month it reached the Mékong opposite Kemmarat.

In these parts there was a veritable rout of the Siamese, who

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were reduced to circulating rumors of the imminent arrival of sizeable reinforcements which would come and reoccupy the regions out of which we were driving them.

In the meantime another column, commanded by Inspector Grosgurin and under the general direction of M. Luce, the resident in Nghé-An, was operating in the region of Cammon.

Greater difficulties confronted us there. The region had been organized (1) by the Siamese commissioner Phrayot. The latter

(1) In accordance with the treaty of March 27, 1889.

joined with the two neighboring commissioners of Nong-Khay and Outhène, and with their help was able to surround M. Grosgurin in Keng-Kièt, which was the last step of the French column before the Mékong. The small force was massacred by the Siamese and its leader, who was stricken with fever and helpless, was killed point-blank without being able to defend himself (June).

After this ambush M. Luce, who could not obtain the reinforcements which he requested and who was also suffering from violent accesses of fever, returned to Saigon and left his command in the hands of Inspector Soler. The latter was valiantly seconded by Chief Guardsman Huguet, and completely routed the Laotians in an engagement at Na-Khai.

Phrayot, whose authority had been greatly shaken by this setback, fell back to the right bank of the Mékong and was unfortunately able to take a large part of the left bank's population with him.

Another series of operations was in course in the north of Cambodia, under the direction of M. Bastard, vice-resident in Cambodia.

In a rapid march a company of Annamite riflemen under the command of Captain Thoreux occupied Stung-Treng (April 1) and then Khône (April 5), which the Siamese commissioner and small garrison abandoned in haste.

[22] M. Bastard then returned to Saigon to give an account of the results of his mission. Captain Thoreux left a detachment on the island of Khône and returned almost alone in the direction of Stung-Treng, where he was to set up a supply service. As he was moving along the right bank of the river he was taken prisoner by a small Siamese force. He was led away to Oubone, where Prince Prit-Chit, who was, as we have seen, quite favorably disposed towards the

French, did not make his captivity too hard for him.

Reinforcements arrived from Oubone, and in May the Siamese tried to retake Khône. Their plan failed, thanks to two companies brought in by Captain Adam de Villiers. The blockade of the island was lifted and the month of July was spent in capturing the whole group of islands, particularly Dom-Som which had been fortified.

When confronted with these simultaneous actions the Siamese became greatly alarmed. It was to be feared in Bangkok that the populace, which was hostile to our influence and might also be aroused by certain court officials, might extract reprisals from the Europeans who lived in the capital. Under these circumstances, and perhaps also so as to take advantage of an unsettled situation, Britain resolved to reinforce its forces in Bangkok.

It was the assassination of Inspector Grosgurin which obliged us, despite our peaceful intentions, to enter into open warfare with Siam. This ambush indeed called for immediate reparations.

Up to that point the chancelleries had not intervened and the operations had taken place, so to speak, without the diplomats' knowledge. The Keng-Kiet incident precipitated the course of events.

M. Le Myre de Vilers, who was returning to Cochinchina, was sent to ask the Court of Bangkok for an explanation, and Admiral Humann, the commander-in-chief of the Far Eastern Squadron, received orders to sail to the Gulf of Siam.

On July 12 the Inconstant and the Comète, preceded by the steamship J.-B. Say of the Cochinchinese River Merchant Fleet which was making its regular voyage, advanced towards the bar of the Ménam. As it was about to cross the pass of Pak-Nam in accordance with the rules [23] [Illustration] [24] [Blank page] [Unpaged map inserted between pp. 24 and 25] [25] of the port of Bangkok (Article 15 of the treaty of August 15, 1856 (1)), the J.-B. Say was

(1) See Appendix IX.

shot at and sunk, for a projectile hit a vital spot. In the face of such cowardly aggression Admiral Humann was forced to respond. The two gunboats crossed the bar and, passing under the fire of the Siamese batteries of Pak-Nam and Phra-Chula, went up the Ménam to Bangkok where they cast anchor that same evening.

175 726 "Our seamen," as M. Flourens put it, "had cut their way through the barrages, the torpedos and the obstacles of all kinds which the Siamese Government had laid out in order to shield behind a barrier which it believed insurmountable, the brazen despicableness of its incessant provocations."

175 728 The news aroused indignation as soon as it became known in France, and in its session of July 18 the Chamber authorized the Foreign Minister to deliver the following ultimatum to the Siamese Government:

648 1. Recognition of French rights to the left bank of the Mékong and to its islands.

2. Evacuation of the Siamese outposts established on the left bank of the Mékong, within the space of one month.

3. Satisfaction for the aggressions committed.

4. Punishment of the guilty.

5. An indemnity of two millions for damages caused.

6. Deposit of the sum of three millions as security, or payment of the tax revenues from the provinces of Battambang and Siem-Reap (2).

(2) See Appendix IXa.

Siam refused at first to accept these conditions, and on July 22 offered to cede the left bank as far as the 18th patallel, thus wishing to keep Vien-Tiane, Luang-Prabang, Tran-Ninh, the Hua-Pahn, Muong-Poukha, Xieng-Khong, Muong-Sing, the two Muong-Hou and the Pahn-Na on the left bank. It was counting, and with some reason, on the support of Great Britain.

Lord Roseberry and Ed. Grey tried, but in vain, to arouse [26] opinion in London and to provoke diplomatic intervention. The Foreign Office refused categorically. Discouraged by this sudden abandonment and intimidated by the resolute attitude of the French Government (1), the king of Siam accepted the conditions which had

(1) In accordance with the Department's instructions, M. Pavie had struck his flag and left Bangkok on July 26 aboard the Inconstant.

been offered without further ado. M. Le Myre de Vilers was named Ambassador Extraordinary and arrived to conclude a treaty with the Court of Siam which should be based on the ultimatum. Signed on

149: Reinach--18 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial
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October 3, 1893, in Bangkok, it was ratified by the French parliament in January 1894.

The following are the clauses of the treaty (2):

(2) See Appendix X.

Treaty concluded in Bangkok on October 3, 1893, between the government of the French Republic and the government of His Majesty the king of Siam, in order to bring an end to the disputes which have arisen between the two lands and strengthen friendly relations.

The President of the French Republic and H.M. the king of Siam, wishing to bring an end to the disputes which have arisen in recent times between the two States and to strengthen the friendly relations which have existed between France and Siam for centuries past, have named as their plenipotentiaries:

The President of the French Republic,

M. Charles Marie Le Myre de Vilers, Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor and of the White Elephant, Minister plenipotentiary of the 1st class, deputy;

And H.M. the king of Siam, His Royal Highness Prince Devawongse Varoprakar, knight of the order of Maha Chakrkri, grand officer of the Legion of Honor, etc., minister of Foreign Affairs; who, after communicating their full powers to one another and having recognized them as in good and due form, have agreed to the following articles:

ARTICLE I. The Siamese Government renounces all claim to all of the territories on the left bank of the Mékong and to the islands in this river.

ARTICLE 2. The Siamese Government agrees not to maintain or circulate ships or armed vessels on the waters of the Great Lake [Grand Lac], the Mékong or their tributaries within the limits specified in the following article.

ARTICLE 3. The Siamese Government shall not construct any fortified outpost or military establishment in the provinces of Battambang and Siem-Reap or within a radius of twenty-five kilometers from the right bank of the Mékong.

ARTICLE 4. In the zones specified in Article 3, police duty shall be carried out, according to [27] custom, by the local authorities with only such contingents as are strictly necessary. No regular or

Colonial

648 irregular armed force shall be maintained there.

728 ARTICLE 5. The Siamese Government agrees to open negotia-
tions with the French Government, within a period of six months,
with a view to drawing up regulations governing customs and trade
175 in the territories specified in Article 3, and to revising the treaty of
1856.

Until such an agreement has been reached, no customs duties shall be established in the zone specified in Article 3. Reciprocity shall continue to be accorded by the French Government to the products of the aforesaid zone.

ARTICLE 6. Since the development of navigation along the Mékong may necessitate certain construction projects on the right bank, or the establishment of boat relays and depots for wood and coal, the Siamese Government agrees to provide, at the request of the French Government, all necessary facilities for this purpose.

ARTICLE 7. French citizens, subjects and nationals may circulate and engage in trade freely in the territories specified in Article 3, when provided with a pass issued by the French authorities. Reciprocity shall be accorded to the inhabitants of the aforesaid zones.

ARTICLE 8. The French Government reserves the right to establish consulates wherever it deems suitable in the interest of its nationals, and particularly at Korat and Muong-Nan.

ARTICLE 9. In case of any difficulties in interpretation, the French text alone shall be deemed valid.

ARTICLE 10. The present treaty must be ratified within a period of four months dating from the day of its signing.

In faith of which the below-named respective plenipotentiaries have signed the present treaty in duplicate and have affixed their seals thereto.

Done at the palace of Vallabha, in Bangkok, October 3, 1893.

(Signed) Le Myre de Vilers
(Signed) Devawongse Varoprakar

An agreement of which the following is the text was joined to the preceding treaty:

149: Reinach--20 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

AGREEMENT

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The plenipotentiaries have determined, in the present agreement, the different measures and steps involved in carrying out the peace treaty signed this day, and the ultimatum accepted on last August 5.

ARTICLE 1. The last Siamese military posts on the left bank [28] of the Mékong shall be evacuated within the maximum space of one month dating from September 5.

ARTICLE 2. All fortifications in the zone specified in Article 3 of the treaty dated this day shall be razed.

ARTICLE 3. The authors of the attempts on Tong-Xieng-Kham and Kammoun shall be judged by the Siamese authorities. A representative of France shall be present at the judgment and shall see to it that the penalties pronounced are carried out.

The French Government reserves the right to judge whether the sentences are sufficient and, if need arise, to demand a new trial before a mixed tribunal whose composition it shall determine.

ARTICLE 4. The Siamese Government shall place at the disposition of the Minister of France in Bangkok or of the French frontier authorities all French, Annamite and Laotian subjects of the left bank and the Cambodians who are being detained on any grounds whatsoever. It shall in no way impede the return to the left bank of former inhabitants of this region.

ARTICLE 5. The Ban-Bien of Tong-Xieng-Kham and his retinue shall be brought to the French Legation by a delegate of the Foreign Minister, as well as the weapons and the French flag seized by the Siamese authorities.

ARTICLE 6. The French Government shall continue to occupy Chantaboun(1) until such time as the provisions of the present Agreement have been carried out, particularly the complete evacuation

(1) We are still there in 1901.

and pacification both of the left bank and the zones specified in Article 3 of the treaty dated this day.

In faith of which the respective plenipotentiaries have signed the present agreement and affixed their seals thereto.

149; Reinach--21 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

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Done in duplicate at the palace of Vallabha, in Bangkok, October 3, 1893.

(Signed) Le Myre de Vilers.
(Signed) Devawongse Varoprakar.

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It became perfectly apparent, after the signing of the treaty and the additional agreement, that these two acts were nothing but palliatives. Only the out-and-out annexation of Siam, in addition to the fact that it would have greatly enlarged our colonial empire, would have enabled us to hold the British and the Germans, who were our commercial rivals, in check.

For a long time the Siamese had been saying, "The day when we are forced to evacuate we shall leave nothing but the land, the water and the wild beasts of the forests." And, as a matter of fact, [29] they had applied this maxim almost to the letter in 1827 and 1840 when, out of fear of Annamite reprisals on the left bank, they had forced people and livestock to follow them over to the right bank and all the way to the Ménam valley. This procedure was altogether too simple for them not to have had the idea of trying it again in 1893. Time was the only thing they lacked to carry out their sinister plan, but they left us only a depopulated and devastated land, keeping for themselves the Laos of the right bank and the rich provinces of Angkor and Battambang, that is to say the well-populated and fertile territories which had never suffered, as the present-day Laos, several invasions in less than a century.

The hesitancy of the court of Bangkok when the ultimatum was delivered, as well as its attempts to keep the territories of the left bank of the Mékong above the 18th parallel, were once more a clear indication of British interference. Although not apparent, British influence had never ceased to make itself felt in the course of all these negotiations. The goal of this hidden influence was to preserve British preponderance in the Pahn-Na and, since Britain was already master of the kingdom of Ava, to facilitate the achievement of its plans for a railway towards S'émao and Yunnan-Sen.

It was nevertheless forced to come out into the open, and demanded that a neutral zone or sort of buffer state be established between the British and French territories along the Upper Mékong. It aimed at preventing us from occupying territory which had been

Colonial

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regularly ceded to us by the treaty of October 3, by transforming them into a neutral zone where it might perhaps later find means of establishing itself.

In order to settle this ticklish question an Anglo-French commission presided over by Messrs. Pavie and Scott was to work on the very spot in order to discover the conditions under which such a buffer state might be established. A backward glance will now be necessary to set the question of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na in its proper context.

[30] THE QUESTION OF THE SIB-SONG-PAHN-NA

The confederation of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na (or twelve Pahn-Na) was situated on both banks of the Mekong between 21° and 23° N. latitude and 97° and 100° E. longitude.

Eight of these Pahn-Na were on the left bank (1) and four on the

(1) The eight Pahn-Na on the left bank were Xieng-Hong, Muong-La, Muong-Poung, Muong-Noune, Muong-Yang, Muong-Bang, Muong-Hou and Muong-Heng.

[Illustration here] right bank of the great river (2). The first had

(2) The four Pahn-Na on the right bank were Muong-Lèm (or Muong-Lim), Muong-Houng, Muong-Haï and Muong-Mèng.

their capital in Xieng-Hong (or Kiang-Oung), and the second in Muong-Lèm.

The confederation was a tributary of Burma and of China, but the latter country's suzerainty was nominal rather than real. Tribute in money and in kind was paid only to the king of Ava, and each Pahn-Na also provided him with a thousand armed men in time of war.

[31] This situation did not continue beyond 1875, for at that time Prince Thibau overthrew the reigning dynasty in Burma, put King Mèn-Dou-Mèn to death with all his family, except for one direct heir in the person of Prince Myngoun-Mèn, and then seized the throne. But the usurper was detested by the people because of his cruelty and his vices, and also because he was thought, whether rightly or wrongly, to be supported by the British.

Colonial

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The mandarins whom he sent into the Pahn-Na to replace [Illustration here] those of the former king could not maintain themselves there, for they were not obeyed and could not collect the various tributes and taxes.

Thus after three years of fruitless attempts they returned to Mandalay and let the Pahn-Na govern themselves as they wished. It was for this reason that the confederation no longer sent Burma the customary head tax, but contented itself with sending a small honorary tribute from time to time.

China, for its part, obtained nothing from the Pahn-Na except a tribute in kind consisting of tea of that region. It also collected certain duties (Li-Kin) on this product when it was exported. Chinese suzerainty, very broad in its form and very meager in its [32] effects, limited its tribute and taxes to these simple bounties. A delegate from the Tao-Tai of Pou-Eurl-Fou with the rank of a sergeant and accompanied by four lancers who were in tatters and covered with vermin, was the only Chinese representative in Xieng-Hong in 1890 and 1891.

In 1883-84, while Britain was preparing to seize Upper Burma, King Thibau made overtures to France in the hope of obtaining our support and permission to secure supplies of weapons and ammunition by way of Tonkin and the Pahn-Na.

The Burmese plenipotentiaries thus gave official confirmation to the declaration made in Mandalay in 1884 to M. Deloncle, who was then on a diplomatic mission. The declaration contained the following passage:

"The eight Pahn-Na on the left bank of the Mékong shall become a part of French Tonkin and the river shall serve as frontier between French Tonkin and Burma, from the point where it leaves China to a point below Xieng-Sèn" (1).

(1) See Appendices VIII and XI.

In the meantime Jules Ferry, who had conducted all the negotiations and parleys with Burma, fell from power and Britain, ever aware of difficulties which might hinder our forward march, profited from the circumstance and from our difficulties in Tonkin in order to seize Upper Burma. It did not, however, become interested in the Pahn-Na before 1890 or 1891.

The Pavie mission had already explored the region and had

149: Reinach--23a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

102
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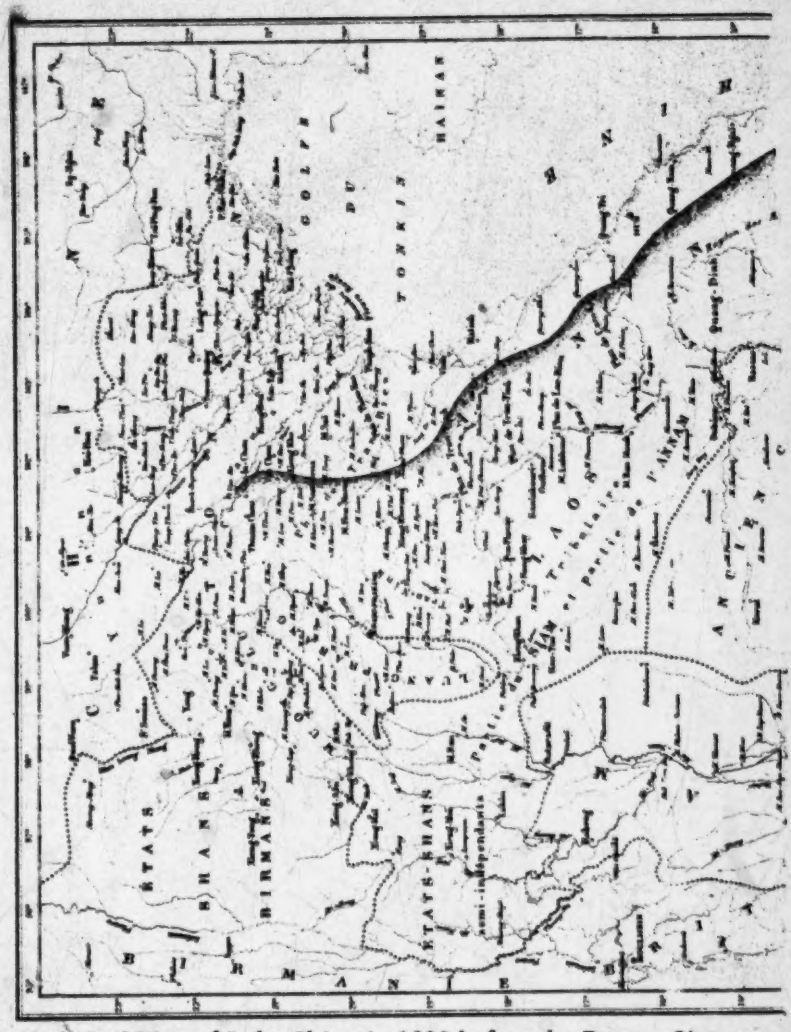

Political Map of Indo-China in 1893 before the Franco-Siamese Treaty of October 3.

Plate 4 Part A /between pp. 32 and 33/

149: Reinach--23b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

102
175
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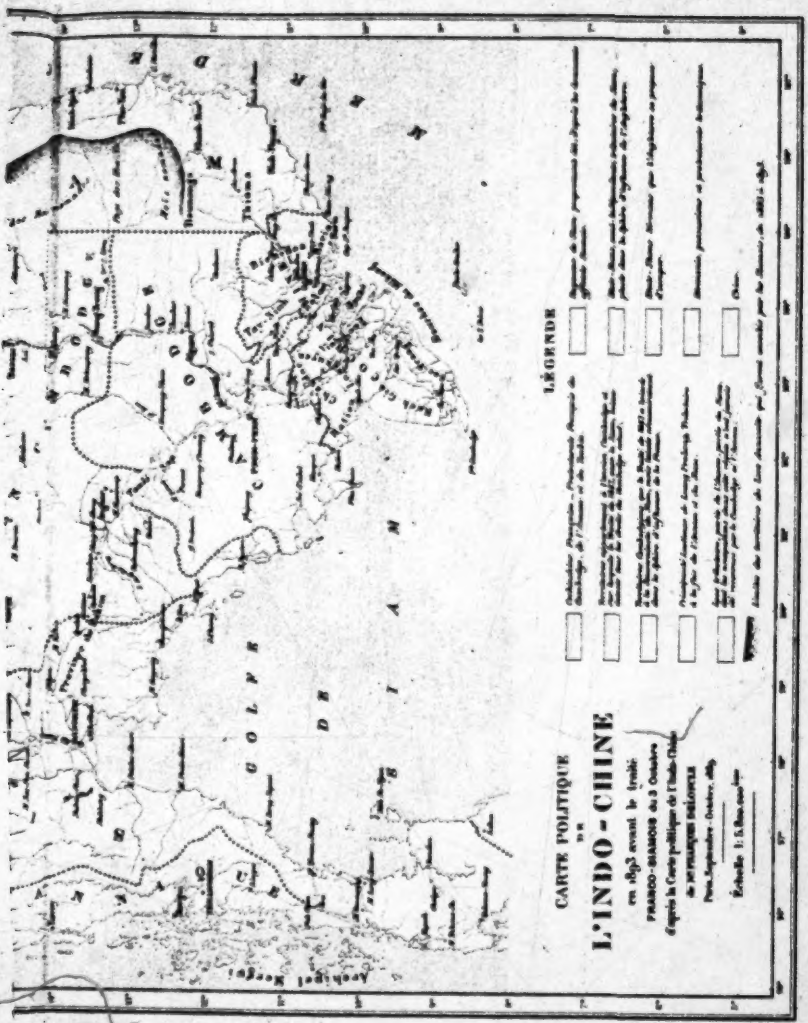

Political Map of Indo-China in 1893 before the Franco-Siamese Treaty of October 3.

Plate 4, Part B /between pp. 32 and 33/

149: Reinach--24 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial
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175

studied its topography at the beginning of 1891. One of its members had even founded a French trading post at Xieng-Hong, over which the French flag flew, and had been accredited to the local chieftains by Prince Myngoun-Mèn who was the sole heir, in their eyes, to the throne of Ava (2).

(2) See Appendix XII.

Unfortunately, we made the mistake of not making public this agreement by our agent with the chiefs of the Pahn-Na, who were quite prepared to accept our protection. Britain quietly went to work in the land. British agents were sent there and sowed discord among the chiefs, and finally in [A two-page map, unpaged, is inserted between pp. 32 and 33.] [33] July 1894 these territories were ceded to China by the United Kingdom. A restrictive clause provided, however, that in no case might they be given back, in whole or in part, to any other nation (1).

(1) See Appendix XI.

This generosity was in absolute contradiction to the agreements which had come before. It violated in clear fashion all previous engagements and made nonsense of the Franco-Chinese treaty of 1887 which awarded us the Pahn-Na on the left bank. Moreover, the territories of Muong-Hou-Neua and Muong-Hou-Tai, which were dependencies of Luang-Prabang, had recently been occupied by the Siamese after the retreat of the Hôs.

In 1894 and 1895 the delimitation of the Franco-Chinese frontier restored the two Muong-Hou to us. Britain used this new state of things as a pretext for accusing China of not having respected the non-retrocession clause in the agreement of June 1895 (2). It

(2) See Appendix XIII.

profited by the occasion in order to take back, as compensation, certain territories in the Kachin States of the north (on the left bank of the Salouen River) which it had ceded to China together with the Pahn-Na.

By virtue of the Franco-Siamese treaty of 1893, we took possession in the following year of the territory on the left bank

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of the Mékong which was situated to the south of the Pahn-Na and to the west of Nam-Hou.

It was at this time that Britain's plans became clearly apparent. It claimed, as being under its influence--and on this pretext its agents fomented disorders and revolts there--the States of Xieng-Khong, Muong-Sing and Muong-Mugne as dependencies of Xieng-Tong (Kiang-Toung) and of Xieng-Khèng (Kiang-Khèng), situated on both banks of the Mékong.

So as to counterbalance British influence insofar as possible, and also to see that the treaty of 1893 was carried out and to protect our nationals and those under our jurisdiction, the French Government created the commercial agencies of Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sèn (right bank) in June 1894. At the same time we took possession of Xieng-Khong, Muong-Mugne, Muong-Poukha and Muong-Luong-[34] Nam-Ta on the left bank. All these territories had been ceded us by Siam, as well as that of Muong-Sing.

Our agents, who lived on the very spot, then saw clearly that the part of the territory of Xieng-Khèng which was called Muong-[illustration here] Sing and was situated on the left bank of the Mékong belonged to us beyond any shadow of a doubt. This region of Muong-Sing was then a dependency of Siam, and in July 1894 our agents had been able to stop its ambassadors at Xieng-Khong at the very time when they were taking the annual tribute to the king of Nan, who was then to send it on to the court of Bangkok. The tribute was forwarded by them, with the message that we were acting out of pure courtesy, so as to emphasize [35] Muong-Sing's old political dependency on Siam and consequently on France, ever since 1893.

In the meantime an event occurred which cast a new light on the question and completely changed all diplomatic plans.

In contravention of the arrangements made at Bangkok by the heads of the British and French international Commissions and by the representatives of the two nations in Paris, pressing orders were sent directing the troops of Upper Burma to occupy the territory on the left bank which had recently been abandoned by Siam. [Illustration alongside text here.]

The British Commission, moreover, instead of going to Xieng-Khong on the right bank as had been agreed and waiting for the French Commission there, avoided going by this route. It went to

149: Reinach--26 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial
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Xieng-Tong well before the appointed date and there it found Lieutenant Stirling, the commander of the troops from Upper Burma. Losing no time, the British mission at once ordered the Tiao-Fa of Muong-Sing to prepare lodgings and provisions for three thousand soldiers, to put the roads in good condition and to go to Xieng-Tong with all his mandarins and make his submission to H.M. the queen of England.

Upon the complaint of the Tiao-Fa of Muong-Sing and at the sight of the letters from the king of Siam saying that Muong-Sing had belonged [36] to France since 1893, M. Macey, our agent in Xieng-Khong who was responsible for organizing the new territory on the left bank, took an initiative which was bold but decreed by the gravity of the situation.

Both to safeguard our rights and to make the members of the British mission feel all the tactlessness of their proceedings, our agent gave orders to the authorities of Muong-Sing which saved the situation. He confirmed all the local functionaries in their privileges and prerogatives and gave them French flags to be distributed in their muongs and villages (1).

(1) See Appendix XIV.

When the British Commission failed to see the Tiao-Fa of Muong-Sing come to Xieng-Tong and make his submission, it decided on November 24, 1894, to cross over to the left bank by way of Xieng-Lap with a force composed of two companies of "Gurka rifles" and a troop of Indian cavalry (Sikhs). But when confronted with the fact that our agent had already taken possession, and when it saw, as it reached the left bank, that the French flag was already flying, the British Commission sent the greater part of its troops back to the right bank and waited at Muong-Sing for the French Commission, which arrived a week later from Muong-Hou.

In spite of the accomplished fact the heads of the international Commissions resumed their discussion, and by common accord they decided to evacuate the disputed territory and to refer the matter to their Governments.

After the departure of M. Pavie, our commissioner general in Laos and head of the French Commission, Sir Friars, who was commissioner general of Upper Burma, came to settle in Xieng-Tong. During this time Lieutenant Stirling had returned to occupy

Muong-Sing (April 1895).

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The effect of this broken promise was to return the question of the limits of our possessions to the agenda. After numerous protests on our part talks were begun in Europe, subsequent to which the two Governments finally elaborated the following declaration:

[37] 1. The Governments of France and Great Britain agree not to send, in any case or under any pretext without one another's consent, their armed forces into the region including the basins of the Petchaboury, Mékong, Ménam and Bang-Pakong (River of Pétriou) rivers and their respective tributaries, as well as the coastal region which stretches from Muong-Bang-Tapan to Muong-Pasé, and thus including all the territory situated to the north of the Ménam basin between the Anglo-Siamese frontier, the Mékong River and the eastern limit of the Mé-Ing basin. They further agree not to acquire any privilege or private advantage in this region the benefit of which shall not be common to France and to Great Britain and to their nationals and persons under their jurisdiction, or which shall not be available to them on a footing of equality.

These provisions, however, shall not be interpreted as affecting the special clauses which, by virtue of the treaty concluded on October 3, 1893, between France and Siam, apply to a 25-kilometer zone on the right bank of the Mékong and to navigation on this river.

2. Nothing in the preceding clause shall prevent any action on which the two powers shall agree and which they shall deem necessary to maintain the independence of the kingdom of Siam. But they agree not to enter into any separate arrangement which would enable a third power to do what they reciprocally agree not to do in the present declaration.

3. Leaving the mouth of the Nam-Huok and going northwards to the Chinese frontier, the thalweg of the Mékong shall form the limit between the possessions or spheres of influence of France and Great Britain. It is agreed that nationals of both countries and persons under their jurisdiction shall not exercise any jurisdiction or authority whatsoever in the possessions or spheres of influence of the other country. In the part of the river here in question, police powers over the islands which are separated from the British bank by a branch of the aforesaid river shall belong to the French authorities as long as such separation exists.

The exercise of fishing rights shall be common to inhabitants of both banks.

149: Reinach--28 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

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4. The two Governments agree that commercial or other privileges and advantages conceded in the two Chinese provinces of Yunnan and Set-Chuèn either to France or to Great Britain by virtue of their respective treaties with China of March 1, 1894, and June 20, 1895, and all privileges and advantages of any nature which may thereafter be conceded in the same Chinese provinces either to France or to Great Britain, shall, insofar as it depends on them, be extended and acknowledged to be common to both powers, their nationals and persons under their jurisdiction, and they agree to use their influence and good offices with the Chinese Government to this end.

5. This article relates to the Niger.

6. This article deals with negotiations to be undertaken in order to replace the present [38] general agreement with a new agreement responding to the intentions announced in the above articles.

Done at London on January 15, 1896.

(Signed) A. de Courcel.
(Signed) Salisbury

As a result of this declaration the territory of Muong-Sing was returned to us in March 1896, and from that time on French Laos was constituted as shall be described in the following chapters (1).

(1) It will be of the utmost interest, after this rapid résumé of the situation, to read Appendices XV and XVI which show in detail what our action was in the Mékong basin, and to compare what we intended to accomplish there with what the necessities of international policy enabled us to do.

[39] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER II

§ I--GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION--BOUNDARIES--EXTENT

131

Laos extends between 22° 30' N. latitude, somewhat below Muong-Kang (prefecture of S'ssémao), and 13° 15' N. latitude, the latter being the parallel of Thboung-Kla, opposite Siem-Boc. Slightly to the east of this point, however, on the 105th meridian, the Laotian province of Darlac stretches a long point southwards to the 12th parallel.

161 and a few plateaus of small extent which are the only spots suited to
311 farming and, in consequence, suited to settlements by human groups.

The uneven disposition of the country is the first cause of the low population density. It is not the only one.

161 For more than a century the Hôs and the Siamese have taken turns in sacking the country, especially the northern part. Their
•175 methods differed, but the final result was the same. The former massacred the inhabitants after burning the villages, and forced those
727 who had escaped famine and torture to go and settle in another region. The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical fashion, and
648 depopulated the [125] land by making the inhabitants, livestock and elephants cross over to the right bank of the Mékong and oftentimes then taking them as far as the valley of the Ménam.

Fortunately this state of affairs, which prevailed when we took possession of Laos, is far from being immutable and there is every hope that the causes which gave birth to this forced departure will never again occur. The French occupation has safeguarded the population against the return of the old invasions, and in the same way the equity and justice of our administration make it possible for the natives to count on interior tranquillity and on the products of their labor.

Great efforts have also been made by our consuls in Siam and our administrators in Laos towards repopulating the country, and appreciable results have already been achieved in this direction. Thus by virtue of the agreement appended to the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, two thousand families including a minimum of eight thousand individuals of both sexes and a great deal of livestock who had previously been taken to Siam were able to return and settle on the left bank of the Mékong, the land of their origin.

168 Nothing, moreover, would stand in the way of an appeal to the other parts of Indo-China to repopulate Laos. The deltas, for example, are overflowing with people and their industrious population is so dense that the part of the land which is cultivable is by far too limited for each individual.

By offering these people a few advantages, especially in the beginning, it would be easy to attract them to Laos. By dint of hard work they would doubtless find existence comparatively easy there instead of being reduced, as they are today in certain regions, to a difficult struggle for survival.

197 In résumé, the study of the Thai language and its derivatives is an attractive one. The language is gentle, musical and euphonic, and is easy for us as well as for the other Latin peoples to pronounce.

It is considered to have many analogies with Malay and most of the Polynesian idioms.

Siamese, Youn and Lu have become localized in certain parts of Laos or have been set aside for special uses. Thus Youn, as we have seen, is the sacred language of Laos.

Lao, however, or the Laotian form of the Thai language, is quite widespread.

[146] In fact, outside of Laos this language is still spoken in Yunnan, in Tonkin, in the two Kouangs and, it would seem, as far away as Hainan.

4. RELIGIONS

174 In prehistoric times Laos must have been in the same situation as the other parts of the world, from the moral and religious point
771 of view. [Illustration here.]

In the age of polished stone, as in the bronze age, there were probably great similarities between the Orient and the Occident with respect to tools and weapons, and also with respect to speculative, religious and philosophical ideas.

• 175 This state of affairs continued for many centuries until the time when, with the first peaceful migrations from the north and north-
771 west, Vedic precepts and a knowledge of the laws of Manou--laws which were moral, social and above all physiological--began to infiltrate the region. Later on, between 900 and 700 B.C., more militant invaders brought in the already age-old dogmas of Brahminism, together with ancestor worship and many superstitions.

Finally, after another period of fifteen to thirteen centuries, Buddhism made its appearance in Indo-China by two different routes, the south and the northwest.

These various doctrines were transformed as time passed and
771 underwent additions, diminutions and numerous changes both in form and content. Struggles, invasions and migrations and civil wars profoundly modified races and made their impression on minds, always leaving ineradicable traces on body and spirit.

It is because of these constant upheavals that we note in Laos today a great host of dogmas and practices which range all the way

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Tribal Tai

s the long pirogue, and the jockeys are the oarsmen. Nor will it be in vain to remark that, as in our races, heavy wagers are often laid by the owners and the lovers of this kind of sport.

Thais or Phou-Thais. The Thais or Phou-Thais are divided into four distinct groups. These are:

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144
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1. The Khao-Thais (white);
2. The Dam-Thais (black);
3. The Deng-Thais (red);
4. The Neua-Thais (northern).

The Khao-Thais are the result of marriages between Chinese men and Dam-Thai women, or vice versa, although the former case is the most frequent. They do not form large agglomerations, but only isolated family groups in the midst of the surrounding population. They are found only in the northern part of the Sib-Song-Chau-Thais, a territory which is dependent on Laos from the ethnographic point of view but administratively attached to Tonkin.

The following is what is known of their origin: [229] [Illustration] [230] [Blank page] [231]

"Around 1600 a rebel Chinese leader assembled a few partisans, set sail from Canton and landed at Haiphong. From there he went on to Bac-Ninh, continually increasing the number of his men. At Bac-Ninh the rebel leader received an envoy from the king of Annam, who asked him to help put down the Thais and the Muongs of the Black River. The Chinese leader accepted, and after leaving Bac-Ninh he went to Lao-Kay, from which point he soon entered the province of the Sib-Sing-Chau-Thais. After defeating the Thais and the Muongs he was given this province out of gratitude for his help. His troops, worn out by the campaign, settled in the country and lost no time in marrying Thai women. It was from such unions that the white Thais were born" (1).

(1) E. Picanon, op. cit. [Le Laos français, Paris, 1901.]

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Dam-Thais and Deng-Thais. These two varieties have a common origin and belong to the same family (2). The different names which

(2) Thais are found in nearly all of Laos, where they are scattered among the Laotian population. They are particularly numerous in the Hua-Pahn, where they are in the majority in certain muongs.

149: Reinach--179 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Tribal Tai

Men's and women's clothing varies little in [244] form from that of the Thais. Under their jacket, however, the women wear a breast-cloth attached to the neck and waist by cords, like the Annamite and Tonkinese women. 291

The Lus. Two centuries or so ago the Lus, who also belong to the Thai race, used to live in the "Shan states" between the Salouen and the Nam-Hon, where they were surrounded by a drifting population composed of Burmese, Kunes, Ngieous, etc. [Illustration alongside text here.] 619 175

Following emigrations, they came to Laos and formed two distinct agglomerations.

Some Lu families have settled in the course of this century on the territory of Luang-Prabang. Today these Lus form villages composed exclusively of people of their race, but live on good terms with the Laotians, whose language and customs they have adopted. [563]

In the old Lu kingdom of Muong-Sing, on the other hand, this people has retained its habits, that is to say its character and temperament are like those of the Burmese. 101

There the Lu is boastful, full of arrogance, a braggart and insolent, but a little firmness is enough to humble his pride. [105]

Lus have a clear complexion, delicate features, keen eyes and a swinging stride. The men are generally tattooed from the calf of the leg to above the navel, and they also have tattoos on their chest, [245] neck, shoulders and arms which are generally red and in the shape of squares with rounded corners. They have long hair rolled in a coil on top or slightly to one side of the head. This coil is wrapped in an enormous turban which they wear tilted over one ear. Many of them have a moustache. This they train upwards, a trait which gives them a conquering air, and to keep it up they smear it with wax. [Illustration alongside text here] 142 304 302

The men's costume consists of a pair of full trousers and a short jacket buttoned along the side. It is made of cotton and is dark blue, almost black, in color. The bottoms of the trousers, the edges of the jacket, the cuffs of the sleeves and the armholes are ornamented with three galloons (blue, white and red) which are quite narrow. Their holiday clothes are often made of silk in varied colors. 291

The women wind their hair into a heavy coil on top of the head and on the side of the coil they place a broad circular plaque of chased silver. They wear skirts like the Laotian women, but the stripes are very broad, run crosswise and are in bright colors. They [302] [301]

Finally, the Ao-Tchaine Yaos owe their name (bearing sapeks) 291
to the fact that the men's jacket, which is shorter than that of the other Yaos, is ornamented in front with several rows of flat copper or silver buttons which resemble sapeks (Annamite and Chinese coins).

The women fasten a pad of compact, gummed hair on their coil 302
by means of sticks made of ivory, of bone or simply of wood.

Like the Meos, the Yaos inhabit the peaks of mountains in 364
northern Laos where they grow poppies. They are confirmed opium [276]
smokers.

[270] [Blank page] [271] [Illustration at top]

CHAPTER V

1. ORGANIZATION

Consulate and Commercial Agencies. Before 439
the treaty of October 3, 1893, we already had a consul at Luang-Prabang in the Mekong basin, on the right bank of the river. In 1892 175.
the vice-consulate was closed and commercial agencies were set up at Luang-Prabang, Outhene and Bassac on the right bank, and then 648
at Stung-Treng on the left bank. The first three agencies were directed by representatives of the French Syndicate of Laos, and the last by a clerk of Posts and Telegraphs. The commercial agents performed the functions of consular agents. Later on in 1894 and 1895 when we actually took possession of Laos, that is to say of the territory on the left bank of the Mekong, two additional agencies were established at Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen. [272] Then in 1895 the agencies of Pak-Lay, Xieng-Khan, Nong-Khay, Lakhone, Ban-Mouk-Dahan and Kemmarat were created on the right bank, bringing the total number to ten, for those of Stung-Treng and Luang-Prabang had been raised to the status of commissionerships.

These new agencies were directed by "commercial agents" specially appointed for the purpose. In addition to the delegates of the French Syndicate of Laos who continued to hold office, these agents included a few inspectors of the Tonkin native guard.

The duties of these officials were poorly defined, and their chief role was to assert our presence. They were mere information agents. For this reason official circles soon decided to abolish these posts, an action made possible chiefly by the establishment of two new vice-consulates in Siam, one at Oubone and one at Ban-Dua-Makeng.

648 "However, since it did not appear advisable to sanction the abandon-
439 ment of the commercial agencies by an official act, which might
175 have been regarded by the Laotian people and by the Court of Bangkok as a modification of the policy followed in the Mekong valley by the French Government," the positions were not discontinued, but only the officials who had held them.

It is thus that today the ten commercial agencies are directed by the administrators of neighboring provinces or by chief clerks or chief guards who perform the functions of commercial agents.

631 Temporary organization. Government com-
175 missionerships. Missions. As soon as the terms of the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, became known, various missions originating in Annam and Cochinchina were sent to Laos to reconnoiter, and set up a temporary organization for, the territories on the left bank of the Mekong to which Siam had abandoned its claims.

In Upper Laos our agents, who were already established on the right bank at Luang-Prabang, took possession of the territory bearing this name. Then in the course of the first half of 1894, when the government commissioner M. Vacle had arrived, they settled in the former Annamite phus of Tran-Bienh and Tran-Ninh and in the territory of [Map, unpaged, inserted here] [273] Vien-Tiane. Somewhat later the assistant commissioner of the French Republic in Laos (1) and

(1) The general commissioner of the French Republic in Laos, M. Pavie, was the chief of two frontier delimitation missions which operated in the basin of the Red River, the Black River and the Mekong. His assistant commissioner was M. Lefèvre-Pontalis.

one of our former commercial agents in Luang-Prabang went out to reconnoiter and organize the territories of Xieng-Khong (left bank), Poukha and Muong-Sing (2).

(2) A newly appointed government commissioner went out to take possession of the territory of the two Muong-Hou and settled at Muong-Ha-Hine to await the impending delimitation of the territory.

In middle Laos, two administrative agents delegated by the

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Superior Resident in Annam established our authority in the former Annamite phus of Tran-Dinh, Tran-Tinh, Lac-Bien, Cam-Lo and Quang-Dinh. They founded the centers of Faureville (now Pak-Hin-Boun) and Song-Khone (3).

(3) The capital of the province of Song-Khone was soon after transferred to Savannakhet.

In the south Commander Tournier, who had already been placed in command of the troops stationed at Khong, Stung-Treng, Attopeu and Ban-Mouang, was at the same time entrusted with civil authority in these territories.

At the beginning of the second half of 1894 three administrators set out from Cochinchina to succeed Commander Tournier, who had been appointed to a mission for delimiting the Sino-Annamite frontiers, and to organize the provinces of Khong, Ban-Mouang, Attopeu and Stung-Treng at the expense of the Cochinchinese budget.

Permanent organization. The Superior Resident on service and the Superior Commandants. In 1895 M. Boulloche, Superior Resident on service in Laos, was made responsible for organizing our new possession on a permanent basis.

Laos was divided into two parts, named Upper Laos and Lower Laos, each of which was autonomous. The former included all the territories between Yunnan, the Anglo-Shan States, Tonkin and Annam as far as the [274] northern limits of Cammon. The capital of Upper Laos was Luang-Prabang.

Lower Laos included all the territories situated between the Mekong and the Annamitic Chain, from the northern limits of Cammon to Cambodia. Its capital was Khong.

A high official with the title of Superior Commandant was placed at the head of each of these divisions. He was directly responsible to the Governor General and had the duties and privileges of Superior Residents in the other parts of Indo-China.

Each of these divisions of Laos was organized into a certain number of commissionerships, respecting in most cases the old administrative subdivisions or those which had been newly created by the Siamese. The Sib-Song-Chau-Thais, however, which had previously been dependencies of Luang-Prabang, were joined administratively to Tonkin, and in 1898 part of the territory of the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc was attached to the province of Tanh-Hoa (Annam).

631 Upper Laos contained six commissionerships and Lower Laos seven.
175 Each was directed by an official with the title of Government Commissioner [Commissaire] (similar to the title of "commissioner" in British possessions). He was assisted by a clerk, scholars and a native interpreter.

Because of their many and varied duties, government commissioners must have extensive knowledge. In fact, these officials are responsible for general administration, police, collecting taxes and duties, selling opium, public works, justice, public education and, in centers without doctors, for the health service.

A further factor to complicate their task is that the circumscriptions are large and communications difficult.

347 Just as in physiology "the function creates the organ," so must our agents become topographers, naturalists, geologists, engineers, architects, etc. all at the same time. Each of them devotes his talents to the task, striving to do his best and able to count only on himself. [275] [Illustration] [276] [Blank page] [277] Their task is facilitated, however, by the zeal and specialized knowledge of the clerks and leaders of the native guard, who are inspectors and chief guards, former officers or sub-officers of the army. Most of these agents have been on campaigns in Algeria or in the colonies and are used to shifting for themselves, to use an expression which is as apt as it is picturesque.

To this system of individual initiative Laos owes the fact of possessing comfortable, durable and healthy installations built of wood, brick or cobwork which certain other colonies, although better endowed from the point of view of the availability of many technical services, did not possess to so high a degree after they had been established for ten years.

631 Present organization. By decree of the Governor
642 General dated February 6, 1899, the two divisions of Laos were joined and a united Laos was placed under the authority of a Superior Resident (1) named by decree of the President of the Republic. This same edict

(1) The enlightened choice of the Government fell on Lieutenant-colonel Tournier, former Superior Commandant in Lower Laos.

abolished the positions of Superior Commandants in Upper and Lower Laos.

Like Cochinchina, Laos is a direct dominion, but is administered according to the forms of a strict protectorate and therefore does not

249 The amount of paper produced is hardly significant, and is limited to
289 local needs.

245 TEA. Tea is the most important crop of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na
311 and the Burmo-Shan States on both banks of the Mekong. The regions of production are included between 21° 30' and 22° 30' N. latitude and between 97° 30' and 99° 40' E. longitude.

175 The greater part of these regions, that is to say those situated on
648 the left bank of the Mekong, belonged to us by the terms of the 1887 Franco-Chinese treaty of Tien-Tsin. But because of our slowness to occupy these territories England inherited the rights of Upper Burma and ceded them to China, and finally only the two Muong-Hou remained in our possession.

563 Unfortunately, the small tea-growing region left to us is not only the least productive, but also the one in which tea-growing has degenerated and is no longer practiced except by the Khas.

[377] Yet the climate of the Muong-Hou is similar to that of Man-La, which is located thirty kilometers to the west and whose tea has the same reputation as those of I-Hou, I-Bang, Muong-Hing, Muong-Pang and Muong-Yang, all of which are known as "S'semao and Pou-Eurl Teas." Furthermore, the altitude and configuration of the soil, the nature of the terrain and the varieties of tea plants are all similar in our territory of Muong-Hou and in that of Man-La. But as a consequence of various circumstances and especially of a long interruption in cultivation between 1884 and 1893, most of the tea plants have not been pruned. They have reached a height of more than six meters and the tea which they produce is almost valueless (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVI.

The average production of the whole tea-growing region has been estimated at from 600 to 660 tons. This tea is exported to China, to Burma, to Laos, to Tonkin and to Siam. In 1891 and 1892 France imported a trial shipment of 6,000 kilograms, but the transaction was not repeated because of a rise in transport costs and customs duties which did not leave a large enough profit for the importer.

435 In the regions of production prices vary, depending on quality, between 75 and 150 francs per hundred kilograms.

The teas which come from this region meet with little approval in Europe, because they lack the various aromas which the Chinese

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of the highest merit entitled Petit traité d'Agriculture tropicale, by H.A. Alford Nicholls, translated from the English by E. Raoul (Paris, 1895, Challamel). This work, which is as complete as it is practical, cannot be too highly recommended.

IV

LIVESTOCK BREEDING

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Without speaking of the poultry which goes to feed the population, the Laotians engage in breeding elephants, horses, buffalo, oxen, pigs, goats and silkworms.

Elephants. Elephant breeding is profitable, even [397] though this animal does not acquire any commercial value until about its fifth year. It is true that young elephants do not necessitate any special care or any expense, since they always go with their mother and provide for their own food.

In one part of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang, in a province on the right bank of the Mekong which numbers scarcely 13,000 inhatitants (Outhai-Tani), there were a hundred some domesticated elephants in 1898, plus twelve young ones which were the result of breeding. If the example of this province were followed throughout all Laos the number of elephants would rapidly increase, and within a relatively short time would constitute a new source of wealth for the country, one part alone of which was said to possess a million of these animals before the Siamese incursions (1).

(1) The kingdom of Luang-Prabang used to be called "Lan-Xang," The Land of the million elephants.

But with each invasion which Laos underwent, especially during the nineteenth century, the Siamese, the Annamites and the Cambodians did not fail to take turns despoiling it of this veritable wealth in order to increase their own.

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In southern Laos, breeding consists mainly in the training of young animals which have been recently captured. Thus in the province of Ban-Mouang the vast plains of the Se-Kampho and the Sepien provide excellent pasturages for elephants. Indeed, there are always fifty or so newly captured animals in the vicinity of Ban-Pa-Pho, which are being trained for sale. It is to be regretted that these beautiful plains are not used for raising livestock in general and

Cochinchina, and this is quite a lucrative trade.

231 178 The following are the main points in Laos where the raising of oxen would have a good chance of success, in view of the nature of the soil and the forage plants which grow there:

1. Northern Laos. Valleys of the upper Nam-Tha; plain of Muong-Sing; plains of the Mekong and of the Nam-Hou in the province of Luang-Prabang; valleys of the Nam-Het and of the upper Song-Ca; plains of Tran-Ninh (2); plains between the Mekong, the Nam-Tone

[175 727] (2) Tran-Ninh used to be the greatest livestock region in Laos as recently as thirty some years ago, and all the buffalo and oxen needed in nearby regions came from there. The occupation of the region by the Hos and its pitiless depopulation by the Siamese completely halted this form of industry. It is beginning to be reborn with the peace and order which we have brought to this region, and the herds are reforming. Exports have already begun again in the last year.

Livestock is the principal form of wealth of the region, and could yield high profits to a European company which had sufficient capital at its disposition to engage in large-scale breeding. [113] (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, December 1900. Report of the Superior Resident on Tran-Ninh.)

and the Nam-Ngum, in the province of Vien-Tiane.

[405] 2. Southern Laos. Plain of Tha-Khek and basin of Mahasay, in the province of Cammon; plains of the Mekong, valleys of the Se-Bang-Hien and of its tributaries in the province of Song-Khone; plains between the Se-Set and the Sedone, valley of the Se-Katam, slope of Pou-Pai-Mai, in the province of Saravane; valleys of the Bla (1), of the Poko and of the Ayoun, in the province of

(1) The raising of oxen might be greatly increased here. In all the villages, especially the Catholic villages, I saw superb herds containing animals with every fine point. If breeding is not more extensive here, this is because the prices offered at Ang-Ke are not greatly higher than those at which the animals are sold in the region, since the Khas use large numbers of them to supplant buffaloes in their superstitious ceremonies. [113] (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, December 1899. Notes by the Superior Commandant of Lower Laos on the eastern region of Lower Laos.)

439 almost all Chinese, the masters of the markets--who scour the country
441 and leave behind none or almost none of the profits which they extract from it.

443 Might not the administration establish, for example, periodic fairs under its supervision which would be held in certain suitably chosen spots? Under its direction market prices would be posted and placed within everyone's ken, and the daily market price could be found of import and export commodities on the nearest large markets and even on coastal markets. Producers would thus gain correct information on the value of their merchandise and would be in a position to decide whether it was to their advantage to operate locally or to go further on before making their transactions.

The question would still remain of giving strong encouragement to private initiative with a view toward the establishment of repositories or emporiums equipped to handle the natural products of the country in wholesale or retail quantities. Such [426] trading posts or factories could compete with the present-day traveling merchants by offering higher prices and also supplying imported goods on more favorable terms.
175 The French Syndicate of Laos [Syndicat français du Laos] made a be-
441 ginning in this direction as early as 1890 and 1891 by establishing its factories at Luang-Prabang, Nong-Khay and Xieng-Hong and later on, in 1892, at Bassac and Outhene, thus distributing factories spaced along the great river over an extent of nearly 2000 kilometers. The guiding idea of the promoters and stockholders of the Syndicate was that its agents should above all else be precursors and pioneers of a fertile idea, just as its counters should be landmarks for future and lasting establishments to be created after their example and beyond their initiative. Once this task had been accomplished, however, the pioneers dispersed and the landmarks so successfully placed were not utilized.

439 Yet isolated attempts made in recent years by several of our
441 countrymen have not always, it must be confessed, been crowned with success. Without special commercial aptitudes, without either the
443 necessary capital or credit and consequently not able to supply themselves at first hand, and restricted by the system of customs now in force in Indo-China, they have not succeeded in all their operations despite their real efforts and their unquestioned good will. Neither should we lose sight of the fact that commerce in Laos should not seek its chief profit in the sale of imported products, but rather in the exportation of a few selected natural products such as sticklac, benzoin, cardamom and rubber, among others.

491 In a land where the population is so sparse and where the centers are often at great distances from one another, the roads have been laid out in accordance with two principal concerns: the shortest distance and the avoidance of as much maintenance work as possible. Thus in order to fulfill these two conditions they pass through swamps on the plains and in mountainous regions over the crests, the gentlest slopes and the least steep hillsides.

In principle, these roads are supposed to be repaired every year, refilled, laid out again if necessary, rid of the trees which have fallen across them and, in a word, kept up in an easily passable state. The administration makes every effort to reach this goal, and is gradually trying to modify the routes and make the bridges which are thrown over the ravines and watercourses more solid and permanent. But time is needed to change the age-old habits of the people and to make them follow a master plan of methodically conceived and executed projects.

487 491 175 In the extreme north in the territory of Muong-Hou-Neua, there are mountain mule tracks which continue on into Yunnan. They were once paved by the Chinese using paving stones taken from the surrounding rocks, and then formed very broad, low steps through the mountains. Traces can still be seen of these roads which have today fallen into disrepair, and there remain, particularly at crossings over watercourses, straight or slanting stone bridges which have fallen into ruins. At certain points there are also stone drinking troughs which sometimes bear the remains of sculptures.

487 In sum, there are scarcely any roads except paths in Laos, and the latter are sufficient for communication by land. Moreover, wide roads have been experimented with in various provinces [471] over sections of varying length. On these wide roads, often even paved, which were built with high crowns and provided with gutters along the sides, it was found that the natives and their animals stubbornly continued to trace a tiny, whimsically twisting path outside of which the grass kept on growing until it covered the road once more.

Here, for each province, is a list of the main roads with some indication of the category to which they belong. We shall not deal, to be sure, with the many paths which are frequented only by travelers on foot and are designed to place one village in communication with another.

149: Reinach--386 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[511] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER XII

1. PRESENT SITUATION OF LAOS COMPARED TO ITS SITUATION IN THE PAST

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Upon our arrival the peoples of Laos were disillusioned and discouraged. They seemed incapable of taking any initiative whatsoever in order to awaken from their long torpor and to regain, together with their independence, their former state of prosperity.

For the last century especially, this unfortunate Laos has been the prey of rapacious neighbors who have despoiled it. It is not surprising that, following on these events, the inhabitants should have retained a sorrowful memory of the past, that they should be unsure of the present and that they should dread the future. It is thus that they have been led, by a kind of fatalism, to produce nothing beyond what is absolutely indispensable.

[512] Yet this has not always been the case. To judge by the ruins of many pagodas, monuments and ramparts which, in their dilapidation, have retained a mark of melancholy grandeur, it may be said that an era of prosperity reigned in the land up until a comparatively recent past. The jewels, the weapons, the gold and silver objects, the bronze statues, the rich cloth goods, etc. which have escaped the invaders, are not these the proof of an antique splendor?

If we are to place any reliance in various historians, moreover, the Laotian kingdoms of Lan-Xang (Luang-Prabang) and Tchandapouri (Vien-Tiane) were sufficiently renowned abroad in the seventeenth century for the governor of the Dutch East Indies to send the king of Vien-Tiane an embassy led by a Dutch general, Gérard Van Wusthof, whose mission was to engage in relations of friendship and trade with this sovereign.

Today the leaders and notables, no more than the bonzes, would not be able to obtain the expenditures and efforts from the natives which would be necessitated by the construction of these monuments and pagodas or the casting of those religious statues which we see falling into ruins.

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We must, however, guard against thinking that the present situation of Laos is immutable in its mediocrity. Such a judgment would be excessively hasty, and would not take sufficient account of the active elements which still exist in the land. It would be as excessive as it would be unjust to assume that the inhabitants in general

China and Indo-China (1).

[113] (1) E. Picanon, Le Laos français. 1901, Challamel. [Paris.]

II

173 Laos, Thais and Khas. Although the Laotian legends
563 attribute the same origin to all of these (Mueng-Theng or Dien-Bien-
144 Phu) and say that they all came from the same "gourd" (Nam-Tao-Phoun), it is hardly likely that the Laotians and the Khas have a common origin. Indeed, the characteristics which serve to distinguish the two races are too numerous and too marked, both from the point of view of the racial types themselves and as regards language, mores and religious beliefs.

144 Nor can it be affirmed that the Khas are the representatives of
174 the aboriginal population, for before any of their people had mounted the throne of Luang-Prabang, six kings foreign to their race had already occupied it--if we may regard the list of the first kings of the land which is preserved in the Phong-Sa Va-Dan (annals of the kingdom) as correct--and of these conquering princes the first is said to have come from India, and the second from Cambodia.

In any case, the Khas are said to have preceded the Laotians in the land, and it was not until the reign of their fourth and last king that they are supposed to have been conquered and driven out or enslaved by the Laotians, who had come down from Dien-Bien-
[609] Phu. Since that time, and despite many revolts of which the last is almost recent, the Khas have never ceased being "a folk talliable and liable to forced labor at pleasure" for their vanquishers, and their name has become a synonym for a low person or slave in the current
[56] idiom. Not until 1895 were the Khas once and for all freed--freed is perhaps not the word, for in the strict sense they were never slaves--or at least summoned to enjoy a system of rule similar to that of the other natives and which left no margin for arbitrariness and vexations.

173 In designating Dien-Bien-Phu as the cradle of the Laotian people, or at least in attributing to the Laotians and the Thais a common origin, legend seems to be in agreement with reality. There are indeed many points of resemblance and contact between the two peoples. The type is invariably the same, although finer in the native of Luang-
175 Prabang than in the native of Lai-Chau or Dien-Bien-Phu. Not more
291 than two hundred years ago the Laotians still wore, like the black Thais, the Annamite costume and their hair wound in a coil. It
177 was doubtless after contact with the Siamese--who had themselves

175 [104] taken after the Cambodians in this respect--that they later
291 adopted the "sampot" and formed the habit of cutting their hair very
177 short, just as the Thais of Lai-Chau today dress like their Chinese neighbors and wear their hair in a long pigtail. The same reasons may also explain modifications in language and writing, which must have been identical in the beginning.

563 Of the Phou-Thais who are settled today in the territory of
144 Luang-Prabang, some--and these make up the greater number--are black Thais (aborigines) from Dien-Bien-Phu, with a darker coloration than the inhabitants of Lai-Chau, who are called white Thais for this reason. The others belong to this second variety.

The ones who sacked Luang-Prabang in 1887 under the leadership of Deo-Van-Tri were white Thais.

Youns. The Laotians living on the right bank of the Mekong at Xieng-Mai, Xieng-Sen, Muong-Nan, etc. are called Youns.
[304] The only feature which distinguishes them from their fellows on the left bank is that they generally tattoo their stomachs, whereas the others tattoo the thighs and upper part of the legs, whence the names "Lao-Phoung-Khao" (white-bellied Laotians) and Lao-Phoung-Dam (black-bellied Laotians) which are used in designating the ones and the others.

Phais. Neither do the Phais constitute a separate racial group. They are Khas who are in the process of being transformed, Khas crossed with either Lus or Laotians according as their neighbors have been representatives of the first or the second of these races. Although after this contact they have begun to police themselves and to bring their way of life into conformity with that of the Lus or Laotians, they are nonetheless subject to the same regime as the Khas in respect to taxes and other matters.

563 Lus. The Lus, who are natives of the Sip-Song Pan-Nas, did
125 not come and settle in any great numbers in the territory of Luang-Prabang until long after the Laotians, and then only in order to flee the war which was desolating their own land, or simply because they hoped to find better living conditions in this territory. The immigration took place in an entirely peaceful manner, and since that time the Lus have not ceased to live on good terms with the Laotians, whose mores and dress they have generally adopted and by whom they will soon be completely assimilated.

563 Khos, Meos, Yaos. These various names designate natives whose racial type, dress and hairdo ending in a queue unquestionably denote a Chinese origin, and who do not differ from one another except

619 traditions and the annals which I have been able to consult, they are
643 the descendants of the last kings of the land before the Cham invasion.
[648] The kings of Cambodia have had to appeal to them for help on one
[175] or two critical occasions, and it was in return for services rendered
that the king of Cambodia, up until recent times, used to send them
563 presents every year (annual tribute, according to them, payment of which stopped only five years ago).

[726] They have never been willing to recognize our authority. The king of Pa-Tao-Ia, who is situated on the Laotian side, twice attacked the Government Commissioners of Stung-Treng when the latter were making a tour of inspection in this region, first in December 1894 and a second time in January 1897. They were given a severe lesson this second time, for the village was entirely destroyed and they suffered many losses. The Sadete Loum (the Master of water) settled on the Annamite side alongside the Master of fire after the affair, and since that time has given no further orders to our faithful Djarais.

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APPENDIX XIX
NOTE ON THE MEOS

563 The Meo has a savage and distrustful character. He does not
609 like the presence of foreigners, or even of people of his own race.

Clinging to the side of a mountain, and always as high up as possible, he asks only to be allowed to live in peace in his wild solitude and bodes no ill to anyone provided he is left alone and independen

He is a great hunter of wild beasts and large game. More in-
433 dustrious than the Thais, he makes all his farming implements him-
241 self (picks and shovels), as well as his wooden buckets and mills for grinding maize and paddy. He raises fine poultry, pigs, oxen, goats
231 and horses with particular care and success. If he stays in one place for any length of time he also produces, in addition to the maize and rice which form the basis of his food supply and the opium which he smokes, very fine eggplants, gourds, sweet potatoes and non-sweetened batatas very much like the common potato, sorrel, green beans and all the French vegetables whose seeds are given him. On his heights he cultivates the fruit trees which merely vegetate in the plains, such as the peach tree, and the peaches which he harvests can compete without any fear with those of our own country.

516 The Meo climbs like a cat. Over sheer paths, up ladders com-
417 posed of a single bamboo pole standing upright in which notches are cut at regular intervals which are large enough for two toes, the Meo

172 transformation of a Khmer dvarapala (guardian of the gate) into a
171 Buddha of Laos. The pious hands of the faithful have restored this sculpture according to the rules of the artistic canon of Laos by means of limestone mortar. Finally, the discovery at the beginning of the year 1951 of a magnificent Khmer Jaya Buddha of the thirteenth century opens up new horizons on the influence of King Jayavarman VII in this southern part of his empire, although his role in this country was already known to us by the discovery in 1903 at Say Fong of the inscription named "stele of the hospitals" (see appendix: Vientiane).

At Luang Prabang the stele of the 900 Vishnu discovered in 1917 had already shown that Brahmanism [14] had apparently been in vogue here for a short while. When a certain number of Buddhist sculptures of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries were brought to light during the war, the theory had to be revised according to which Buddhism was not introduced into the kingdom of Luang Prabang before the fourteenth century of our era.

175 Thus, it is principally in the thirteenth century that the Khmer empire exerted its maximum influence on the provinces of northern Laos. But, as Mr. Coedès very correctly observes, the thirteenth century found the whole of Eurasia under the hands of the Mongols. Ever since his accession as grand Khan, Kubla Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan and conqueror of China, sought to obtain the oath of vassalage from the foreign sovereigns who were in the habit of giving it to the Chinese T'ang dynasty. Although these same Sino-Mongolian armies were always defeated or only temporarily successful, their attack produced deep repercussions. The most important of these was the advent of the power of the Thais in the basin of the Menam and in Burma with all its results for Cambodia, the principalities of the Mekong and those of the Malay Peninsula.

HISTORICAL LAOS OF THE XIVth CENTURY TO THE PRESENT DAY

The end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries saw the establishment of principalities in the valley of the Menam and their internal struggles. The weakening of the principality of Soukhotai favored the formation of the state of Laos.

Fa Ngoum (1316-1374) reigned from 1353 to 1374. This king was the true founder of the kingdom of Laos. He spent part of his childhood as an exile in Cambodia where he was brought up by a religious scholar of the capital. When he was sixteen years old, King Jayavarmanparamecvara [15] gave him in marriage to his

daughter, Princess Nang Yot Keo. At an indeterminate date which must come between 1340 and 1350, he was given the command of an army destined to reconquer the kingdom of his fathers. According to the Laotian chronicle, the victorious advance of this army enabled Fa Ngoum to declare himself king of Lan Xan. He immediately demanded the submission of all the Thai princes of Mekong. The center of resistance to Fa Ngoum was Phai Nam (spiny bamboos) because of the impenetrable vegetable belt which protected it like veritable ramparts. Fa Ngoum seized it by means of the classical trick of ornamenting missiles with gold and silver, then pretending to retreat and then pouncing on the enemy at the moment when they had scattered to gather the precious metal. In memory of this episode, the town was baptized Vieng Kham which means "circled with gold" and which later became Vientiane, "circled with sandalwood." Fa Ngoum organized his kingdom with force and reigned as a despot. Complaints were made and the king of Cambodia advised him to be moderate. Fa Ngoum then requested that a mission be sent him from Cambodia consisting of religious and lettered men, and of artisans. This mission introduced the orthodox books of Buddhism and a statue of the Buddha (Prabang) which had been presented in the eleventh century to the Khmer sovereign by the king of Ceylon. Prabang thus became the safeguard of the kingdom.

Up until recent years this tradition led one to believe that the introduction of Buddhism into Laos dated from Fa Ngoum. The discovery of a certain number of Buddhist sculptures of Khmer manufacture of the twelfth century A. D., has destroyed this theory (see below: Introduction of Buddhism to Laos).

After a series of wars, Fa Ngoum died in 1373 at the age of fifty-eight. His successor Sam Sen Thai reigned from 1373 to 1416. He kept [16] peace in his kingdom and passed on to his successor a prosperous kingdom, well established and living in peace, and at the same time dreaded by its neighbors.

The fifteenth century saw a succession of sovereigns about whom history has nothing in particular to tell. Let us mention, however, a war with the emperor of Annam. The first part of the sixteenth century passes under the reign of King Phothisarath (1506-1547), a pious Buddhist. One of his most famous actions is the edict against the cult of Phis. Setthathirath came into power in 1548 after a war with the Burmese. His death was followed by a troubled period. The beginning of the seventeenth century is particularly obscure, but in 1637 a great king called Souligna Vongsa (1637-1694) ascended

175 the throne. During his reign the kingdom of Lan Xan became again a powerful state. It was at this time that the Dutchman van Wusthoff (1641) visited Vientiane, followed in 1666 by Father Marini (see appendix: Vientiane). This era was one of prosperity for the country.

The eighteenth century brought tragedy to Lan Xan. The country found itself divided into two factions and the two kingdoms of Vientiane and of Luang Prabang did not cease to tear each other apart, thus playing into the hands of Siam and Annam. In the course of the nineteenth century, King Anou (1805-1828) attempted to bring back some of its former pomp to the kingdom of Vientiane. A disastrous war with Siam brought about the systematic destruction of the town of Vientiane and the Siamese domination of the left bank of the Mekong. In 1831 the kingdom of Vientiane even became a Siamese province. Its disappearance led Siam to exert its suzerainty on the principality of Luang Prabang. Since then [17] Siamese influence became more and more marked in these regions, and two royal commissioners were still assisting the king of Luang Prabang when August Pavie arrived at this town (see appendix).

It is well known that, through the intervention of this friend of Laos, Siam renounced "all claim to the whole territory on the left bank of the Mekong and to the islands in the river." In 1895, His Highness Oun Kham, king of Luang Prabang, received from the representative of France official recognition of the kingdom by the French government. However, in spite of the directives given by Pavie, the Franco-Siamese treaty of 1893 could not be satisfactory either for Laos or for Siam. This error was the result of political policy in regard to England. A partial ratification was necessary, which was accomplished in the treaties of 1904 and 1907.

The accession of His Royal Highness Sisavang Vong in 1904 opened a new era for the kingdom of Lan Xan which ended in the independence of Laos within the framework of the French Union.

[18] RELIGION

BUDDHISM

779 The Life of Buddha.

Buddhism, the official religion of Laos, is of Indian origin. The story of Sakyamuni, its founder, is without doubt one of the questions most discussed by western science. As Mr. Foucher points out, there is no event in his life, however simple, about which the

779

forms of Buddhism: the Mahayana or Great Vehicle, and the Hinayana or Little Vehicle. "One must beware of contrasting too violently the two Vehicles, as is often done. They were held together by many and subtle bonds." However in our days a Laotian Hinayanist and a Mongol Mahayanist have nothing in common.

Roughly, the essential difference between the two doctrines is that Hinayana considers the Buddha not as a superior man but as a man, while Mahayana deified Sakyamuni, who, without being a god, was as much as or more than a deity. Activity, formerly condemned, is glorified, sanctified on condition that it is freed from personal interests and is used for the salvation of others. Individual salvation has absolute value only if it contributes to universal salvation. The nirvana of the Hinayanist must be denounced as a scandalous exaltation of self. Bodhi, the supreme knowledge which makes Buddhas, is accessible to all beings. The saint is the Bodhisattva, who is on the point of reaching nirvana, yet remains during periods of incalculable successive existences to save [22] souls. The Mahayanist universe, which has grown immeasurably is filled with an infinite multitude of Buddhas. Many Bodhisattva exist: the principal ones are Avalokitesvara, Maitreya, Manjousri, Vajrapani, etc. Besides, each Buddha and each Bodhisattva has been doubled by a dhyani-Buddha, a contemplative Buddha (spiritual Buddha). To the belief in nirvana proclaimed by the Hinayana, the Mahayanists add an infinite series of paradises, the "pure Grounds" (this notion is Iranian) where souls saved by the grace of the Bodhisattva are born again in the symbolical lotus.

Mahayana now flourishes in central Asia, in Tibet, China, Japan and in Vietnam, was in vogue in Java, and in the ancient Khmer empire from the ninth to the thirteenth century. Its influence is found in certain sculptures of Luang Prabang (see appendix). Hinayana is practised at the present time in Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Cambodia and Laos. [101]

Introduction of Buddhism to Laos.

175 • 177 779

According to certain documents, Buddhism was introduced to Laos by Buddhaghosa. This legend is too popular in other Buddhist countries of the Indochinese peninsula for it to be given any credit here. Laotian tradition tells us that Fa Ngoum had a mission come from Cambodia which brought not only the sacred books of orthodox Buddhism but also Brahmanic texts whose traces can still be found today. This tradition, which offers greater proofs than the legend, fixed the date of the introduction of Buddhism to Luang Prabang in

175 the fourteenth century. Archaeological discoveries made in recent
177 years in the region of Luang Prabang and more recent ones in the
779 neighborhood of Vientiane may enable this important event in the religious history of Laos to be moved back more than two centuries.

[23] The Pagoda.

346 "Laotians liked to place their pagodas on high points, but their
778 marked taste for the edge of the water made them prefer the neighborhood of rivers. This location of pagodas is a natural consequence of
[192] the relations between bonzes and inhabitants. The former drew their livelihood from the latter, and these are crowded on the river banks."
In principle the pagoda consists of three elements:

346 1) The buildings connected directly with the cult: vat, chapels, libraries; that, standing landmarks and niches;

2) The surrounding enclosures, exterior and interior;

3) The buildings for the immediate use of the inhabitants of the pagoda: monastery [bonzerie], cells for the bonzes, reception halls.

The vat consists of a large hall furnished with a pedestal on which stands the statue of the Buddha often accompanied by a preaching pulpit. The columns and walls are frequently ornamented with paintings.

Among the annexes of the vat, the most numerous are the chapels which are in the form either of delicate buildings or small compound halls.

The that is a votive and sometimes a funereal monument. (See appendix on Vientiane).

The only piece of furniture always found in the vat is the preaching pulpit, an elegant construction, often made of gilded wood. By way of furniture there are a few seats for the chiefs of the bonzes,
[788] particularly for the torch bearer. Finally, particularly in the region of Luang Prabang, one finds the hang-lin, a curious spout-shaped object, with elegant decoration, which is used for sprinkling the Buddhas on great feast days (cf. the New Year). These various finely carved objects are usually made of gilded wood and are sometimes inlaid with enamelled lead [24] whose brilliant gleam makes them sparkle. The manuscript chests are usually collected in the
[217] libraries, piled up in the shape of an inverted pyramid; they are generally carved and gilded.

175.10 -------175.88

25: Brodrick--90 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 162, 361, 175.63

"Only ten Europeans lived in Houaphan.

Xieng-Khouang, about three thousand six hundred feet up, lies, all the same, in a valley surrounded with high hills. There is a new European quarter, by no means exclusively inhabited by Europeans, and the pagodas are among the most archaically planned of all the Laos land. (2)

2. Tran-ninh was for long ruled by independent chieftains until the province was annexed in 1830 by the King of Vientiane who, six years later, had to cede the territory to the Annamese Emperor. It was the French who added the province to the realm of Luang-Prabang."

Around 1597 Belloso and Gonzalez "dared" to wander adventurously across South Annam and even Champa in search of the king of Cambodia who had taken refuge in Laos. In 1608 another adventurer in the grand manner, de Brito (2), dreamed of ex-

2. Philippe de Brito Nicole died in Pégou, preferring impalement to prostration (sumbaya) before the king. For the same reason, other Portuguese adventurers of the grand period were boiled in oil in Siam.

tending his ephemeral sovereignty in Burma not only over Chieng Mai and Siam, but as far as Luang Prabang. His plans failed. The geographer [53] of Malacca, Godinho de Eredia, compiled a whole collection of information on this remote kingdom about the same time.

But the missionaries, it would seem, were the most persevering in their efforts to remedy the isolation of Laos, particularly the Portuguese Jesuit Cardim (1). The latter

1. Father Cardim, Relations della Provincia del Giappone. Rome, 1643.

has given various accounts of his efforts and those of his predecessors. If we are to believe him, three Portuguese traders had already entered through Cambodia when Antonio Gançalves Cavallerio persuaded the Superior of the Jesuits of Macao to send

several Fathers there in 1624, almost immediately after the first incident of the bar of Siam. Father Cardim and a Japanese companion left Macao on December 13, 1625 to go and study the language at Ayuthia [HD: then the capital of Siam], but sickness and reprisals against the acts of the Spaniards in 1629 caused the project to fail once again (H. Bernard). It was to be resumed later by Father Borelli and Father J. Baptiste Bonel, the latter of whom "died in Laos or Layès" (A. de Rhodes).

10: d'Orleans T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
563, 634, 721, 175.72 Ethnic subgroups

[LSS: For the history of the family of Deo Van Tri, chief of the Lai district and for the history of the wars in the area of Laichau and Luang Prabang, see Indochina, category 116, pp. 204-209.]

177.10 ----- 177.88

10: d'Orleans--362-363 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 276, 439, 655, 177.27 Siam
636.27

"... The opium monopoly has been set up in Luang Prabang by the Siamese. Not content with having, during the past century, ruined and depopulated the valley of the Mekong, and with weighing it down with taxation, they now seem anxious to crush its trade and arrest its growth. From our point of view, it is a matter of indifference to us if the relations between Luang Prabang and China become less close and friendly, and we may even turn this change to our profit, for the caravans which were wont to bring opium down the routes parallel with the Mekong, will find it answer [sic] their purpose to branch off in the direction of the Black River, and to effect their exchanges with Upper Tonkin.

I can answer for the fact that during the past year only one caravan reached Luang Prabang from the north, this consisting of sixty mules from Xieng [363] Hong, which took a month upon the journey by short stages, eight being loaded with iron, four with tea, and the rest with Chinese groceries, sugar, opium and a little silk."

10: d'Orleans--333 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 532, 778, 793, 177.35

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "Above the market and built against the hill is the residence of one of the four leading bonzes from whom we had a visit yesterday; and upon going to see him there we find that the interior is ornamented with coloured designs and pictures, given him by Frenchmen, of the Eiffel Tower and so forth, with a small chapel in one corner and a library of religious books, many of which are rolled up in palm leaves. The only curious object in the adjoining pagoda is a wooden statue of Buddha (Pasine), in a crouching attitude, like that of a monkey when scratching his chin. The skull is very depressed and misshapen; and it is possible that those who offered the image were desirous of depicting the incident in his life, when having complained to God of the temptation which the flesh evoked in him, he received by way of reply a violent blow on the head in order to crush his carnal appetites."

10: d'Orleans--370 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 353, 643, 177.35

"We gather information as to the route which we are to follow from the second King of Luang Prabang, who has just returned that way from Bangkok. He lives near us in an enormous room, which his baggage has transformed into a veritable bric-à-brac shop. There are glass-globes, imitation paper flowers under glass, European hats, cooking utensils, and cruets, indeed, a little of everything which has attracted the prince in the way of European civilisation. After living twenty-two months at Bangkok, he is returning to Luang Prabang slowly by easy stages. Elegantly turned out, he seems franker than his brother, and after exchanging visits he sends us a present of cocoanuts and bananas."

"Though the natural products of Luang Prabang are so varied, the cost of transport over so long a distance from the coast would reduce the profits very considerably, though I think that the complaints of the Chinese traders as to business being carried on at a loss must be an exaggeration, for if so why do they carry it on?

In any event, it is difficult to form a precise estimate of the commerce of the principality. According to the Siamese the exports from the Laos region, which includes the country between Strung Treng and Xiangsen in one direction, and Xieng Mai and Attopen in the other, amount to about £900,000, and if this estimate is correct the proportion of Luang Prabang must be very small. Macey gives the exports of benzoin at £40,000, but if this was so at one time the total must have decreased very much.

But trifling as the commercial movement of Luang Prabang may be, it is of interest to us, because of the situation of the town upon the Mekong, nearly in the centre of the Laos and in the vicinity of Tonkin, to see what share we may hope to have in it and what profit can be derived from it. Opinions vary very much upon the subject, and Mr.Archer, the British Consul, whose statistical reports as to the trade of this region are well worth careful study, is of opinion that there is little to fear from French competition, the cost of transport being too great, and with regard to steam navigation, he does not deem it possible upon the Mekong, on account of the rapids upon the other [359] hand. I have read several articles in the Bangkok Times to the effect that the French have great facilities for getting into their hands all trade upon the Mekong, and that to guard against this

Siam ought to push on the construction of railways with all speed. Then, again, Mr. Macey and Captain Devrez assert that the Tonkin routes are much shorter, easier, and less expensive than those leading to Bangkok.

Whatever the truth may be, of one thing I can speak positively, and that is that the greater part of the commercial current of Luang Prabang either comes from or goes to Bangkok. This current follows one of two routes. It either proceeds from Luang Prabang to Paklay by the Mekong; Paklay to Pitchai or Ontaradit by land and from thence to Bangkok down the Menam (this being the way by which we returned), a voyage of twenty-six days going down and fifty-two coming up. The second route is from Luang Prabang to Nong Kay by the Mekong; from Nong Kay to Korat and from Korat to Bangkok, this being rather the longer of the two. These routes, though shorter than that which brings Luang Prabang and Tonquin within a month of each other, have the advantage of being safer both by water and by land, there being no rapids on the Menam, while the roads are wide enough for elephants to travel easily along them and might easily have rails laid down. Owing to the facility of the communications, the cost of transport between Luang Prabang and Bangkok is if not cheaper, at all events not dearer than those via the Black River, and as I have been over the two routes myself I am in a [360] position to make the comparison. M. Massie, moreover, has arrived at the same conclusion."

10: d'Orleans--330 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 443, 651, 177.44 Siam
636.44

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "In the market, each vendor has his own special stall, while the representatives of the same trade are all placed together, and a tax of twenty-five cowries is collected from each of them every morning by soldiers told off for the purpose, whereas the street hawkers are exempted from all dues."

10: d'Orleans--360 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 441, 563, 177.44 France
636.44

"The trade of Laos, like that of the greater part of Siam, is carried on by the Chinese, who form a sort of freemasonry among one another against the foreigner and are constantly pushing forward their advance posts. Masters of the Customs, more intelligent, more hard working, more temperate and more rapacious than the Siamese, they constitute the commercial class, and they have a way of insinuating themselves into the secrets of the natives and transferring their money into their own pockets which we neither could nor would wish to imitate. Our task is a higher one, and it consists, upon the one hand, in undertaking and carrying out such enterprises in the way of mining as I have described above, and upon the other in supplying the native or Chinese middlemen with the raw material and with our national goods upon as reasonable terms as English or German merchandise."

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6: Goudal--32-33 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-1-3
116, 466, 651, 177.46 France
636.46

Laos. --An Order of 12 May 1914 regulated labour dues for natives and assimilated Asiatics between 18 and 60 years of age who inhabit the territory of Laos.

Registered Laotians are required to provide 16 days' labour per annum, which may be commuted at the rate of 0.40 piastre, while 'Khas' must provide 20 days.

The commutation of labour dues is optional. Labour conscripts may only be recruited within a radius of 100 kilometres from the place of employment or at a maximum of five days' march for the outward and return journeys. No wages are paid for days thus worked, but each day taken up by the journey from the village to the place of work is paid at the rate of 30 cents. At least one-quarter of the labour called up must be employed solely on communal work. The commutation fee is fixed at 0.25 piastre.

An Order of 18 June 1929 increased the commutation fee to 0.30 piastre.

An important Circular issued on 21 June 1934 laid down the measures to be taken by the Residents in Laos to secure that the recruiting and employment of requisitioned labour should be carried out in the best conditions and with due attention to the requirements of health and hygiene.

6; Goudal--32-33 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-2
116, 466, 651, 177.46 France
636.46

The recruitment of labour must be carried out with the greatest care and under the supervision and responsibility of the indigenous authorities. Sick and infirm persons, elderly persons and children may not be employed in any circumstances. When the workplace is far from the village, the workers must be carried in service lorries or canoes.

Before work is begun the encampments must be carefully organised. The workers' food must be the object of strict supervision, and every care must be taken to avoid victimisation of the workers by itinerant traders.

As a rule a dresser must be made responsible for the health in all workplaces employing at least 50 workers. The workers must be supplied with tools and implements so as to secure a maximum individual output.

In the management and organisation of workplaces, every effort must be made to co-ordinate administrative supervision, the work of the indigenous authorities and the technical instructions issued by the public works services.

It is thus clear that the regulation of labour dues has undergone practically the same evolution in all the countries of the Union. The old system of compulsory labour, which in theory was subject [33] to no restrictions, has been reduced to a reasonable number of days by the French authorities, while the work exacted from the inhabitants has been

restricted to the district in which the latter live, so as to avoid long absences from home and transfer to distant places. The regulations recommend the avoidance of mass levies likely to empty the villages of their able-bodied population, and discourage the requisitioning of labour during periods of agricultural activity. The introduction of certain measures for the protection of the workers' health (infirmaries in the work-places, etc.), together with the compulsory supply of appropriate tools and implements has certainly introduced a more humane element in the labour system. Finally, the general adoption of commutation fees has led to dues being treated as a tax (in three countries, the dues are included in the personal tax). Only for certain tribes in mountainous districts is the character of the former compulsory labour system still maintained."

6: Goudal--42-43 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians
116, 466, 482, 653, 177.46 France
636.46

"In Laos, the regulation of compulsory labour for public purposes has been the subject of a number of legislative measures, including an Order by the Senior Resident of 27 June 1933 which closely resembles that issued by the Governor-General of 5 February 1932.

Moreover, in the countries of the Union where this form of labour is still permitted, Orders are issued periodically establishing the [43] maximum weight of the load carried by porters and the rates of wages payable to such workers. Annual reports are also sent to the central administrative authorities on the value and usefulness of requisitioned labour. If the present effort made by the authorities is continued, it is practically certain that in the near future compulsory labour levies for transport work and large-scale public works will become a thing of the past."

6: Goudal--161-162 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-1-2
116, 466, 671, 177.46 France
636.46

"Laos--Sections 197-201 of the Laotian Civil Code provide for two methods of assessing workmen's compensation, according to whether the accident was or was not the consequence of an operation or dangerous work for which no special remuneration was laid down to offset the risk. If the accident is caused by dangerous work, the liability of the employer is regulated as follows: in the case of death or permanent total incapacity, the victim or his dependants are entitled, according to their situation, to an allowance amounting to 100 piastres for officials, 80 piastres for an employee of the administration or a skilled worker exercising a remunerative trade, and 50 piastres for all other workers.

These allowances are reduced to one-half or to one-quarter of the stated amount when the victim's working capacity is reduced, even permanently, by 50 or 25 per cent.

In case of temporary incapacity, the person liable in case of accident is required to pay as damages to the injured party the cost of the treatment entailed and in addition, throughout the whole period of incapacity, full wages in the case of an official, 0.55 piastre a day in the case of an employee of the administration or a skilled worker, and 0.25 piastre a day in the case of all other persons. [162]

All the above-mentioned allowances are reduced by one-half if the injured person is under age and has undertaken the operation or dangerous work with the authorisation of his parents.

6: Goudal--161-162 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-2
116, 466, 671, 177.46 France
636.46

Among other classes of work, the Civil Code classifies the following as dangerous: scaling of tall trees, going down wells or underground caves or passages, diving into a deep or rapidly flowing part of a river, the capturing of wild animals, the training of untamed animals, pursuit of criminals, etc.

When, on the other hand, the accident is not the result of dangerous work, but is nevertheless incurred in the course of, or arising out of, paid employment, the employer is required, in case of death or permanent incapacity, to pay to the victim an allowance equal to one-half of the corresponding indemnity established for injuries caused by dangerous work. In case of death he must also pay the cost of burial or cremation.

If the accident results in minor injuries, the employer must provide the injured person with medical attendance and food throughout the period of temporary incapacity.

Finally, in no case is the employer responsible for accidents resulting from unavoidable circumstances."

6: Goudal--166 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians
116, 466, 647, 177.46 France
636.46

"In Laos, no local labour inspectorate has so far been established. An Order of 22 December 1932 required the inspector of political and administrative affairs to carry out the duties of local labour inspector in addition to his own work. Subsequently, as the first-class administrator of the civil services who carried out these double duties was not replaced, the chief administrative officer of the Cammon province was entrusted with the duties of labour supervisor for all mining undertakings situated in his area.

It would seem that the cuts in the estimates, which led to a reduction in the staff of the various local inspectorates, have resulted in an unfortunate decline in the activity of these services. (1)

1. We read, for example, in the Annual Report of the Tonking Labour Inspectorate for the period 1 July 1933-30 June 1934: 'The attachment of the labour inspectorate to the Fifth Bureau has resulted in greatly reducing the sphere of activity of the labour inspector, whose time is mainly taken up by his duties as chief of the Bureau of Economic Affairs; his tours of inspection have thus been reduced to those which are strictly necessary'. "

25: Brodrick--85 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 131, 489, 177.48 France
636.48

"The Laos was, and indeed still is, a country happy in its isolation. It is land quite difficult of access. There are no railways. There is only one all-weather road crossing the country and that in the Lower Laos. Moreover, in my day, at least, that is to say on the very eve of the last World War, you did not just start off for the Laos as you would for any other part of Indo-China, discreet inquiries were made. The French liked to keep their Laos uncontaminated by foreigners.(1)

1. The total area of the Laos is just under 90,000 square miles and the population, at the last census, was just over one million. There is no all-weather road right up the Mekong Valley and the highways from the east cannot be used during the rains except for that across the Lower Laos from Dong-Ha to Kabao. Much of the Laos is, therefore, except for air-communication, cut off from the outer world for at least five months out of every year."

3: Robequain--94 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 496, 177.49 France
636.49

"Laos still lacks railways. Some years ago surveys were completed on the projected line from Tan Ap to Thakhek, which had been selected as the shortest and most convenient route between the coast of Annam and the Mekong. About twenty kilometers of rail were laid from Tan Ap as far as Xom Cuc, and téléférique built to hoist material and supplies from the workyards to Mu Gia Pass which will be traversed by a tunnel at an altitude of 370 meters; a service road was built in order to assure the easy maintenance of the téléférique. The roadbed beyond Thakhek was also started, but budgetary difficulties caused the stoppage of work."

23: Franck--346 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 491, 177.49 France
636.49

"Had it been in China or South America, this important trail between the two principal capitals of Laos would be impassable, in spots at least, which is the same thing so far as an overland trip is concerned, during the rainy season that was now upon us. Thanks to the few French overlords, however, mile after mile was welded together by many woven-bamboo bridges that sagged like bed-springs under our weight."

3: Robequain--113-116 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians-1-5
116, 133, 503, 505, 177.50 France
636.50

"The Mekong appeared to offer a splendid means of penetrating the plateaus and mountains of Laos. At one time it was even suggested that Saigon could be one of the great ports for Southern China. As early as 1866, the Doudart de Lagrée and Francis Garnier mission realized the difficulties[114] of navigating the river above Kratié. This large river, as a matter of fact, is still very young as far as physical geography is concerned, or rather, a series of recent and still only partially explained tectonic episodes have renewed its youth. It consists of a chain of calm-surfaced reaches, separated by rapids or falls. The chief obstacle to navigation is at Khône where the arms of the river, spread out over an area several kilometers wide, drop 15 meters through torrential and rock-studded channles or cataracts. Here precisely is the border between Cambodia and Laos. Other rapids are scattered both up and down stream, making navigation by launch difficult and uncertain throughout entire sections between Kratié and Savannakhet. It is only at Savannakhet ('the gateway to paradise') that the great navigable reaches begin which permit launches to sail as far as several kilometers above Vientiane without breaking bulk.

Europeans were eager to tame the Mekong. As early as 1890 the Messageries

3: Robequain--113-116 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians-2
116, 133, 503, 505, 177.50 France
636.50

Fluviales de Cochinchine had organized a steamship line which, with the help of some trans-shipment, operated as far as Khône. For more than two years the launch, Argus, tried to get past the Khône barrier through the channels which canoes sometimes used in descending the river. In view of the failure of these attempts, a narrow guage railway was built across Khône Island, and by this means gunboats and then launches were carried to the upper river in 1893.

Conditions of navigation have been improved since then, but scouring the river channels has not always produced the desired results, since the river's reactions are difficult to predict; buoying had been improved up to 1925; more than a thousand towers, buoys and landmarks had been built. Hundred-ton launches, drawing one and one half meters, can reach as far as Khône, at high water, about three months a year; in other months, the section between Kratié and Khône, much of which had to be traversed by canoe up to 1900, can now be covered, with only one trans-shipment, by a short thirty-ton launch which can manage the sharp turns of the narrow channels. Above Khône, the most difficult passage is through the sandstone canyon of Kemmarat, where the river attains [115] a depth of eighteen meters during the heavy floods and the current in some rapids is from nine to ten knots. Since 1910 more powerful launches have been put into service, and were later supplied with semi-Diesel engines; they have gradually reduced the number of changes but the Keng Sa rapids are still impassable at low water

and necessitate trans-shipments to motor-canoes.

In 1895 a small gunboat, the Lagrandière, went up above the Savannakhet-Vientiane reaches to within 50 kilometers of the Yunnan frontier, about 2,500 kilometers from the sea and 400 meters above sea-level; this was a purely sporting exploit. Since then other steamboats have gone up as far as Luang Prabang, but it was realized that regular traffic could not be maintained through one section, dotted with dangerous rapids. Nevertheless, the trip between the two Laotian capitals previously made by native canoes plying upstream, and by rafts going downstream, has been very much speeded up since 1930 by the use of motor canoes.

In brief, progress is summed up in the following figures; in 1900, at low water, it took 65 days or more to go from Saigon to Luang Prabang; in 1909 the time was reduced to a maximum of 50 days; in 1937 the upstream trip took 37 days, downstream 27; and at high water, it took 27 or 22 days, respectively.

In spite of all this, French Upper Laos is still farther from Saigon by water than Saigon is from Marseille. Even below Vientiane in Lower Laos, the transport capacity of the Mekong depends on the obstacles encountered between Savannakhet and Khône. It is difficult to cut down the present length of the time needed for the journey: the narrowness of the channels and the limited power of the engines which can negotiate them do not

permit increasing the useful cargo beyond 100 tons. At low water, trans-shipment is a heavy burden on shipping. In 1936 only 4,644 tons of freight passed the port of Khone going downstream (10) and 5,286 tons upstream.

10. Excluding teak logs which are floated down the river.

Thus the high hopes for the Mekong as a means of transportation have been dashed. Experts believe that if additional improvements could increase the traffic to 25,000 tons a year, [116] this is a maximum which would be hard to surpass. Railways and highways will therefore have to furnish transportation which will be justified in the future by our reasonable expectations for an enlarged Laotian economy, if not by its extent at present. (11)

11. The arguments in favor of the water route are set forth by Colonel Bernard in the Bulletin du Comité de l'Indochine, February 20, 1936. Navigation on the Mekong has undergone great changes since the end of 1937, at the expiration of the contract of the Campagnie Saigonnaise de Navigation et de Transports, which had replaced the Messageries Fluviales. Steam launches no longer negotiate the Kemmarat narrows;

3: Robequain--113-116 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians-5
116, 133, 503, 505, ~~177~~, 50 France
636.50

there is no longer a regular service between Paksé and Savannakhet. From Savannakhet to Vientiane service is now assured by a company employing flat-bottomed barges and from Vientiane to Luang Prabang and Xieng Sen by motor canoes."

10: d'Orleans--300-301 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 436, 455, 525, 651, 177.52 Siam
636.52

"In addition to the forced labour, there is, the capitation tax, the opium tax, and the monopoly of the tchoum-tchoum, but the monopoly of gaming, which is the source of large revenue in Siam itself, has been suppressed here by the Siamese as being immoral. It is the same with the speculation upon the money exchange, which is not yet resorted to in Luang Prabang. In the valley of Ménam, more especially, the money in use is composed of earthenware counters, the circulation of which is suspended or the value altered by a Government decree, large profits being thus secured in very arbitrary fashion. Another source of profit [301] for the treasury of Luang Prabang is the produce of the customs, there being a tax of three per cent. upon the merchandise and of a basket of salt upon each canoe, which comes up from the south with a load of it."

10: d'Orleans--333-334 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 532, 177, 53

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "Among the other pagodas are Ouate Tiomsi, which contains nothing remarkable, and Ouate Pahope, with a good deal of wood carving and frescoes representing animals and scenes in the life of Buddha, to say nothing of pictures of Frenchwomen in the dress of the First Empire, which may possibly have been brought here by the traveller Monhot some forty years ago. Beyond these are Ouate Paphay and Ouate Pakay, both of which are very graceful and have beautifully carved facades. The whole effect reminds me in a remote measure of the Hindoo architecture, and among the figures on the wood-carving of the doors is [334] one of Nangmanouba, a woman standing up on a dragon, and another of a personage wearing a costume very similar to that which was in vogue with us during the middle ages."

7: Thompson--371-372 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 565, 567, ~~177.56~~ France
636.56

"The people were simply divided into slaves and freemen. Of the former there were three kinds: slaves for debt, by sale, or by capture. Slave-trading used to be enormously profitable, for the offspring of slaves were born into perpetual slavery. In 1880 the King of Siam made a generous reform. The descendants of slaves were henceforth to be freemen, and it was made much easier for debt slaves to buy their freedom. No mention was made, however, of captured slaves, but severe penalties were meted out to men convicted of slave-trading. One of the first steps taken by the French was the abolition of the slave trade, despite its affecting important Laotian, Cambodian, Siamese, and even Burmese commercial interests. Next, debt slavery was attacked in 1896, and for this Tournier found an ingenious solution. Special attention [372] was paid to the Khas, who lived in a state of serfdom, and this provoked a series of revolts. Their enfranchisement was begun in 1898, and nowadays a form of patron-client relationship has been evolved, but the bond is easy. It is almost impossible to wipe the slate clean, for many of the slaves resist change, since it is an easier way of getting rid of a debt than by working as freemen."

26: Brodrick--60 S-3 (1939) 1944 Laotians
116, 631, 177.63 France
636.63

"Most of the Laos region is under direct French administration, but the kingdom of Luang-Prabang (consisting of the provinces of Luang-Prabang, of Houaphan and of the Fifth Military Territory) is a 'protectorate.' Until 1893 the Siamese were in effective possession of about one-half of the Luang-Prabang realm, but by 1904 the French had obtained the cession of the whole of the kingdom."

68: Mouhot--85-86 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
Siam

116, 131, 728, 631, 162, 177.63
636.63

"A great number of the inhabitants of this province [HD: i.e. Saraburi, in Siam] are natives of Laos, and are principally captives brought from Vien Chang after the insurrection there. The provinces of Boatioume and Petchaboune are peopled by Siamese, for Laos proper only commences at M'Lôm. Boatioume, Petchaboune, Sôm, and some other provinces in the north and east, are governed by Siamese mandarins of rank more or less elevated; that is to say, several of them have the power of life and death, and are [86]then considered as viceroys. The most distant provinces belong to the empire of Siam, and form a part of it."

68: Mouhot--105-106 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 631, 122, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"On the 28th February, 1861, I arrived at the town of Chaiapume, [HD: at that time a Laotian town tributary to Siam] and presented myself before the governor to request his permission to hire some elephants or oxen to enable me to continue my journey. I showed him my French passport, and also gave him the letter from Khrom Luang, [HD: one of the brothers of the King of Siam] and another from the Governor of Korat; [HD: an important outlying province of Siam. See category 116, p. 115] but all in vain. He replied that, if I wanted oxen or elephants, there were plenty in the forest. I might easily have done without the assistance of this functionary, and procured animals from people in the village; but they would have made me pay two or three times the ordinary price, and my purse was too slenderly filled to allow of my submitting to this extortion, which would probably be repeated at every station.

The only thing left me to do, therefore, was to retrace my steps, and, leaving one of my servants at Korat with [106] my baggage, to return to Bangkok and claim aid from the consul, the ministers, or the king himself; for there is a treaty between the Governments of Siam and France, concluded by M. de Montigny, which obliges the king to afford assistance and protection to the French, and especially to missionaries and naturalists. It was a sad loss of time for me, and might occasion me serious inconvenience; for, if I were delayed, the rainy season might surprise me in the midst of the

68: Mouhot--105-106 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 631, 122, 177.63 Siam
636.63

forests before I could reach a healthier region, and the consequences might be fatal. However, I was forced to submit, and I returned to Bangkok."

68: Mouhot--113 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 579, 162, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"These precautions are very necessary, for Korat is a nest of robbers and assassins, the resort of all the scum of the Laotian and Siamese races. Bandits and vagrants, escaped from slavery or from prison, gather here like the vultures and wolves which follow armies and caravans. It is not that they enjoy complete immunity, for the [HD: Siamese] governor, son of Bodine, the general who conquered Battambong and the revolted provinces, is viceroy of the state, has absolute power of life and death, and is, they say, very severe, cutting off a head or a hand with little compunction. But still it is Siamese justice, 'non inviola:' there are neither gendarmes nor police; the person robbed must himself arrest the offender and bring him before the judge. Even his neighbour will give no assistance in the capture."

68: Mouhot--115 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 439, 631, 651, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"The merchants who bring silk, [HD: to Korat, Siam] which, though of inferior quality, is an important article of commerce, come from Laos, Oubone, Bassac, and Jasoutone.

The entire province of Korat comprises a number of villages, and more than eleven towns, some containing as many as fifty or sixty thousand inhabitants. This little state is simply tributary, [HD: to Siam] but on condition of furnishing the first and most considerable levy of men in case of war.

The tribute consists of gold or silver, and in several districts, amongst others those of Chaiapume and Poukiéan, amounts to eight ticals a head. Some pay in silk, which is weighed by the mandarins, who, as with the cardamom at Pursat, and the langoutis at Battambong, buy a further quantity on their own account, and at their own price.

Elephants are numerous, and a great many are brought from the north of Laos as far as Muang-Lang. I should think there must be more than a thousand of these animals in each province. Oxen and buffaloes were formerly exceedingly cheap, but the distemper, which has for some years committed great ravages among the herds, has doubled or tripled the price. They are brought southward from the extreme north of East Laos, and even from the frontiers of Tonquin."

68: Mouhot--120-121 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-
Siam
116, 609, 122, 631, 177.63
636.63

"I was again delayed a few days at Korat before I could obtain elephants, in consequence of the absence of the viceroy; but on his return he received me in a friendly manner, and gave me a letter of introduction to the governors of the provinces under his jurisdiction. He likewise furnished me with two elephants for myself and servants, and two others for my baggage; so at last I was able to set out for Chaiapume. Before I started, the Chinese with whom I lodged gave me the following advice: --'Buy a tam-tam, and, wherever you halt, sound it. They will say, "Here is an officer of the king;" robbers will keep aloof, and the authorities will respect you. If this does not answer, the only plan to get rid of all the difficulties which the Laotian officials will be sure to throw in your way is to have a good stick, the longer the better. Try it on the back of any mandarin who makes the least resistance and will not do what you wish. Put all delicacy aside. Laos is not like a country of the whites. Follow my advice, and you will find it good.'

I was, however, much better received on my second visit to Chaiapume, and required neither tam-tam nor cane. The sight of the elephants and the order from the viceroy of Korat made the mandarin as supple as a glove, and he provided me with other elephants for a visit to some ruins existing about 3 leagues north of the town, at the foot of a mountain. The superstitious Laotians say that [121]these ruins contain gold, but that every one who has sought for it has been struck with madness."

68: Mouhot--129-130 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 122, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"[HD: Going north to Pak Lai] I soon found that, but for the letter from the governor of Korat, I should have met everywhere with the same reception as at Chaiapume; however, this missive was very positively worded. Wherever I went, the authorities were ordered to furnish me with elephants, and supply me with all necessary provisions, as if I were a king's envoy. I was much amused to see these petty provincial chiefs executing the orders of my servants, and evidently in dread lest, following the Siamese custom, I should use the stick.

One of my men, to give himself importance, had tied one of these bugbears to the arms which he carried, and the sight of it alone sufficed, with the sound of the tam-tam, to inspire fear, whilst small presents judiciously distributed, and a little money to the cornacs, [HD: elephant drivers] procured me the sympathy of the people.

Most of the villages are situated about a day's journey from one another, but frequently you have to travel for three or four days without seeing a single habitation, [130] and then you have no alternative but to sleep in the jungle."

68: Mouhot--251 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 122, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"I have done everything in my power to obtain letters and passports [HD: to Laos] from the French and Siamese authorities here, [HD: i.e. in Bangkok, Siam] but all have been nearly useless. I have obtained nothing but a letter from the King's brother, [HD: Khrom Luang] who has the superintendence of the provinces north of Laos, and with that I trust to be able to get on."

68: Mouhot--256-257 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 122, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"When I reached Chaiapume, I went to the governor with my letters, and asked him to lend me elephants to enable me to continue my journey, that being the only method of travelling among these mountains; but he refused me decidedly, and consequently I have been forced to retrace my steps. Here one can do nothing without the help of the people in power.

I therefore returned to Korat, and established Phrai in a [257] hut which I hired of a Chinese; and went myself to Bangkok, to procure from the authorities orders to the different governors of provinces to aid me instead of throwing obstacles in my way."

68: Mouhot--258-260 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-4
116, 122, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"[HD: Excerpt from one of Mouhot's letters to his wife] You will be much surprised on receiving this letter to see it dated from Saraburi, [HD: in Siam] for if you have received the one I wrote in January, you must believe me to be already in Laos. But man proposes, and God disposes. However, to reassure you, I must begin by saying that I am in perfect health, and full of strength and hope. All goes well with me.

I had in fact reached Laos. I arrived at Korat after a tedious and troublesome journey, for I had only a few oxen for my baggage, and was forced to walk myself. From there I went to Chaiapume, and here an animal of the mandarin species made himself great, and under the pretext of having no elephants refused me the means of going further, and was so rude and impolite to me that I determined at once to return and protest against the very insufficient protection which had been granted to me. Indeed, I could do nothing else, not being able to go on. The elephant which had brought me to Chaiapume took me back to Korat, and there I found a mandarin from Bangkok, who had been sent to fetch a white elephant which had been taken in Laos. I begged him to let me join his party, and he lent me two elephants, one for my servant and luggage, and one for myself. I left Phrai at Korat, with the greater part of my possessions, having hired a room for him in the house of a Chinese, and a week afterwards found myself back at Saraburi, in company with this strange divinity (who, by the way, had

more black than white about him), and of the grand personage who had been sent to escort him, and who had showered on him every kind of attention during the journey. He had an escort of fifty foot soldiers and several on horseback. As for me, I wanted for nothing; at every halt the mandarin sent me ducks, fish, fruit, sweetmeats, &c., and he was [259] also kind enough to allow me eight men as night-guards to watch round my fire. In return, I discovered for him in the mountains large quantities of copper, and even gold, which delighted him.

The whole province of Saraburi was in motion to do honour to the white elephant; the King and all his court are coming here; the ministers are here already to watch over him. I decided, therefore, to apply to the Siamese, hoping to obtain more from them than from the Europeans; and yesterday hearing of the arrival of Khrom Luang, the King's brother, I hastened to address myself to him. He, however, had only passed through, and was gone to Prabat, to join the King. However, I found here the man I wanted, the mandarin who has most interest in Laos, and without a letter from whom it would have been difficult to proceed. I did not know him, but I went to him to ask about the Prince, and told him what I wanted. 'I am your man,' said he; 'the Prince can only give an order for me to write a letter, such as I will give you, if you like.' I accepted gladly, and promised him in return my double-barrelled gun, which I could easily replace, 'if

he would only furnish me with the means of travelling through Laos without expense, and would bring the Chaiapume mandarin to reason.' The poor governor of Saraburi was with us, and had to remain more than an hour amidst a number of others kneeling on the bare ground, while I was seated on the mat of the mandarin, by his side, eating sweetmeats and drinking tea, while he dictated a letter in which he called the governor of Chaiapume a fool, and threatened to deprive him of his office, and of this letter I was to be the bearer; and he promised me another general one on the morrow, in which he stated that if I did not receive efficient aid it might bring on a war; [HD: i.e. with France who was then occupying Cochinchina] and this he also repeated to all the chiefs present. My cause was gained, and I could plainly see that our affairs must be going on well in Cochin China; the echo of the cannon had its effect in Siam. However, I had pro-
[260] mised him my gun, and evidently he wished to have it before he gave me the letters This morning, therefore, I took it to him all cleaned and furbished up. He was delighted with it, and gave me at once the letter for Korat and Chaiapume, and to-morrow I am to have one which will carry me all through Laos without any expense but a few ticals to the cornacs. [HD: i.e. elephant drivers] Without this, judging by what I had to pay for an elephant from Korat to Chaiapume, my purse would have been exhausted by the time I reached the north of Laos, and I should not have had the means of returning without

sending to Bangkok to ask for help, which would have been a work of difficulty, and, what is worse, I should have been exposed all along the route to the insolence of these arrogant mandarins. Now, they will all humble themselves before me, taking me for some important personage sent by the Emperor Napoleon or Queen Victoria to collect butterflies, insects, and birds for them. I shall no longer travel on foot, but on elephants, and shall want for nothing. Agree, then, with me, that out of evil comes good, or rather, that God does all for the best. When at Chaiapume I found myself obliged to retrace my steps, after so many fatigues, and so great a waste of money, I was only downcast for a few minutes; God almost immediately inspired me with the idea that all would turn to my advantage, and this persuasion never left me again. Unaccountably to myself, I was gayer on my return than I had been in coming, although then I was everywhere well received and kindly treated by the people. Even after my discourteous reception [HD: by the mandarin] at Chaiapume, all the inhabitants came to see me, to bring me little presents, and to express their regret that they could not aid me from fear of their chief. The head of the monastery took me to see some ruins similar to those in Cambodia, and gave me a tiger-skin; and all along the road I experienced the same kindness, and numbers came to me to ask for advice and various remedies."

68: Mouhot--276-277 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
Siam
116, 122, 174, 609, 631, 177.63
636.63

"Notwithstanding the small population of Korat, it is the chief town of a province, or rather an extensive state, containing eleven towns or boroughs, chief towns of districts, and a great number of villages, more or less populated. Fifteen days' [277] journey brings you from Korat to Bassac on the banks of the Mekon, and in the same latitude.

My intention was to proceed northwards, only stopping in the province of Louang Prabang, and then to descend the river as far as Cambodia. I hired elephants, and five days after, having passed through several villages inhabited by the descendants of ancient Siamese colonists who had taken refuge there in time of war, passing continually through forests of resin trees thinly scattered, I arrived at Ban Prang, a village where I discovered a ruined tower, and also the remains of an ancient temple. The next place I arrived at was Chaiapoune, the principal Laotian town in the north, and the chief town of the district. Here also I found ruins; but they were inconsiderable, and seemed more like a Laotian imitation than the work of Khmer Dôme. The inscriptions on the other temples in the province of Korat resemble those of Ongcor: here I found upon a block of broken slate-stone an inscription in Laotian characters, but which is unintelligible even to the inhabitants of the country. These, with some remains of idols and towers at the foot of a mountain in the district, were the only vestiges of that ancient

68: Mouhot--276-277 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 122, 174, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

civilization which I discovered in the north. Everything leads me to suppose that here also were the limits which separated the kingdom of Cambodia from that of Vieng Thiane, destroyed during the last war which the Siamese raised against the Western Laotians or white-bellies. It was in this district that I was stopped in my travels by the authorities of the country, who treated me with great rudeness, and who forbade the people to let me have any means of transport, even after seeing my passport. I was therefore obliged to retrace my steps, deploring the expense and loss of time in the best part of the year, and which will cause me serious inconvenience."

3: Robequain--5 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 175, 177.64 France
636.64

"Laos was the last great country to become part of French Indo-China. French influence there had spread gradually, coming first from Cambodia and then from Tonkin and Annam. This peaceful expansion is forever connected with the name of Pavie, the explorer who set out 'to conquer hearts.' Nevertheless, there were clashes with Siam which was eager to acquire all the countries where Thai dialects were spoken. The French protectorate over Laos was not established until the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, under which Siam renounced all claims to territory on the left bank of the Mekong."

7: Thompson--78-79 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 647, 177.64 France
636.64

"Laos offered a virgin field for Doumer's administrative experiments. In 1895, two years after its nominal occupation, Laos had been divided into two districts which corresponded to no geographic or economic reality. Moreover, the country was totally undeveloped, and Cochin-China, as usual, was called upon to subsidize the administrative expenses. In the final analysis, this country had administrators but no administration. It was rather vaguely hoped that the projected railroad system would eventually overcome Laos's [79] geographical barriers and arouse the country from its economic lethargy."

7: Thompson--368-369 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 647, 651, 177.64 France
636.64

"Though the year 1893 marked the nominal occupation of Laos, it was not until three years later that the country was organized administratively as Upper and Lower Laos. This division remained purely theoretical and it was modified in 1899, when both sections were united under a single Resident Superior and a single budget. The local organization was left as it was found, only the upper stratum of offices was changed. In this the French were inspired by their Siamese predecessors, who had respected native institutions, and also by budgetary considerations. Thirteen French Commissars, aided by native officials and the inevitable interpreters, exercised all powers with a tranquil disregard of Montesquieu's principles. A native guard was adequate to perform police service among such a placid people. Revenues came from the usual head tax paid by the male population in money and in kind, and the commutation of corvée duty, licences for foreign merchants, and an export tax. There was no land tax and only a local levy on the products of the soil. The indirect tax on opium was harder to collect because certain [369] tribes had always raised enough for their own needs. There was little increase in revenues despite the steady increase in population. The budget was poor and not properly drawn up, so it had to be regularly subsidized. Cochin-China, as usual, bore the brunt of this deficit."

7: Thompson--369-370 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians-
116, 647, 645, 653, 177.64 France
636.64

"The centralized administration of Laos was not only part of the French mania for simplification and uniformity, which for various [370] reasons had reached Laos later than elsewhere, but was primarily stimulated by the economic importance of Laos's mines and town building in the post-war period. The modernization of Vientiane was especially notable, for it had been buried under the jungle, 400 kilometres from the sea, and on an almost unnavigable river. When the potential wealth of the country became evident, the administration began to veer away from the Protectorate ideal to direct government, making tabula rasa of native institutions. Some Hanoi officials took it into their head to suppress the King of Luang-Prabang as an obstacle to transforming Laos into a bona-fide colony. Varenne had the good sense to recognize how much the Laotians venerated their king, and so he rescued his throne from the assimilationist peril. The Protectorate was saved, and to push Laos farther along the trail blazed by Annam and Cambodia, a native advisory assembly was given to the country in 1929, and a mixed Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, both of which recently sent delegates to the Grand Conseil. The process can only fully develop when the rail and road network is completed--that administrative pipe-dream linking Laos to the rest of the Union--which in 1936 looked perilously near fulfilment. An unfortunate corollary is that the forty-year tariff freedom of Laos, a miracle in French colonization, died in 1932 with the growth of the Siamese and Indo-Chinese railroad construction."

7: Thompson--369 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 647, 652, 671, 177.64 France
636.64

"Of the budget expenditures one per cent was allotted to road building, when paths were almost non-existent in Laos. Fifty per cent of the revenues was absorbed by the administration. A subsidy to the company that navigated the Mekong cost 350,000 francs: the total revenues were 600,000, and all for the occasional transportation of the hundred European residents and their mail. The Laotians were much too amiable and indolent to protest against this state of affairs. They were a charming people, who knew nothing of French civilization but the pleasure of paying taxes. They asked little and so they got little. If this were true of the Laotians it was even more so of the mountain peoples. The country was administered as if it were exclusively inhabited by Laotians. The codes, and the mandarins who applied them, were Laotian. The Provincial Council, long the sole representative organization, had no delegate from the mountaineers. Buddhists were given a monopoly of the education, though the Yaos were Confucianist and the Khas fetishists. The administration concentrated on the valley-bound Laotians and ignored the scattered mountain peoples, who differed radically in religion, language, and customs. The Meos's reaction to the Laotians was shown by the massacre of 1920."

10: d'Orleans--298-299 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 208, 647, 651 177.64 France
636.64

"To revert to Luang Prabang, we have a Vice-Consul there, or rather an agent, for he has not got an exequatur. Assisted by twelve interpreters, he does wonders with the limited means at his disposal, but as he is generally short of money and is obliged to borrow from the Chinese to pay the staff, he cannot do much to uphold French interests. The most he can do is to keep up the few friends whom he has gained for us by his personal influence and winning ways. For his title of French agent weighs as nothing in the balance compared to his personal popularity, so that he is seconded but not feared, for it is known that he cannot speak out, that his threats will remain a dead letter, that he is not backed up, and that the Foreign Office seems indifferent to the Mekong question. Compare our mode of action to that of the English in Xieng Maï, a Laos State bordering on Burmah and similarly situated to Luang Prabang. At Xieng Maï there is a consul with an exequatur, that is to say duly recognized by the native Government and his own, well [299] paid and backed up by his superiors, having under his own orders several thousand British protégés and holding very much the same position as the Siamese Commissioner here, this latter being everything while we are nothing."

23: Franck--281-282 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 144, 644, 177.64 France
636.64

"The huge commissaire, now half invalid but still a great force in his province, and beloved apparently by all classes of its residents, was a survival of the earlier colonial days, when a man in his present position was virtually king [282] of all he surveyed. His half-dozen pure-blooded dogs all wore stout canvas pants to assure their offspring against mixture with the local mongrel breed. But some officials had not taken the same precautions with themselves, and had several brown-complexioned children at school in Hanoi, though they were bachelors."

23: Franck--303 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 175, 648, 177.64 France
636.64

"The same altruism and love of their fellow-man that has given the French the arduous task of protecting the rest of Indo-China led to their present position in the affairs of Laos. About the time the Chinese from Yünnan were pillaging Luang Prabang kingdom a Frenchman named Pavie was sent there on a mission. The father of the present king, born Tiao Kham Souk, who lived from 1837 until 1904 and reigned under the name of Ritthithamaronjsac--though he was more popularly known as King Zacharine, and probably not entirely on account of his sweet disposition--was an absolute despot, descended from a long direct line of similar rulers. For the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha has been a kingdom as far back as the memory of its people goes. Zacharine became a great friend of Pavie, at least according to such data as was available in the French government offices of Luang Prabang, and when the Siamese failed to protect him, as they had promised, against the Chinese, he went to Siam under Pavie's wing; and later, in a quarrel with the Siamese, who had burned and looted and carried off most of the people of Vientiane and Xieng Khuang, he made the mistake, like his royal neighbors of Annam and Cambodia, of calling in the French. By 1893 Siam had been compelled to give up all claim to this ancient kingdom and to the magnificent highlands of Tran-ninh, and all Laos became a European dependency under the protection of France."

73: Hammer--240 S-4 (no date) 1951 Laotians
116, 642, 648, 727, 177.64 France
636.64

"In Laos, as in Vietnam, the Chinese occupation had provided a protective screen behind which a nationalist regime had consolidated itself in power. A Free Laotian movement forced the abdication of King Sisavong Vong, set up its own more representative government, and then brought him back to the throne as the constitutional leader of an independent country. Only after the Chinese withdrew could the French return to Laos, and the Chinese troops were in no haste to leave. China did not withdraw the last of its troops from Indochina until midsummer of 1946. The French promised Laos, as they had Cambodia, to restore the areas taken by Thailand in 1941; (8) and in both countries they

8. On November 17, 1946 the French signed an agreement to this effect with Thailand in regard to both Laotian and Cambodian territory.

played upon the fear of Vietnamese and Thai aggression. On August 27, 1946 they signed an agreement with Laos (recognizing the union of the country under Sisavong Vong, formerly king only of Luang Prabang) much like that with Cambodia, by which they restored the prewar protectorate in modifiedbut not radically changed form."

6: Goudal--5 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-1-4
116, 101, 161, 141, 463, 177.65 France
636.65

"The Tai are of Mongolian race. They came from China and formed various groups, including the Laotians (and the Siamese) and the predominant ethnical group in Upper Tonking. Their numbers are assessed at a million. They are of less than average height (1.59 metres). As a people they are very gay and hospitable. Like the Cambodians, the Laotians are Buddhists, but their religious sense goes hand in hand with very great moral freedom. They are indifferent farmers but engage frequently in fishing and hunting and are excellent boatmen. As traders they possess remarkable qualities.

For a long time the Laotian was considered as an apathetic creature, hating all effort and anxious only to enjoy the present without worrying about the morrow or without trying to improve his moral well-being or his material existence by persevering labour. It cannot be denied that this people, whose country was repeatedly laid waste throughout the centuries by invasions from the north and the west, seemed at the time of our arrival in Indo-China to be doomed to decadence. . . At the present time the country has roads and tracks, and its doors are open to commercial and industrial undertakings which have already done much for the development of the land and its mineral wealth. The local authorities have no difficulty in securing the very active co-operation of the inhabitants in the contruction of roads and tracks. . . The legend

of the Laotian as an idle creature, exercising passive resistance to any attempt to make use of his intelligence or his physical labour, had disappeared. Far from taking no interest in public welfare as was long asserted, the Laotians on the contrary seem to take a lively interest in it, and in particular in the progress of the development of the country and of the schools and medical institutions that are being established. (2)

2. Léon Archimbaud: Rapport au nom de la Commission des finances sur le budget général des Colonies (1928), pp. 88-89. This point of view is confirmed by the following statement:

'It has been repeatedly alleged that the Laotian abhors work and does only what is strictly necessary to provide for his own needs and for those of his family. He is said to have two serious defects: a very idle mind and a hatred of effort. This view is mistaken. It is certainly true that there is a certain fundamental apathy and indolence about the Laotian but this can be quite naturally explained by his background and the circumstances

in which his material existence has so far been passed.

'Times have now changed, the country is entirely pacified and war and piracy are merely a memory. . . . Exports of raw materials which were practically non-existent a mere 15 years ago are now increasing rapidly and this is clearly proof that the Laotian worker is not, as has been said, indifferent to gain, but that he can collaborate effectively with the settlers.

'The whole question is one of making use of his services in a manner suited to his special mentality, customs, qualities and defects. It is essential to treat him fairly and kindly; his intelligence and his docility of character enable him to adapt himself gradually to modern working methods. The tin mines in the province of Cammon have for several years been employing Laotian workers who have proved completely satisfactory both for mining the ore and for its treatment.

'Similarly, in connection with road making, in Upper and Lower Laos groups of workers have been used for cutting down

trees and clearing away stumps and undergrowth in the heart of a mountainous country where conditions of work are difficult and resources are slight. Under the skilful direction of our administrators and engineers the use of Laotian labour has proved satisfactory in almost every case.' (M. Bosc: Rapport d'ensemble sur le Laos. Conference on Native Communities held at the International Colonial Exhibition, Paris, 1931.)"

10: d'Orleans--268 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 166, 651, 177.65 Siam
636.65

"Fishing is one of the principal resources of the inhabitants of the valley of Nam Ou; they are forced to turn everything into money, for they are crushed by the taxes imposed upon them by Siam. The village, on the right bank, in which we spend the night, is inhabited by some people from Traniuh, who tell us that they left their homes three years ago on account of the cholera, they came to Luang Prabang in five nights, and from there they have come up here; but they do not appear to have gained any advantage from their change of place; they have fled from the frying-pan into the fire, for their new conquerors make each man pay eight rupees a year poll tax; they can remember a time before these heavy burdens were laid upon them, but now they can never satisfy the revenue collectors. A great many of them are forced to sell all their possessions."

10: d'Orleans--296-297 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 208, 647, 651 177.65 Siam
636.65

"We find that a people is being formed; if there is not a sentiment of nationality the governing power is becoming autocratic and an administrative centralization is being effected to its profit, under the control and the direction of the Siamese. The local rulers are in communication with Bangkok, even if they have not been on a visit there; they are learning to appreciate luxury, and they are upon the point of arming their troops with European weapons, of increasing their effective, and lending aid to the forces of the invaders. In order to obtain these charming results of what may be called 'the new civilisation,' much money is needed, but if the king's expenditure has increased it has not been so with the earnings of the people. The latter were not consulted when a tax was put upon opium 'for their good,' when the tchoum-tchoum was made a monopoly, or when a capitation tax of eight rupees for each man and six for each woman was imposed. The consequence is that they are discontented and unable to make any further payments, mandarins from all parts of the kingdom writing that the villagers are willing enough to come to the capital and take the oath, but empty-handed. Last year several had to sell what they possessed, and now they are endeavouring to borrow, and are murmuring [297] against those who have ruined them. The peasants bow the head in subjection because they see no liberator; but the first man who comes forward with some arms and a relatively small sum of money, in order to drive out the Siamese, may be assured of encountering an enthusiastic and almost unanimous welcome from the population."

7: Thompson--370 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 671, 177.67 France
636.67

"Justice has followed in the wake of the Laotian administration. At first it was left almost untouched, with Laotian codes and magistrates, even for the mountain peoples. In 1900 the Resident Superior, Tournier, made a first tentative translation of some Laotian laws, but he found them so incomplete and so poorly organized that the work was temporarily abandoned. In 1908 Sallé, a Saigon magistrate, took up the task. Beginning with the kingdom of Luang-Prabang he promulgated three codes of civil and criminal law and procedure. Then new texts were discovered, which necessitated more study from 1917 to 1922, when another code was promulgated. It was this time very complete, in fact too complete for the type of judge who applied it. Simplification was needed for their understanding as well as for the illiterate masses. A modified version was put out in 1928, but the following year it was again changed. As in Cambodia and Annam, the problem of discovering, understanding, translating, re-organizing, and harmonizing native law with some basic principles of Western legislation is so delicate that it requires an enormous amount of time and experimentation."

7: Thompson--371 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 563, 661, 671, 177.67 France
636.67

"Nowadays the code of Vientiane or of Luang-Prabang is applied to the Thai peoples and to certain Kha tribes; Burmese custom law to the Lus in Muong Sing; and their particular customs to the other ethnical groups--all under magistrates of their own people. The judgments of these courts are examined by the French authorities. This is not a useless precaution, as often the judges themselves are in a quandary about interpreting their laws and traditions. Moreover, the venality of these judges passes all understanding. If the native appears without offerings appropriate to his station and that of the judge, he is lost. Undoubtedly with time the specialization of magistrates, with guarantees in salary and promotion, will obviate the most flagrant of these evils."

7: Thompson--370-371 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 692, 177.69 France
636.69

"The Resident Superior is at the head of native justice, which is administered by native magistrates under the control of French ad-[371]ministrators. As yet there is no specialization of administrative and judicial powers, since magistrates are taken from the civil service. The general organization of the courts resembles that of the other countries of the Union. Unimportant cases are settled by the heads of the villages and cantons. Important suits are sent to the provincial courts, which are presided over by the administrative head of the province and native judges. A higher court judges appeals from the provincial courts and is placed under the Resident Superior, French, and native judges. Wholly French courts exist for European cases."

10: d'Orleans--265 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
~~116, 177~~ 70 Siam
636.70

"A Siamese lieutenant, in a yellow silk jacket, white cotton drawers, bare legs, and slippers, invites us to tea at his house. He inquires our names, and promises us some fresh pirogues for the continuation of our voyage. I take advantage of this visit to glance at the armoury of the post. It includes about a dozen rifles of all kinds for percussion caps, Remingtons, Thaï, Laotian, &c."

10: d'Orleans--301 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 644, 701, 177.70

"The Laos army is kept up at a very slight cost, there being only, apart from the Siam troops, a royal corps, dressed in European style and armed with rapid-firing rifles. The rest of the men are supplied in the event of war, by the villages with their own form of weapon, and they are not likely to be dangerous opponents for a long time to come, as shown by the way in which they fled before the soldiers of Deo Van Tri."

10: d'Orleans--258 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 712, 177.71 Siam
636.71

[LSS: at Sop Nao] "Accompanied by Takiate, I repair to the Siamese post, which is formed of a collection of huts rather larger than the others, surrounded by a palisade; there is no flag, but a great many women and dogs. The garrison consists of twelve men, in European clothes made of strong linen, and armed with Remingtons. The officer in charge invites me to sit down and take tea with him. He tells me that the boats are ready, and promises to give us a letter for the chief of Muong Ngoi."

10: d'Orleans--268 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 609, 727, 177.72 Siam
636.72

"At first they refuse to let us have any provisions, and as we are now without food I am reduced to extreme measures. The villagers assert that they have neither fowls nor eggs in the place.

'If you do not rear poultry,' I reply, 'we may consider that all we find are wild birds,' and I tell the interpreter to open a hen-house and take out two chickens, offering fifteen pence for them, which is, of course, accepted. When the owners have once examined the coins, sounded them and found them good, they regain confidence and bring us some eggs. Their distrust arises from the proceedings of the Siamese soldiers, who, as they travel, requisition everything they require without any payment; the villagers thought that we might do the same, but now they realize that we are honest people."

10: d'Orleans--292-294 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-4
116, 648, 721, 177.72 France
636.72

"Without seeking to undertake an historical work, which would carry us too far, we have only to glance over some of the old maps to find the justification for that phrase of Garnier's which should have been the groundwork of our policy in this region. 'What we had to do was to make the king of Luang Prabang feel that a day might come when we should take up the rights exercised over his principality by the Court of Hué, which has now become once more our vassal. Unfortunately, the Siamese, whose influence had extended, after 1838 (2) towards Luang Prabang, came and [293] established

2. According to Hallett (A Thousand Miles on an Elephant, p. 201), the Shan States of Vienchang and of Luang Prabang became tributary to Siam. The Siamese authority in the Shan States consisted in arranging their external affairs and sanctioning the nomination of their chiefs. In return for the protection of Siam against the foreign invaders, three States consented to send a triennial tribute, consisting of gold and silver boxes, chased cellarettes and salt-cellars, as well as gold and silver trees worth from fifteen to thirty-five pounds each. To these statements of Hallett as to the early date at which Luang Prabang bebecame tributary to Siam, I would rejoin that the chronicles of Luang Prabang, which have been consulted by M. Pavie, do not contain any

allusions to Siam at an earlier period than the last half-century. The Lai' chronicle, to which I referred above when dealing with Deo Van Tri, only alluded to the state of dependency in which the King of Luang Prabang stood with regard to Annam.

M. Deschanel would seem to have anticipated the views suggested, if not openly expressed by Hallett, Colquhoun and Lord Lamington, when he wrote in 1885: 'The day that England seizes Burmah, our authority in the eastern part of the Indo-Chinese peninsula will receive a severe shock. If we do not take our precautions (in the Upper Laos) the English, once established at Xieng Mai' (in Siamese Laos) will be masters, morally speaking, of the valley of the Mekong and the important position of Luang Prabang, which was tributary to Annam. Thus cut off from the great river, in danger of seeing England secure the protectorate of Siam, our situation in Indo-China will be very much weakened.'--Compare Garnier above,

10: d'Orleans--292-294 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-3
116, 648, 721, 177.72 France
636.72

themselves there for good a few years ago, when they learnt that the French were approaching from the direction of Tonquin. I have already related, when speaking of Deo Van Tri, the ambush set for his brothers, the Siamese officers being accompanied by an Englishman, one McCarthy, who, with another of his compatriots, had been appointed agent at Luang Prabang. I have also referred to the meeting of French and Siamese troops in the plain of Theng, and the retreat of the latter. We were not able to push on any further, for the aged king of Luang Prabang, who [294] had at one time hoped to be backed up by our arms, foresaw the policy of non-intervention and excessive prudence which would be impressed upon our officers. He recognised that the valiant champions of our colonial extension would have their hands tied and that it would be no use reckoning upon us. 'The Siamese are coming up,' he said to Dr. Neis; 'we are lost.'

As a matter of fact, while we were standing still, the Siamese were advancing, and it is easy to understand the political course followed by the Court of Bangkok; as long as it is left free, it is always marching forward, occupying advance posts, sometimes with only seven or eight militia men, but still making a reality of its occupation. But for Colonel Pennequin, Theng would have fared no better than all the important centres upon the Mekong as far as Cambodia and than several towns between the coast and the river; one can feel that these Siamese troops, when they are on the march, have behind them

10: d'Orleans--292-294 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-4
116, 648, 721, 177.72 France
636.72

the moral if not the effective support of intelligent and fearless persons, who are used to getting their way by firm speaking, the only obstacles which they are likely to encounter from European nations being idle diplomatic protests."

25: Brodrick--93-94 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-2
116, 177.72 France
636.72

"The immediate cause of the extension of French influence over the Upper Laos was the invasion of Luang-Prabang by Siamese troops in 1855, at a time when the French were, with great difficulty, forcing their protectorate upon the realm of the Annamese ruler. It was not until 1893 that the French demanded the withdrawal of the Siamese troops. A French flotilla threatened Bangkok. The Siamese then abandoned all claims to Laotian lands on the left bank of the Mekong, and in 1907 evacuated the Luang-Prabang territories on the right bank. A series of quarrels, bickerings and pin-pricks [94] between British and French concerning the Burmese frontier was finally settled by the Anglo-French Convention of 1896.

The French owe their Laotian protectorate more to Auguste Pavie, a Breton, who landed as a marine N.C.O. at Saigon in 1869, than to any other one man. Pavie, a bright lad, qualified as a telegraph officer and travelled far and wide in Cambodia learning the language and getting to know the people. Le Myre de Vilars, the first civilian to govern Cochin-China for the French, sent Pavie up the Mekong on a mission of exploration, and in 1885 secured his nomination as consul at Luang-Prabang. Pavie gained the confidence of the Laotians, took sides in natives' disputes and induced the Luang-Prabang ruler to ask for French 'protection.' Later, as French representative at Bangkok, Pavie led the negotiations preceding the Franco-Siamese Convention. The

25: Brodrick--93-94 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-2
116, 177.72 France
636.72

ex-N.C.O. had made good and, of course, was quite forgotten by his fellow-countrymen when he died in 1895.

He had given his country a vast territory over one-third the size of France."

23: Franck--301 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 657, 779, 177.77 France
636.77

"But the French do not insist on imposing their religious beliefs on their wards and colonies. In Luang Prabang they go so far as to provide for the up-keep of the temples and monasteries in the annual governmental budget. In a way this is a means of supporting the educational system, for the priests act as schoolmasters to their novices. In great contrast to China, there is not a single Christian missionary in all the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha, not even a Catholic priest."

25; Brodrick--104 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 779, 177.79 France
636.79

"In the kingdom of Luang-Prabang there is no doubt that Little Vehicle is the state religion. We have seen how royally and respectfully. H. M. King Sisavang Vong received the Venerable Narada and his slip of the sacred Bodhi Tree. [HD: see category 116, p. 62-63] And the efforts of the French administration to purge the practice and reform the discipline of the monks was mildly successful in the Laos though not so obvious as in Cambodia. Still, the Laotians are difficult to coerce."

7: Thompson--376-377 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 814, 177.81 France
636.81

"The tempo of France's political and economic penetration of Laos has been so much slower than elsewhere in the peninsula that the intellectual counterpart inevitably lagged ever farther behind. Naturally, the [377] first work accomplished was of a practical nature. Massie, of the Pavie Mission, wrote a dictionary in 1890-91, that included some 1,300 words, designed to aid French officials and merchants adrift in Thai countries. He found the language very simple, unlike the complexities of Annamite, and estimated only a year's study necessary for a relative mastery of it."

7: Thompson--377 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 484, 815, 177.81 France
636.81

"Laos has offered a rich field to scientists. Henri Mouhot was its first scientific explorer, and he was followed by others, chiefly zoologists. The Lagrée Mission continued this work, as did Dr. Harmand, who made a great collection there on his 1872-78 series of explorations. Pierre's work on the forest flora of Laos has been perhaps the greatest single scientific achievement."

7: Thompson--377 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 871, 177.87 France
636.87

"Much too small a sum has been allotted to education in the Laotian budget. Even elementary instruction is confined to the chief towns of the country and to the inadequate pagoda schools. Following the success of utilizing the Khmer bonzes as intermediaries, the French tried a similar policy in Laos with much less good fortune. To begin with, it gave the monopoly of education to the bonzes in a country not by any means wholly Buddhistic. The result has been that the mountain peoples remain quite illiterate. The French, in their love of simplification and uniformity, enjoy giving to a formula, which happened to succeed under one set of circumstances, an unjustifiably universal significance. As elsewhere in Indo-China, Laos has suffered from the assimilationist tendency to train natives for menial government service, as clerks and interpreters, by means of a French programme of studies that uproots its Asiatic victims spiritually from their setting. Only in Laos, through negligence or indifference on the part of both French and Laotians, this occurred much later. In 1928, however, Pasquier, on a tour in Laos, was horrified to hear a teacher expounding to his youthful pupils such irrelevant material as the French Wars of Religion."

7: Thompson--378 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 872, 874, 177.87 France
636.87

"In 1931 the government reluctantly pulled itself together to remedy an admittedly bad situation. Certain provinces and certain bonzes were selected as fields for experimentation. An itinerant teacher was sent around to the pagoda schools to conduct model classes with a very simple programme, as a practical demonstration before the bonzes. Blackboards, textbooks, and chalk were doled out to these schools, which had heretofore lacked even such elementary equipment. Bonzes were asked to report semi-annually on the number and progress of their pupils. Slowly an examination was organized with a certificate, so as to set up some standard and to stimulate the sluggish Laotian zeal for knowledge. The problem of further training for bonzes is delicate. The idea of a small scale Normal School was again revived in 1932, and attempts were made to avoid some of the pitfalls which had doomed earlier experiments. The majority of bonzes still could not teach either reading or writing. They were less than half-hearted in falling in with the government's ideas, and would break training at the slightest provocation, thus automatically condemning their schools. The new courses are more modern in method, more prudent in application, and more successful in their results than the old, but it is too soon as yet to draw any conclusions about that elusive and infinitesimal effort known as Laotian education. Less than 300 schools teach fewer than 7,000 pupils in French Laos."

7: Thompson--373 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
177, 534

"The few instruments that exist, notably the khène, are of Malayan or Chinese origin."

7: Thompson--376 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 177, 167, 186, 464

"It is obvious that the future development of the country, as in Cambodia, cannot depend on any but imported labour. As ever, it is the prolific and industrious Chinese and Annamites who are flowing into Laos to the economic betterment of the land, but equally to the moral distress of its people. Middle Laos, from Savannakhet to Vientiane, is the region most subject to infiltration. Upper and Lower Laos will probably be cut apart by a wedge of foreign colonizers. The French cannot but favour this immigration. Laos is a terrestrial paradise offering an easy living, undisputed by the timid Laotians, to the miserable Annamites from the over-crowded Tonkinese delta. The Laotians, like the Khmers, prefer to withdraw rather than to struggle with their old enemies. A terse Laotian proverb crystallizes this ancient antagonism: 'Dog and cat, Annamite and Laotian.' In addition to taking their land and their women the Annamite has introduced vices like gaming and theft, and diseases like tuberculosis and syphilis. The contempt of the industrious and formalistic Annamite for the lazy and carefree Laotian is only matched by the latter's impotent hatred. Yet the evil is without remedy. Rich, unoccupied land will inevitably attract an industrious and prolific people like the Annamites, who are able and willing to do what Laotians cannot and will not do."

7: Thompson--380 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 177, 797

"The missionaries, even if they made little headway in conversions, enjoy great moral influence in Laos, especially among the mountain peoples, to whom they teach new methods of agriculture, in addition to their medical, educational, and Scriptural activities. These primitive peoples do not differentiate between spiritual and temporal authorities, and often use the missionary as intermediary with the administration. These regions are so remote, and their economic and political importance so obviously relegated to the future, that the Mission has not encountered there the anti-clerical opposition that existed for so long in Annamite countries."

10: d'Orleans--277 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 124, 177, 192, 563, 802 Ethnic subgroups

"I am trying to make a lexicon of their [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] language; they answer us, but sometimes we have a great deal of trouble in hearing what they say, and particularly in separating the affixes or suffixes, with which they can surround the same word. I notice the absence of special names for certain classes of things; they have no word for bread and the names of the numerals, except the four first, are borrowed from the Laotians; lastly mother is called ma, the word in general use amongst nearly all the peoples of the world, perhaps because it is the first sound that a newborn infant instinctively produces, when it requires food."

10: d'Orleans--354 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 177, 565, 644

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"After a few more prayers in the pagoda, he [LSS: the king] returns home, preceded by his courtiers who are dressed in the Laos fashion, like the rest of the people, without any distinguishing sign, and who carry cups, boxes, a teapot, and other articles all of wrought gold, and most of them given by the King of Siam. It is surprising to notice side by side with these a small yellow tin box containing clothes, a French deal box, painted to represent carriages and horses, a phial containing scent, and a crystal bottle such as one may see in a hairdresser's shop. All this is indicative of what must happen in a country which is overrun, as this one will be, by the bad taste of what I may call a cheap and nasty civilisation. [sic] "

23: Franck--337-338 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 177, 291, 304, 644 Ethnic subgroup

"The prince had only to order the village chief, or the inhabitants themselves, to furnish new carriers, however, and they were soon there, though from then on we changed as often as we came to a village, sometimes two or three times a day. The coolies still seemed to be Kha, but they were men who had come into more contact with the outside world than those who had been with me all that strenuous Sunday, and they had lost some of the ornaments, simplicity, and politeness. Perhaps they were [338] not Kha at all, for they had all sorts of tattooing, and some of them had raised welts, like the bush negroes of Dutch Guiana. Each man according to his fancy wore a kind of kilt that was really a mere strip of cloth wound about him from waist to knees. Now and then we passed a woman on a journey, in a costume in which she would not have been unnoticed on Broadway, wearing earrings, neck-rings, two bracelets on each arm, and a barrel-shaped strip of cloth from nipples to knees, and carrying her bed and belongings, consisting of a sack hanging down from her forehead and on her back a rolled-up grass or reed mat on which to spend her virtuous nights."

25: Brodrick--94 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 177

"The cultural influence of Annam (and of China) upon the Laotians has been negligible, whereas that of Siam, and, indeed, of Burma have been far-reaching. It is, in fact, difficult to unravel, in this timeless land, what is Laotian and what is foreign, what is of ancient adoption and what is comparatively late importation. Still, despite the evidence you see all round you of non-Laotian styles in architecture, of custom and of ceremony, you never feel in the Land of the Laos that you are in Siam or Cambodia; there is something distinctively peculiar in the country, and it may well be that the nonchalant Laotians, in letting foreign influence run over them, have kept themselves essentially intact. In any case, as far as the externals of civilization are concerned, it is India and not China which is present in this last outpost of Indian culture on the mainland of Asia."

25: Brodrick--109 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 177, 346, 532

"The Phra-Keo Pagoda or Temple of the Emerald Buddha, [HD: in Vientane] is, by tradition, supposed to have been founded in A.D. 814, but it was razed by the Siamese and the Emerald Buddha was carried off to Bangkok where it may still be admired in its gorgeous temple. Needless to say, the Emerald Buddha is not carved out of emerald. It is fashioned in green jasper and is undoubtedly of Laotian workmanship, for the image, as you can behold it in the Siamese capital, has a most Laotian face, vehement, cunning and, it may be, lecherous.

The sight of Vientiane to-day is the That-Luong. This large stupa is some mile and a half outside the city and is set in a palm grove. The buildings seem to date from about 1567 and were put up to shelter a relic of the Buddha. The sanctuary was spared by the Siamese. However, in 1874, the Chinese Yünnan land-pirates, who feared neither God nor man, plundered and ravaged the shrine. It was botched up unskilfully, but a few years ago, was restored to its pristine appearance through the efforts of the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient. The stupa not only shows the curious bulbous spire we noted at Luang-Prabang, but the whole place is uncommonly complicated in plan. It is surrounded by a cloister in the Siamese mode and the stupa itself rises from a series of rectangular terraces set round with numerous pinnacles joined together by an arcade."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

A DRAGON APPARENT

000 eventually to the Buddhas to solicit their curative powers; and if so what we should learn from it about the prevalence of disease among Europeans.

217 The museum of Vientiane, which I visited in the hope of learning
532 something of the living art of the country, has also little more to
771 show than a collection of Buddhas. There is a tranquillity, a lack of compulsion in the Hinayanist Buddhism of Cambodia and Laos — so different from the neurotic deformation practised by the later Khmer kings — which is not propitious to the development of religious art. There was no violence or drama in the life of Buddha comparable to that of Christ, and the Indian Epics have been eschewed in Laos as improperly secular. It has been enough to carve Buddhas, and more Buddhas *ad infinitum*, seeking perhaps to multiply in this way the magic virtues which each image contains. The curator takes you round, explaining the characteristic postures — there are seven or eight — all of which can be appreciated in five minutes. After that there are minute differences of physique and physiognomy to be noted that reflect the influences of India, of Java, of Thibet or of Ceylon. That is all.

177 By the time the museums turn to the art of the people, the
532 grotesque animals in bamboo, the carved movable figures which
782 are obscene to European eyes — all of which become a pagan burnt-offering at the end of each *boun*[1] — it will be too late. The microphone is an infallible sign of what is to come. Nothing of this kind will survive the era of materialism, under whatever form it arrives.

253 *These are the sights of Vientiane*, but in addition there is a
825 spectacle which is popular with Europeans, who, remote, isolated, and living under difficulties, tend to shut themselves up within the protective social rituals of people in exile.

This spectacle is the slaughterhouse at work. I do not know whether or not it is illegal in Laotian law to kill animals, but certainly it is thought shameful, and the killing for Europeans is done at the dead of night on the outskirts of the town. The

[1] [Laotian religious festival. -- Analyst]

a certain basic licentiousness and is accented by a final sharp 533
cheer; and the singsong in the strict sense which has no great development and to which were applied words, at the whim of the man or woman singing, to celebrate a welcome or any kind of event (1).

1. M. Galerne, op. cit. /Courrier musical, 1925/

Here is one of the love songs, "from which springs all the sentimentally exquisite poetry of the Laotian soul":

The moon is rising; come, o my beloved, and speak to us under the rays of the twinkling star;

O flowers, which exhale your pure perfumes at this hour, come and tell me of his good qualities;

O my heart, why do you beat so strong?

I think of my beloved.

Come, come quickly; I am alone under the roof of my house; why do you leave me thus?

I am languishing, my beloved. Come, then, and press this heart which beats so strongly for you and ask it for the essence of my thoughts.

Come, come quickly.

/123/ Page 123 is devoted to an illustration: "A khene player." -- Translator/ /124/

We must regretfully cut short this rapid excursion into the melodious garden of these people who are instinctively artistic and who lost the joy of living together with their independence through the fault of their leaders' tearing one another to pieces, and also because there cannot for long be any place here below for individuals, as well as for peoples, whom the Germans themselves, although they are nevertheless deeply musical, have scornfully called "mandolin players" (1).

1. The Laotian theater scarcely deserves mention. It de- 545
rives exclusively from the Cambodian and Siamese theater /177/
and is likewise made up of extremely long plays -- epics, warrior legends and romances, and religious tales taken from the Vedas, the Ramayana or the Mahabharata. "To this repertoire are joined the purely Kmer plays and various adaptations of Burmese origin, which are played in classical costumes and in which a good bit of comedy and modernism

545 and a barb of satire are mingled with the ancient traditions."
●/177/ (L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 191.)

341 The other arts: architecture. Carefree artists: this is what the
346 Laotians seem to have been throughout the ages. And this is what
172 explains the extreme fragility of the innumerable monuments with which they adorned their land and which the pitiless tropical vegetation is today strangling for the most part. Under the Kmer influence
/177/ in the south and the Burmese in /125/ the north they built temples, chapels, pagoda-libraries, and reliquaries in the shape of "lotus blossoms" or pyramids or cones which were without any originality of their own but almost always charming in the grace, prettiness and elegance of their details. The reigning princes, from Fa-Ngoun to Souligna, were all great builders of temples, but if we except three or four edifices in Luang-Prabang, a few pagodas and chapels, the That-Luong in Vientiane and the Vat Sisaket which is only a century old, practically nothing is left of this abundant flowering (1).

1. There can be no question here of the important monastery of Vat-Phou (Bassac), which is really Kmer and belongs in some way to the Angkor group.

Everywhere in Laos one encounters impressive ruins of brick pagodas which were clumsily built but in which the plaster which covered them still frames the openings with many-colored ornaments and exquisite arabesques. For several years the French have tried, albeit somewhat tardily, to save the chief of these mutilated vestiges of an Edenic past from total destruction. Even the Vat Prakeo itself is today, alas! irrevocably destined to final disintegration.

"More fragile still (was) the style of building /126/ in wood which may well have yielded the most beautiful of the country's achievements. One of the most interesting of these exists today only in the memory which was recorded by a drawing of Delaporte at the time of the expedition of Doudart de Lagree... This was a pagoda located in the vicinity of Luang-Prabang... its form was highly individual, and reminds one of a feeding trough or a bread-pan. Delaporte compares it to an Oriental tomb. Rectangular in shape, its walls flared out up to the first roof. The latter was surmounted by a second recessed story which flared out again to support a second richly ornamented roof..."

115: Le Boulanger--81 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

"The wooden panels which formed the walls, the corbels, and 341
the beams were all carved with great delicacy. This pagoda was 346
as pretty in the fineness of its details as it was elegant in its gen- 172
eral lines.

"But nothing is left of it" (1).

1. Cf. G. Maspero, L'Indochine /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930/, p. 186.

Sculpture. For these sanctuaries, the Laotians made hordes of 532
statues out of stone, brick, and especially bronze, which were 175
wholly or partly covered with gold. Of the latter, which were al-
ways molded from wax models, some attained gigantic size. /127/
All of them strike the various attitudes of the Buddhist liturgy. The
bodies are sketchily draped and may be seated, standing, walking
or lying down, their arms outspread. The faces are surmounted by
a sort of tiara and are frozen in a hieratic smile which is not very
expressive and seldom varies.

Painting. As for the fresco paintings which brighten the walls
of certain pagodas, they are not of any special interest. Most of /177/
them were "primarily the work of Burmese, Cambodians or Chinese
of whom the native artists (were only) the pupils" (1).

1. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 342.

The art of the gold and silver smith. On the other hand, the 326
Laotian jewelers and silversmiths knew and still know, with only
the most meager of tools, how to work gold and silver admirably--
primarily silver--and how to chase and engrave it. Their motifs
show an attractive decorative invention, and it is chiefly in this
"minor art" which borders on small-scale industry that we find the
most original manifestations of old-time Laotian life /128/ --
betel services, vases, cups, sword and dagger hilts; bracelets,
necklaces, rings, headpins, earrings, etc.

Basketwork and weaving. Finally, "like all the peoples of the 285
Far East, the Laotians are skilled in all kinds of basketwork. A 531
very pretty object which seems to be peculiar to this land is the
small basket for women in which the basketwork is covered with

175* /139/ Lan-Na (Xieng-Mai and its dependencies of Xieng-Khong
101 and Muong-Nan), an age-old battlefield and crossroads of all the Burmese, Laotian and Siamese expeditions, lived in permanent dread of new conflicts, and its princes owed their continued existence only to the multitude of competitors who vied with one another for an alliance with them.

The former Dai-co-Viet had given way to the kingdom of Annam, which was in full expansion to the south.

The lords of Hue had accomplished their conquest of the Chams. They had settled at Phan-Ri (1692), had gained a foothold in Cochinchina and had driven the Cambodians from Saigon (1698). Finally, their influence had crossed the mountains in the east ever since their troops had entered victorious with Ong-Hue into Vientiane, which was henceforth to owe them the tribute of vassaldom.

As for the Siamese of Ayuthya, who were favored by the accessibility of their territory to the sea and hardened by the desperate battles which they had waged for their existence, they were solidly established in the whole lower basin of the Menam. After striking a mortal blow at the power of Angkor and shaking off the Burmese yoke, they experienced an era of remarkable prosperity all through the seventeenth century. Encouraged by their kings, they
/177/ formed /140/ trade relations abroad, particularly with Europe, and
● were the first in the peninsula to undergo Western influence.

Their capital became covered with palaces, princely residences, vast gardens and sumptuous temples in the number of more than three hundred. The many travel accounts which have come down to us all mention the considerable growth of Ayuthya, which spread at this time over an island "seven leagues around." Wide, straight paved streets crossed numerous quarters which were peopled with Europeans, Malays, Chinese, Japanese, Hindus and even Pegouans. Vaulted bridges made of brick crossed the natural canals criss-crossing the city, which has justly been called the Venice of the Far East. The Dutch had a large trading office there which was supplied by their largest vessels. Across from them, on the opposite bank, the "camp" of Portuguese half-breeds formed a compact agglomeration. The strictly Siamese quarter was immense. Animated by a host of artisans and shopkeepers, it stretched around large squares which served as markets (1).

1. Cf. Nicolas Gervaise (1680) and Commandant E. Lunet de la Jonquiere, Le Siam et les Siamois.

They struck out into the inextricable forests of Burmese Laos, 648*
which were "cut here and there by muddy ricefields and by over- 175*
flowing torrents," entered Yunnan which had been desolated by 654
the insurrection of the Tau-Pings, the latter further complicated by new Moslem revolts, and were marching resolutely westwards into the heart of the insurgent land when Doudart became exhausted and was forced to halt. He was taken with difficulty to Tong-Tchouen and to the French missionaries of Dong-Chau-Phu, but only to die there of a hepatic attack on March 12, 1868. Francis Garnier then took charge of the expedition, embarked at Hang-Keou bringing back his leader's remains, and returned to Saigon on the following June 28 after an absence of two years.

"A terrible voyage," concludes P. Legendre, "one of the most daring of the century and which was also to cost the young de Carne his life, but /234/ which established in a peremptory way the necessity for France to wield a preponderant influence in Tonkin, the key to China."

Resumption of relations between Luang-Prabang and Tran-Ninh. 648*
In the meantime Tiantha-Koumane had had occasion to resume 175*
continuous relations with the old kingdom of Xieng-Khouang.

Ever since its annexation to the empire of Annam (1) this land

1. See above, p. 178.

had been living in strict servitude. The exactions of the Quan-Phu's soldiers weighed heavily on the natives, who were incessantly ransomed and pillaged with the utmost severity. The authority of the emperor's delegate met with resistance which was all the more /177/
keen in that this mandarin had undertaken a policy of brutal assimilation the aim of which was to force the Laotian people to adopt all the customs -- and even the clothing -- of the Annamites. The agents which Siam secretly maintained in the region had not failed to exploit the inhabitants' exasperation and to impel one of Chao-Noi's cousins (2) whom Annam had mistakenly allowed to

2. Chao-Xan.

live freely in Tran-Ninh to open revolt. One /235/ fine night the Quan-Phu was assassinated in his fortress together with his whole guard, and the small Siamese force, which had taken part in the

133 The market of Bassac owes its importance to the proximity of the
433 plateau. It is therefore a storehouse for the Laotians of the whole
438 region, a reservoir [51] from which they draw. The part which it plays is obviously a fine one, and no more can be asked of it.

There has also been much discussion as to whether large-scale breeding of buffalo and oxen would be successful there, for at present livestock is found only in the villages situated near the Sédone, that is to say, quite far from the plateau. The question has not yet been settled, and sufficient tests have not yet been made.

133 At the southernmost corner of the plateau there is a conical mountain about 800 meters in altitude which Francis Garnier baptized The Breast [le Téton] because of its shape, and to which he later gave the name Lagrée's Peak [Pic de Lagrée] in commemoration of the President of the Exploratory Commission of 1866.

[224] The elephant hunters of southern Laos go to the mountainous region of Saravane and Attopeu every year, and there they capture an annual quota of fifty to a hundred elephants.

133 To the east of Attopeu the mountains are inhabited by well-nigh independent Kha tribes--Cédangs, Djarais, Rognaos and
[177] Bahnars. The two latter tribes have almost been pacified, thanks
[797] to the persevering efforts of the Christian missionaries of Kon-Toum. This point is the center of the mission, and through it passes the road from Attopeu to Qui-Nhon. It crosses the Annamitic Chain
563 between Kon-Xalam and Kon-Tiorak at an altitude of about 900 meters. Near Attopeu this same road goes up over Pou-Satièng (400 meters), the last ramification of the great chain, which separates the basin of the Sé-Souk from that of the Sé-Kémane.

[135] This region of Pou-Satièng, Sé-Souk and Sé-Kémane has long been known to be rich in gold deposits.

§ IV--HYDROLOGY

a.--THE MÉKONG--GENERALITIES

133 It has often been said, and rightly so, that the Nile constituted Egypt. In the same way it can be said that the Mékong makes Laos, for is it not the river which gives what vitality there is to these vast isolated regions? Is it not the river which, by its annual floods, helps the growth of rice? Does it not supply, with its fish, a large

is [Illustration here] a duty for us, to restore the Khas to the normal 000
status to which their imposing number in the total population as well as the special qualities which they possess give them a right.

Once emancipated from their strict servitude and from the rapacity of the Laotian and Thai mandarins, and once commanded by leaders who have been chosen by them and from members of their own race, the Khas will rise rapidly and, as [136] time passes, will certainly give a most effective impetus to the development of our possession's riches.

Moreover, they have not lost the tradition of their original status. 563
They are conscious of their own antiquity and say, not without scorn, 173
that the peoples who are newcomers to Indo-China are only their younger brothers. Their race has fallen back on its own resources, has divided into small groups, has opposed a force of absolute inertia to the invader and the conqueror and has thus kept itself free for many long centuries from mixtures with other peoples. Today there are still many descendants of these first possessors of the land and one may find in them, in a latent state, the energy and courage so conspicuously absent in the conquering races which drove them back to the mountains and reduced them to a kind of slavery or ostracism from which the latter greatly profited.

Nor can it be denied that the Khas are capable of moral and 563
material improvement. There are many, for example, who have 795
adopted Buddhism (1), and still others Catholicism (2). These Khas 797

(1) Khouène Khas and Khmou Khas.

(2) Bahnar Khas, Rognaos, etc.

have yielded up to persuasion and gentle treatment what they refused for many centuries to constraint and force. The future is therefore encouraging.

What is more, the question of emancipating the Khas has left 563
the domain of theory and pure speculation. In 1894 M. Macey, one 177
of our political agents, emancipated the Khas in the territories of Xieng-Khong, Muong-Mugne, Poukha, etc. The terrain was well chosen for the experiment, since this daring attempt was applied precisely to the Khouène, Khmou and Lemet Kha groups whose moral regeneration had already begun through the practice of Buddhism.

177 Notice should also be taken of the transformation which has been
563 going on for half a century or so, in the fusion of Khas with Lus,
144 Laos and Thais. From these fusions have emerged the mixed-blood
races which are known as Phou-Thèngs, Phou-Thîlongs, Soués,
Phongs, Phou-Oks, Laos-Nîos, etc. [137] [Illustration] [138]
[Blank page]

[139] Later on in 1898 and 1899 the 1894 experiment was tried once more, thanks to the intelligent initiative taken by the Superior Commandant in Upper Laos. His Majesty the king of Luang-Prabang proclaimed the emancipation of the Khas in his kingdom on both banks of the Mékong and even of those who, while natives of Luang-Prabang, are employed in Siam in the lumber camps of the upper Ménam valley.

In résumé, the Khas of French Laos are anything but a negligible quantity, but rather constitute a force and a reserve of energy from which we may draw great profit.

3. LANGUAGES

197 It is impossible here to examine in detail the many Kha idioms
and dialects, which only a long and attentive special study could
194 succeed in coordinating, in grouping by similarities and in identifying
with other languages, idioms and dialects which contributed to their formation.

The Kha dialects have harsh consonant sounds, among which the R and K are particularly noticeable, in contrast to what is the case in the other forms of the Thai language spoken in Laos where R, except in Siamese, is replaced by L or H.

Insofar as it is possible to judge, the primitive languages must have been corrupted when the land was invaded by foreigners. From that time on they dissolved, changed and became subdivided into idioms, and then into varied dialects. Besides the regional and racial
211 idioms and the various local dialects the Khas, who do not (except for the Khouènes) have any form of writing, use various means to translate their thoughts, and symbolic objects such as strips of wood in which they make notches in accordance with a conventional system.

This method may be compared to that of a great many illiterate persons, who sometimes succeed in keeping quite complicated accounts by this means.

If one were to entrust a letter to a Kha courier, for example, one [140] would give him the following symbolic objects grouped together:

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This is doubtless due to the use of the brush, which does not make it possible to draw characters as fine and as purely rounded as with a dry point, a wooden stylus, a pen or a pencil, which are the only instruments used to write the other varieties of the Thai language.

Phouthai, like Laotian, is written in characters, but these differ in number and in form. The vowels are intercalated between the consonants, or are placed like accents above the line when the consonant stands alone, or may even always be placed above in the case of some vowels. This way of understanding the use of vowels can also be found in certain primitive languages.

[101]

In the regions where Phouthai writing is used the influence of the proximity of Annam and China has clearly manifested itself, and the alphabet has become syllabic. Scholars are able to learn by heart a certain number of syllables in which consonants and vowels are joined to form a single character, but those who have not learned Laotian cannot distinguish between the vowels and consonants nor use them separately.

The Phouthais, who have the same basic spoken language as the Laotians but who have a different writing and religion, must either have separated from the primitive groupings before writing was created and have attained sufficient cohesion to create their own form of writing, or else must have learned it in a perfected state of development through some foreign current. It may also be said that when the Laotians adopted the Buddhist religion they lost their old Phouthai signs and took over those of the bonzes who had come to teach them the new faith. Then the brush was abandoned for the stylus and the point, which make it possible to write more rapidly and finely and to form a greater number of signs--these being necessary, moreover, to express and define the abstract ideas and subtle dogmas of the new religion.

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[142] The Phouthai alphabet includes only twenty-three characters, almost all of which are syllabic.

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The Siamese language. Of all the forms of the Thai language, Siamese, as we have seen, is the most complete and the most highly developed. Thus it will perhaps be of interest to give some notion, as rapidly as possible, of this language.

The alphabet is composed of forty-four letters which are divided into three classes, as follows:

11 letters on a rising tone, or high letters;
9 letters on a middle tone, or recto tono middle letters;

consonants. Vowels or diphthongs are also sometimes written before the consonant. 212 194

This system of accentuation is, however, not at all fixed, because of the lack of tonic accents. This is what explains the great number of synonyms, as far as spelling goes--synonyms which differ only in prominciation. It is therefore essential to know the meaning of the sentence in order to give it the necessary accentuation and the proper intonation.

It is easy to write, but reading it is fraught with difficulty. To be sure, the orthography is not very complicated, and after a certain time one can manage to write it fairly correctly.

The same is not true of Siamese, and the fixed rules of tonality which it has make it possible, when one has a firm grasp of them, to read all texts without understanding anything.

The Youn language. The Youn language which is in current usage in all of western Laos, [145] that is to say in the basin of the upper Ménam and in part of the Laotian Shan States, is Lao which has been modified graphically by the introduction of certain forms borrowed from the alphabetic signs of the Burmese language. There is no doubt but that it is a compound of the Thai language and that which was brought to Laos by the Pégouans and the Burmese and which underwent profound modifications on contact with Buddhism. [177]

What seems to lend credence to this hypothesis is that the Youn alphabet is used almost exclusively in all parts of Laos for the sacred books and manuscripts of the pagodas. It is a kind of transition between Pali, which is too little known and little suited to expressing the sounds of the Thai language, and this latter language itself which is regarded as too vulgar. A somewhat modified Youn alphabet was then created, and was reserved for religious writings, both texts and copies. A knowledge of this special alphabet is, in Laos, the mark of a superior degree of education. 212 176

The Lu language. Like the preceding, the Lu language is complex and formed of the same elements. That is to say, it is due to the introduction of a Burmese graphic element into the already existing Thai element. In this way it has answered to new needs which resulted from the milieu and from social relations. 212 177

Thus the Lu language includes a certain number of Chinese, Kha and Burmese words which have been added to the original Thai mass.

The Lu alphabet includes twenty-six letters, twelve vowels and fourteen consonants.

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(Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

Besides these major holidays there are a certain number of others which are more religious than secular in character and which fall in between the ones dealt with above.

In the course of the sixth month (April-May), for example, a religious holiday is celebrated in memory of the first leaders of the Buddhist religion.

At the end of the eleventh month, on a date which is fixed in accordance with the rites and which varies from one year to another, a celebration takes place in the pagodas in honor of the men who first introduced Buddhism into Indo-China.

Finally, after the twelfth month (November or December), comes the feast of penitence which applies to all the faithful. During a [174] kind of Lent which lasts for nine days, true believers must abstain from certain foods and from all sex relations.

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Since our establishment in Laos the province capitals and all the centers where Europeans live have celebrated the National Holiday on July 14 which the natives call Boun-Phi-Falang-Sete (Holiday of the French Genie) or, by onomatopoeia, Boun Ka-Tor-Yu-Yèt. [C. A. M. Translator's note. The latter term seems to be an approximation of the French Quatorze juillet ("July 14").]

MORES AND CUSTOMS

101

By reason of their diverse origins and the relations into which they have entered with neighboring peoples, as well as by the cross-breeding which has taken place, the races of Laos necessarily have characteristics, costumes, dwellings and, in a word, mores and customs which differ to a greater or less extent from one race to another (1).

(1) On this question of mores and customs we shall have recourse from time to time to a notice entitled Le Laos français which was written by the Superior Resident in Laos and based on reports and local monographs which were provided by our administrators and are in consequence authoritative.

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If we have consistently reproduced here extracts from the above work, this is because they provide an admirable summation

149: Reinach--134 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"Costume. The Laotian costume is the langouti or Siamese 291
sampot. This is a long band of cloth without any seams, and between one and 1.2 meters wide by 2.5 to three meters long. The cloth is placed around the waist to make a skirt, with the opening in front. To keep the skirt in place a knot is made in front with part of the surplus cloth, and the loose ends of the cloth left hanging in front are rolled, passed between the legs and attached to the belt in the middle of the back. The skirt then takes the form of a pair of baggy trousers covering the front of the legs down to the knees and leaving the lower part of the thighs bare in back. The chest is left bare, and a sash is tied around the waist. This is the ordinary garment, and that worn by all the common people. The sash is often worn on the shoulder or around the chest, but it has to be removed and wound around the loins whenever one speaks to anyone who has a right to one's respect. Dandies wear shoes, stockings or socks, quite [177] frequently a short-sleeved or sleeveless knitted vest, a jacket made of white cotton or flannel, depending on the season, and a hat of any type whatever, or even a cap. But these are imported European [293] styles which have not become widespread. Umbrellas enjoy great favor." (Le Laos Français.)

This costume is a relatively recent import, for two hundred years 291
or so ago the Laotians on the banks of the river, as those of the interior still do today, wore a fairly long jacket [178] made of cotton 177
cloth woven in the land. The jacket was caught in at the waist by a sash and came down over a broad pair of trousers made of the same material. The whole garment was dark blue or almost black in color. On the head they wore a kind of turban made of silk or cotton of the same color.

The abandonment of this purely Thai costume was due to the influence of the Siamese and Cambodians during their incursions into Laos. It was also at this time that the Laotians formed the habit of [302] cutting their hair, which they had previously worn rolled in a coil on the back of the head.

"Laotian women wear a skirt which covers them from the hips 291
to the ankles and is made of silk interwoven with gold threads. These [286] skirts are rather dark in color, and the pattern is made up of vertical stripes which are close together and difficult to see. In Luang-Prabang the lower part of the garment is decorated with a flat trimming formed of two or three closely spaced gold galloons. At the top of the skirt a sash made of red cloth and embroidered to a greater

Tribal Tai

291 cover their bust with a small short jacket which is very close-fitting and bright in color. It has a heart-shaped opening on the chest and, like the men's jacket, is ornamented with galloons and passementerie. For celebrations and ceremonies Lu women wear a heavy turban on their head which is folded flat or pleated, shaped like a mitre and generally made of black silk spangled with gold.

301 Both men and women pierce the lobes of their ears [246] with a broad opening, into which they introduce hollow gold or silver cylinders which are sometimes as large as three centimeters in diameter.

306 Great lovers of jewelry, the Lus number skilled jewelers and goldsmiths among them who make hair coil plaques, ear cylinders, flat braided metal belts with wide chased and checkered buckles, bracelets, rings, hilts and sheaths for daggers and swords, etc. [Illustration alongside text here]

411 The Lus almost always wear daggers and swords. Each of them, so to speak, possesses a rifle, generally flintlock, which by the shape of
493 the stock, the length of the barrel and the many bands which adorn it greatly resembles the long Moukhala so dear to our Arabs in Algeria.

[361] Lu villages are clean, and the houses are arranged in a checkerboard pattern.

[23] The Lus have a high reputation as breeders of oxen and horses.

A great lover of celebrations and parades, this boisterous people
527 sets off gunpowder at every opportunity, and there is no festival, private or public, so small that it is not accompanied by salvos and fireworks.

• [77] From their contact with the Burmese the men have retained a [247] [Illustration] [248] [Blank page] [249] taste for dancing and for
535 sword fights mingled with dance steps in which they manifest a real grace and elegance.

"Among other forms of amusement, the men execute, with a truly remarkable suppleness and skill, sword dances which are perfectly elegant. Naked to the waist, with their trousers rolled up and bunched and a wooden sword in each hand whose cutting edge has been dipped in dye so that the thrusts will leave a mark, the two champions confront one another. Moulinets, parries and returns follow one another without apparent effort, and the movements are undulating and rapid but without any abruptness. The men seem to be caressing one another, not fighting, and yet the slashes leave their colored traces on the skin of the vanquished. Direct thrusts are forbidden, but the entire body from head to foot is fair game for the opponent. Thus during the

436 It will perhaps be of some interest to note here that the peoples of Laos have no respect for European gold coins, [420] because their gold
822 is alloyed with copper! In this country, as in all of the Far East in
439 general, it is thought that gold is the noble metal par excellance, that it is polluted and diminished by alloying it with copper, which is un-
177 worthy of it, and that it can endure being made into an alloy only with silver.

The only "gold" coins in use, and still not at all currently in northern Laos, are books of gold leaf the thickness of tinfoil. They come from China and bear the official stamps of the country's banks which put them into circulation as "merchandise" in the same way as bars of silver.

Weighing instruments

405 The weighing instruments used in Laos include the "Ta-Dieng" or "Sing," a Chinese steelyard made of wood which has three rows of graduations. It may have a hook or a single platform, and is used for weights ranging from one "Sang" (1.23849 kilograms) up to several piculs.

For weights of less than a "Sang" the same kind of Chinese steelyard, with a hook or platform, is used, but it is smaller and made of ivory or bone.

A small pair of beam scales with platforms shaped like cupels, which is called "Sing-Dieng," is used mainly for weighing precious metals and gems.

There are several series of weights for balances. They are made of bronze, iron or copper and are most diverse in shape, representing elephants, imaginary birds, hexagons, pentagons, cones, pyramids, etc.

2. TRADE COMMODITIES AND PRODUCTS OF EXCHANGE

438 Since there is no industry to speak of in Laos, the local products which make up the basic commodities of interior trade and exports come
241 mainly from agriculture, livestock raising, scavenging, fishing and hunting. Mention may be made, however, of certain products of local, not to say familial, industry which enter into interior commerce and to some extent into the trade which goes on with neighboring countries.

438 [421] These include cloth goods of pure silk, either plain or spangled with gold, goods of silk blended with cotton, and wholly
433 cotton goods, then articles of jewelry and goldsmithing, and finally metals and ores from the still rudimentary mining industry and pottery goods, edge-tools, basketry, etc.

505 Large quantities of nep (rice suitable
438 for making alcohol), hides, horn, cardamom, wax, benzoin, various gums, etc. were shipped from Bassac, from Pakse, from Savannakhet, from Vien-Tiane and from other Laotian centers which had formerly traded exclusively with Bangkok by way of the Nongkay-Outaradit route on the Menam and by the Korat route on the Se-Moun.

505 "Passenger traffic, which was almost nil when the new services
484 were established, is increasing every day. The natives are beginning to become familiar with this rapid, convenient and inexpensive manner of traveling which the steamship represents and they are making more frequent use thereof, a fact which can only contribute to the broadening of relations between the various posts scattered along the great river and increase trade in their products of all kinds" (1).

(1) See, in Appendix XXX, the transport rates between France and Indo-China and between Saigon and Laos.

[487] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER XI

1. SOCIAL STATUS. SLAVERY

[565] Upon our arrival in Laos, we found a hierarchial society comprised of nobles, commoners and slaves. We could not do better than
567 to preserve all features of the political, social and administrative organization just as it had been. In this respect we took our inspira-
178 tion from our predecessors the Siamese, leaving our new subjects the utmost liberty and respecting their traditions, customs and mores in-
177 sofar as these were compatible with our own institutions.

Thus we were at times forced to recall certain native officials who had compromised themselves with the Siamese, or who through their exactions had made themselves unworthy of their office. Moreover, we have always acted tactfully and mildly, [488] leaving the choice of officials to election, in accordance with custom.

But above all, we took radical measures by completely suppressing the slave trade and by regularizing a very mild form of slavery for debt.

[556] There used to be slavery in Laos, as in Siam, in the form of slavery by capture, by purchase and for debt. It yielded high profits for those who engaged in the traffic, for the children and grandchildren of slaves were slaves themselves at birth, a fact which increased the fortunes of their masters to that extent.

149: Reinach--400 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[102]

APPENDIX XVII
ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLES OF LAOS
I

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144
174

Which was the truly autochthonous race, whence did it come, and what were its mores and customs? No one can answer this question, and the only statement which can be advanced is that the savage peoples must have settled in the Indo-Chinese peninsula at a time when present-day Indo-China did not yet exist, geologically speaking, and when a greater or lesser part of the Asiatic continent was covered by water.

Coming from the Malay Archipelago, the Khas occupied the south of the peninsula at first and immediately entered into a struggle with the aborigines. Stronger and more intelligent, they drove the aborigines back into the forests and mountains and founded groups and colonies in their midst which gradually absorbed the first occupants, until that day when the victorious Khas came up against men of the yellow race who drove them back into the mountains in their turn, and into the poorest and most remote parts of the land.

Coming down from the high plateaus of central Asia, probably from Tibet, the men of yellow race came in through the northwest and at first occupied the northern provinces of the immense territory which was later to make up the Chinese empire. These natives, whom the Chinese chroniclers designate by the name of Y, that is to say "Bearers of large bows," and by the name of "Miao-Tse," or "Sons of the uncultivated fields," were driven back in their turn by new invaders. They then fell back into the southern provinces and sought refuge on little-accessible peaks where more or less pure types of their ancient race may still be found today, and from there they spread into the valleys of the Mekong, the Menam, the Salouen and the Irrawaddy. Isolated from one another as a consequence of their expansion, these individuals of primitive race became mixed with one another and with the first inhabitants of the conquered regions, and gave birth to intermediary sub-races and to distinct groups whose character and even number is very difficult to determine. Language became [103] differentiated, the kind of handwriting used was influenced by the proximity of more powerful peoples, dress changed, and yet all of them preserved analogous usages and beliefs which militate in favor of a common origin. Thence arises the necessity of seeking the origin of these peoples in the diversity of families, tribes, sub-races and races which sucessively shared the extreme provinces of present-day

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China and Indo-China (1)

D E. PRANOH. LE LAOS français. 1901 CHALLAMEL. [PARIS

149: Reinach--401 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

China and Indo-China (1).

[113] (1) E. Picanon, Le Laos français. 1901, Challamel. [Paris.]

II

173 Laos, Thais and Khas. Although the Laotian legends
563 attribute the same origin to all of these (Mueng-Theng or Dien-Bien-
144 Phu) and say that they all came from the same "gourd" (Nam-Tao-Phoun), it is hardly likely that the Laotians and the Khas have a common origin. Indeed, the characteristics which serve to distinguish the two races are too numerous and too marked, both from the point of view of the racial types themselves and as regards language, mores and religious beliefs.

144 Nor can it be affirmed that the Khas are the representatives of
174 the aboriginal population, for before any of their people had mounted the throne of Luang-Prabang, six kings foreign to their race had already occupied it--if we may regard the list of the first kings of the land which is preserved in the Phong-Sa Va-Dan (annals of the kingdom) as correct--and of these conquering princes the first is said to have come from India, and the second from Cambodia.

In any case, the Khas are said to have preceded the Laotians in the land, and it was not until the reign of their fourth and last king that they are supposed to have been conquered and driven out or enslaved by the Laotians, who had come down from Dien-Bien-
[609] Phu. Since that time, and despite many revolts of which the last is almost recent, the Khas have never ceased being "a folk taillable and liable to forced labor at pleasure" for their vanquishers, and their name has become a synonym for a low person or slave in the current
[56] idiom. Not until 1895 were the Khas once and for all freed--freed is perhaps not the word, for in the strict sense they were never slaves--or at least summoned to enjoy a system of rule similar to that of the other natives and which left no margin for arbitrariness and vexations.

173 In designating Dien-Bien-Phu as the cradle of the Laotian people, or at least in attributing to the Laotians and the Thais a common origin, legend seems to be in agreement with reality. There are indeed many points of resemblance and contact between the two peoples. The type is invariably the same, although finer in the native of Luang-
175 Prabang than in the native of Lai-Chau or Dien-Bien-Phu. Not more
291 than two hundred years ago the Laotians still wore, like the black Thais, the Annamite costume and their hair wound in a coil. It
177 was doubtless after contact with the Siamese--who had themselves

175 [104] taken after the Cambodians in this respect--that they later
291 adopted the "sampot" and formed the habit of cutting their hair very
short, just as the Thais of Lai-Chau today dress like their Chinese
177 neighbors and wear their hair in a long pigtail. The same reasons
may also explain modifications in language and writing, which must
have been identical in the beginning.

563 Of the Phou-Thais who are settled today in the territory of
Luang-Prabang, some--and these make up the greater number--are
144 black Thais (aborigines) from Dien-Bien-Phu, with a darker coloration
than the inhabitants of Lai-Chau, who are called white Thais for this
reason. The others belong to this second variety.

The ones who sacked Luang-Prabang in 1887 under the leadership of Deo-Van-Tri were white Thais.

Youns. The Laotians living on the right bank of the Mekong at Xieng-Mai, Xieng-Sen, Muong-Nan, etc. are called Youns.
[304] The only feature which distinguishes them from their fellows on the left bank is that they generally tattoo their stomachs, whereas the others tattoo the thighs and upper part of the legs, whence the names "Lao-Phoung-Khao" (white-bellied Laotians) and Lao-Phoung-Dam (black-bellied Laotians) which are used in designating the ones and the others.

Phais. Neither do the Phais constitute a separate racial group. They are Khas who are in the process of being transformed, Khas crossed with either Lus or Laotians according as their neighbors have been representatives of the first or the second of these races. Although after this contact they have begun to police themselves and to bring their way of life into conformity with that of the Lus or Laotians, they are nonetheless subject to the same regime as the Khas in respect to taxes and other matters.

Lus. The Lus, who are natives of the Sip-Song Pan-Nas, did
563 not come and settle in any great numbers in the territory of Luang-
175 Prabang until long after the Laotians, and then only in order to flee
the war which was desolating their own land, or simply because they
hoped to find better living conditions in this territory. The immigration took place in an entirely peaceful manner, and since that time the Lus have not ceased to live on good terms with the Laotians, whose mores and dress they have generally adopted and by whom they will soon be completely assimilated.

563 Khos, Meos, Yaos. These various names designate natives whose racial type, dress and hairdo ending in a queue unquestionably denote a Chinese origin, and who do not differ from one another except

149: Reinach--452 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

The following table gives the composition of each of these blends:

272

Quality	White points	Delicate green leaves	Large leaves
1st quality	10%	30%	60%
2nd quality	5	15	80
3rd quality	2	5	93

Preparation. After harvesting the leaves are placed on mats in the sun, where they wither and become soft. They are then slightly torrefied in a copper or cast-iron basin placed over a hot fire. This operation, which lasts only a few moments and during which the leaves are constantly stirred and sifted, is designed to remove all the natural moisture which they contain and thus make sure that they will not spoil later on.

Molding and wrapping. Blends are made when the tea is molded, for the tea of these regions is sold in the form of cakes .25 meter in diameter or of cylinders six or seven centimeters in diameter. The different qualities of leaves are placed within easy reach and the different weights of each kind [154] which will be mixed together to make up a cake or cylinder are measured out. Then the mixing itself is done in marble, cast-iron or wooden molds after the leaves have been exposed to steam for a few seconds. The tea is compressed in the molds, the latter are heated, and when they are opened their contents are dry, hard and homogeneous. The cakes or cylinders are then wrapped in bamboo leaves or leaflets and tied with rattan. A package of tea in the form of cakes includes seven of the latter and weighs 1.2 kilograms.

[157]

APPENDIX XXVIII
REPORT AND REGULATIONS ON SLAVERY

567 The problem of slavery for debt is one of the most difficult ones to solve.

177 That of slavery resulting from capture has been solved very easily. The Siamese had already given orders for it to be stopped, and although it still existed in certain provinces, principally in those of Lower Laos, this was due to the fact that the Siamese high mandarins voluntarily closed their eyes, thanks to large sums which were paid to secure their cooperation and which constituted one of their largest sources of income.

As soon as we assumed the administrations of the country the Laotians sounded us out on this subject. They soon realized that our

567 upbringing and sentiments rejected the idea of such slavery, and
177 without giving in gracefully, for some of them stood to lose large capital investments, they accepted without question the principle of emancipation of slaves by capture. A few attempted to use subterfuge and tried to pass off slaves who were really slaves by capture as
[675] slaves for debt. Fortunately every contract among the Laotian people, whatever it be, is a written one, and examination of these contracts was sufficient to foil all their ruses.

At the present time it may be said that this question has been solved. There are no longer any but voluntary slaves who like their life under their masters and, although free, want to stay there. Nearly all of them, moreover, are provided with a certification of liberation which their masters have forced them to request so that they, the masters, will not be accused later of keeping slaves by force.

Full justice must be given to the Laotian authorities who, although the first to suffer from this measure, have freely aided us in our task.

The reports by the government commissioners have noted the
[126] good consequences of the measure. One of its first results was to bring a stop to the inter-tribal warfare among the Khas, warfare whose origin, if not its sole purpose, almost always lay in the capture of human cattle demanded by recognized slave traders [158] who were established in the land--they were mainly Burmese--and who had deliveries to make.

567 As regards slaves for debt, the question is a much more delicate one, for here we are confronted by a voluntary and for the most part uninteresting form of slavery.

In Laos, all crimes and misdemeanors must be paid for. This is the origin of nearly all debts, among the well-to-do as well as among the poorer classes. Among the latter, sentences for stealing buffalo or rice are usually involved, and among the well-to-do sentences for adultery or judicial decisions resulting from unsuccessful speculations. When sentence has been pronounced, money must be found immediately in order to avoid prison. If the borrower can offer security for payment the necessary sum is lent to him at annual interest rates which vary, depending on the province, from ten to twenty percent.

If the borrower is a poor man, he offers his person in payment of the interest and then becomes not the slave, but the servant in a house.

His status is not comparable to that of a slave by capture. Whereas the latter is a veritable beast of burden, often badly mistreated, obliged to work only for his master and to provide himself for his food and clothing, the slave for debts, on the other hand, is fed and

/970/"Laotian Politeness in Ancient and Modern Times (1)"

1. A talk held on June 18, 1949, under the auspices of the Alliance Francaise in Vientiane.

121 An eminent lecturer has said that the Laotian is a humble person. I should like to add that the Laotian is also very polite. If I dared, I would use the past tense! But one should not let oneself be misled by the appearance of the newly arisen cities and the uncertain customs of a generation as yet poorly adjusted, where the old remember the past and where the young believe that much must be destroyed.

That is why the talk that I gave in Laotian on the subject had as much an informative character as an educational one, for I believe that in the era in which we find ourselves it is necessary to help people in making choices and in adjusting themselves. And since we, Frenchmen and Laotians, have been living side by side for more than half a century, we must, in some sort, have an interpretation of French and Laotian customs in order to be able to decide, now in favor of the former, now in favor of the latter.

576 What are the marks of respect?--To show his respect to a superior or to an older person, the Laotian salutes with his hands joined together. This manner of salutation must be preserved. The custom of going on all fours in approaching a mandarin will no longer do. It is, in effect, a humiliating posture. When one passes by a superior it is enough to walk softly while inclining the head a little.

The salute in the Laotian or in the French manner marks the respect of one person toward another. It must be reciprocal, but it is up to the subordinate to salute first.

/971/ When one person salutes another with his hands folded together, the latter must answer in the same manner. If he does not answer at all or only makes a sign with his head he must be considered ill-bred.

177 After having returned the greeting in the Laotian manner,
576 the superior can shake hands in the European manner in order to show his good will towards the person who respects him.

Some say that to salute in the European fashion is too liberal a

177 gesture, and others say that to salute the Laotian way sometimes
576 seems degrading because those whom one greets do not always return the greeting in the same manner, considering it as an homage which is their due but which does not need to be reciprocated.

The Laotian is polite, one must abide by that. The Laotian is respectful of tradition, one must abide by that even more emphatica But let us not forget that from now on all Laotians must have the sense of progress and the desire to improve themselves. Politeness must be neither a unilateral token of respect nor a mark of the humiliation of the human being.

554 To salute in the French manner the subordinate nods his head
576 after having taken off his hat if he is wearing one. If someone extends his hand to him, he shakes it. The superior is the first to hold out his hand. The woman is the first to hold her hand out to a man. To be polite one should shake hands somewhat forcefully. In order to do so one should always use one's right hand and never imitate certain Laotian peasants who, under the pretense of being acquainted with French customs, extend their hand from afar to Europeans while stretching out their left arm.

In the street.--When one meets a high personage in the street it is no longer necessary, as it used to be, to sit down in order to greet him. After having taken off one's hat one nods one's head. If one is not wearing a hat one is free to greet him either by joining one's hands together or by nodding one's head politely. If one is on a bicycle or on a horse, there is no need at all to dismount. The mere gesture of nodding one's head suffices. If one has something to say to a friend whom one meets, one should stand on the side of the street or of the pavement to conduct one's conversation. When one is on a bicycle one should dismount and should not leave one leg over the frame of the bicycle while one is chatting. If one is dealing with a colleague or an intimate friend, one may hail him using expressions like: "Sabay!" (good day), or "Pai sai ma?" (where are you coming from?): that is good tradition, which must always be preserved.

481 Laotians have the habit of walking in Indian file. This habit
576 should be abandoned because it is no longer good form. It will be well to practice the European custom of walking abreast of one another except in cases when this is a hindrance or on a path. When there are two people walking together, /972/ the superior places

daughter, Princess Nang Yot Keo. At an indeterminate date which must come between 1340 and 1350, he was given the command of an army destined to reconquer the kingdom of his fathers. According to the Laotian chronicle, the victorious advance of this army enabled Fa Ngoum to declare himself king of Lan Xan. He immediately demanded the submission of all the Thai princes of Mekong. The center of resistance to Fa Ngoum was Phai Nam (spiny bamboos) because of the impenetrable vegetable belt which protected it like veritable ramparts. Fa Ngoum seized it by means of the classical trick of ornamenting missiles with gold and silver, then pretending to retreat and then pouncing on the enemy at the moment when they had scattered to gather the precious metal. In memory of this episode, the town was baptized Vieng Kham which means "circled with gold" and which later became Vientiane, "circled with sandalwood." Fa Ngoum organized his kingdom with force and reigned as a despot. Complaints were made and the king of Cambodia advised him to be moderate. Fa Ngoum then requested that a mission be sent him from Cambodia consisting of religious and lettered men, and of artisans. This mission introduced the orthodox books of Buddhism and a statue of the Buddha (Prabang) which had been presented in the eleventh century to the Khmer sovereign by the king of Ceylon. Prabang thus became the safeguard of the kingdom.

175 [723] 103 175 641 177 779

Up until recent years this tradition led one to believe that the introduction of Buddhism into Laos dated from Fa Ngoum. The discovery of a certain number of Buddhist sculptures of Khmer manufacture of the twelfth century A. D., has destroyed this theory (see below: Introduction of Buddhism to Laos).

[172]

After a series of wars, Fa Ngoum died in 1373 at the age of fifty-eight. His successor Sam Sen Thai reigned from 1373 to 1416. He kept [16] peace in his kingdom and passed on to his successor a prosperous kingdom, well established and living in peace, and at the same time dreaded by its neighbors.

175

The fifteenth century saw a succession of sovereigns about whom history has nothing in particular to tell. Let us mention, however, a war with the emperor of Annam. The first part of the sixteenth century passes under the reign of King Phothisarath (1506-1547), a pious Buddhist. One of his most famous actions is the edict against the cult of Phis. Setthathirath came into power in 1548 after a war with the Burmese. His death was followed by a troubled period. The beginning of the seventeenth century is particularly obscure, but in 1637 a great king called Souligna Vongsa (1637-1694) ascended

[771]

forms of Buddhism: the Mahayana or Great Vehicle, and the Hinayana or Little Vehicle. "One must beware of contrasting too violently the two Vehicles, as is often done. They were held together by many and subtle bonds." However in our days a Laotian Hinayanist and a Mongol Mahayanist have nothing in common. 779

Roughly, the essential difference between the two doctrines is that Hinayana considers the Buddha not as a superior man but as a man, while Mahayana deified Sakyamuni, who, without being a god, was as much as or more than a deity. Activity, formerly condemned, is glorified, sanctified on condition that it is freed from personal interests and is used for the salvation of others. Individual salvation has absolute value only if it contributes to universal salvation. The nirvana of the Hinayanist must be denounced as a scandalous exaltation of self. Bodhi, the supreme knowledge which makes Buddhas, is accessible to all beings. The saint is the Bodhisattva, who is on the point of reaching nirvana, yet remains during periods of incalculable successive existences to save [22] souls. The Mahayanist universe, which has grown immeasurably is filled with an infinite multitude of Buddhas. Many Bodhisattva exist: the principal ones are Avalokitesvara, Maitreya, Manjousri, Vajrapani, etc. Besides, each Buddha and each Bodhisattva has been doubled by a dhyani-Buddha, a contemplative Buddha (spiritual Buddha). To the belief in nirvana proclaimed by the Hinayana, the Mahayanists add an infinite series of paradises, the "pure Grounds" (this notion is Iranian) where souls saved by the grace of the Bodhisattva are born again in the symbolical lotus.

Mahayana now flourishes in central Asia, in Tibet, China, Japan and in Vietnam, was in vogue in Java, and in the ancient Khmer empire from the ninth to the thirteenth century. Its influence is found in certain sculptures of Luang Prabang (see appendix). Hinayana is practised at the present time in Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Cambodia and Laos. [101]

Introduction of Buddhism to Laos.

According to certain documents, Buddhism was introduced to Laos by Buddhaghosa. This legend is too popular in other Buddhist countries of the Indochinese peninsula for it to be given any credit here. Laotian tradition tells us that Fa Ngoum had a mission come from Cambodia which brought not only the sacred books of orthodox Buddhism but also Brahmanic texts whose traces can still be found today. This tradition, which offers greater proofs than the legend, fixed the date of the introduction of Buddhism to Luang Prabang in 175 177 779

175 the fourteenth century. Archaeological discoveries made in recent
•177 years in the region of Luang Prabang and more recent ones in the
779 neighborhood of Vientiane may enable this important event in the religious history of Laos to be moved back more than two centuries.

[23] The Pagoda.

346 "Laotians liked to place their pagodas on high points, but their
778 marked taste for the edge of the water made them prefer the neighborhood of rivers. This location of pagodas is a natural consequence of
[792] the relations between bonzes and inhabitants. The former drew their livelihood from the latter, and these are crowded on the river banks."
In principle the pagoda consists of three elements:

346 1) The buildings connected directly with the cult: vat, chapels, libraries; that, standing landmarks and niches;

2) The surrounding enclosures, exterior and interior;

3) The buildings for the immediate use of the inhabitants of the pagoda: monastery [bonzerie], cells for the bonzes, reception halls.

The vat consists of a large hall furnished with a pedestal on which stands the statue of the Buddha often accompanied by a preaching pulpit. The columns and walls are frequently ornamented with paintings.

Among the annexes of the vat, the most numerous are the chapels which are in the form either of delicate buildings or small compound halls.

The that is a votive and sometimes a funereal monument. (See appendix on Vientiane).

The only piece of furniture always found in the vat is the preachingpulpit, an elegant construction, often made of gilded wood. By way of furniture there are a few seats for the chiefs of the bonzes,
[788] particularly for the torch bearer. Finally, particularly in the region of Luang Prabang, one finds the hang-lin, a curious spout-shaped object, with elegant decoration, which is used for sprinkling the Buddhas on great feast days (cf. the New Year). These various finely carved objects are usually made of gilded wood and are sometimes inlaid with enamelled lead [24] whose brilliant gleam makes them sparkle. The manuscript chests are usually collected in the
[217] libraries, piled up in the shape of an inverted pyramid; they are generally carved and gilded.

inverting the order of words. The negation bo is added. Is the gentleman home? is translated Tan you ban bo? Sometimes a single word contains a whole phrase: 193

mi = there are.
dai = it is possible.

Vocabulary. In addition to the pronunciation of sounds, one of the difficulties of the Laotian language is the distinction between noble language and popular language. The language is different when one addresses the bonzes, the high dignitaries, the king. There is a very rich concrete and abstract Laotian vocabulary which unfortunately is tending to go out of use. We have found in manuscripts Laotian words translating textually [78] abstract Pali words, but they have been gradually forgotten. The Laotians no longer read enough of their original texts. Cheap Siamese literature has invaded the country making the people abandon their own language. 192 554 [178] [177 538]

One of the urgent tasks is to bring back the old Laotian texts into honor and to spread them abroad again among the public.

[79] LITERATURE AND MUSIC

In addition to the canonical religious literature already discussed, Laos possesses an important literary treasury. But as in Cambodia, Siam and Burma, this literature is anonymous. We are in the presence of epic texts of Indian origin, of legendary traditions, of apologues, of legal, moral or comic tales. There exist also novels, but as in French "romances" of the Middle Ages, they are by unknown authors. There is no equivalent in Laos of a Kalidasa or of a Li T'ai-po. No philosopher or dramatic author is known. 538

If the name of a French writer were mentioned whose manner is closest to that of Laotian authors, it would be that of Charles Perrault, and this in a word characterizes the type of Laotian literature. It excels in wonderful tales.

Literature of Indian Inspiration.

In addition to the Jatakas, Laos possesses at least two great texts of Indian origin. This is said under reservation of further discoveries, for in spite of the important work of Louis Finot, "Recherches sur la littérature laotienne," we are still far from knowing all the treasures of the Laos pagodas. [177 114]

a) The Pancatantra. The first text is a collection of tales copied from the famous Indian Pancatantra. In the Middle Ages

15: Benedict--389 L-5 (no date) 1947 Laotians

116, 171, 178

"The present-day position of Lao, is to be contrasted with that of Khmer. The Lao of French Indochina are simply an eastern extension of the much larger Lao group within Siam itself, the Mekong river being a political rather than ethnic or cultural boundary. Siamese, although spoken only in central and southern Siam, has a dominant cultural position and is gradually encroaching on the Lao-speaking areas of northern and eastern Siam. With further political growth in Siam, coupled perhaps with a Pan-Thai movement, we may look forward to further extension of Siamese at the expense of Lao, Shan, and lesser Thai speeches. If the Mekong river boundary is maintained, however, the Lao of French Indochina (Laos) may be sufficiently buffered to stand up under these linguistic influences. In any event it is apparent that Thai speech, whether Lao, Siamese or some newly evolved dialectical variant, will long continue to play a leading role in this part of Indochina."

648* edition), Paris, 1911./, p. 9
175*
654 the name French Syndicate of Upper Laos, which placed a first ship-
/439/ ment of fifteen tons of merchandise at the expedition's disposal.

Pavie set sail again on November 17 for /293/ Bangkok, where he stayed for only two weeks, just long enough to make contact again with our representative in Siam and to reopen negotiations with the Siamese foreign minister, who was specially appointed for the purpose by King Chulalongkorn.

On January 23, 1890 he reached Hanoi and rejoined his old and his new companions (including, among the latter, the embassy attache Lefevre-Pontalis, the vice-consul Lugan, the trader Macey, Professor Cornillon, the Postal Commissioner de Coulgeans, the naturalist Le Dantec and the officers Riviere, Friquegnon, de Malglaive, Dugast and Cogniard). He divided them into several groups of operators who scattered on February 3 throughout Tran-Ninh, Cammon and the region of Stung-Treng, while he himself set out for Luang-Prabang with a last group of "fervent disciples," where he arranged to meet all the members of the mission six months later so that they could coordinate their first labors over the winter months.

Duly provided, through the intermediary of Governor General Piquet, with the authority of the king of Cambodia and that of the emperor of Annam for settling questions of frontier delimitation, and with a passport from the Chinese government /294/ which would eventually allow him to explore the Yunnanese frontiers, he first
/624/ went to Muong-Lai where Deo-van-Tri was waiting for him. Faithful to his promise, now that all his brothers had all been freed Cam-Sinh's son awaited his arrival so that he could offer himself to the French authorities, "placing all his pride in giving himself up to that man who had restored calm to his land" (1).

1. Cf. Mission Pavie, "Geographie et Voyages," Vol. II, p. 12.

Pavie had an enchanted voyage. Although the magnificent valley of the Black River no longer held for him the powerful attraction of the unknown, still he felt a profound joy as he daily noted the changes for the better which had occurred since his last trip among
/727/ these peoples. "The influence of Pennequin (who had accompanied
/178/ him with Vacle and Lefevre-Pontalis) was there, clearly marked at each step... no more Flags in the well-known colors, all had

643* Indeed King Zakarine, no matter what his attitude of detachment
648* towards power, was noteworthy for his simplicity, his good sense and
175* his ability to see /323/ the usefulness of certain reforms. For he was
/178/ very poorly seconded by the mandarins of the kingdom council (Senam),
/646/ who were "incompetent men and scoffers dominated by their immediate and individual interests" (1). On the whole, however, the

1. Cf. ibid., p. 78.

642 political and social organization which we found was a good one,
178 and we acted wisely in preserving all the mechanisms of the native administration and in respecting the traditions, customs and mores of the populations throughout all of Laos, insofar as they were compatible with our own institutions (2). This was all the more easy for

2. Thus we were led to suppress radically the slave traffic which was enriching a few Siamese, Cambodian, Laotian and Burmese mandarins. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos (Posthumous edition), Paris, 1911./, pp. 230 ff.

us in that all the Laotian muongs (whether or not they were dependencies of Luang-Prabang) had a similar organization which was a smaller model of that of the kingdom (except for the Senam) and
647 was an obvious vestige of the epic times of Fa-Ngoum and the great
642 State of Lan-Xang (3). Like the king, the governors of /324/
631

3. The following was, in outline, the political organization of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang in 1894:

/643/* At its head the king, the great master of existences (Somdet-Phra-Chao), and the second king, the great master responsible for the preservation of property (Chao-Maha-Oupahat).

Then came the minister princes: the Ratsavong or first prince and right-hand minister; the Ratsabout or second prince and left-hand minister; and the Komakhoune or third and fourth princes and ministers of the center and of the civil services.

The first three mandarins, who bore the title of Phaya,
/646/ were, in order of importance: 1) the Phaya Muong-Sen or
/693/ first right-hand mandarin, head of the Senam and head of of justice; 2) the Phaya Muong-Tiane or first left-hand

648* Siamese high commission" meeting in Vientiane and presided over
175* by the superior resident in Laos was established to study all questions arising from the application of the new system, including definition and /352/ delimitation of the river frontier; determination of the regime to be applied to the demilitarized zone; eventual modification of the system of leased concessions which had previously been granted to France on the right bank; and elaboration of regulations
/654/ governing the program of public maintenance and improvement works along the Mekong, policing the river, policing navigation, sanitary police, fishing in the river, etc. The carrying out of these extremely liberal provisions, which was begun in all sincerity in January 1928, justifies us in believing that a true entente cordiale has been reached to the greater profit of the two neighboring States.

ACCESSION TO THE THRONE OF H.M. SISAVANG-VONG, KING OF LUANG-PRABANG, 1886. -- KING 1904.

643* King Zakarine died in Luang-Prabang on March 25, 1904 at the
175* age of sixty-three, at the very moment when the agreement which we made with Siam at this time fulfilled his last desires with respect to the integrity of his domains. The heir apparent Sisavang-Vong, who had just finished his studies in Paris, was on the way to Indo-China. He was back in his country's capital in time to attend the cremation ceremonies. /An unpaged photograph is inserted between pp. 352 and 353: "H.M. Sisavang-Vong, king of Luang-Prabang."--Translator/

643* /353/ The Laotians of today. On March 4, 1905 the new
178 sovereign solemnly received his investiture from Superior Resident Mahe acting in behalf of the government of the Republic. Profoundly attached to France, H.M. Sisavang-Vong has for more than a quarter of a century exercised, under our supervision and with the utmost loyalty, his high and benevolent authority over his faithful and trusting people. Thanks to his prestige, and to his great personal activity, and thanks also to the precious help given us by his dignitaries, some of whom have the most enlightened and active comprehension of the civilizing mission which France has set herself in the Far East, the Laotians of the kingdom have wholeheartedly accepted our methods of social renovation and of making their magnificent land productive. They are awaking from the kind of lethargic somnolence into which their historical calamities had plunged them. They have regained the consciousness of their political personality

and, even as they retain their smiling native good nature, they are 643*
becoming increasingly adapted with each passing day to the rude 178
necessities of modern existence in the hectic struggle between
individuals and peoples.

Nearly identical results have been achieved in the other parts of Laos where /354/ the influence of our administrators is exercised in a more direct manner, even though it is still usually based on the ascendancy which the local mandarins have retained over the populace.

Annexation of the territory of Bassac (1905). It was thus that 635
the territory of Bassac on the right bank, which was in full disorder 175*
when it was returned to France, was pacified by the Laotian "governor" whom we appointed there. Annexed in January 1905 to the province of Ban-Mouang, this territory had been abandoned in the previous year by the oupahat Boua-Laphan, who was the successor of King Kham-Souk (1) and who had taken refuge at Ban-Toung-

1. See above, p. 328.

Loung in the Siamese district of Oubone. In a most loyal manner Chao-Nhouy, one of Kham-Souk's sons, offered us his services and took an oath of fidelity before Superior Resident Mahe on October 14, 1905. He was named governor of the region, and since then has not ceased to give the French administration the benefit of his influence and his devotion (2).

2. The "delegation" which replaced the commercial agency in Bassac was discontinued in 1908 and the capital of the circumscription, which took the name of province of Bassac, was transferred from Ban-Mouang to Pakse.

/355/ The Khas of Lower Laos. The Khas of Lower Laos have 563
remained perfectly peaceful ever since their 1901 escapade was 669
suppressed. They have even tended imperceptibly to come out of their fierce isolation as new means of communication have connected their villages, which only yesterday were hidden in the brush, with the vast network of roads now under construction which will soon open up the Laotian hinterland (1).

1. The question of the Indo-Chinese "Moi hinterland"

influence of any foreign propaganda and that their revolt did not L
at any time assume the character of an anti-French manifestation. M
Thus their uprising had no repercussions on the other ethnic groups 563
in Laos, which in spirit and in deed stood behind our repressive 669
measures.

They returned in peace to their agricultural labors (chiefly the L
cultivation of poppies) in their precipitous solitudes. A special M
administrative statute gave them the cantonal and communal 563
autonomy which they desired, with no Laotian or Annamite inter- 636
mediary. No matter how infrequent their contacts with the popu- 609
lations of the valleys and plains, it is quite certain that racial
antagonism (exploited by agitators during the revolt) was maintaining a state of mind among their groupings which was suspicious and
devoid of friendliness towards the native authorities. The reforms 178
which were put into effect seem to have yielded good results. In 563
the same way, a prudent policy towards the still unsubdued tribes
of Lower Laos, one which will avoid direct conflict with their
customs /362/ and prejudices, will gradually tame these last representatives of another age whom the opening-up of means of communication will finally incorporate into the larger Indo-Chinese
family.

/ Pages 363-367 contain a Bibliography. Page 368 is blank. Pages 000
369-375 contain an Alphabetical Index of Names Mentioned. Page
376 is blank. --Translator/

792
785

To dream of a woman and be awakened by the dream.
To covet the property of others.
To speak profanely of earth, wind, fire, water or anything whatsoever.

792
302
292

Ordained bonzes, like novices and students, shave their heads, eyebrows and beards carefully and repeat this operation every two weeks. Their clothing, which is the same for all and is of a uniform yellow color obtained by means of a jackwood dye, consists of a sarong, a kind of very full skirt which is worn folded in pleats and extends from the waist to the ground, and which is held in at the waist by a narrow sash. A half-tunic passing under one arm is attached to the opposite shoulder, and is split on one side. The whole garment is kept in place by a sash worn crosswise, and is covered with a kind of toga in the antique manner which is severely draped.

Ordained bonzes wear in addition a piece of pleated cloth on the left shoulder on which sacred characters and various formulas are inscribed.

Bonzes obey a code which was brought to them from India together with the sacred books, and a part of which has been quoted above.

The code requires that their clothing should not be made of one piece of cloth which is whole and of full width, but that it be made of unmatched pieces sewn together. Since the code does not in any way specify the nature of the cloth, one sees bonzes' garments [164] of silk and velvet as well as of cotton and flannel, depending on the generosity of the donors.

792
668

Failure to keep the vow of chastity is very severely punished. The guilty person is marched through the village or city and seated backwards on a horse or carried on a wattle while a minor functionary proclaims the fault committed aloud and beats on a gong. Children and even adults utter hoots and throw filth at the guilty party and his female accomplice, who follows a few steps behind him. When he gets back to the pagoda the bonze is degraded from his rank and then handed over to the civil authorities if there are any grounds for so doing (1).

[10]
178

(1) This custom has fallen into disuse. Faults committed by bonzes are treated much more indulgently in Laos than in Cambodia.

149; Reinach--124 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Although less pure than in Cambodia, the bonzes' morals in Laos are generally fairly good. They are, moreover, greatly loved, highly regarded and fondly cherished. When there is a celebration or a great feast in a family, part of the choicest dishes is always reserved for the bonzes. 792 785 554

On the next to the last day of every phase of the moon, the bonzes must make public confession of their faults and be prepared, should the need arise, to undergo the punishments which the code stipulates. 792

Bonzeries are schools and at the same time workshops where all trades are taught. All knowledge is concentrated in them, as our knowledge was during the Middle Ages in monasteries. 871 874

Together with the pagodas, they are also spots of inviolable asylum in accordance with certain rights, and hostelries where travelers are lodged and fed with the produce of the bonzes' alms-seeking. 485 778

Newly ordained bonzes must stay in the pagoda at least three months, and may quit their habit at the end of this period. If a bonze desires to return to the pagoda after he has reentered lay life, his reassumption of the habit gives rise to the same formalities and ceremonies as the first time. It is a new ordination. 792

The liturgical litanies of the Buddhist religion, which the bonzes psalmodize, may not be translated into Laotian. The bonzes and the [165] [Illustration] [166] [Blank page] [167] Laotian faithful, as well as the cantors and the French adepts, chant prayers whose meaning they do not understand (1). 198 788

(1) In reality the Laotian, Lu and Youn bonzes form a sort of caste as the Druids used to in Gaul. More particularly, they are the ministers of worship, the repositories of moral authority, of scientific traditions, of secrets and of artistic and industrial methods. They transmit by word of mouth the precepts of Buddhist dogma, which were long ago explained by those who introduced the religion into the land. But the writings in "Pali" which contained these, although they can still be read mechanically by a few scholars, are no longer understood. Thence arises the necessity of handing down their meaning by word alone. Thence also, without doubt, arises the increasingly greater attenuation of the purity and force of these principles as they 792 779 178

779 pass from one generation to another and suffer partial suppressions
78 and numberless interpolations.

[198] The bonzes of our own day do not know the sacred language and are reduced to imitating the "hateful" monks of whom Rabelais speaks, "who neither till the soil nor work, but only mumble
792 a great stock of legends and psalms which they do not understand at all."

792 The bonzes are the ones who consecrate water and prepare with their prayers for the pronunciation of the oath of allegiance which
641 native officials take twice a year to their direct sovereign and, if necessary, to their suzerain both for themselves and for the whole
788 population. The oath consists in reciting the formula and in drinking lustral water in which the candles used for the ceremony have been extinguished and in which the arms of the sovereign have been dipped.

The following is the formula of the oath which is pronounced in Laos twice a year, in the capital of each province, in the presence of the government commissioner. This formula has been in use in the land for centuries and was left just as it was, except for substituting the title of President of the Republic for that of the king of Siam, Vien-Tiane or Luang-Prabang.

Formula of the oath: "I (there follow the names, titles and qualities of each of the mandarins present, each of whom repeats the formula, which is read aloud by one of them, generally the eldest), take an oath of allegiance and offer my life to the President of the French Republic. I give my word before God and before the angels present in heaven. May God and his angels deign to listen to my vows, because the President of the French Republic governs our land with wisdom and skill, follows the ancient customs and protects the bonzes, the authorities and the inhabitants.

"I place myself under his sacred feet, as well as the soldiers and inhabitants who live in my muong, and we all swear him allegiance.

[168] "I ask to serve the administration in the shadow of his sacred feet and to acknowledge his goodness by promising to be faithful and never to revolt in thought, word or body.

"If I show myself ungrateful to, or if I revolt against the President of the French Republic in thought, word or body; if I see or learn that peril threatens the President of the French Republic and remain silent instead of warning him immediately of the peril which I see or know; if I show myself ungrateful towards the President of the

satisfaction and finds a pleasant test of his abilities in setting words 538
to refrains whose meaning is unknown and in stimulating laughter
or pleasant and amusing ideas in his audience, either by vaunting
the joys of love and the plastic perfections of the human body, or by
recalling [217] useful or pleasant memories, or by honoring justice
and goodness. The morals of these folk, who are indolent because 538
they are content with very little and are happy and healthy, and to
whom all our subtleties are unknown, permit the greatest license in 831
songs and improvisations and the greatest realism and crudity in the
expression of thoughts.

In spite of this, there is not the least unhealthy intention in
either the poet or his audience. As we have seen above in connection
with burials, children of both sexes attend all these festivities ac-
companied by their parents. They all take pleasure in the same
refrains and laugh at the same funny sayings, not because they are
vicious but because they are pure pagans for whom enjoyment and
pleasure are like gods. The songs are animated by graceful gestures, [535
and together with the music form a whole which is poetic according
to their particular esthetic canons and which is simply a manifestation
of art and not an indication of loose morals.

Theater. The Laotians also have a dramatic repertory consisting 536
of longwinded plays, epics, religious and warlike stories, romantic
tales, ancient legends, etc. These poems are played by several
actors, with an orchestra and supernumeraries, and require many very
ornate costumes which have not varied in form since the earliest
times. Usually, however, the costumes are mere tinsel.

Like the Cambodian and Siamese theater from which it comes, [171
the Laotian theater interprets age-old works taken from the Vedas, 178]
the Ramayana or the Mahabharata. To this repertory are added
purely Kmer plays and various adaptations of Burmese origin which
are performed in the classical costumes and in which a strong tinge
of comedy and modernism and a bit of satire are mingled with the
ancient traditions.

Women are excluded from the theater, and the female roles are [462]
played by young men. As in the case of songs and improvisations,
dramatic knowledge, the repertory of plays and the art of acting are
handed down from father to son. The actors are called Lakhone and
plays are called Kam-Kong-Lakhone or Kam-Kong [218] Fone-Lakhone
if they include dances or ballets. Finally, one last dramatic genre

Cochinchina, and this is quite a lucrative trade.

231 178 The following are the main points in Laos where the raising of oxen would have a good chance of success, in view of the nature of the soil and the forage plants which grow there:

1. Northern Laos. Valleys of the upper Nam-Tha; plain of Muong-Sing; plains of the Mekong and of the Nam-Hou in the province of Luang-Prabang; valleys of the Nam-Het and of the upper Song-Ca; plains of Tran-Ninh (2); plains between the Mekong, the Nam-Tone

[175 727] (2) Tran-Ninh used to be the greatest livestock region in Laos as recently as thirty some years ago, and all the buffalo and oxen needed in nearby regions came from there. The occupation of the region by the Hos and its pitiless depopulation by the Siamese completely halted this form of industry. It is beginning to be reborn with the peace and order which we have brought to this region, and the herds are reforming. Exports have already begun again in the last year.

Livestock is the principal form of wealth of the region, and could yield high profits to a European company which had sufficient capital at its disposition to engage in large-scale breeding. [W3] (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, December 1900. Report of the Superior Resident on Tran-Ninh.)

and the Nam-Ngum, in the province of Vien-Tiane.

[405] 2. Southern Laos. Plain of Tha-Khek and basin of Mahasay, in the province of Cammon; plains of the Mekong, valleys of the Se-Bang-Hien and of its tributaries in the province of Song-Khone; plains between the Se-Set and the Sedone, valley of the Se-Katam, slope of Pou-Pai-Mai, in the province of Saravane; valleys of the Bla (1), of the Poko and of the Ayoun, in the province of

(1) The raising of oxen might be greatly increased here. In all the villages, especially the Catholic villages, I saw superb herds containing animals with every fine point. If breeding is not more extensive here, this is because the prices offered at Ang-Ke are not greatly higher than those at which the animals are sold in the region, since the Khas use large numbers of them to supplant buffaloes in their superstitious ceremonies. [113] (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, December 1899. Notes by the Superior Commandant of Lower Laos on the eastern region of Lower Laos.)

231 178 Attopeu; slopes of the plateau of the Bolovens; plains of the Se-Kampho and of the Se-Pien (2); plains of the upper Sebang-Khan and of the

(2) I have never crossed these great and beautiful plains which stretch as far as the eye can see between these two rivers which have water all year long, intersected here and there by wooded hills whose slopes provide the herds with a refuge and with a guaranteed food supply during the inundation of the lowlands--an inundation lasting three or four months--without regretting that no European colonist has ever thought of taking advantage of this situation. (Report of the Superior Commandant of Lower Laos, April 1897.)

Ia-Drang.

231 435 The sale prices for buffalo and oxen vary from one point to another and are also subject to fluctuations due to the age, stature, abundance or scarcity of the stock, the law of supply and demand, etc.

In 1899 livestock exports from Lower Laos only were 2,184 oxen valued at 54,600 francs, 362 cows valued at 5,430 francs and 3,144 buffalo valued at 235,800 francs, or a total of 6,690 head with a value of 295,830 francs.

In Lower Laos buffalo sold for from 50 to 112 francs in 1899, and oxen for from 20 to 30 francs. In Upper Laos the prices for [406] buffalo varied from 60 to 110 francs. Oxen may cost more or less there, depending on whether they are trained as draft and pack animals or fattened for export. In the first case they bring from 40 to 70 francs and in the second from 10 to 15 francs.

231 262 Pigs. Pigs are used mainly for food by the natives, who consume a great many. The meat of this animal enjoys great favor among the population, and it is pork which, prepared either alone or with fish, enters most often into the composition of meals. [Illustration here]

[563] The Lus, the Meos, the Chinese and the Khas are past masters at raising pigs, and their stock might figure successfully in our regional competitions. They fatten them in closed compartments, after first castrating them.

231 The most common variety is the one known as "Cochinchinese or Tonkinese pig." It is gray with white spots and sometimes almost black, and bears on its back a mane of long, stiff bristles similar to those of the wild boar. Even when domesticated these pigs have

439 178 [437] The conclusion to be drawn from the preceding tables is not favorable toward orienting Laotian trade towards the ports of French Indo-China. It is evident that the export trend of animals and products shows a marked tendency to move towards Oubone and Siam. Indeed, Siam's share of total exports from Lower Laos (merchandise and animals), which was 179,627 francs in 1898, rose to 381,185 francs in 1899. This was an increase of more than double.

On the other hand, we see that the share of Annam, Cochinchina, and Cambodia in this same traffic, which was 699,712 francs in 1898, fell to 466,477 francs in 1899, representing an approximate decrease of one-third.

[496] The causes of this persistent and increasing orientation of Laotian trade towards Siam are perhaps to be sought in the opening of the railroad from Bangkok to Korat (1) as well as in the customs system of

(1) The king of Siam inaugurated this line on December 21, 1900.

French Indo-China.

439 497 505 There is no question but that the railroad constitutes a considerable improvement over the old means of transport, as much by virtue of the lower costs and shorter travel time as by the suppression of the dangers and bothers of the cart road from Korat to Bangkok (domestic duties, exactions of the local authorities, robberies, etc.). But are these reasons sufficient to explain or justify the admitted fact?

The River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales] service is, as we have previously noted, the most rapid and least expensive means of transporting merchandise from Luang-Prabang to Saigon. Why then is this service, which is superior even in its present imperfection, scorned by exporters in general and used mainly by importers for products destined for the Europeans in Laos? The answer is a simple one. Exporters would not hesitate to use the Mekong route and to transport their products to Pnom-Penh or to Saigon-Cholon if, as they can do at Moulmein, at Xieng-Mai, at Nong-Khay, at Bassac, at Oubone, at Korat and at Bangkok, they could obtain [438] supplies there of imported merchandise from various sources to make up the counterpart of their exports. But, besides the fact that they would not be able to find certain special merchandise which is indispensable to them in the French marketplaces, they could not obtain the rest except at an increase of fifty or sixty percent or even more over the ordinary prices in the markets of Siam and Burma which we have just cited.

505 Large quantities of nep (rice suitable
438 for making alcohol), hides, horn, cardamom, wax, benzoin, various gums, etc. were shipped from Bassac, from Pakse, from Savannakhet, from Vien-Tiane and from other Laotian centers which had formerly traded exclusively with Bangkok by way of the Nongkay-Outaradit route on the Menam and by the Korat route on the Se-Moun.

505 "Passenger traffic, which was almost nil when the new services
484 were established, is increasing every day. The natives are beginning to become familiar with this rapid, convenient and inexpensive manner of traveling which the steamship represents and they are making more frequent use thereof, a fact which can only contribute to the broadening of relations between the various posts scattered along the great river and increase trade in their products of all kinds" (1).

(1) See, in Appendix XXX, the transport rates between France and Indo-China and between Saigon and Laos.

[487] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER XI
1. SOCIAL STATUS. SLAVERY

[565] Upon our arrival in Laos, we found a hierarchial society com-
567 prised of nobles, commoners and slaves. We could not do better than to preserve all features of the political, social and administrative organization just as it had been. In this respect we took our inspira-
• 178 tion from our predecessors the Siamese, leaving our new subjects the
177 utmost liberty and respecting their traditions, customs and mores insofar as these were compatible with our own institutions.

Thus we were at times forced to recall certain native officials who had compromised themselves with the Siamese, or who through their exactions had made themselves unworthy of their office. Moreover, we have always acted tactfully and mildly, [488] leaving the choice of officials to election, in accordance with custom.

But above all, we took radical measures by completely suppressing the slave trade and by regularizing a very mild form of slavery for debt.

[556] There used to be slavery in Laos, as in Siam, in the form of slavery by capture, by purchase and for debt. It yielded high profits for those who engaged in the traffic, for the children and grandchildren of slaves were slaves themselves at birth, a fact which increased the fortunes of their masters to that extent.

567 as early as March of 1896, in a report which we believe it will be of
426 value to reproduce in part, as well as a code of rules as ingenious as they were just governing slavery for debt (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVIII.

567 Finally, there is a kind of serfdom in Laos which is applied to
563 certain Kha tribes. Thus in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang, subsequent to revolts, entire tribes of Khas were reduced to a state of serfdom and placed under the patronage of the king, of princes, or of the principal members of the nobility. In 1894 our administration undertook to liberate these Khas, who are completely free today. In southern Laos most of these latter are still the clients of a few nobles or Laotian officials, but the guardianship is a gentle one which they can abandon and resume at will.

2. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

178 Under our control, as has been noted above, the political
642 organization of Laos has remained what it was before 1893. We have respected the customs and local traditions, and we govern through the native administration in which all the machinery has been retained.

643 [490] The following is a nearly complete list of all the officials in a large Muong such as the kingdom of Luang-Prabang or of Bassac (1)

(1) The kingdom of Luang-Prabang is situated on both banks of the Mekong, but the king resides on the left bank at Luang-Prabang and is consequently dependent on the French authorities. The kingdom of Bassac is today wholly on the right bank, and the king of Bassac falls under Siamese domination. The title of king is sometimes given also to the "Tiao-Fa" or head of the province of Muong-Sing. The head of a muong in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na may be a "Tso-boua," a "Phya-Hua" or a "Sen-Houi-Fa," depending on his importance.

At the head are the Kings, two in number:

Somdet-Phra-Tiao or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Louang, first king, great master of existences.

Tiao-Maha-Oupahat or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Vang-Na, second king,
644 great master responsible for conservation of property. [Illustration here]

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178

Opium sales are constantly on the increase in Laos, moreover, and it is probable that receipts for 1900 have reached nearly 350,000 francs.

5. BUDGET

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The budget of Laos was created by a decree of the governor general dated September 30, 1895. The first budget was that of 1896. It varies little from one year to another, and amounts to about two million francs. The following are the exact figures:

	francs
1896	1,819,245
1897	1,918,207
1898	2,008,806
1899	1,988,700
1900	1,847,500
1901	1,896,650

[506] Local receipts taken in in 1896 amounted to 356,925 francs. In 1900 they had risen to 516,250 francs, an increase of 159,325 francs. On the other hand, levies on the other parts of Indo-China which were necessary to balance the budget of Laos decreased by the same amount. In fact, since local resources are insufficient to cover expenses, it has been necessary to have recourses to subsidies provided by the other countries of the Indo-Chinese union. Thus Cochinchina provided 6/13 of the subsidy, Tonkin 5/13 and Cambodia 2/13. Since the creation of a general budget for Indo-China, the sum of these subsidies is entered there annually.

Each year a projected budget is prepared by the superior resident. It is presented to the Superior Council of Indo-China, which studies and approves it. Before it can become official, it must also be approved by the President of the Republic.

Here, as a sample, is the budget as established for the fiscal year 1900:

A. Receipts

	francs
Direct taxes.....	316,250
Miscellaneous taxes.....	200,000
Subsidy from general budget....	1,331,250
Total receipts....	1,847,500

249 It is reckoned that about 100 tobacco plants are needed to supply one "mun" of cut tobacco, and this would mean, in accordance with what has been said above, a yield of 1,800 to 3,000 kilograms per hectare.

[145]

APPENDIX XXIV
NOTE ON SERICULTURE

231 It would appear that sericulture was once one of the most active branches of the country's industry. It must even have been quite extensive, if we are to rely on the sayings of the older folk who deplore its present decline.
178

Today the production by this entirely familial breeding industry
231 is not as great as it used to be and its quality leaves much to be desired, as does the general yield from the silkworms. This decline stems both from certain unfavorable climatic conditions and from a defective food supply for the worms resulting from the poor state of mulberry tree cultivation.

Since the temperature in places where there are silkworm breeding houses never falls below a certain point, except perhaps during a few nights in the cold season, there can be no wintering for the silkworms. As a consequence there is never any stop to the fecundation, egg-laying, incubation, hatching and rearing of the worms, and all these operations can be carried out continuously all year long.

Under such a regimen it is not surprising that the native varieties of silkworms should degenerate and produce only a mediocre and rather scanty yield. From the point of view of breeding returns, there are considerable losses. Thus if eight females lay 2,500 to 3,000 eggs, for example, these will yield only 250 or 300 worms and only half of the latter, that is to say about 125 or 150, will reach a final stage of development and spin a cocoon. This return amounts to only ten percent of the eggs placed in incubation and fifty percent of the worms subsequently hatched.

Fecundation and egg-laying. The male and female insects which have been selected and chosen for reproduction are mated for fecundation. Afterwards the females are separated from the males, which serve no further purpose, and placed in groups of six or eight on a small square of cottonstuff which is covered with an ordinary porcelain bowl. [146] The females lay their eggs, and when they have done so some 2,500 or 3,000 eggs are found on the

naturally be "water." These two elements, opposed though they are 593
to one another, nonetheless go together. If you should happen to 647
raise your voice, see to it that it does not reach the ears of your 565
neighbors who will be sure to laugh at your domestic misunderstanding.
There is a good way to appease your anger: that is to go out and get
some fresh air. A moment of distraction will calm your irritation.
This precious and effective remedy is called, according to a Laotian
expression, "to caress one's heart with a hand drenched with fresh
water."

On a walk and on a visit.--Formerly it used to be considered 574
a disgrace for a mandarin to go for a walk by himself or to visit minor 647
functionaries. Nowadays this is no longer the case. A Laotian 565
Minister goes out alone without being accompanied by the traditional 178
retinue. He visits all classes of society without being criticized for
it by anyone at all.

At a private gathering--In contrast to the customs of former
times, present-day mandarins accept the invitation of a simple
citizen. The host very often organizes various diversions: dances, /533/
lamvong, orchestras, songs etc. The Ministers willingly participate /535/
in these; they sing, dance, and pay their respects to the phousaos
while they mingle with the crowd. Certain Laotians whom I consider
backward criticize the liberal manner on the part of our Ministers.
Our great mandarins are their own masters. Let them turn a deaf
ear to these carpings. /978/

Honor Laotian Women

Some people consider the Laotian woman as an inferior 562
creature.

Certain women, it appears, are not permitted to eat with
their husband. Miserable husbands! You consider then that your
better half is like an animal?

Certainly, tradition says: "The woman must sleep with her /513/
head lower than her husband's. She must go to bed after him and
she must get up before him. The husband must have eaten three /264/
mouthfuls of rice before the wife can begin to eat in her turn."

These counsels of our fathers are valuable, but they are far
from indicating that the woman is inferior to the man. They recommend,

779
538 treatises on metaphysics.

[198] [179] Such is the whole of the Buddhist canon in force in Laos. Unfortunately, as the knowledge of Pali disappeared, many texts were forgotten because they were not understood and therefore were not followed. But certainly the most popular text and that which forms the core of all Buddhist literature is the Jatakam.

The Jatakas.

This name is given to a collection of tales about the former lives of the Buddha. As the Master is supposed to have had the greatest variety of experiences from the animal state to that of a god, going through the different states of humanity, his long career as bodhisattva provides ample material for stories of all sorts, moral tales, satirical tales, parables, fables, etc. These stories have no equivalent in any literature, for Buddha knows not only his own births, but also the former births of all creatures, and these he relates as the occasion presents itself. The method of exposition is always the same. The narrator tells more or less briefly the circumstances giving rise to the story of the Buddha, then comes the story itself, finally by way of conclusion, the Buddha relates the past to the present by indicating the identity of the characters in their various roles.

The greatest number of Jatakas take place at the time when "Brahmadatta reigned in Benares," which is the equivalent of our "once upon a time."

In these tales the Buddha appears in the most varied roles; he is in turn ascetic, king, scholar, courtier, brahman, prince, noble, merchant, landlord, slave, potter, elephant-driver, woodcutter, mason, thief, actor, student, etc. Sometimes he is a god or the deity of [28] a tree, sometimes merely an animal, such as a serpent, a lizard, a bull, a pig, a dog, etc. The Buddha has none of the prejudices of nobility. Instead he gives a comforting example of how in all ranks of creation one can realize perfection in oneself and serve the collective interests of the universe. The most incongruous materials are harmoniously blended in this incoherent collection which is always frank. The whole Indian folklore is poured into this convenient framework, where it has received the Buddhist stamp, and been spread throughout the whole Far East where it has been received with enthusiasm.

There are 547 Jatakas. Some are more popular than others. Thus, in Laos, there are ten which form a special collection called "Sip Xat" (the ten Jatakas). The best known are the Temiya Jataka: (Cf. Appendix: Luang Prabang).

173: Deydier--50 H B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

inverting the order of words. The negation bo is added. Is the gentleman home? is translated Tan you ban bo? Sometimes a single word contains a whole phrase: 173

mi = there are.
dai = it is possible.

Vocabulary. In addition to the pronunciation of sounds, one of the difficulties of the Laotian language is the distinction between noble language and popular language. The language is different when one addresses the bonzes, the high dignitaries, the king. There is a very rich concrete and abstract Laotian vocabulary which unfortunately is tending to go out of use. We have found in manuscripts Laotian words translating textually [78] abstract Pali words, but they have been gradually forgotten. The Laotians no longer read enough of their original texts. Cheap Siamese literature has invaded the country making the people abandon their own language. 192 554 [178] 177 538

One of the urgent tasks is to bring back the old Laotian texts into honor and to spread them abroad again among the public.

[79] LITERATURE AND MUSIC

In addition to the canonical religious literature already discussed, Laos possesses an important literary treasury. But as in Cambodia, Siam and Burma, this literature is anonymous. We are in the presence of epic texts of Indian origin, of legendary traditions, of apologues, of legal, moral or comic tales. There exist also novels, but as in French "romances" of the Middle Ages, they are by unknown authors. There is no equivalent in Laos of a Kalidasa or of a Li T'ai-po. No philosopher or dramatic author is known. 538

If the name of a French writer were mentioned whose manner is closest to that of Laotian authors, it would be that of Charles Perrault, and this in a word characterizes the type of Laotian literature. It excels in wonderful tales.

Literature of Indian Inspiration.

In addition to the Jatakas, Laos possesses at least two great texts of Indian origin. This is said under reservation of further discoveries, for in spite of the important work of Louis Finot, "Recherches sur la littérature laotienne," we are still far from knowing all the treasures of the Laos pagodas. 177 114

a) The Pancatantra. The first text is a collection of tales copied from the famous Indian Pancatantra. In the Middle Ages

536 There is no scenery. The costumes and headdresses vary according to the characters represented. The masks of colored lacquer worn by the actors, their accessories (weapons, scarves, etc.) being traditional and invariable enable the fictitious characters on the stage to be identified.

/178 The theatre of animated shadows, similar to the shadow theatre
101/ of China and Java, tends to disappear little by little.

Laotian Decoration.

Laotian decoration is characterized by a somewhat mannered
531 elegance which can be noticed in the motifs of the pagoda doors and
178 windows. The Laotian artisan is, however, endowed with an extremely well developed artistic sense, but the present day demands do not enable him any longer to live by his handiwork, and the importation of manufactured articles tends to make the artist disappear. /89/ He can only survive by royal patronage. The royal palace for this reason shelters sculptors on wood and ivory as well as goldsmiths, but
/644/ their produce is not sold and the tourist will hardly be able to bring back with him typical Laotian objects.

However, the weaving of silk materials of divers shades, often laminated with gold or silver, is still done on a sufficient scale to
/236/ satisfy the passing tourist.

The Sin

This is a skirt reaching from the hips to the ankles. It is of a
291 rather somber color with a design of vertical stripes very close together and not very evident. This skirt is decorated on its lower edge with a flat trimming of two or three rows of gold or silver braid. At the top of the skirt a belt of red cloth, more or less embroidered, relieves the rather dark tone. This garment is a regular cylinder having the same width on its entire length. When the woman emerges from her bath she lifts her skirt, gathered into the shape of a crown, above her head and lets it slide down the length of her body. She fixes it without hooks or fasteners to her belt by means of a turned in pleat tied in front leaving most of her belly exposed. A bright colored scarf of cotton or silk thrown over one shoulder and completely covering the breasts completes the costume. The most beautiful scarves come from Samneua, Luang Prabang and Khong. The jewelry most frequently seen consists of
301 silver bracelets, necklaces and buttons, rings, long crossed over chains /chaînes-sautoirs/, flat clasps, and belts usually of silver but sometimes of gold.

/Pages 90 to 135 not translated/ /136 blank/

7: Thompson--380-381 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians-1-2
116, 181, 186

"In proportion, as the Laotian is the national group which has the least political and economic importance in Indo-China, so it is the country where the French find themselves most happy. Not that there are not some of the racial unpleasantnesses evidenced in a centre like Luang-Prabang, but in Laos the friction that seems inseparable from all colonization is at a minimum. The reaction to mutual contracts is the same as in Cambodia, but more intense in degree. For the rare Frenchman who sees in the Laotians a silly, lazy, and naïve people, there are hundreds who are charmed by their gentle affability and their aesthetic appearance. If they understand and like the Laotian character, there are no limits to the devotion they can inspire. But an offence to Laotian pride, albeit unconscious, or demands for sustained effort on their part, will meet with instantaneous defeat.

The effect which the French have had upon the Laotian people is as yet--perhaps because the economic exploitation is so dilatory there--very slight in comparison with the influence Laos has had upon the French. By contrast with the sombre inscrutability of the ambitious Annamites, the easy-going Laotian is infectiously gay. Suddenly it seems the simplest thing in the world to be happy. Laotian family life has an archaic simplicity. The country is an earthly paradise which offers a beauty and nourishment that demands no effort for its enjoyment. Partly it is because Buddhism has encouraged a life without violent desires, but it is also due to the climate which has conspired to reject effort and to encourage an immobile happiness. For the European, wearied with Western greed

and strife, Laos seems to be the answer to [381] all his problems. Laziness is an idle reproach in a land where work would obviously make one less rather than more content. In fact, Laos is in itself a passive reproach to the futility of Europe's bustling activity and soul-searchings. It is a museum-piece of earthly happiness, a reply to the West's gloomy disillusionment. Even the Civilizer, with all his utilitarian baggage, hesitates to trouble its idyllic calm. If Europeans are forced by a grudging nature to wrest a precarious living from it by irksome and boring toil, the Laotians have not had to submit to such indignity. They render lip-service to European superiority, because it is too much trouble to be impolite, but the Laotians do not believe in it. Nor does the European for long who lives in their amiable midst. Europe is well lost to gain a Laotian soul."

10: d'Orleans--306-307 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 181

"The Laotians of Luang Prabang, in their way of speaking and general demeanour, give me the idea of [307] what the citizens of a small Greek republic might have been like, and I can fancy the Athenians, putting the aesthetic sentiment upon one side, to have been of a like disposition, lazy, fond of gossip, and of an easy saunter, devoted to flowers, women, and music."

10: d'Orleans--315 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 181, 517, 609

"... They are a curious people; lazy without being fools; of equal fortune, as a rule, without great wealth or great distress; of a fairly pacific character; well disposed towards foreigners without exhibiting the intolerable curiosity of the Chinese; very religious, more, perhaps, from habit than from strong convictions; and, what is so rare in the East, treating women and girls with deference. For, while very free in their morals, they have their serenades and their 'Courts of Love,' reviving in the midst of Indo-China practices which belong rather to the Europe of the Middle Ages. There is something poetical, chivalrous and French, or, to go back to an earlier period, something Athenian in the inhabitants of the Laos; and if they have not the artistic feeling of the Greek, they have no desire for a knowledge of luxury. Having very little to earn, they do not work much and their existence is more unfettered."

23: Franck--327[2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 181

"The difference indicated how great is the adaptability of the human frame, for these men were if anything larger, sturdier, certainly more visibly muscular than Chinese carriers. They were like those muscle marvels one sees in gymnasiums and in physical culture magazines, no good at all beside the wiry little shrimp when it comes to real sustained hardships. Unless hunger or the white man drives them, the Laosians do little work; they are so happy-go-lucky in their tropical fairy-land that their rulers even have trouble making them keep their communal granaries filled against possible famines."

25: Brodrick--101 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 181, 522, 577

"The Laotians like to laugh, that is to say that they like to enjoy the circumstances which move them to mirth and then they like to go on laughing because laughing makes them, as all of us, feel happy... And, if it is incongruity which moves us most to laugh, then those are most happy who live in a society full of conventions whose breach is ridiculous, provided, of course, that such a breach is not such a sin, such a crime and such a misdemeanour that laughter outlaws us. The Laotian has plenty of conventions, but he feels they are made to be breached. Happy people.

The Laotian is cheerful and serene and contented, perhaps from some strange physiology of his glands, of his bodily make-up and of his environment, or of all of these, but he is most of all happy because he has but few needs."

25: Brodrick--101 [3] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 181, 224, 276

"The men and the women both smoke and often they smoke pan, a sort of hemp, not unlike the Moroccan kif, but the Laotians mix their pan with tobacco. And everyone chews betel.

The Laotians' ideal in life is to chew betel, to drink rice-alcohol, to make love and to sleep--they are very good sleepers. Their economy is still half pre-agricultural, hunting and fishing afford food and amusement, and amusement, of course, because men are not wholly dependent upon the product of the chase."

26: Brodrick--60 [3] S-3 (1939) 1944 Laotians
116, 181

"The French-protected Laos are a nonchalant, easy-going people, averse from any sort of work, much given to song and love-making and professing a dreamy, cheerful sort of Buddhism. The Laotians' care-free melancholy they call su-su--perhaps the Potruguese [sic] saudade is the nearest equivalent word in a European language--and the Land of Susu is one of the most delightfully unreal places one can well discover."

34: Thompson--168[2] J-4 (no date)1947 Laotians
116, 563, 463, 181

"This fear and dislike [P. H. : of the Annamese] is also felt by Cambodia's northern neighbors, the Laotians, who are even less able to resist Annamite infiltration. The Laotians do not appear to share the capabilities of their relatives in Siam and resemble the Cambodians in regard to farming and industrial incompetence. Although they are less talented as craftsmen, they are more skillful as boatmen and as merchants. Under sympathetic tutelage, however, they have shown some ability in forestry and even in mining."

68: Mouhot--138-139 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 181

"The Laotians of Leuye [HD: southeast of Pak Lai, in what is now Siamese territory] appear to me more industrious than the Siamese, and, above all, possess a much more [139] adventurous and mercantile spirit; and although, both physically and morally, there are great points of resemblance, yet there exist shades of difference which distinguish them at once, and are apparent in their dialect, or rather patois, and in their manners, which are more simple and affable. They are all much alike in features; the women have round faces, small noses, large almond-shaped eyes, thick hair, the mouth large and strongly-marked; but the men do not exhibit so great a diversity of race as they do in Siam.

Alas! what a journey my fragile collection of specimens, so difficult to gather together, has still to take, and what various accidents may befall them! Those who in museums contemplate the works of Nature do not think of all the perseverance, trouble, and anxiety required before they are safely brought home.

The Laotians have not the curiosity of the Siamese, and ask me fewer questions. I find them more intelligent than either the latter race or the Cambodians, and among the villagers especially there is a curious mixture of cunning and simplicity. They do not as yet seem to me to merit their reputation for hospitality,-- a virtue which appeared to be much more practised in Siam. I should never have obtained any

means of conveyance without the letter from the Viceroy of Korat, and my experience has been that they are less respectful, but at the same time less importunate, than the Siamese."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

241 sufficient for his requirements. If there are six members of the
461 family, six standard, equal sized portions of land will be cultivated.
511 If a child is born into the family another piece of land is cleared and
792 worked. When a member of the family dies, whether it be a baby or the grandfather, cultivation of his portion will be stopped. Just enough is produced for the family to eat and to provide a small surplus sold in the market – *with the bonze's approval* – to buy occasional strict necessities, like a silk shawl and a bicycle for the
735 daughter. There is no social insurance and there are no poor. The
556 old and the sick are supported by the young, or, where they are
792 left without able-bodied providers, by the community, and the
771 bonzes give instructions for the necessary land to be placed under cultivation for them. The accumulation of wealth which is not to be used for definite, approved purposes, causes a man to lose prestige among his neighbours, just, as in the West, the process is reversed. The main difference, it seems, between Buddhism in Indo-China, and Christianity – apart from any question as to their relative merits – is that, whether we admire it or not, the former is largely put into practice.

It is a stimulating reflection that the Western millionaire, obsessed for the sake of social distinction with the amassing of enormous possessions – little of which he can personally consume – would attain the same ends of personal celebrity under a Laotian Buddhistic order of things by his priestly austerities – by embracing the most abject and prestige-conferring form of poverty.

181 For this reason perhaps the local Evangelist missionary and his
771 wife have made no converts. Like all who have lived among the
785 Laotians they are charmed with them – although, of course,
797 disappointed at their blindness. They also deplore their immorality.

In the matter of converts the Evangelists have been no more unsuccessful than their Portuguese, Spanish and French forerunners. The Laotians having little capacity for abstractions, either in their

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Miao AE5

language or religion, cannot follow the subtlety of Western religious concepts. They have a passion for taking things *au pied de la lettre*. Being told that the basic commandment of Christianity as well as Buddhism is 'thou shalt not kill', they cannot swallow such reservations as capital punishment and 'the just war'; while casuistry repels them. Moreover, a bonze, the spiritual leader of the country people among whom he lives and works, occupies by virtue of his rigorous fulfilment of the principles of his religion, a position in their esteem accorded in the West, say, to a boxing champion. The Laotians have come to associate the prestige of sanctity with certain abstinences and uncomfortable practices. The bonze gives an example of utter renunciation which is awe-inspiring by comparison with the minor self-abnegations of the villagers. The Laotians, therefore, although tolerant in the extreme, are not impressed by the worth of a would-be spiritual leader who presents himself to them loaded with material possessions. And this negative attitude deepens into a certain aversion if, as usually happens, the holy men of the West spend most of their time hunting in a country where animals must be allowed to die of old age. I fear that where the austere Dominicans, and the Jesuits failed, there is little hope for the Evangelists.

However, the missionary was far from despondent. There were Meos in the mountains not far from Vientiane, and just as in the plateaux of Viet-Nam the Moïs had not rejected the Gospel, so here the primitive peoples of the mountains seemed promising material for evangelization. There would be no risk of jeopardizing conversion by hunting, among such hearty amateurs of open-air sports as the Meos, and if the missionary had more of this world's goods than they – well, that was a sure sign that his *ai* (or spirit), was stronger, and it would be a good thing to imitate him. Before the Meos could trouble themselves with renunciatory religions they would have to create a comfortable and abundant civilization for themselves. There was no chance of becoming sated with prosperity at the top of their mountains.

285 lacquer -- red on the inside and black on the outside -- and deco-
532 rated with a fine gilt design which makes a border, like a galloon" (1).
175*

1. Cf. G. Maspero, ibid. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930/, pp. 190-191.

286 Even today weaving remains women's work, and is done solely in
462 the home. The materials, which may be silk or cotton, striped or
532 splashed with colors, embroidered or spangled with gold and silver thread, nevertheless acquire, under the action of light and carefree hands, chatoyant, harmonious or dazzling tones, and yet the looms which are used are simple in the extreme. Patterns "are obtained, as before the invention of the Jacquard loom, by alternately isolating or raising certain woof threads by means of thin bamboo splints" (2).

2. Cf. L. de Reinach, ibid. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 333.

181 Thus did the Laotian of the seventeenth century live in peace, respecting the law of the least effort with an amiable perserverance amidst his laughter and his games. . . . The princes were perhaps the
/565/ only ones in the whole kingdom to know any of the worries which power and its exigencies bring, and it was for not having wished to compromise with his authoritarian principles that King Souligna, towards the end of his reign, compromised the destinies of his people forever.

643* Condemnation of the heir apparent to death. He had three chil-
175* dren, a son Tiao Ratsabout and two daughters. His son married Nang-
648* Tian-Koumali, who gave birth in her turn to two children, King-Kitsarath and Intha-Som. Nang-Tian-Koumali was the sister of a prince of the Sip-Song-Panas who had been driven out of his country by a Chinese invasion and whom the king of Lan-Xang had welcomed in Vientiane together with his family. Tiao Ratsabout, however, committed the imprudence of seducing the wife of the chief palace page. In accordance with his edict which punished the crime of
/684/ adultery by death, Souligna pitilessly referred the deceived husband's complaint to the royal tribunal and allowed his son to be sentenced to capital punishment

The result was that at the king's death, which occurred /130/ in 1694, the direct heirs to the crown were his grandsons King-Kitsarath

Tribal Tai

291 the Deng-Thais, is applied to the edges of the gown. It is further
563 ornamented [233] on the outside edge opposite the buttonholes with colored silk embroidery which does not go down below the waist.

This garment is also folded in half lengthwise and worn rolled around the body with the sleeves left hanging.

The women wear their hair parted down the middle in front
302 and rolled into a sort of long tassel behind which is contained within
301 the folds of a little turban. The latter is wound above the forehead and the free end inserted under the first turn, on the nape of the neck. This headdress is quite similar to that of the Annamite women in Tonkin.

In certain regions of Laos, Thai women wind their hair into a sort of coil which girls wear loosely down their neck and betrothed or married women wear on top of the head. Thai jewelry is made of heavy silver and is of the same type as Laotian jewelry. The men wear bracelets on their wrists.

Food. The Thai diet is like that of the Laotians, but they prefer
262 non-glutinous white rice and use chopsticks like the Chinese and
264 Annamites.

The use of betel is quite widespread among the Thais, but in
276 contrast to the Laotians they keep their teeth white. The Thais smoke the oily, opiated tobacco of Tonkin and China in bamboo waterpipes whose tiny bowls only contain a small pinch of tobacco. They also smoke a local variety of tobacco, either in cigarettes or in pipes with a highly worked clay bowl into which a long stem ending in a glass or jade mouthpiece is inserted.

Character. Although serious and reflective, the Thais have a
156 vivacious and friendly character. They are somewhat cold in appearance, but are sound friends and highly affable when one gets to know them better.

[701] Gentler and more timid than the Laotians, they have no taste for the art of war and it is difficult to get them to stay in the native militia.

They are very self-seeking and much more miserly than the Lao-
433 tians. [234] It should be noted, moreover, that since they produce
438 everything themselves and are a people of farmers and livestock breeders, they do not have, by virtue of their ever sedentary occupations,
156 the opportunities which these latter have to enjoy fairly high profits resulting from commercial transactions, nor the special habits which contact with different races gives.

•181 The Thais love pleasure and celebrations. Guaranteed their daily
461

181 bread by their work, they have scarcely a care for the morrow.
461 Scrupulous observers of the traditions handed down to them by their ancestors, they live an utterly carefree life and instinctively dread everything foreign or unknown to them.

463 Occupations. The men busy themselves with the tasks of farming,
241 fishing and hunting. They are very industrious and skilled farmers,
462 and can draw admirably on the soil's resources. They bring in the wate needed for irrigating their rais or mountain ricefields through ingenious canals built along the sides of hills, and they also know how to capture springs, often very distant ones, for the same purpose. To decorticate paddy, they use mills driven by artificial waterfalls. The women perform the household chores, take care of the children, make and mend clothes, harvest and spin cotton, breed silkworms, unwind the cocoons and mill the silk. Theirs also is the task of supplying the home with water and with wood which they gather in the forest, as well as sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, getting in and decorticating the rice. These many tasks leave Thai women and girls little leisure, and it would thus seem only natural that they should profit by a momen of pleasure, whenever one presents itself in the midst of their multiple duties. They do, in fact, go in for fun eagerly and behave as keenly, despite their more reserved appearance, as their Laotian sisters.

361 Houses. There is no difference between Laotian villages and Thai villages, except that the latter are better kept and cleaner.
342 Thai houses are generally longer and higher than those of the
592 Laotians, by reason of the custom which decrees that the whole family-parents, children and grandchildren--shall live under the same roof. Some Thai houses are as much as thirty meters long and from eight to ten meters wide. In rare cases one finds much larger houses which are from seventy to seventy-five meters long and twenty-five meters wide.

342 Thai houses very often have no verandas on their long sides, but
554 always have two, one at each end, which are covered by rounded roofs and serve as reception terraces or antichambers.

The houses of mandarins and notables can be distinguished from the others by the fact that the roof rafters and the trusses of the gables extend above the line of the roof and cross. These members are decorated with wooden silhouettes or scallops ending in discs which, depending on their number and arrangement, indicate the rank of the house's owner.

Tyibal Tai
Kha

291 The men's costume is like that of the Laotians. A few, however, have adopted the Burmese costume, turban and all, in which case they let their hair grow and roll it in a coil instead of having a brush cut.

The women wear a very long skirt with broad stripes running across it which is fastened beneath the breasts. The bust is covered by a closed jacket or bodice which is cut straight and made of cotton or silk [302] of varied colors. Their hair is rolled in a coil on the nape of the neck [301] or is held in place around the head by a narrow band of cloth and allowed to fall freely down the back. Both sexes wear metal cylinders in their ears, like the Lus, and silver jewelry.

[142] The Youns are more robust than their fellows, and also more industrious. The women are perhaps less pretty than the Laotian women, but they are just as friendly and merry.

[251] Both men and women chew betel, and also "Mieng" (green 276 tea, fermented and salted). They smoke tobacco in enormous cigarettes rolled in dried banana leaves. [Illustration alongside text here]

The Youns are primarily farmers and livestock breeders. They excel in breeding and training oxen as draft animals.

We have seen that the Youns, although they speak the same lan- 212 guage as the Laotians, have their own form of writing which is generally 292 used for religious writings. Their bonzes, who are highly learned for the most part, are renowned for their expert knowledge of the rites of the Buddhist religion.

Marriage, divorce, polygamy, births, funerals, celebrations and 101 festivities are all the same among the Youns as among the Laotians, except for a few minor differences in detail which we need not mention here.

THE KHAS

619 Before entering into detail about the mores and customs of the main Kha families, we shall again have recourse to the learned work • 181 by the Superior Resident in Laos in order to give a general sketch of this race which represents at least a third of the population.

[252] "They are to be found throughout the territory, and are divided into more than sixty families. As much as those who inhabit northern Laos are docile, manageable and respectful, so are those who inhabit the southern part of Laos proud, independent and warlike, particularly the tribes inhabiting the mountains which separate us from Annam.

Kha

586 684 and to the family of his accomplice. In a case of flagrante delicto, however, he has the right to kill the guilty parties.

[462] Kha women, when married, are renowned for their austerity, and their conduct is usually exemplary. Moreover, they are very soon disfigured by precocious and repeated childbearing, as well as by the difficult work which they do, and after two or three years of marriage the poor women are no longer tempting to anyone.

764 Deaths. Cremation is not practiced by the Khas. They bury their ~~dead in as~~ summary a fashion as the Lus, and for a few days bring food to the freshly filled grave. Then the latter is abandoned.

When a chief or a rich man is to be buried, the body is placed in a coffin hewn from a tree trunk.

181 Character. Like all oppressed peoples, the Khas are reserved and timid. They are afraid of innovations and new faces. But in intimate gatherings with their own people they are just as merry and love music, dances, celebrations and festivals just as much as the other peoples of Laos.

535 536 Music and dancing. They know certain dances imitated from the Lus, pantomimes (1) which resemble the I-Ke of the Burmese,

(1) They also have the habit of performing scenes in pantomime, rather like extremely primitive ballets. We shall describe one such scene:

"A group of girls, guarded by two respectable men, are pursuing the pleasures of dancing. A rogue comes up and tries to make off with one of the girls. After a few unsuccessful attempts he succeeds in eluding the guards' vigilance, jumps forward to seize the girl on whom he has designs, and clasps her in his arms. But his happiness is too much for him and he falls senseless at the feet of the girl he wanted to abduct." (Le Laos français.) - [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

and [255] singsong legends in which the r's and k's roll out in terrible fashion. They also have songs which they accompany on flutes, clarinets and single-stringed violins. Some tribes have xylophones, these being instruments composed of bamboo tubes of [Illustration here] different thickness and length, each of which produces a tone varying with its size. It will be seen that by striking with a [256] stick of wood on these tubes, a combination of more or less harmonious sounds will

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149: Reinach--186 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

result. But the Kha ideal is to possess a battery of gongs of different 533
sizes and timbres, and with these they manage to obtain quite perfect chords.

Industry. Withdrawn in their mountains where they live in small 433
isolated groups, the Khas use their leisure time to make many basket-work and hollow-ware products which have a mark of elegance and a great deal of delicacy. Other tribes make paper from wood pulp, weave mats from rattan and bamboo bark, etc. They use all these products in trade.

Finally, certain Khas exploit deposits of iron ore and transform 316
it into farming implements, while others wash gold-bearing sands.

In general, although the Khas are industrious they work only to 461
procure what is strictly indispensable. They cannot resign themselves to staying away from home for any length of time and dread any stay in the low country, which they say is unhealthy for them. Since they [313]
have particular aptitudes for woodcutting, however, they have been successfully employed to cut teak wood in the forests on the right bank of the Mekong which are situated in Siamese territory. But it must be admitted that there they are in mountainous country and in the midst of forests, as in their native region.

The Khas of southern Laos. In southern Laos Khas are found who differ very little from those of Upper Laos. We shall not concern ourselves with them, but shall deal briefly with the many more numerous ones who have particular mores and customs.

The Djarais, the Rades, the Bahnars, the Cedangs, the Peunongs, [619]
the Rognaos (1), etc. are the principal types of these Kha tribes,

(1) See Appendix XVIII.

which for the most part are still independent.

These people are proud, large and muscular, supple, trained in 181
all forms of bodily exercise, bold, warlike and brave.

These qualities, moreover, have been developed by their pe- 567
culiar way of [257] [Illustration] [258] [Blank page] [259] life.
Accustomed to hunting slaves from which they extracted large profits 721
by selling them on the banks of the Mekong, these Khas have had to resort to continual expeditions in order to obtain their human game.

For many long years, in fact, they could acquire [Illustration 567
here] the gongs, buffalo, metals, textiles, etc. which they needed only by selling captives, generally Annamites, whom they went and

10: d'Orleans--308 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 183, 512, 641, 831

"It may be asked how do the Laotians spend their time if they are lazy and have scarcely any occupation? The answer is easy--the greater part of their days and nights being employed in paying court to the young ladies and in services at the pagoda.

Formerly there was a law dispensing the young men from military service and taxation upon the ground that their first duty was towards the young women and although this law is repealed de jure, it still serves as a rule of conduct and reveals the spirit of this people."

10: d'Orleans--367 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 183, 823

"The rapids have no special name 'We call them,' say our boatmen, 'what we have heard our fathers call them. The rapids were made by God with the world, like the mountains and the rivers.' "

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The spade. Two kinds of spades are used. These are called "Siem" (this is more of a scoop) and "Tiok-Kout-Dine" or, literally, Pick for breaking ground. The first is formed by a narrow iron blade which is slightly concave lengthwise and is provided with a socket into which a handle is fastened. The second is made of wood, and the blade and handle are in one piece. The lower part is fixed into an iron frame which also binds both sides [379] [Illustration] [380] [Blank page] [381] for about two-thirds of their height. The spade is used to make holes and to turn over the soil.

The machete. The machete [coupe-coupe] or felling sword which is used for heavy work is called "Pha." It is composed of a solid, broad and rather short iron blade with a thick back which is fitted into a wooden hilt with an iron ferrule.

Another kind of knife, called "Mit-Tok" or "Mit-Noi," has a blade which is narrower but longer than the above. This tool is used for fine work, such as cutting and splitting bamboo, rattan, etc.

The ax (Khouane-Hone, Khouane-Mou, or Khouane-Bong, "hatchet"). The ax is formed of a narrow, two-edged and rather short blade. A hardwood shank .6 to .7 meter long is fitted into the head. This shank itself is held by wedges, a third of the way along its length and slightly above the blade, in a mortise which crosses the end of a handle .6 to .7 meter long. The ax is used to cut trees, to hew posts and planks, etc.

It is at the very least odd to note that, except the blade which is a modern innovation, this ax is similar in every respect to the kind used during the age of polished stone.

The other tools used are: the hammer or "Khone-Lek," the saw or "Lueui," the file or "Lek-Sambai," the wood chisel or "Siou," the awl or "Lek-Si," the pincers or "Kab-Lek," the anvil or "Thang-Ti-Lek," and finally the bellows or "Soub."

CROPS TO BE ENCOURAGED

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Most of the crops which are now grown in Laos can be improved and developed, and this must be done if we are either to increase exports of farming products or to provide more well-being for the inhabitants.

In a general way, the administration can perform a useful task by increasing the number of experimental farms, by distributing [382]

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selected seed to the natives, and by giving them advice and, if necessary, orders.

The reader will doubtless be struck by the fact that we shall often reiterate, in speaking of the crops which should be encouraged or introduced, that the administration's role should be to make trials of such and such a plant. This is nevertheless the case. It must not be imagined that individual initiative will suffice, for the comparatively large capital investment which any agricultural enterprise requires will not be made until after any given crop has proved to be successful. It is therefore incumbent on the administration to make these first trials. Was it not the Government which set up the first plantations of tea in Assam, of cinchona in Java, and of tobacco and coffee in Sumatra? The colonists did not come until later, when the period of groping and failure was over, and they were then able to act with assurance almost everywhere.

Rice. The cultivation of glutinous rice should most particularly be developed in southern Laos, with a view towards the manufacture of alcohol.

We have seen above how small a proportion of the cultivable land has heretofore been utilized. Much land suitable for making ricefields has not yet been cleared. In spite of the remunerative price offered them for the produce of the soil, and in spite of the encouragement which they have received from all quarters, the natives do not yet understand all the advantages which they would gain from developing their crops. It is nevertheless easy to see that since our arrival in Laos the inhabitants have realized that the regime of terror and exactions has disappeared and that an era of prosperity and justice is opening up before them, and they are increasingly devoting themselves to the work of the fields. Ricefields have appreciably increased in extent, either because new land has been cleared or because abandoned fields have been brought back under cultivation.

Glutinous rice is assured of a certain and profitable sale on the markets of Cambodia and Cochinchina (1). It may be anticipated

(1) At the present time, with the existing means of transport, exporting rice from Bassac to Pnom-Penh yields an average net profit of 18 francs per ton.

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that if rice production were to increase and continue to progress, distilleries and starch factories might be established in Laos [383] to utilize the high proportion of starch which rice contains.

The cultivation of maize should also be encouraged with a view to the same end.

Tobacco. It is to be desired that the manufacturers who deal in tobaccos should become aware of the very real qualities of those of Vien-Tiane and Nong-Khay. Persons or corporations who prospected this region would immediately find, in the cultivation of tobacco and its direct marketing, resources which would greatly reduce the cost of their explorations.

There is also room for one or several Europeans who would engage in tobacco farming on a share-cropping basis, allowing natives to cultivate it in the beginning and prepare it in their own way, until it has been made into plugs. Then later on they might experiment with seed from Havana and the Philippines, and attempt industrial fermentation. Without making any advance judgment as to the eventual results of these improvements, it may yet be said that this crop would yield rewarding profits, since prices in the region of production vary between 50 and 100 francs per hundred kilograms, whereas they are as high as 125 to 187 francs in Bangkok.

Whatever the case may be, the cultivation of tobacco may be extended, since there is no shortage of suitable land. It is also capable of improvement, for production would certainly double if the natives used fertilizers less parsimoniously.

Cotton. We have noted that the existing species are all of the short staple variety and all have a low yield. Plantings of a long staple variety have been made in the experimental garden of Luang-Prabang, and have given satisfactory results. The Superior Commandant of Upper Laos reported the experiment as follows:

"Trials were made with seed from the botanical garden of Hanoi.

"The minimum height of the plants was one meter and a few, those from Virginia, reached heights as great as 2.5 meters.

"The bolls were as large as chicken eggs, whereas those of the native cotton plants [384] were at best as large as pigeon eggs, and their average number was 400 per plant.

"As regards the quality of the textile material, it is unquestionably superior to that of all the cotton heretofore harvested in the country.

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"These results are extremely encouraging for the future, and there is every reason to believe that if undertaken on a large scale and in accordance with the most improved methods, the cultivation of cotton could within a short time become an important source of revenue" (1).

(1) Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, 1899.

This report is correct, and yet one should not think that if the natives are left to their own devices they will take any care to secure cotton seed of an improved variety or modify their farming methods.

The administration must step in and furnish this new seed to the population, and force it to cultivate the seed in accordance with the better methods.

Such intervention on the part of the administration will come as no surprise to those who are acquainted with the carefree ways of natives of all races in Laos, and their scant eagerness to give up their old routines, even when they are being asked to adopt some measure of unquestioned utility. In proof of this fact we need merely cite the difficulties encountered and the unwillingness which had to be overcome when rice storehouses were set up in each village, even though these were designed to save the inhabitants from famine.

A further example may be cited in this connection, showing that in certain cases firmness is not to be eschewed. The crop of cotton is one of the chief products of Russian Turkestan but, as is the case in Laos, the cotton being grown in the country when the Russians arrived was of the short staple and low yield variety.

The administration first tried to increase production in the country by distributing seed from Georgia cotton and by giving advice on its cultivation.

All to no avail, for it came up against the routinism, the indifference and the fatalistic spirit of the population. Then it acted by order, almost manu militari, and obtained amazing results, such that a section of railroad which had been constructed as a strategic line, [385] that is to say with no hope of commercial traffic, is now employed in transporting cotton. The yield from the crop is fivefold, it would seem, and prices have doubled.

The creation of the cotton farm of Tachkent has had similar results. [Illustration here]

Sugar cane. The production of sugar cane, which is still not very significant in Laos, deserves to be encouraged. Later on when this crop had been developed, the Laotians might be trained in the methods of the first stage of refinement. They would then be able to produce gray muscovado and sugar candy, which are easily exportable. 241 185

Southern Laos is the part of our possession which would lend itself [386] best to the extension of this crop. Although of secondary importance, it is nonetheless deserving of attention.

Benzoin trees. Increasing the number of trees which are producers of this precious resin is again a task for the administration. After a serious study of the conditions of growth of the plant in Laos, of its habitat and of the nature of the terrain best suited to it, it would be possible to set up seed gardens designed to supply young plants either to the natives or to Europeans who settled in the country and were interested in this crop. It yields a rich product, which brings a high price on the market. Benzoin is, in fact, widely used in perfumes and in the manufacture of varnishes.

Lac trees. All who are acquainted with Laos are unanimous in agreeing that increasing the production of sticklac is one of the main factors in increasing the country's wealth. What, indeed, could be more simple, thanks to the easy and rapid multiplication of the "Kok-Toua-He," the tree which grows almost without care and lends itself so well to the establishment of colonies of coccus lacca, the producers of a superior quality of gum lac?

Cardamom. It would seem that experiments with growing true cardamom, as it is grown in Cambodia in the province of Pursat, might be attempted in Laos. The natives would have everything to gain from giving up the cultivation of wild cardamom for that of true cardamom, since the latter brings from five to ten times more than the former on the market of Pnom-Penh. 249 263 438

Until such time as this precious seed is introduced into Laos, it will be well to extend and encourage the cultivation of the present variety of cardamom. All those who have engaged in the production and commerce of this seed (1)--the mountainfolk who grow it, the

(1) It is much sought-after by the Chinese, who use it as a condiment as well as in pharmaceutical preparations.

249 Chinese and Laotian middlemen and even the few European merchants--
263 have found that it brings in rewarding profits. Indeed, by exporting
438 this product the latter are assured of an almost certain gain of 20 to 30 percent.

248 [387] Ramie. There is also much to be gained from increasing
439 the production of ramie or Chinese nettle. It is assured of an outlet in Cambodia, where it sells for as much as 80 francs per hundred kilograms.

219 Cinnamon. The extension of the plantations and gardens of
185 cinnamon trees already in existence in the province of Vien-Tiane deserves serious encouragement. The bark of these trees is a valuable product which is much sought-after in China and in Europe.

276 Opium poppies. The Government of Indo-China, which is
656 both the preparer and seller of chandoo or opium for smoking, is the party which would gain most from obtaining the raw drug on French territory. It is, indeed, still dependent on British India for this product, and can acquire it only on extremely disadvantageous terms.

Since much time must still pass, however, before the Meos and the Yaos give up their age-old methods, it would be essential for the intensive cultivation of the opium poppy to be undertaken by Europeans on behalf of the administration. This would be possible if there were a guaranteed labor supply in the form of Chinese coolies, who would be enlisted primarily for the greater part of the work, and of native specialists who would deal only with scarification of the capsules, harvesting the opium and the first stage of its preparation.

These delicate operations are the ones which the Meos and the Yaos like best, but they dislike plowing, fertilizing, weeding and irrigation, all of which tasks are indispensable for obtaining a high yield of capsules and consequently of the raw drug. It would therefore be best to entrust this heavy work to foreign coolies, and it is probable that after a certain time they too would be capable of extracting the opium. Impelled by their example, the natives would doubtless then be seen to break with their prejudices and devote themselves also to intensive cultivation so as to reap its full benefits.

The role of the administration would then be at an end, and it would gradually diminish its intervention as free cultivation of the poppies increased.

[435 Raw opium which is produced locally or which comes from [388] neighboring countries is worth 22 francs, 50 centimes to 32 francs, 25 centimes per kilogram, depending on quality, in northern Laos.

centimes per kilogram, depending on quality, in northern Laos.

Betel nuts. It is a well-known fact that commerce in betel nuts is quite extensive in the Far East, since the number of consumers runs into several millions. It is therefore a crop to be developed and encouraged, all the more so because the climate, soil and temperature of Laos are perfectly suited to plantations of this type. 24 185 435

In Laos the harvest from about three trees sells for one tical (1 franc, 50 centimes). In Cochinchina the produce of a single tree is worth about one piaster (2 francs, 50 centimes). It is therefore evident that it would be profitable to export this nut in large quantities.

PRUNING AND GRAFTING FRUIT TREES. The natives in Laos, as a consequence of ignorance, lack of initiative, carelessness and also lack of the necessary means, do not give sufficient care to fruit trees. The result is that the latter, at least in the case of most varieties, bear only degenerate fruits. 24 185

It is to be desired that these trees should no longer be abandoned in this manner, without being pruned, trimmed or grafted. Thought might then be given not only to improving the natives' diet in the way of fruit, but perhaps also to creating new resources by preparing certain kinds of preserves, fruits with juice, compotes and jams.

Again it is the administration alone, with the means of action at its disposition and the authority in its possession, which could act in an effective manner.

The colonial and botanical gardens, etc., should be able to provide administrators with precise information on the care to be given to the various fruit trees, both in order to improve their fruit and to increase their yield.

The obvious middlemen between the administration and the population are the bonzes. The latter, if they were the possessors of industrial knowledge, would be listened to and imitated above all others when they provided an example by giving their care to the numerous varieties of fruit trees which they keep up within the enclosures of pagodas or nearby.

149: Reinach--285 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[389] CROPS TO BE INTRODUCED

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Here is a list of some crops which, among others, might profitably be introduced into Laos.

Manioc and sorghum. Trials successfully carried out, particularly in Muong-Son, prove that these plants can be grown there on a large scale.

Abaca. In Laos there are several varieties of musa which grow wild and whose fiber is used in the country for making various kinds of string and cord, tow for caulking pirogues, etc. These trees are the "Kok-Kouey-Ken" or seed banana, and the "Kok-Kouey-Pa" or forest banana. They are found on the lowest slopes of hills, along water-courses and in the bottoms of valleys. It would be interesting to try and identify these varieties of banana tree with the trees which produce abaca or Manila hemp, and to make comparisons between the fibers which they all produce.

In any case, seeds or plants could always be imported from Manila in order to create plantations in Laos.

Cinchona. The cinchona tree grows on land from which forestation has been newly cleared, at altitudes between 800 and 1200 meters. The soil must moreover be rich in humus. It would therefore seem that northern Laos is clearly indicated as a region for growing the cinchona (1). In the Laotian forests there is even a

(1) The Cinchona succirubra has been extremely successful in Jamaica and Java.

liana called "Khua-Khao-Ho" (2) which is used for its fever-inducing

(2) See Chapter III, p. 120.

properties. Both wood and bark are ground up, as is done with licorice root. It would be worthwhile to see whether this liana has any relation to the cinchona.

Cacao trees. This crop is among those whose introduction into Laos may be recommended. In order to develop, cacao trees need a hot and humid climate and high valleys with deep alluvia which are situated at altitudes between 100 and 200 meters. [390] Thus it might very well be that this shrub should prove successful in southern Laos.

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Coffee. The coffee bushes which have been planted in Laos by way of experiment in different regions and at different altitudes, depending on the variety (Liberian or Arabian), seem to be thriving. A few small plantations, like those on the Black River (on the frontier of the Sib-Song-Chau-Thai) and at the mission of the Bahnars, are even said to be producing a full yield already. But these results are still too sketchy for us to be able to state that the cultivation of coffee in Laos is ready to leave the period of experimentation and be undertaken on a large scale.

If it is true, as some say, that planting coffee in Annam and Tonkin has been extremely disappointing, then this does not offer encouragement for trying this crop in Laos.

Jute. The fiber of this plant is in great demand for making grain sacks and cloth wrapping material known as gunny. Although some jute is grown in Annam and Tonkin, in Indo-China we are still dependent for this product on British India, which sends us large quantities of it. The cultivation of this plant might be tried in Laos, in the higher parts of the country.

III

FOREST PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION--REFORESTATION

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The administration of Laos has made an effort to remedy, insofar as possible, the indifference of the population as concerns conservation of forest resources. It has taken measures to facilitate the reforestation of hills and plateaus which have been cultivated as rais.

These measures were indispensable, if any attempt was to be made to prevent the hills and hillocks of Laos, as well as the mountainsides, from becoming bald and sterile over the years as has already occurred in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na and the northern regions. The heights do not have any trees or green foliage, the rock is bare on their [391] prominences, and only in the valleys which face to the north is there any soil containing vegetable matter.

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This deforestation and denudation are due to the annual burnings which spread from one rai to another at the time when the inhabitants turn to new clearings. Out of indifference they allow the fires to consume the young vegetation which was beginning to cover the old rais and which, by holding back the soil containing vegetable matter, was attenuating the destructive effects of erosion.

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Years	Number of animals exported	Average purchase price in Laos	Sale price at outlet markets
		francs	francs
1898	103 Horses	50	112.50
1899	185 Horses	From 30 to 125	From 88.50 to 225
	14 Mares	From 30 to 75	From 40 to 95

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Finally, we recommend the introduction of donkeys into Laos, with a view toward producing mules by coupling the donkeys with Laotian mares. The mules of Yunnan, which are highly reputed, reach heights as great as 1.32 meters. Extremely sturdy, they can readily carry a net weight of ninety kilograms of merchandise, not counting the saddle and pack-saddle. It is obvious that much use might be made of these animals in Laos for all kinds of transport.

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Buffalo. Buffalo breeding is much in honor throughout all of Laos. It supplies the needs of agriculture and of food consumption, which [403] absorbs a large number of these animals, particularly young ones. Many of them, in fact, are sacrificed on the occasion of celebrations and various ceremonies, while others are used daily for food in some of the larger centers.

It may truly be said that buffalo are raised everywhere, and since this animal is extremely hardy it can always find enough to eat, even in the forests.

The administration is encouraging the raising of buffalo in a most effective way, and since our arrival in Laos the work has grown by such proportions that exports of buffalo to nearby regions has assumed genuine importance. (4,721 head in 1898 and 3,144 in 1899.) When we entered into possession of Laos, however, the land had been largely depopulated of its animals. They had been removed by the Siamese, and it is nothing short of miraculous that the herds have been restored in so short a time despite the considerable losses caused by periodic outbreaks of epizootic disease, often extremely violent.

These favorable results have been achieved thanks to the wise foresight of the higher authorities, who prohibited all exports and imports as long as the bovine plague lasted.

231 highly developed canine teeth.

There is another variety, not so tall and lighter in color, which is widespread mainly among the Laotian population on the banks of the Mekong and its tributaries.

[407] Cammon exports pigs to Annam. In 1899, 6,038 of these animals representing a value of 30,565 francs were exported from this province.

Chickens. The Meos have a variety of chicken which is much taller than the chickens of the plains. They make a current practice of caponizing, and this procedure produces chickens which are highly esteemed by Europeans for the firmness of their meat and the delicacy of their taste.

Goats. The raising of goats does not call for any particular remarks. It is done naturally without any particular care, and is localized in northern Laos. In southern Laos goats are found only in the wild state. Europeans have brought in a few domesticated goats for their own use.

231 Sheep. It would be interesting to try sheep raising on the
185 high plateaus of northern Laos. It has been denied that any undertaking of this nature could succeed, but it would seem that no serious attempt has as yet been made. It would first be necessary to choose a breed capable of multiplying on ground similar to that of northern Laos with respect to altitude, climate, forage, hygrometric conditions, constitution of the soil, etc. Since sheep do not withstand humidity well, it would also be necessary to move the flocks to high, dry points during the months of the rainy season. Afterwards, at the beginning of the dry season, they could be returned to pasturages in the plains.

[408] [Blank page]

[409] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER VIII

1. NUMBERS, WEIGHTS, MEASURES AND COINAGE

805 Since numbers, weights, measures and coinage serve as a basis
802 for all transactions and all commercial evaluations, we shall here

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the steep slopes of certain peaks, the brinks of torrents, etc.--are being subjected to new routings or improvement projects which will soon be carried out. (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, loc. cit.) [Translator's note. This seems to be a reference to the December 1899 number, "Notes du Commandant supérieur du Bas Laos sur la région est du Bas Laos."]

elephant back).

Province of Saravane. 1. Road from Ban-Mouang to Saravane by way of Kham-Thong-Niai, along the Sedone (4 to 5 days). This road is a first category road over a distance of five kilometers from Keng-Kok to Keng-Pho. The falls of the Sedone can thus be avoided by a cart road at all seasons of the year. Over the rest of its route the road belongs to the second category.

2. Road from Saravane to Attopeu by way of Thateng, the plateau of the Bolovens, Nong-Bok and the Se-Pien (4 to 5 days. Second category).

3. Road from Saravane to Ai-Lao by way of Muong-Nong (a poor path).

Province of Darlac. 1. Road from Ban-Me-Thuot or Darlac to Ninh-Hoa (Annam). A six or seven day trip. This is a cart track on the Laotian side of the divide, that is to say as far as Ai-Bloum. At Me-Sao a branch forks toward Cong-Son (Annam). This is a portion of the route selected for the Saigon-Qui-Nhon railway.

[478] 2. Cart road from Ban-Done to Kratie, either by way of the Pou-Kha (10 to 12 days), or by going around the mountain to the north and connecting with the road from Stung-Treng to Kratie at Sreki.

2. PROJECTED LAND ROUTES OF COMMUNICATION

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Three large highways are projected, namely:

1. From Savannakhet to Ai-Lao and Hué; [Illustration here]
2. From Pak-Hin-Boun to Vinh by way of Ha-Trai;
3. From Luang-Prabang to Vien-Tiane.

These roads will be negotiable by carts and will be provided with iron and wooden bridges. Engineering officers have been placed at the disposition of the Superior Resident of Laos to make a study of these various routes.

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A credit of 32,500 francs has been established for the construction of [479] these roads in the 1900 budget, and another of 10,000 francs has been set aside for improving the existing roads.

These credits are allocated for meeting the costs of equipment, iron, skilled labor, etc. Current repairs are made through statute labor and payments in kind which all registered persons owe.

Supervision of these projects falls to the inspectors and chief guards of the native civil guard.

With support such as this, it becomes clear that it will be possible to carry out quite large road projects with credits which might seem quite insufficient at first glance. It is true that they will be renewed as the need arises.

3. PRESENT RAILWAY ROUTES

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"There is only one railway in Laos. It crosses the island of Khone and is used for transhipment of passengers and goods from the lower reach to the Khone-Pakmoun reach and vice versa. It is a narrow railway, with a gauge of one meter. It is 4.5 kilometers long. It was built by the administration and placed at the service of the River Merchant Fleet [Messageries Fluviales]."

4. PROJECTED RAILWAY ROUTES

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"A railway is planned which will connect the great middle reach of the Mekong with a seaport in Annam, passing through Ai-Lao, Quang-Tri and Hué. This would make it possible for all the products of central Laos to flow down towards Annam, and avoid for transports in general the disadvantages and dangers of the Kemmarat rapids. Studies for this line were begun in the first days of 1899, and have continued during the dry season of 1899-1900" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900]

The portion of this line in Annamite territory, that is to say the Quang-Tri-Hué-Tourane section, is included in the schedule of expenditures to be covered by a loan of 200 millions, to the extent of 24 millions. Since it is 195 kilometers long, the cost comes to 125,000 francs per kilometer.

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[480] Construction of this line was authorized by the law of December 25, 1898, but its extension to the Mekong, and that is to say the means of entrance into Laos, is classified among the lines of third-degree urgency for which routes have scarcely been outlined.

Another railway has also been planned from Binh-Dinh to Attopeu, with the same third-degree urgency classification as the line from Savannakhet to Quang-Tri. It seems astonishing that anyone should have thought, even as a line of third-degree urgency, of a line which would start from the sea and end in a cul-de-sac, crossing one of the most mountainous regions which is inhabited by Kha tribes who are still partly unpacified. It may be that there is some thought of facilitating, by means of such a line, the exploitation of the gold and copper-bearing deposits in the region of Attopeu, even though it has now been established that the best deposits are located on the Se-Sane, more than 50 kilometers to the south of this point as the crow flies. It is also to be feared that by reason of the nature of the terrain this line may cost as much as 200,000 francs per kilometer, if the conditions of its route be compared with those of the lines estimated at 125,000 francs.

The projected Savannakhet-Quang-Tri railway does not seem to be the best solution for creating an entry into Laos and an outlet to the sea.

In the first place, it is not the shortest and most economical, despite the low elevation of the ridge of Ai-Lao, which is only 410 meters in altitude.

Besides, Savannakhet has never been a trade center and market of distribution and transit like Luang-Prabang, Pak-Lay, Nong-Khay and Bassac.

To be sure, it is an administrative center situated opposite the market of Ban-Mouk and the seat of the main office of the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [Compagnie des Messageries Fluviales], which has storehouses, a depot, workshops, etc. there. But this center was built up from nothing scarcely six years ago. The market of Ban-Mouk is an unimportant one, and the office of the River Merchant Fleet is inaccessible to its steam launches during a large part of the year.

[481] If Nong-Khay, instead of Ban-Mouk, were located opposite Savannakhet, there would be an advantage to capturing this great market in which the major part of the trade of Upper and Middle Laos is centered, and to turn this trade away from Bangkok to the profit of Tourane. But one must surrender to the evidence, for Nong-Khay

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is no further from Vinh than Savannakhet is from Tourane. In fact, the distance by steamship to Hin-Boun (or Tha-Kek) and from there to Ben-Thuy [Illustration here] (port of Vinh) by way of Nape, the ridge of Tram-Mua and Ha-Trai by railway is only 500 kilometers, whereas it is also 500 kilometers from Savannakhet to Tourane.

It has been objected that the ridge of Tram-Mua, the highest point on the line in question, is at an altitude of more than 1,200 meters, that many calcareous peaks encumber the route, and that the port of Ben-Thuy has a sand bar (that of Cua-Hoi) which leaves a depth of water of only 1.5 to 4.5 meters, depending on the tide.

All of this information is correct, although somewhat exaggerated. The ridge of Tram-Mua is not an insurmountable obstacle, and the road which crosses it leaves the Mekong at the 250 meter level and manages to reach it by rounding the [482] peaks of Pou-Hak and Pou-Kha-Sak and by rising gradually, ascending 1000 meters over a distance of about 140 to 150 kilometers.

Ha-Trai, moreover, which is situated on the river of Ngan-Pho, is at approximately the 100 meter level, and the descent from the ridge requires half a day on elephant back. The slope is very steep, without any doubt, on the Annamite side, since it represents the hypotenuse of a right triangle with a base 15 kilometers long and an altitude of 1,100 meters. It is not such, however, as to make the establishment of a railroad impossible, and cog-railways could also be used, as in Switzerland, at the steepest parts of the route.

Finally, the bar of Cua-Hoi is only an imaginary obstacle. Indeed, it would be sufficient merely to extend the railway beyond the bar, where the foundation is everywhere solid enough, or else to dredge a channel.

From the financial point of view the advantage also lies with the Hin-Boun-Ben-Thuy project, which will cost 30 millions instead of 61. Indeed, expenditures of 24 millions are anticipated for the Quang-Tri-Tourane section, to which 37 millions must be added for the Quang-Tri-Savannakhet section (about 300 kilometers at 125,000 francs per kilometer), whereas if we assume a cost of 150,000 francs (1) per kilometer for the Hin-Boun-Ben-Thuy line (about 200 kilometers),

(1) Cost anticipated for the Vietri-Lao-Kay and Saigon-Qui-Nhon lines.

we are confronted with an expenditure of 30 millions. The difference between 30 and 61 millions is so great that it would even be possible

446 to anticipate, for the line which we recommend, a much higher cost per kilometer (although this has not been demonstrated) than the cost which we assume.

185 Both lines--the one from Hin-Boun (or Tha-Khek) to Ben-Thuy and the one from Savannakhet to Quang-Tri--have their partisans. The latter line is more in favor, but we believe that, like its rival, the line from Hin-Boun to Ben-Thuy should be studied by engineers, who, without any preconceptions, would draw up an estimate [483] which could be compared with the other and serve as a basis for evaluation by the government of Indo-China.

In conclusion, when the Hanoi-Nam-Dinh-Vinh section is completed, and if it is joined to the line of which we have been speaking, it will constitute a network connecting the Mekong with Tonkin and eventually with the great central region of China by way of Lao-Kay, whereas the Quang-Tri-Tourane section is destined to remain isolated, with no connection either with the north or the south, for a period of time which is as yet indeterminate (1).

(1) The Superior Resident favors a line connecting Tran-Ninh to the coast:

"The opening of this railway would not bring profit to Tran-Ninh only, and it is certain that the line would be used not only by all officials and travelers who had to reach the upper reach of the Mekong and even the middle reach, but also by the greater part of the merchandise destined for these reaches.

"I have no doubt but that, the day this railway is opened, it will have to be extended to Luang-Prabang, which it will be possible to reach in less than three days from Vinh by this means. Another branch extended from Xieng-Khouang towards Pak-San would give us the whole Mekong trade, and the problem whose solution we are now pursuing would then be solved. There would no longer be any need to seek a route from Luang-Prabang to Tonkin, from Outhene to Vinh, or from Savannakhet to Hué, and there would no longer be any need to explore the possibilities of navigation through the Kemmarat rapids or between Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang. The two reaches, separated by rapids which have heretofore been regarded as an obstacle to commercial steam navigation, would be opened up and would be less than three days' distance from a seaport.

"On that day the colonization of Laos will take a giant stride, and the land will be wholly opened to all the enterprises

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which the difficulty of communications is now impeding."
(Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, loc. cit.)
[Translator's note. Probably refers to December 1900 issue, "Rapport du Résident supérieur sur le Tran-Ninh."]

5. POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH SERVICE

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The telegraph network in Laos is quite complete. At the present time only three commissionerships are not served by a telegraph line, those of Tran-Ninh, the Hua-Pahn and Darlac. All the other provinces possess one or several telegraph offices, where postal service is also provided.

Examination of Plate VI will show the extent of the telegraph network in Laos. The lines are divided into two sections: the northern one which is under the jurisdiction of the Annam-Tonkin central office, and the southern one which is attached to the Cochinchina-Cambodia central office. [484] The two sections are not connected with one another, but soon will be. Tonkin will then be in communication with Cochinchina by means of a line which will cross all of Laos from north to south.

When this result has been achieved, that is to say when the Luang-Prabang-Vien-Tiane section has been completed, the Laotian network will be 2,283 kilometers long: 1,168 in Upper Laos and 1,115 in Lower Laos.

[505] By the terms of a contract between the administration and the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [Compagnie des Messageries Fluviales], the latter was made responsible for the transport of postal dispatches on the Mekong as far as Luang-Prabang (1). Outside

(1) This company receives an annual subsidy of 300,000 francs from the government of Indo-China for this purpose.

of the region of the river, and even in certain stretches served by the Company where service can be made more rapid, the administration has recourse either to human carriers or to pirogues.

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6. SERVICE BY THE RIVER MERCHANT FLEET [MESSAGERIES FLUVIALES]

Transport for merchandise and passengers is provided on the Mekong as far as Luang-Prabang by the Cochinchina River Merchant

who were disposed to follow them.

464 stitions and perhaps also the opposition of the mandarins who for
563 centuries have tried [516] to prevent any exodus towards the lands
situated beyond the mountains, have in the long run made him a
stay-at-home.

This industrious, intelligent and prolific people prefers to struggle
000 for life in agglomerations which are too dense, rather than emigrate
in order to obtain a life of well-being and ease.

We should not, however, despair of ever seeing the Annamites spread into Laos and there provide a powerful force for repopulation and make the low plains which border the Mekong from Cammon to Cambodia bear fruit. It is up to us to destroy the legends, to reduce to nothingness the superstitions which have gained currency, and then to use our influence to bring an end to the ostracism in which Laos is held. Does it not belong today to the great Indo-Chinese family in which all the component peoples are French subjects in the same right?

On the day when the mandarins no longer sustain a fear of Laos and a dread of slavery among the Annamites, it will be possible to induc them to emigrate into the Mekong basin. The colonies already in existence, particularly at certain points in Cammon, will grow from that day on through the addition of newcomers. We must not deceive ourselves into thinking that such immigration will not take time, and so in order to meet our most pressing needs European colonies in Laos will have to appeal to laborers from the southern provinces of China and especially from the island of Hainan, that inexhaustible reservoir which has supplied coolies to several parts of the world for so many years.

But, it will be asked, is Laos ready to welcome colonists who want to work the mines and forests and to engage in trade, agriculture and livestock breeding? We believe that, in the present state of communications, some of these undertakings are possible at this moment and that others cannot hope to succeed until the country's economic equipment has developed.

316 As concerns commerce and the exploitation of forests and mines,
we have noted that several attempts have already been made. These
313 are valuable indications showing the [517] courses which isolated
colonists or companies which would like to employ their capital in our
185 new possession can follow as of the present time. Indeed, such under-
takings yield profits almost from the very beginning, and if they are

316 begun at judiciously chosen points [Illustration here] they can be
accommodated to the existing means of communication and transport
313 if necessary. As for the sums needed to engage in a commercial,
mining or forest enterprise, it is difficult to determine these in any
185 precise fashion for, depending on the region and the special conditions
of the terrain, such matters may require more or less capital.

[518] For dealing in teak wood (1), for example, the sums needed

(1) A rigorous investigation made by a chief guardsman of the Laotian militia of the region of Xieng-Khong, on the left bank of the Mekong, has shown that the number of teak trees ready for cutting in the province of Muong-Sing is 4,975 in all, 2,000 of which are of exceptional size for the region, that is to say that their diameter varies between 0.3 and 0.6 meter. Counting the young shoots and young trees, the total number of teaks which we possess in Muong-Sing may be estimated at about 20,000.

Another group is situated on the right bank of the Mekong, in the vicinity of Pak-Lay and in the basin of the Nam-Poun. It includes from 10,000 to 12,000 teak trees ready for cutting, concessions for about half of which have been granted. (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900.)

for purchase and transport would depend on the quantity which it was desired to export. As an average indication, the sum of 40,000 francs might be given for operations on 1,000 teak trees.

From the point of view of mineral resources, certain deposits require capital in the millions for their exploitation, while others might be worked profitably with sums varying between 250,000 to 500,000 francs.

433 In the way of industries which may be started at the present time,
185 we may cite only the establishment of rice distilleries in southern
Laos and of a mechanical sawmill at Khone.

[273] A distillery could be set up without any great expense at the
[243] mouth of the Mekong and the Sedone, for example. Thanks to the
price of glutinous rice which is five or six times less expensive in
this region than at Pnom-Penh, the alcohol from such a distillery
would find a certain market in Cambodia.

185 For several years now there has been talk of establishing a
mechanical sawmill on the island of Khone which would obtain its
313 motive power from the nearby waterfalls. Besides teak wood (2),
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(2) Teak is generally regarded, although wrongly, as the wood

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with the greatest value on European markets, but woods which are very common in Indo-China are often just as highly esteemed. Among others we may cite the "Mai-Niang," the "Mai-Thon" (mock walnut), the "Mai-Deng" (rosewood), the "Mai-Dou" (thuja), the "Mai-Lang-Dam" (ebony), etc.

a great many other varieties of trees could be used to feed the saw-mill and, like alcohol, find an easy outlet in Cambodia and Cochinchina.

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[519] Finally, one other enterprise might be attempted. This is livestock breeding and particularly the raising of oxen, which sell in Cambodia and Cochinchina for double their value in their country of origin. We have previously mentioned some of the points which would be particularly well-suited to undertakings of this nature. The greatest hazard to be feared is the appearance of epizootic epidemics such as the ones which occur almost periodically and against which there is no weapon. The Pasteur Institute of Nha-Trang does not send out [Illustration here] anti-plague serum as is done with cow-pox vaccine, for as yet its incoulation must be left in the hands of specialists.

We believe that the system of livestock leasing would perhaps yield good results with the Laotian peasants.

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Since no serious attempt has as yet been made in Laos, it is difficult to treat of agricultural enterprises which Europeans might undertake. Nor must we forget that affairs of this sort require comparatively large sums of capital and professional knowledge which takes a long time to acquire. It is, moreover, up to the administration to provide the initial impetus, for it has the necessary means, equipment and personnel. When plantations have succeeded it [520] will easily find colonists to continue the work which has been begun, and capital will then find its way into Laos.

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Speaking for ourselves, we are persuaded that this land will soon be open to colonization. Only the coast of Indo-China is well-known, and on the day when it has been demonstrated that the mountains as well are a source of wealth, the fortune of Laos will be made. There is a blank page on which it is up to us, by profiting from the gropings and errors of the past, to trace the principles of true colonization, which provides well-being for the population and creates outlets for our industry and our commerce.

A very high official of Laos recently wrote, speaking of the development of this land: "Once everything was for Tonkin and

316 In case our proposal should be accepted and the matter once more taken under consideration, we should advise that it be undertaken in
•185 the following way.

It would be well, especially in the beginning, to treat the gold-bearing alluvia by washing in a sluice and to extract the gold by amalgamation and cyanidation. The results would be sufficiently remunerative to make it possible, even while realizing profits, [126] to study and make ready for further exploitation of the lodes by means of more complete and more highly developed equipment. Such a procedure would, in our opinion, be wise, foresighted and of such a nature as to inspire a just confidence in capitalists. It would also enable them to advance in a sure fashion and with a well-founded hope of certain profits. Such profits, if held in reserve by prudent administrators, could not only provide sizeable dividends, but also go to increase the initial capital to any figure deemed necessary for exploitation at a later date of the deep-seated lode-bearing deposits.

The volume of these alluvial gold-bearing deposits may be estimated at approximately four million cubic meters, with an average weight of more than seven million tons.

They are all situated near that part of the Mekong which is navigable all year long by pirogues and rafts of from one to three tons, and in a reach which can be served by steam launches as far as Luang-Prabang during nearly five months of the year.

The countryside, moreover, is fairly well populated, offers sufficient resources in the way of food and contains a population which could provide more than a thousand specialized workers who have been accustomed since their childhood to treating gold-bearing alluvia (1).

(1) The study by M. Mallet shows us that all this part of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang is rich in gold. The gold extracted by the natives comes either from the sand of the river beds, from consolidated alluvia near the banks, or sometimes from hillside mines at a somewhat higher altitude, but never from direct treatment of the primitive rock, that is to say from gold-bearing quartz. The rock samples have always yielded amounts of gold which were insufficient to justify any attempt to treat them, but it would be entirely natural to try to work the consolidated alluvia. In the latter task, as M. Mallet's report proves, experienced miners could probably be recruited with ease "who would not be afraid to go down seven or eight meters and dig veritable mine

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galleries at this depth."

During this period of limited exploitation of the alluvia, which are quite rich, detailed studies could be made of the region in order to determine whether the gold content of the deep-seated rocks is really as slight as M. Mallet's summary explorations would seem to indicate. (Report by M. Courillon, head of the geological service of Indo-China.)

2. DEPOSITS OF VIEN-TIANE, NONG-KHAY

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That part of the territory of Vien-Tiane and Nong-Khay which is situated in the 25-kilometer restricted zone contains vast deposits of gold-bearing gravel which are deposited on the bottom of an immense basin about 5,000 square kilometers in area. The deposits are covered with a layer of more recent alluvia which varies from 7 to 12 meters in thickness.

The Mekong and its left and right bank tributaries called the Nam-Ngume, [127] the Nam-Tone, the Nam-Sang, the Nam-Soue and the Nam-Luong, now flow through this elliptical basin which straddles the intersection of the 100th meridian and the 18th parallel.

Between 1896 and 1898, after prospecting the deposits in the region of Nong-Khay, Tourakhome, Nam-Tone and Pone-Pissaye, we there noted the presence of the same bank of gold gravels at several points which were quite far apart.

Not until after discovering that they were currently being worked by the natives in several villages on the banks of the Mekong and in the upper part of its tributaries, did the idea occur to us to examine these deposits more closely.

These studies have been the object of several official reports in which we expressed the theory that two twin lake basins once existed on the two present banks of the Mekong, and that their bottoms would be covered by a sedimentary stratification of gold-bearing gravels about two meters in thickness.

According to one of our consuls in Siam, this hypothesis has been found to be correct by prospectors of various nationalities on the right bank of the Mekong, at several widely separated points both on the circumference and in the center of the lake basin. Supposing this to be true, our theory is thereby confirmed and the presence of gold noted under the conditions which we suggested.

The natives have for many years exploited the gold-bearing gravels on the Nam-Sang, the Nam-Tone, at Tourakhome and at

6: Goudal--234-235 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-1-2
186, 563

"As regards Annamite immigration into Laos, the following opinion was expressed by a highly placed Laotian, His Excellency the Tiao Phetsarath, Inspector of Political and Administrative Affairs in Laos, in the course of an interview published early in 1931 by France-Indochine:

The Laotians have no need of Annamite immigration, which is a source of expense and trouble for them. The Laotians have to give [235] way before the immigrants and abandon their institutions and customs. The immigrants should as a rule submit to Laotian laws and regulations, but in reality they do nothing of the kind, as Annamites in Laos live 'outside the laws', form 'a State within a State' and thus enjoy 'inadmissable privileges'. This state of affairs must have serious consequences in the future and will surely lead the Laotians to desert Laos and to cross over into Siam to join the great Thai family, which always gives a warm welcome to its blood brothers from across the river.

These statements are naturally denied by the Annamites, who assert that they have no feeling of hostility for the Laotians and have no desire to invade or conquer their territory. And in reality the avenues open to the Annamite immigrants are nowadays much more limited than is commonly believed. There are of course the mines and work on the roads and railways, but most of the workers so employed are essentially unstable

and cannot really be considered as immigrants in the strict sense of the term. Only when the Annamites are allowed to grow rice in Laos will their emigration have any chance of development. Moreover they seem to form an element of stability and prosperity for Laos. (1)

1. Pham-Quynh: 'L'Immigration annamite au Laos', in France-Indochine, 27 March 1931."

6: Goudal--235 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians
186, 652

"When Mr. Paul Reynaud, then Minister for the Colonies, visited Indo-China in November 1931, the Annamite colony in Vientiane submitted to him a list of complaints which brought out the following points:

(1) Annamite emigration is a vital matter for Laos. Whether they like it or not, the Laotians must drop their policy of isolation and collaborate with the other races of the Union, and the necessary effort cannot be made by the indigenous population of Laos.

(2) In its present state, progress in Laos depends entirely on subsidies from the Federal Government; Laos must now take steps not only to meet its own expenditure but also to play an important part in the Indo-Chinese economic system, by the development of its natural wealth."

7: Thompson--376 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 177, 167, 186, 464

"It is obvious that the future development of the country, as in Cambodia, cannot depend on any but imported labour. As ever, it is the prolific and industrious Chinese and Annamites who are flowing into Laos to the economic betterment of the land, but equally to the moral distress of its people. Middle Laos, from Savannakhet to Vientiane, is the region most subject to infiltration. Upper and Lower Laos will probably be cut apart by a wedge of foreign colonizers. The French cannot but favour this immigration. Laos is a terrestrial paradise offering an easy living, undisputed by the timid Laotians, to the miserable Annamites from the over-crowded Tonkinese delta. The Laotians, like the Khmers, prefer to withdraw rather than to struggle with their old enemies. A terse Laotian proverb crystallizes this ancient antagonism: 'Dog and cat, Annamite and Laotian.' In addition to taking their land and their women the Annamite has introduced vices like gaming and theft, and diseases like tuberculosis and syphilis. The contempt of the industrious and formalistic Annamite for the lazy and carefree Laotian is only matched by the latter's impotent hatred. Yet the evil is without remedy. Rich, unoccupied land will inevitably attract an industrious and prolific people like the Annamites, who are able and willing to do what Laotians cannot and will not do."

7: Thompson--380-381 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians-1-2
116, 181, 186

"In proportion, as the Laotian is the national group which has the least political and economic importance in Indo-China, so it is the country where the French find themselves most happy. Not that there are not some of the racial unpleasantnesses evidenced in a centre like Luang-Prabang, but in Laos the friction that seems inseparable from all colonization is at a minimum. The reaction to mutual contracts is the same as in Cambodia, but more intense in degree. For the rare Frenchman who sees in the Laotians a silly, lazy, and naïve people, there are hundreds who are charmed by their gentle affability and their aesthetic appearance. If they understand and like the Laotian character, there are no limits to the devotion they can inspire. But an offence to Laotian pride, albeit unconscious, or demands for sustained effort on their part, will meet with instantaneous defeat.

The effect which the French have had upon the Laotian people is as yet--perhaps because the economic exploitation is so dilatory there--very slight in comparison with the influence Laos has had upon the French. By contrast with the sombre inscrutability of the ambitious Annamites, the easy-going Laotian is infectiously gay. Suddenly it seems the simplest thing in the world to be happy. Laotian family life has an archaic simplicity. The country is an earthly paradise which offers a beauty and nourishment that demands no effort for its enjoyment. Partly it is because Buddhism has encouraged a life without violent desires, but it is also due to the climate which has conspired to reject effort and to encourage an immobile happiness. For the European, wearied with Western greed

and strife, Laos seems to be the answer to [381] all his problems. Laziness is an idle reproach in a land where work would obviously make one less rather than more content. In fact, Laos is in itself a passive reproach to the futility of Europe's bustling activity and soul-searchings. It is a museum-piece of earthly happiness, a reply to the West's gloomy disillusionment. Even the Civilizer, with all his utilitarian baggage, hesitates to trouble its idyllic calm. If Europeans are forced by a grudging nature to wrest a precarious living from it by irksome and boring toil, the Laotians have not had to submit to such indignity. They render lip-service to European superiority, because it is too much trouble to be impolite, but the Laotians do not believe in it. Nor does the European for long who lives in their amiable midst. Europe is well lost to gain a Laotian soul."

10: d'Orleans--354-355 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
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"The [355] standard of Luang Prabang is white, with a particoloured dragon like that of China, while a second white flag with a red border, upon which can be traced the outlines of an elephant, must be Siamese."

648* everywhere. In the restricted zone on the /330/ right bank troops
175* of soldiers were still circulating and Siamese functionaries had taken the place of the local authorities. In that part of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang which was situated on the right bank of the Mekong there was an obvious attempt -- and one clearly contrary to the treaty -- to transform the region into a Siamese province.

654 Without taking time to argue, he merely cited the fact that Chantaboun was our guaranty and that its evacuation could necessarily not be envisaged until complete satisfaction had been given to our innumerable claims. Then he embarked on September 3 for Tonkin, where he rapidly organized the important campaign which he was to undertake along the upper Black River and the Upper Mekong for the purpose of drawing up a map of the region on the very spot.

654 *Delimitation of the frontier with China (December 1894).* Ac-
648* companied by the Messrs. Lefevre-Pontalis, Caillat and Oum, by
175* Commander Tournier, Dr. Lefevre and several topographical officers, and wondrously aided by Deo-van-Tri who took great pride in providing, first in French territory and then in Chinese territory, for provisions at the various stops, for finding coolies and horses, for the chance repairs /331/ which the paths required, etc. (1), he reached

/186/ 1. "Never had our excellent assistant taken more pains to make us succeed. He thus manifested his gratitude not only for the past but also for the present, for he knew that the French government was determined not to cede China any of his territories, part of which the Chinese agents had had hopes of taking from him. He knew that he was indebted to us for having shed light on this question which was such a grave one for him and his people. He loved us all the more for it, and his people vied with their leader in their enthusiasm for us." Mission Pavie, Vol. II, p. 298.

Muong-Le in December where without any difficulty he established the frontier line in full agreement with the two Chinese commissioners. The latter, knowing the place he held in the cantons and the perseverance with which he had steadily aimed at their pacification, manifested a perfectly correct and conciliatory attitude (2).

/642/ 2. The agreement awarded the two Muong-Hou to France.

565 The common people, kind and carefree in character, roamed
175* over the country in all directions as easy-going masters, leaving
/462/ household tasks to the women and the work of the fields to dependents of an inferior race or to slaves. They were excellent boatmen and traders rather than farmers, so that they liked to perform the function of peddlers and served as a link between the multiple /55/ varieties of mankind which inhabited Lan-Xang.

567 Slavery existed--slaves could be obtained through capture, as
175* the result of debt or through trade--and brought high profits to those
563 who engaged in this traffic. In the region of Muong-Swa there was also a kind of serfdom which was applied to certain Kha tribes placed under the patronage of the king, the princes or the chief representatives of the nobility.

565 But if we consider the gentle and happy temperament of this
175* people whose good humor made up for everything, we are justified in believing that the relations between the various social levels must have been free of any harshness.

191 They spoke a dialect derived from the language which was imported into the basin of the Ménam by Rama Khamheng at the end of the thirteenth century and which was itself derived from the
771 graphs of India (1). They practiced orthodox Buddhism together
793
554

1. Cf. Mission Pavie, op. cit. /Études diverses, Vol. II, "Recherches sur l'Histoire du Cambodge du Laos et du Siam"/ Inscription of Sukhothaï translated by Father Schmitt, p. 192: "It was in (1287 A. D.) that the king Rama-Khameng summoned a teacher who created Thaï writing."

with the cult of the "Phi" or Genii which represented for them the beneficent or maleficent forces of Nature. The bonzes were of comparatively pure morals amidst these peoples for whom enjoyment and pleasure were, when /56/ all is considered, the true gods. Although they were fairly ignorant and recited their prayers in Pali
/782/ without understanding them, they did not lack a certain air of nobility. They also enjoyed a high regard and had as much favor as they could desire. The bonzeries[1] which were built near the pagodas were at once places of inviolable asylum, schools frequented by all the children of the village, and workshops where trades could be learned.

/[1] Buddhist Monasteries--Analyst./

2: Gourou--481 N-5 (1939 ?) 1945 Laotians
192

Houei and Nam mean river in Laotian, as in other T'ai languages.

10: d'Orleans--277 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 124, 177, 192, 563, 802 Ethnic subgroups

"I am trying to make a lexicon of their [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] language; they answer us, but sometimes we have a great deal of trouble in hearing what they say, and particularly in separating the affixes or suffixes, with which they can surround the same word. I notice the absence of special names for certain classes of things; they have no word for bread and the names of the numerals, except the four first, are borrowed from the Laotians; lastly mother is called ma, the word in general use amongst nearly all the peoples of the world, perhaps because it is the first sound that a newborn infant instinctively produces, when it requires food."

643 canton heads and heads of villages, who might be described as can-
646 tonal and municipal delegates, gather in the capital of the muong to vote on the names of candidates which are presented. The name of the one who obtains the most votes is then presented by the province administrator to the superior resident, who accepts or rejects him after studying his personal qualities, his aptitudes, his background, etc. In the case of a rejection the electors are consulted a second time. The superior resident names the four chiefs of muongs by delegation from the governor general. These latter may not begin office until they receive their commission, insignia and seal from the French government.

In general, the electors' choice falls on a son, brother or nephew of the high official who is to be replaced, unless he is unworthy or notoriously incapable.

685 Mandarins of lesser importance are named by the province head
647 with the approval of the persons under his administration and of the superior resident.

647 Officials receive a salary only in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang
652 and in the provinces of Vien-Tiane and Muong-Hou. Everywhere else they must be content with a fee equivalent to one-tenth of the sums they collect as taxes.

[693] In their capacity as judges, the muong authorities also collect legal costs and shares in the sums of certain fines, as is the custom of the land.

647 Such, in its general outline, is the organization of the Laotian
576 administration. It generally functions well, is sufficient to the needs of the natives and makes it possible for us, despite the vast extent of our possession, to keep only a few European officials there.

[92] The outer forms of respect towards great men, mandarins and anyone who holds a rank are dictated by Laotian etiquette, as in Siam. One does not speak to a king, a [495] [Illustration] [496] [Blank page] [497] prince or a leader as one would to an equal or an inferior. There are special expressions which are peculiar to the representatives of certain social classes or to the holders of dignities. But even while it conserves, at bottom, the ritual ceremonial forms, Laotian etiquette is paternal and much more spontaneous and genuinely respectful than elsewhere.

When they speak to the king, to princes, to great men, etc., inferiors prostrate themselves, with forehead on clasped hands, near the ground, or with their hands clasped above their head. Outside of this particular case, those present may remain squatting, smoke, talk, laugh and even disturb the audience somewhat. Moreover, no lack whatsoever of respect is to be seen in this liberty.

inverting the order of words. The negation bo is added. Is the gentleman home? is translated Tan you ban bo? Sometimes a single word contains a whole phrase:

mi = there are.
dai = it is possible.

Vocabulary. In addition to the pronunciation of sounds, one of the difficulties of the Laotian language is the distinction between noble language and popular language. The language is different when one addresses the bonzes, the high dignitaries, the king. There is a very rich concrete and abstract Laotian vocabulary which unfortunately is tending to go out of use. We have found in manuscripts Laotian words translating textually [78] abstract Pali words, but they have been gradually forgotten. The Laotians no longer read enough of their original texts. Cheap Siamese literature has invaded the country making the people abandon their own language.

One of the urgent tasks is to bring back the old Laotian texts into honor and to spread them abroad again among the public.

[79] LITERATURE AND MUSIC

In addition to the canonical religious literature already discussed, Laos possesses an important literary treasury. But as in Cambodia, Siam and Burma, this literature is anonymous. We are in the presence of epic texts of Indian origin, of legendary traditions, of apologues, of legal, moral or comic tales. There exist also novels, but as in French "romances" of the Middle Ages, they are by unknown authors. There is no equivalent in Laos of a Kalidasa or of a Li T'ai-po. No philosopher or dramatic author is known.

If the name of a French writer were mentioned whose manner is closest to that of Laotian authors, it would be that of Charles Perrault, and this in a word characterizes the type of Laotian literature. It excels in wonderful tales.

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In addition to the Jatakas, Laos possesses at least two great texts of Indian origin. This is said under reservation of further discoveries, for in spite of the important work of Louis Finot, "Recherches sur la littérature laotienne," we are still far from knowing all the treasures of the Laos pagodas.

a) The Pancatantra. The first text is a collection of tales copied from the famous Indian Pancatantra. In the Middle Ages

7: Thompson--373 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 193, 536, 538

"The Laotian tongue is very simple. It is mainly monosyllabic: the article is never used, and substantives are not declined. Profane literature includes historical works, chiefly the annals of Luang-Prabang as well as its codes of law, novels, and songs. There is a large sacred literature, a very small part of which has been translated from Pali into the vernacular. Their drama is akin to the Khmers' in length, costuming, and music. The themes are epic, religious, or bellicose history, love stories and legends, mostly taken from the Vedas, the Ramayana, and Mahabharata. Many Khmer and even Burmese plays, with a modern satirical tone, lend a cosmopolitan character to the Laotian repertoire. A kind of marionette theatre, analogous to the Javanese, exists as well."

212
194

24 letters on a falling tone, or low letters.
These forty-four letters can be broken down into:
18 consonants;
5 vowels;
21 diphtongs.
The Siamese language has five tones:
1. Long recto tono and short recto tono;
2. Long circumflex tone, short circumflex tone and very short circumflex tone;
3. Long falling tone and short falling tone;
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To represent these tones there are four accents which are placed above the syllables or vowels.

193

Nouns or substantives. The simple nouns are in large part monosyllabic. Only a few are polysyllabic. The compound nouns are formed of two words.

A large number of verbs and adjectives can be changed into substantives by means of a prefix. From the grammatical point of view, nouns do not have any gender or number. To distinguish between men and women a suffix is used which designates sex. In the case of animals, except for a few exceptions, the name is the same for the male and for the female. The male or female prefix is added to distinguish between them.

Numerals and numerical designations. Nouns do not have any number, and this is compensated for by adding expressions signifying [143] singular or plural, but which vary with each object. In French, for example, we would say "two kings, several leaders." In Siamese they say "kings, two persons; leaders, several persons."

These numerals are different, depending on whether it is a question of men, animals, plants or various objects.

For men, for example, there are three numerals. One applies to everybody, the second is used for God, the king, princes, priests and great men, and the third is used only for bonzes.

There are also thirty-five numerals which apply to animals, plants, fruit, material things, books, clothing, grain, flowers, stars, jewels, cloth, packages, string, thread, carts, weapons, etc.

Adjectives. Certain expressions may be construed either as adjectives or as substantives or verbs, depending on the construction of the sentence. A suffix after the noun forms a descriptive adjective,

193 while a prefix before the noun transforms it into a demonstrative adjective. The comparative is expressed by a suffix placed after the noun.

There are eleven expressions to indicate the superlative. They are used as prefixes or suffixes in accordance with fixed rules.

Personal pronouns. There are eleven pronouns for the first person which vary in accordance with the status of the speaker and the person being spoken to.

There are ten for the second person and eight for the third.

Possessive pronouns. There is no such pronoun in Siamese. It is replaced by the genitive of the person or animal which possesses.

Relative pronouns. They are in the number of three, and stand before the object which they modify.

Interrogative pronouns. They are five in number. When repeated they become relative or indefinite and signify, for example, whoever instead of who, whatever instead of what, etc.

Verbs. Verbs do not have conjugations, moods, tenses or persons. Like nouns, they are always invariable. Some semblance of conjugation may nevertheless be achieved by means of particles or auxiliary words. These words, in the number of eleven, change the [144] meaning of sentences by expressing an action or an idea, according as they stand before the verb or after.

Principal adverbs. There are seventy-eight principal adverbs. Moreover, certain nouns or adjectives take an adverbial form by means of seven particles which are placed after them.

Prepositions and conjunctions. There are twenty-eight main prepositions and twenty-five conjunctions (1).

[113] (1) Pallegoix, Dictionnaire siamois-français-anglais, 1896.

212 The Lao or Laotian language. The Lao alphabet is composed of
194 twenty-eight letters divided into fourteen simple or compound consonants and fourteen vowels or diphthongs. They are divided into three classes, as follows:

1. Six letters on a rising or aspirated tone;
2. Eight letters on a middle or recto tone;
3. Fourteen letters on a falling or low tone.

To obtain the grave, long grave, short, open and close tones, signs and accents are used. These may be placed above or below the consonant, or may be formed by joining certain vowels and

173: Deydier--49 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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Like the other words, the verb is invariable. Verbal time is unknown, but there are auxiliaries indicating a completed action. Personal pronouns differ according to whether the person addressed is an inferior, an equal or a superior. [554]

Syntax. Laotian construction is direct: subject, verb, object. The determinant follows the determined. A question is made without

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149: Reinach--103 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

177 Notice should also be taken of the transformation which has been
563 going on for half a century or so, in the fusion of Khas with Lus,
144 Laos and Thais. From these fusions have emerged the mixed-blood
races which are known as Phou-Thèngs, Phou-Thîlongs, Soués,
Phongs, Phou-Oks, Laos-Nîos, etc. [137] [Illustration] [138]
[Blank page]

[139] Later on in 1898 and 1899 the 1894 experiment was tried once more, thanks to the intelligent initiative taken by the Superior Commandant in Upper Laos. His Majesty the king of Luang-Prabang proclaimed the emancipation of the Khas in his kingdom on both banks of the Mékong and even of those who, while natives of Luang-Prabang, are employed in Siam in the lumber camps of the upper Ménam valley.

In résumé, the Khas of French Laos are anything but a negligible quantity, but rather constitute a force and a reserve of energy from which we may draw great profit.

3. LANGUAGES

197 It is impossible here to examine in detail the many Kha idioms
194 and dialects, which only a long and attentive special study could
succeed in coordinating, in grouping by similarities and in identifying
with other languages, idioms and dialects which contributed to their
formation.

The Kha dialects have harsh consonant sounds, among which the R and K are particularly noticeable, in contrast to what is the case in the other forms of the Thai language spoken in Laos where R, except in Siamese, is replaced by L or H.

Insofar as it is possible to judge, the primitive languages must have been corrupted when the land was invaded by foreigners. From that time on they dissolved, changed and became subdivided into idioms, and then into varied dialects. Besides the regional and racial
211 idioms and the various local dialects the Khas, who do not (except for the Khouènes) have any form of writing, use various means to translate their thoughts, and symbolic objects such as strips of wood in which they make notches in accordance with a conventional system.

This method may be compared to that of a great many illiterate persons, who sometimes succeed in keeping quite complicated accounts by this means.

If one were to entrust a letter to a Kha courier, for example, one [140] would give him the following symbolic objects grouped together:

149: Reinach--105 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

This is doubtless due to the use of the brush, which does not make it possible to draw characters as fine and as purely rounded as with a dry point, a wooden stylus, a pen or a pencil, which are the only instruments used to write the other varieties of the Thai language. 212 197

Phouthai, like Laotian, is written in characters, but these differ in number and in form. The vowels are intercalated between the consonants, or are placed like accents above the line when the consonant stands alone, or may even always be placed above in the case of some vowels. This way of understanding the use of vowels can also be found in certain primitive languages.

In the regions where Phouthai writing is used the influence of the proximity of Annam and China has clearly manifested itself, and the alphabet has become syllabic. Scholars are able to learn by heart a certain number of syllables in which consonants and vowels are joined to form a single character, but those who have not learned Laotian cannot distinguish between the vowels and consonants nor use them separately. [101]

The Phouthais, who have the same basic spoken language as the Laotians but who have a different writing and religion, must either have separated from the primitive groupings before writing was created and have attained sufficient cohesion to create their own form of writing, or else must have learned it in a perfected state of development through some foreign current. It may also be said that when the Laotians adopted the Buddhist religion they lost their old Phouthai signs and took over those of the bonzes who had come to teach them the new faith. Then the brush was abandoned for the stylus and the point, which make it possible to write more rapidly and finely and to form a greater number of signs--these being necessary, moreover, to express and define the abstract ideas and subtle dogmas of the new religion. [177 795]

[142] The Phouthai alphabet includes only twenty-three characters, almost all of which are syllabic.

The Siamese language. Of all the forms of the Thai language, Siamese, as we have seen, is the most complete and the most highly developed. Thus it will perhaps be of interest to give some notion, as rapidly as possible, of this language. 212 194.

The alphabet is composed of forty-four letters which are divided into three classes, as follows:

11 letters on a rising tone, or high letters;
9 letters on a middle tone, or recto tono middle letters;

212
194

24 letters on a falling tone, or low letters.
These forty-four letters can be broken down into:
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The Siamese language has five tones:
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consonants. Vowels or diphthongs are also sometimes written before the consonant. 212 194

This system of accentuation is, however, not at all fixed, because of the lack of tonic accents. This is what explains the great number of synonyms, as far as spelling goes--synonyms which differ only in pronunciation. It is therefore essential to know the meaning of the sentence in order to give it the necessary accentuation and the proper intonation.

It is easy to write, but reading it is fraught with difficulty. To be sure, the orthography is not very complicated, and after a certain time one can manage to write it fairly correctly.

The same is not true of Siamese, and the fixed rules of tonality which it has make it possible, when one has a firm grasp of them, to read all texts without understanding anything.

The Youn language. The Youn language which is in current usage in all of western Laos, [145] that is to say in the basin of the upper Ménam and in part of the Laotian Shan States, is Lao which has been modified graphically by the introduction of certain forms borrowed from the alphabetic signs of the Burmese language. There is no doubt but that it is a compound of the Thai language and that which was brought to Laos by the Pégouans and the Burmese and which underwent profound modifications on contact with Buddhism. [177]

What seems to lend credence to this hypothesis is that the Youn alphabet is used almost exclusively in all parts of Laos for the sacred books and manuscripts of the pagodas. It is a kind of transition between Pali, which is too little known and little suited to expressing the sounds of the Thai language, and this latter language itself which is regarded as too vulgar. A somewhat modified Youn alphabet was then created, and was reserved for religious writings, both texts and copies. A knowledge of this special alphabet is, in Laos, the mark of a superior degree of education. 212 176

The Lu language. Like the preceding, the Lu language is complex and formed of the same elements. That is to say, it is due to the introduction of a Burmese graphic element into the already existing Thai element. In this way it has answered to new needs which resulted from the milieu and from social relations. 212 177

Thus the Lu language includes a certain number of Chinese, Kha and Burmese words which have been added to the original Thai mass.

The Lu alphabet includes twenty-six letters, twelve vowels and fourteen consonants.

173: Deydier--49 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
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Like the other words, the verb is invariable. Verbal time is unknown, but there are auxiliaries indicating a completed action. Personal pronouns differ according to whether the person addressed is an inferior, an equal or a superior. [554]

Syntax. Laotian construction is direct: subject, verb, object. The determinant follows the determined. A question is made without

796 1. To have had carnal relations with anyone, even an animal.
2. To have stolen the property of others.
3. To have killed.
792 4. To have falsely usurped spiritual perfections, and with the intention of personal profit.

783 Then follows a list of lesser sins. When the enumeration is completed, the reader addresses the monks, repeating three times the following question:

"Now, I ask the reverend ones: Are you free of these sins? And for the second time: Are you pure? And for the third time I ask: Are you pure?" If everyone is silent, the reader says: "The reverend Ones are free of these sins, therefore they are silent, that is how I understand it."

In this way are catalogued in more than two hundred paragraphs, without much order, the precepts dealing with the daily life of the monks, their housing, their food and drink. No detail however irrelevant or insignificant is omitted.

In Laos as in Cambodia "during the entire rainy season, a taper of the Vassa must burn in each pagoda. This consists of a more or less richly carved, painted, wooden cylinder into which is poured virgin wax around a wick" (E. Porée-Maspéro). Before going into retreat, the bonzes are given garments, then the people form a procession and enter the pagodas where they deposit their taper.

[43] Ho Khao Padap Dinh--the Feast of the Dead of the Ninth Month

•196 773 This feast is celebrated on the fifteenth day of the waning moon of the ninth month and is accompanied by offerings to the bonzes.

735 A Jataka (Sadhitissaraja) taken from the Ha Sip Xat tells us the benefits acquired by celebrating this feast.

"Two poor devout Buddhist woodcutters sold the produce of their labor and bought two large urns. Into them they put some rice, a few pieces of sugar cane, two bowls, four bananas, some meat and fish, and some delicacies. They offered all this to a bonze on the day of the feast of the dead and vowed to be born again in a better state. As a result of this act of charity they were born again into a royal family. The husband became king and his wife queen. The Buddha then said to those who were listening to this story: "When an act of charity is done for the feast of the dead, one attains three blisses: the terrestrial bliss of being king, the celestial bliss of becoming Indra and finally the supreme bliss of Nirvana."

5: Brodrick--71 S-3 (1939) 1942 Laotians
116, 197, 174

"Siam has territorial ambitions. The Thai irredentists claim the Laos country (for the Laotians speak a language akin to Siamese, and they are evidently a Thai tribe left north when the ancestors of the present-day Siamese settled in the Menam plains), and they dream of lordship over the Thôs and all the Thai-speakers wherever they may be found—from the Burmese Shan States far into South-western China.

'You see,' said one of the Siamese to me, 'these people understand perfectly what I say.' And the stocky Thôs certainly did seem to have a general idea of what he was talking about."

10: d'Orleans--275-276 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 101, 173, 197, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"They [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian.] are easily recognised as Laotians, but they appear inferior and weaker, though they are lively and prepossessing; they originally came from Ban Lasa (near Muong Ngoi), but they call themselves Khamouks, and count seven principal tribes of Kas; but their dialects differ, so that several of them cannot understand each other.

The Kasings (whose language approaches that of the Yaos).
The Khakos.
The Khabits. [276]
The Khakoos.
The Kahoks (who wear cotton drawers as their only garment).
The Khapai's.
The Khamouks.

They say that they do not know anything of their history, but add: that the Laotians are their brothers, therefore the Kas had compassion upon them and retired to the mountains, leaving the plain and the young shoots of bamboo to them."

10: d'Orleans--316-319 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 101, 173, 197, 771, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"The Meos live upon the eastern frontier of the kingdom, close to the Pouons plateau. I never met any in the town, but I had an opportunity of [pages 317 and 318 contain illustration] [319] conversing with one who was employed by M. Counillon, the French consul. He was a man of small stature, but well proportioned, with very pale complexion and regular features, and he told me that the Meos originally came from China and could make themselves understood by the caravan-men from the Yunnam. I gathered from his expressions that the Meos dialect is very like that of Van Bou, the word Meos, being rather the Laos designation, while they call themselves Mongs. I do not know whether this name has any connection with that of the ancient empire of the Mongs and the Möns of Burmah, but, according to the man with whom I conversed, the tribes to which he belongs have no religious creeds, though there is a word in his language which denotes the Deity."

10: d'Orleans--316 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 175, 197, 241, 511, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"In speaking of the inhabitants of the principality of Luang Prabang, I referred to the Lus, the Meos and the Chinese, and a few words must be said about all three.

The first mentioned strike me as being, from an ethnographical point of view, very similar to the Laotians, whose language they speak, with a few slight differences of dialect, but they are smaller, punier and in a more poverty-stricken state. We saw one of their villages, just behind Luang Prabang, and its poverty was the most salient feature about it. Coming originally from Sibsompanas, where they form the principal element of the population, they have been driven south by Chinese wars and invasions, and several of them told me that they had not the means of returning home. Moreover, they are just as well off where they are, for, like the Kas, they cultivate the soil, planting rice fields for the Laotians."

15: Benedict--381-382 L-5 (no date) 1947 Laotians-1-2
116, 175, 197

"Lao, a Thai language spoken throughout most of the middle Mekong basin (Laos), is a much more recent as well as more successful invader of Indochina. The early home of the Thai peoples was southern and southwestern China, whence they migrated southward and eastward into present-day Siam and Indochina. The Lao, together with the Siamese, made up the southern front of this expansion, which at the turn of the first millenium A. D. began to exert gradually increasing pressure on the Mon-Khmer civilization to the south. The famous Rama Khamheng inscription of 1292, the earliest monument of the Siamese language, signalizes the final disruption of Mon-Khmer civilization by the economically and politically more aggressive Thai culture. Other Thai groups, smaller and less cohesive, made their way eastward into the mountainous areas of northern and western Tonkin. Linguistically these groups are represented by Tho, Black Tai, and White Tai. Thai languages are also spoken through much of southern China (Dioi, Nung), in Burma (Shan, Khamti), and until recent times were even represented far to the west in Assam (Ahom). They are monosyllabic and tonal like Chinese, and a Thai-Chinese language family has traditionally been accepted by most scholars. On closer view, however, the basic root affinities appear to lie with Indonesian (Malayo-Polynesian) rather than with Chinese, the Chinese lexical elements belong to a later cultural horizon and must be ragarded as [382] ancient borrowings--contrast, for example, Thai *nok 'bird,' Indonesian * manuk 'fowl, bird.' with Thai *kai, Chinese *kiei 'fowl' (the domesticated bird, belonging to a later cultural level). Chinese, it would

seem, exerted a dominant influence on Thai as regards monosyllables and tones, while Thai in turn exercised a similar influence on Annamese (see the discussion below). (3)

3. See the discussion in P.K. Benedict, 'Thai, Kadai, and Indonesian: a new alignment in Southeastern Asia,' American anthropologist, 44 (1942), 576-601.

Here we are presented with a striking example of the intricate patterning shown in the linguistic and cultural history of Southeast Asia."

23: Benedict
113, 197, 601
●

AL1 Southeast Asia
Lahu AP13
● Laotians AM8

/For a linguistic reconstruction of the kinship terminology of the Lahu and Laotians, see AL1 Southeast Asia, 23: Benedict: category 116, pp. 198-205, 230-235./

115: Le Boulanger--16 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina AM1
Laotians AM8

It is generally admitted that towards the beginning of our era I
the geographical distribution of the /22/ /C. A. M. Translator's L
note. Page 22 is entirely devoted to a map: "The Indo-Chinese 162
Peninsula in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries."/ /23/ 174
various populations which inhabited Indo-China was approximately as follows:

The Chams inhabited southern Annam;

The Kmers occupied not only the present-day Cambodian region, but probably also present-day Cochinchina and the greater part of Laos;

The Burmese, in conjunction with their Tibetan congeners, were doubtless already established along the Upper Irrawaddy, and the Pégouans (Mon or Talain, related to the Kmers) in the lower valley of this river;

The Thaïs, who came from central Asia and were divided into six native principalities or "tchao," occupied Yunnan;

Finally, the Annamites occupied the north of Annam and Tonkin, which were organized as a Chinese province (1).

1. Cf. R. Grousset, Histoire de l'Extrême-Orient, pp. 285, 287, 548 and 549. "The study of phonetics has led H. Maspero to find that Annamite is related to the Thaï /197/
family." (Ibid., p. 599.)

His first concern was with repairing the disasters of the in- 727
vasion, which were immense. The capital had been sacked and 643*
the people had fled into the forests. The fruits of a long century 175*
of peace had been almost completely destroyed, and everything had to be begun anew. For their part, the Annamites had suffered irreparable losses. The chronicles of Auguste Pavie say that when the king of Annam learned of the results of the expedition he "had a great grief because all those who had set out for the war (and /69/ had not come back) were the leaders and best people in the country." He deeply regretted having disobeyed the orders of their common ancestor Khoun-Borom (1) and forbade that in the future

1. Legend here agrees with certain philologists in attributing 197
Thaï origins to the Annamite race. (Cf. above, p. 23, note 1.)

"war should be waged against brothers."

This commentary is Laotian, and it cannot be shown that the 727
Annamites judged the adventure in so highly philosophic a manner. 175*
Whatever the case, this bloody struggle did not have any after-effects. It left no rancor in the heart of the fundamentally peaceful and carefree people of Lan-Xang, who were only too happy to have escaped a mortal danger and to be able to resume their nonchalant life singing. The court itself, shaken by intrigues and passions which were unknown to the common people, never had any idea of reprisals and resumed relations which rapidly became excellent again with the court of Annam.

What is more, the solid armature of the kingdom forged by the great princes of the preceding century hastened the recovery of the country, which had partly regained its former prosperity and its /70/ preeminent position among the Thaï principalities when King Thène-Kham died prematurely in his palace of Xieng-Thong in 1486.

LA-SÈNE-THAÏ (1463), KING 1486-1496.

His brother La-Sène-Thaï succeeded him and devoted the ten 643*
years of his reign to perfecting the work undertaken both at home 648*
and abroad. He particularly strengthened the ties of family and 175*
friendship which bound him to the king of Ayuthya and furthered trade exchanges between his subjects and their cousins on the Ménam (transit points were settled by common agreement for trading

149: Reinach--94 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

At the present time labor is what is needed to place under cultivation the land which is still lying fallow. Indeed, scarcely 30,000 square kilometers are cultivated out of the 80,000 which could be used. Once placed under cultivation these 50,000 square kilometers (1) could support from [126] 500,000 to 600,000 new inhabitants, 168 311

(1) About 15,000 square kilometers in northern Laos and 35,000 in southern Laos.

at the rate of ten or twelve inhabitants per square kilometer.

2. RACES

The population of Laos can be divided into four large distinct categories. These are: 162

1. The Thais, that is to say, all the people who speak, write or understand the Thai language with a few slight differences either in pronunciation, the construction of words, orthography or writing. 144 197

This race is subdivided into several types or varieties which are:

The Laotians (or Lao or Phou-Lao) (1).

(1) We have created the word Laotian by derivation to designate the inhabitants of Laos in general, but in reality there is one variety of the Thai family, the most numerous one moreover, which bears the name Lao or Phou-Lao. The whole of the region included in the Mékong basin above Cambodia and in the basin of the Upper Ménam is called Muong-Lao, Xieng-Lao, or land inhabited by the Phou-Lao.

The Phou-Thais.
The Khao-Thais.
The Dam-Thais.
The Dèng-Thais.
The Neua-Thais.
The Phou-Eunes.
The Youns.
The Lus.

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2. The Khas (2) or descendants of the prehistoric aborigines.

(2) In Laos the word Kha means slave, individual of inferior and scornful condition, or else one who lives as a savage. The name, which was applied by the last invaders of Laos to the races which had preceded them there, has the same meaning as Moï in Annamite, Stieng or Peunong in Cambodian and Orang Oulou in Malay.

They mixed with newcomers to form a large variety of secondary tribes which, despite their common origin, differ from one another in type, language, dialect or idiom, mores, customs, dress, etc.

[771]
[212]

The Khas have no form of writing, except for the Khouènes and the Khmous who have been partly converted to Buddhism while their [127] fellows have clung to a crude fetishism in which belief in spirits (Phis) prevails.

[641]

A few of these tribes have not yet submitted to our domination and do not pay any taxes.

The principal Kha tribes in Laos are the following:

a) In northern Laos. (The names below should be followed by the word Khas.)

1. PURE KHAS

Khouènes-Khao.	Koussoungs.	Bos.	Kouangs.
Khouènes-Dam.	Bits.	Sapouans.	Saks.
Lemets.	Phèng-Mis.	Kasèngs.	Mouçeus.
Leups.	Sos.	Tiols.	Khmous.
Lawas.	Siengs-Di.	Alous.	
Khos.	Giois.	Ouxas.	
Khouis.	Hock-Roï.	Panas.	

2. KHAS MIXED WITH LAOTIANS, THAIS, LUS AND YOUNS OR IN THE COURSE OF CHANGE

Oks.	Sos.	Phongs.	Phou-Thuongs.
Youngs.	Souès.	Laos-Niôs.	Phou-Oks.
Phou-Phays.	Sèks.	Phou-Thengs.	

149: Reinach--96 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

162
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3. KHAS MIXED WITH HÔS, MÉOS AND YAOS

Khas-Hôs.
Ounis.
Hô-Kias.
Lolos.
Sidas.

b) In southern Laos.

1. PURE KHAS

Djarais.	Mane.	Katongs.	Cédangs.
Nia-Heuns.	Halang-Doang.	Katangs.	Radès.
Alaks.	Salèngs.	Niès.	Habans.
Tiem Poueûns.	Peunongs.	Phou-Khaos.	Goclars.
Lovès.	Tha-Hoïs.	Khon-Tou.	Bahnars.
Braos.	Vèhs.	Banams.	Rognacs.
Souks.	Sos.	Bos.	Sèks.
Sèngs.	Hin.		

[128] 2. KHAS WHO ARE LAOTIAN-IZED OR IN COURSE OF CHANGE

Bolovens.	Pou-Bathièngs.	Lovès-Lao.	Phou-Oks.
Ongs.	Toueis.	Souk-Khok.	Phou-Phays.
Pou-Thongs.	Laos-Niôs.	Souk-Niâ.	Phou-Thuongs.

3. The Mongols who have immigrated from Yunnan.

TRIBES OF MONGOL ORIGIN FROM NEIGHBORING LANDS

Hôs.	Méos-Dam.	Yaos-Lantènes (black)
Méos-Khaô.	Méos-Dèng.	Yaos-Khao (horned)
		Yaos-Ao-Tchaine (with sapeks)

4. The foreign Asiatics.

Annamites.	Burmese.	Kûnes.
Cambodians.	Yunnanese.	Tsongs-Sous.
Siamese.	Ngieous or Nuons.	Malays.
Chinese.		

149: Reinach--103 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

177 Notice should also be taken of the transformation which has been
563 going on for half a century or so, in the fusion of Khas with Lus,
144 Laos and Thais. From these fusions have emerged the mixed-blood
races which are known as Phou-Thèngs, Phou-Thîlongs, Soués,
Phongs, Phou-Oks, Laos-Nîos, etc. [137] [Illustration] [138]
[Blank page]

[139] Later on in 1898 and 1899 the 1894 experiment was tried once more, thanks to the intelligent initiative taken by the Superior Commandant in Upper Laos. His Majesty the king of Luang-Prabang proclaimed the emancipation of the Khas in his kingdom on both banks of the Mékong and even of those who, while natives of Luang-Prabang, are employed in Siam in the lumber camps of the upper Ménam valley.

In résumé, the Khas of French Laos are anything but a negligible quantity, but rather constitute a force and a reserve of energy from which we may draw great profit.

3. LANGUAGES

197 It is impossible here to examine in detail the many Kha idioms
194 and dialects, which only a long and attentive special study could succeed in coordinating, in grouping by similarities and in identifying with other languages, idioms and dialects which contributed to their formation.

The Kha dialects have harsh consonant sounds, among which the R and K are particularly noticeable, in contrast to what is the case in the other forms of the Thai language spoken in Laos where R, except in Siamese, is replaced by L or H.

Insofar as it is possible to judge, the primitive languages must have been corrupted when the land was invaded by foreigners. From that time on they dissolved, changed and became subdivided into idioms, and then into varied dialects. Besides the regional and racial
211 idioms and the various local dialects the Khas, who do not (except for the Khouènes) have any form of writing, use various means to translate their thoughts, and symbolic objects such as strips of wood in which they make notches in accordance with a conventional system.

This method may be compared to that of a great many illiterate persons, who sometimes succeed in keeping quite complicated accounts by this means.

If one were to entrust a letter to a Kha courier, for example, one [140] would give him the following symbolic objects grouped together:

149: Reinach--104 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

two strips of rattan, two feathers from the wing of a chicken or any other bird, two dry red peppers and two pieces of partly burned charcoal. The significance of these objects would be as follows: if the bearer of the letter does not make haste to deliver his message he will be whipped, whence the rattan; the feathers remind him that he must have the speed of a bird, together with the ardent fire of spices (the red pepper); and finally the charcoal means that he must even keep going at night by lighting torches or making a fire. 211

The Khmou Kha idiom, among others, is quite widespread, especially in the territory to the northwest of Luang-Prabang where it is in current use for relations between groups which do not speak the same dialect. These idioms are highly rudimentary, moreover, and do not lend themselves to the expression of ideas which are at all subtle or abstract. 197

Some of them are even composed of only two or three hundred words, invariable in form, the use of which naturally does not involve any grammatical rule.

The Thai language is the fundamental tongue of Laos. It is spoken and written in five variotonic and graphic forms which vary from one another by slight differences in detail, that is to say by differences which bear much more on graphic and phonetic representation than on syntax.

Classified by order of highest development from the point of view of their ability to translate thought, these forms of the Thai language are Siamese, Laotian, Youn, Lu and Phouthai.

In order to give some idea of the gradation which there is between these different forms in the way of alphabetic wealth, variety of accentuation and flexibility of phonetic nuances, we might say that Phouthai is to Siamese what Montaigne's French is to the present-day language.

Siamese is Thai which has been perfected, stabilized phonetically, enriched and complicated alphabetically to such a point as to enable it to translate European languages almost literally.

But although Siamese is easy to read correctly, writing it is extremely complicated by reason of its highly varied tones and the profusion of its accentuation.

[141] The Phouthai language. Phouthai, on the other hand, and we refer here to the written language rather than the present-day spoken language, is rather a primitive form of Thai from the graphic point of view.

149: Reinach--105 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

This is doubtless due to the use of the brush, which does not make it possible to draw characters as fine and as purely rounded as with a dry point, a wooden stylus, a pen or a pencil, which are the only instruments used to write the other varieties of the Thai language. 212 197

Phouthai, like Laotian, is written in characters, but these differ in number and in form. The vowels are intercalated between the consonants, or are placed like accents above the line when the consonant stands alone, or may even always be placed above in the case of some vowels. This way of understanding the use of vowels can also be found in certain primitive languages.

In the regions where Phouthai writing is used the influence of the proximity of Annam and China has clearly manifested itself, and the alphabet has become syllabic. Scholars are able to learn by heart a certain number of syllables in which consonants and vowels are joined to form a single character, but those who have not learned Laotian cannot distinguish between the vowels and consonants nor use them separately. [101]

The Phouthais, who have the same basic spoken language as the Laotians but who have a different writing and religion, must either have separated from the primitive groupings before writing was created and have attained sufficient cohesion to create their own form of writing, or else must have learned it in a perfected state of development through some foreign current. It may also be said that when the Laotians adopted the Buddhist religion they lost their old Phouthai signs and took over those of the bonzes who had come to teach them the new faith. Then the brush was abandoned for the stylus and the point, which make it possible to write more rapidly and finely and to form a greater number of signs--these being necessary, moreover, to express and define the abstract ideas and subtle dogmas of the new religion. [177 795]

[142] The Phouthai alphabet includes only twenty-three characters, almost all of which are syllabic.

The Siamese language. Of all the forms of the Thai language, Siamese, as we have seen, is the most complete and the most highly developed. Thus it will perhaps be of interest to give some notion, as rapidly as possible, of this language. 212 194

The alphabet is composed of forty-four letters which are divided into three classes, as follows:

11 letters on a rising tone, or high letters;
9 letters on a middle tone, or recto tono middle letters;

197 In résumé, the study of the Thai language and its derivatives is an attractive one. The language is gentle, musical and euphonic, and is easy for us as well as for the other Latin peoples to pronounce.

It is considered to have many analogies with Malay and most of the Polynesian idioms.

Siamese, Youn and Lu have become localized in certain parts of Laos or have been set aside for special uses. Thus Youn, as we have seen, is the sacred language of Laos.

Lao, however, or the Laotian form of the Thai language, is quite widespread.

[146] In fact, outside of Laos this language is still spoken in Yunnan, in Tonkin, in the two Kouangs and, it would seem, as far away as Hainan.

4. RELIGIONS

174 In prehistoric times Laos must have been in the same situation as the other parts of the world, from the moral and religious point
771 of view. [Illustration here.]

In the age of polished stone, as in the bronze age, there were probably great similarities between the Orient and the Occident with respect to tools and weapons, and also with respect to speculative, religious and philosophical ideas.

This state of affairs continued for many centuries until the time
175 when, with the first peaceful migrations from the north and north-
771 west, Vedic precepts and a knowledge of the laws of Manou--laws which were moral, social and above all physiological--began to infiltrate the region. Later on, between 900 and 700 B.C., more militant invaders brought in the already age-old dogmas of Brahminism, together with ancestor worship and many superstitions.

Finally, after another period of fifteen to thirteen centuries, Buddhism made its appearance in Indo-China by two different routes, the south and the northwest.

These various doctrines were transformed as time passed and
771 underwent additions, diminutions and numerous changes both in form and content. Struggles, invasions and migrations and civil wars profoundly modified races and made their impression on minds, always leaving ineradicable traces on body and spirit.

It is because of these constant upheavals that we note in Laos today a great host of dogmas and practices which range all the way

Kha

caught even on the other side of the watershed and then delivered as 567
slaves to the Burmese, Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian merchants of the low country. The barbarity of their mores has been greatly lessened since our arrival in Laos, but traces of it still exist and manifest themselves in rivalries and attacks between tribes. The police force which [260] we have organized in the land in the form of a native militia, the influence of the missionaries who have settled among the turbulent Khas, and also the help and example of the tribes which have submitted to our tutelary authority will soon cause this abnormal state of things to disappear. Finally, our increasingly effective occupation of the land, which has been completed by the organization of the province of Darlac, and the strict protectorate which we exercise over Cambodia, the chief purchaser of slaves, have begun to bring order in an effective fashion to this shameful traffic in human flesh (1).

(1) See § I of Chapter XI.

It should be noted that the Djarais and the Rades are the only 197
Khas who speak Cham, that is to say a greatly corrupted Malay tongue which they have preserved for centuries.

The men's clothing consists of a loin-cloth, and that of the 291
women consists only of a short skirt knotted around the waist or under the armpits, the torso left bare.

Both men and women have long hair wound in a coil. Both 301
sexes, but mainly the men, wear jewels of a crude shape, made of tin or brass, in the form of bracelets, neckbands, ear pendants or cylinders and hairpins. They are also very fond of glass bead necklaces.

These Khas smoke tobacco, either dried or green, as well as 276
bamboo shavings impregnated with nicotine. They make terra cotta pipes with highly worked bowls and also use imported brass pipes. They do not blacken their teeth.

From the point of view of diet and housing, practically the same 511
conditions obtain as we have seen above except that the houses are built with greater care and arranged in the form of a circular camp.

In the middle of Cedang and Rognao villages there is a large 342
house some twenty to thirty meters long by twelve to fifteen meters 883
wide, with a high pointed roof. This is the common house where all the boys of the locality live from the age of nine or ten until the day of their marriage.

149: Reinach--408 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Meo

[197] The Meos have several dialects in their particular language.

Their musical instruments are reduced to two: a kind of bagpipe

534 resembling the Laotian organ, but in which the frame is metal and the sounds sharper; and a smaller instrument which is nearly identical with the toy known in France as a jew's-harp.

535 To the accompaniment of their instruments, the Meos dance something reminiscent of the bear dance. (Le Laos français, 1900, Schneider Hanoi.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), Notice sur le Laos français.]

149: Reinach--124 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Although less pure than in Cambodia, the bonzes' morals in Laos are generally fairly good. They are, moreover, greatly loved, highly regarded and fondly cherished. When there is a celebration or a great feast in a family, part of the choicest dishes is always reserved for the bonzes.

On the next to the last day of every phase of the moon, the bonzes must make public confession of their faults and be prepared, should the need arise, to undergo the punishments which the code stipulates.

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Bonzeries are schools and at the same time workshops where all trades are taught. All knowledge is concentrated in them, as our knowledge was during the Middle Ages in monasteries.

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Together with the pagodas, they are also spots of inviolable asylum in accordance with certain rights, and hostelries where travelers are lodged and fed with the produce of the bonzes' alms-seeking.

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Newly ordained bonzes must stay in the pagoda at least three months, and may quit their habit at the end of this period. If a bonze desires to return to the pagoda after he has reentered lay life, his reassumption of the habit gives rise to the same formalities and ceremonies as the first time. It is a new ordination.

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The liturgical litanies of the Buddhist religion, which the bonzes psalmodize, may not be translated into Laotian. The bonzes and the [165] [Illustration] [166] [Blank page] [167] Laotian faithful, as well as the cantors and the French adepts, chant prayers whose meaning they do not understand (1).

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788

(1) In reality the Laotian, Lu and Youn bonzes form a sort of caste as the Druids used to in Gaul. More particularly, they are the ministers of worship, the repositories of moral authority, of scientific traditions, of secrets and of artistic and industrial methods. They transmit by word of mouth the precepts of Buddhist dogma, which were long ago explained by those who introduced the religion into the land. But the writings in "Pali" which contained these, although they can still be read mechanically by a few scholars, are no longer understood. Thence arises the necessity of handing down their meaning by word alone. Thence also, without doubt, arises the increasingly greater attenuation of the purity and force of these principles as they

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779 pass from one generation to another and suffer partial suppressions
78 and numberless interpolations.

[198] The bonzes of our own day do not know the sacred language
792 and are reduced to imitating the "hateful" monks of whom Rabelais speaks, "who neither till the soil nor work, but only mumble a great stock of legends and psalms which they do not understand at all."

792 The bonzes are the ones who consecrate water and prepare with
641 their prayers for the pronunciation of the oath of allegiance which
788 native officials take twice a year to their direct sovereign and, if necessary, to their suzerain both for themselves and for the whole population. The oath consists in reciting the formula and in drinking lustral water in which the candles used for the ceremony have been extinguished and in which the arms of the sovereign have been dipped.

The following is the formula of the oath which is pronounced in Laos twice a year, in the capital of each province, in the presence of the government commissioner. This formula has been in use in the land for centuries and was left just as it was, except for substituting the title of President of the Republic for that of the king of Siam, Vien-Tiane or Luang-Prabang.

Formula of the oath: "I (there follow the names, titles and qualities of each of the mandarins present, each of whom repeats the formula, which is read aloud by one of them, generally the eldest), take an oath of allegiance and offer my life to the President of the French Republic. I give my word before God and before the angels present in heaven. May God and his angels deign to listen to my vows, because the President of the French Republic governs our land with wisdom and skill, follows the ancient customs and protects the bonzes, the authorities and the inhabitants.

"I place myself under his sacred feet, as well as the soldiers and inhabitants who live in my muong, and we all swear him allegiance.

[168] "I ask to serve the administration in the shadow of his sacred feet and to acknowledge his goodness by promising to be faithful and never to revolt in thought, word or body.

"If I show myself ungrateful to, or if I revolt against the President of the French Republic in thought, word or body; if I see or learn that peril threatens the President of the French Republic and remain silent instead of warning him immediately of the peril which I see or know; if I show myself ungrateful towards the President of the

149: Reinach--128 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[148] 805

The terms used to designate the years of these various cycles are taken from the Pali language and other sacred idioms of India.

1. In northern Laos the years of the cycles have the following names:

TEN YEAR CYCLE	TWELVE YEAR CYCLE
Kate-Sok.	Pi-Tkiaï.
Kaute-Sok.	Pi-Pao.
Ofiane-Sok.	Pi-Gui.
Tao-Sok.	Pi-Maô.
Kâ-Sok.	Pi-Si.
Kab-Sok.	Pi-Saï.
Hab-Sok.	Pi-Sagnâ.
Oueï-Sok.	Pi-Mote.
Mûng-Sok.	Pi-Sane.
Peûk-Sok.	Pi-Hao.
	Pi-Sète.
	Pi-Kaï.

2. In southern Laos and Siam the years of the cycles have the following names:

TEN YEAR CYCLE	TWELVE YEAR CYCLE
Eka-Sok.	Pi-Xuèt (of the rat).
Thô-Sok.	Pi-Xalu (of the ox).
Tri-Sok.	Pi-Khane (of the tiger).
Tiattava-Sok.	Pi-Thô (of the hare).
Bentia-Sok.	Pi-Marong (of the great dragon).
Xô-Sok.	Pi-Maseng (of the small dragon).
Sattha-Sok.	Pi-Mamia (of the horse).
Attha-Sok.	Pi-Mamè (of the goat).
Nophâ-Sok.	Pi-Vok (of the monkey).
Thatsa-Sok.	Pi-Raka (of the cock).
	Pi-Tio (of the dog).
	Pi-Koun (of the pig).

149: Reinach--191 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Hill Tribes

595 There is polygamy among the Meos, and the Meo women do not enjoy any higher regard than the Kha women.

[101] The Yaos. The Yaos have the same origin as the Meos, and are strikingly like them in many respects. Their moves, their beliefs and their habits are identical.

619 As we have seen above, the Yaos are divided into three varieties, these being the Lantenes, the Khao and the Ao-Tchaine.

291 The Lantenes (blacks) wear broad trousers, a long smock buttoning at the side and a turban, all made of black cottonstuff. They wear
302 their hair long and either wound under a turban or braided in Chinese style.

[342] Their houses are like those of the Meos and shelter several families, each of which has its own quarters. They are generally clean and well kept-up.

593 The mores of the Lantene Yaos are patriarchal, and these folk are monogamous. The women are very reserved and do not let them-
562 selves be seen much by strangers. They enjoy a certain respect and are treated with consideration by their husbands.

231 The Lantenes are great livestock breeders, and cultivate the opium poppy in addition to rice and maize. They are skilled hunters of wild
241 animals, and each man owns a rifle from which he is rarely separated.

224 Besides a dialect peculiar to them, they speak Quoan-hoa (a
[212] Cantonese idiom), and many of them can write Chinese characters.

[198] The Khao Yaos are less outgoing than their fellows and do not
101 greet strangers with as much good will.

The men's clothing is like that of the Lantenes, [269] but the
291 women are garbed in a different manner and wear their hair in a special way which has earned their tribe the name "Khao" (horns).

Over a pair of black trousers ornamented with colored embroidery and held in place by leggings, Khao Yao women wear a tunic which comes down to the knees but the flaps of which are fastened to the belt. This tunic also has colored embroidery on the chest, back, neck and cuffs, and is held shut with wide silver hooks.

302 Their hairdress consists of a coil which is smeared with wax and lacquer to hold it in place and in which a wooden socket is imbedded. A light bamboo framework is inserted into the socket, and over this is spread a red cloth or a black cloth embroidered in red. The women thus appear to have two horns on their head.

301 Silver jewelry, neckbands, bracelets and ear pendants are worn by the Khao Yaos.

516 progresses at an even, elongated pace, carrying as much as 30 kilo-
417 grams in his pack without even seeming to suspect the feats of strength,
[132] suppleness and balance which he accomplishes. As long as he remains on high ground his resistance to fatigue is very great indeed, but he cannot go down to the lowlands without danger, especially in the hot season.

101 Certain authors claim that the word "Meo" which, when pronounced with a certain intonation, means cat in several Indo-Chinese languages, was given to these folk by reason of their agility. However, we must note that in [109] Laotian the word "Meo" used to designate these mountainfolk is neither written or pronounced like the word meo which is used to designate cats. There is the same difference between these two words as there is in French between the words maitre and mètre.

342 A Meo house is built at ground level on slightly leveled ground. The walls are made of puddled clay or of ill-fitting boards, and the house is roofed with thatch or crudely-squared wooden shingles. The doors are made of wood which has been shaped with an ax, and there
[592] are no windows. Often several families live in the same house, and then each has a fireplace to itself and a compartment which serves it as a bedroom. In the common room there is an oven and fireplaces above which objects are placed to dry on a bamboo framework. Behind the house a narrow passageway is left free separating the
[343] building from the sheer mountainside. In front there is a narrow veranda where the horses are kept when they are not housed in a stable built on piles and overhanging the mountainside, as are the animal barn and pig sty, the rice granary and the goat pen. This system has the advantage of protecting the animals from the dampness of the ground, since the planks which form the floor jut out over empty space on their solid piles.

[101] Inside the house there are a few furnishings, as among all peoples of Chinese origin. There are benches, tables, camp beds, dishes,
352 iron and copper cooking utensils and opium smoking accessories, all
356 so repulsively filthy that even the least delicate would hesitate to enter and stay in these hovels, where vermin swarm under the protection of the ancestors' altar.

• 198 Although amongh themselves and with their families the Meos speak a rather unharmonious language, nearly all the men can under-
212 stand and speak Qouane-hoa, the language of the Chinese mandarins, which is the official language in Yunnan. They can neither read nor write Chinese characters, and have no system of writing of their own.

779
538 treatises on metaphysics.

[198] [178] Such is the whole of the Buddhist canon in force in Laos. Unfortunately, as the knowledge of Pali disappeared, many texts were forgotten because they were not understood and therefore were not followed. But certainly the most popular text and that which forms the core of all Buddhist literature is the Jatakam.

The Jatakas.

This name is given to a collection of tales about the former lives of the Buddha. As the Master is supposed to have had the greatest variety of experiences from the animal state to that of a god, going through the different states of humanity, his long career as bodhisattva provides ample material for stories of all sorts, moral tales, satirical tales, parables, fables, etc. These stories have no equivalent in any literature, for Buddha knows not only his own births, but also the former births of all creatures, and these he relates as the occasion presents itself. The method of exposition is always the same. The narrator tells more or less briefly the circumstances giving rise to the story of the Buddha, then comes the story itself, finally by way of conclusion, the Buddha relates the past to the present by indicating the identity of the characters in their various roles.

The greatest number of Jatakas take place at the time when "Brahmadatta reigned in Benares," which is the equivalent of our "once upon a time."

In these tales the Buddha appears in the most varied roles; he is in turn ascetic, king, scholar, courtier, brahman, prince, noble, merchant, landlord, slave, potter, elephant-driver, woodcutter, mason, thief, actor, student, etc. Sometimes he is a god or the deity of [28] a tree, sometimes merely an animal, such as a serpent, a lizard, a bull, a pig, a dog, etc. The Buddha has none of the prejudices of nobility. Instead he gives a comforting example of how in all ranks of creation one can realize perfection in oneself and serve the collective interests of the universe. The most incongruous materials are harmoniously blended in this incoherent collection which is always frank. The whole Indian folklore is poured into this convenient framework, where it has received the Buddhist stamp, and been spread throughout the whole Far East where it has been received with enthusiasm.

There are 547 Jatakas. Some are more popular than others. Thus, in Laos, there are ten which form a special collection called "Sip Xat" (the ten Jatakas). The best known are the Temiya Jataka: (Cf. Appendix: Luang Prabang).

776 of one or several spirits who are reincarnated in one possessed. This
796 person enables the villagers and those living in the same quarter to
787 know the course of the new year and, if necessary, to improve it by means of gifts and prayers. During this time the village is forbidden to strangers (Lévy).

776 A series of particularly dangerous phi is also known; these are
the Phi Phetu (Sk: Preta), that is the wandering souls of people who
725 have died in an abnormal way, by accident, suicide, childbirth for a woman, etc. These souls cannot be born again. They remain present in order to torment human beings. The Phi Houa Kout are
776 the headless phi, the Phi Khon Long are those who carry the coffins,
754 the Phi Pop have the power of entering into the body of a living human being. The unfortunate person then has the evil eye and is expelled from the village. In the region of Savannakhet, there is a village of victims of the Phi Pop which was created by a Protestant mission, in order to rescue these poor creatures who would otherwise die of hunger, for they are forbidden to enter any village.

The Phi Phong are the spirits of human beings who have studied the formulas to acquire magic powers but have not conformed strictly to certain rites prescribed by their studies. They are bloodthirsty and go out at night by the light of the fire [32] which issues from their nostrils along the banks of rivers and streams, and of ponds, to catch fish and toads. If one meets a Phi Phong, one must flee for he can spit in one's face, and then one may become a Phi Phong oneself.

776 The Phi Kong Koi lives in the mountains and has the shape of a monkey. During his existence on earth he was the servant of a Vietnamese. One day, having been too badly treated, he decided to escape. But in order not to be caught, he camouflaged his footprints by putting his heels in front and his toes behind. The Vietnamese, deceived by this trick, went off in the opposite direction
[198] and never found him. In our days when the Laotians want to chase away the Phi Kong Koi, the speak Vietnamese to each other. But if one is traveling in the mountains, one must refrain from lighting a fire or cooking any fish or meat or crabs, for the odor attracts the phi who wants to come and eat. His victim would have his intestines split open. The approach of the phi is always preceded by a violent storm and a torrential rain. There are said to be a great many Phi King Koi in the region of Samneua.

There is, however, another kind of Phi. This one seems to have a particular hatred for archaeologists. These are the phis who inhabit sculptures or the tumuli which are found in the bush [en brousse]. But that is another story...

10: d'Olreans--371 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
201

[LSS: during a 'game of repartee between young men and women] "On one side a young man, with a rather expressive face, contorts his facial muscles so as to produce every sort of mimicry. Opposite is an old woman with a wrinkled and pockmarked skin, though her ugliness does not prevent her, from possessing the gift of quick retort. The organ plays continually on a grave key in a sort of bass, while the persons present accompany it by clapping their hands at certain measures.

When the woman rejects her questioner's propositions, the latter takes two small candles, made of a little wax coiled round a few threads, holds them fixed with the thumb nail, and gesticulates, turning his hands and moving his arms in passes like those of a hypnotiser. To these movements correspond certain shruggings of the shoulders, contractions of the mouth, distortions of the nose, and wrigglings in consonance with the measure of the organ music. When the grimaces are funny the women mark their satisfaction by bursting into peals of laughter."

10: d'Orleans--277 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 202, 212, 533, 563, 802 Ethnic subgroups

"From their [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] own account, they have no special songs, but they use the Laotian music.

Writing is unknown to them; but they keep their accounts, or send their messages by means of small pieces of bamboo, marked with notches which are made at closer or longer intervals according to the signification that has been arranged. This is like our bakers' sticks. (1)

1. M. Harmand has found amongst the peoples of the south of Indo-China the same method of correspondence that Father Crabouillet discovered amongst the Lolos of Setchoun. (Cf. 'Note on the Writing of the Indo-Chinese Khas,' by M. P. Lefèvre-Pontalis, L'Anthropologie, Mars-Avril, 1892.) "

10: d'Orleans--313 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 202, 782, 793

"The signal for the commencement of the principal acts of worship is a big bell placed upon the summit of the hill, and it is also used as an alarm bell in the event of fire, in which case it is rung in quite a different way.

The bonzes give instruction to their pupils, preside over certain festivals and preach to the people: they read passages from the sacred books, inculcate charity, and above all impress upon their congregations the importance of making many presents to the pagoda so as to be well pleasing to heaven and to deserve everlasting life.

In a small chapel, in front of each pagoda, a bronze bell rings every afternoon at four o'clock, while on Sundays and fête days it rings at 1 A. M. The bonzes, be it added, are supposed to make only two meals a day, in the early morning and at noon, but their pupils are not expected to conform to this rule."

10: d'Orleans--332 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 202, 346, 731, 793

"After leaving Ouate Mai, we ascend the small hill which commands a fine view of the town, about 350 feet above, and upon the summit of which are several small buildings and a gilt belfry in which is hung a tam tam about three feet in length. Several men keep guard over it and beat it to let the bonzes know when it is the hour for study, or else an alarm bell in case of fire. There is a grand view from here, as the city is at our feet, half hidden among the cocoa trees, one part, which was burnt last year and has been rebuilt, being less wooded than the others."

23: Franck--250 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 205

"Wild-looking Muong mail-carriers, each with a small bag, hung about the rowboat ferry between the garage and our quarters as if they were in no hurry whatever to cross and be off on their fifteen kilometers of the Postes et Télégraphes relay. It was a reminder that the mail service of Indo-China under the French is by no means the equal, in proportion to the difficulties involved, of that of China under international tutelage. But on the other hand one can telegraph anywhere within the colony, from almost any hut, at a cent a word, in English, French, or the native tongues, and be sure of prompt and accurate delivery."

149: Reinach

AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

205, 206

[For information on the postal and telegraph facilities in the various provinces and districts of French Laos at the beginning of the twentieth century, see Category 116, pp. 200-217.]

149: Reinach--197 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Service of Posts and Telegraphs. Before 1900, Upper Laos paid Tonkin a yearly sum of 157,500 francs for the service of posts and telegraphs. 205 206

Lower Laos had an appropriation in its budget for wages, personnel housing, new construction, maintenance of lines, etc., and this rose to 165,295 francs in 1898.

Since 1900 the general budget has covered the service of posts and telegraphs in unified Laos. [279] [Illustration] [280] [Blank page]

[281] Public education. An appropriation of 13,750 francs is written into the 1900 budget for public education. This is a negligible expense, yet the results achieved in the Franco-Laotian schools are satisfactory. The Superior Resident writes as follows: 658 871

"Primary schools in which the elements of the French language are taught to the natives are in operation at Luang-Prabang, Vien-Tiane, Khong and in all the province capitals. There students are given basic training by an interpreter who is appointed for the purpose and for whom a salary is appropriated. As soon as they can read and write fluently the most intelligent pupils are sent to the Collège Chasseloup-Laubat in Saigon, where they continue their studies for two or three years to perfect their knowledge. Under this system we shall shortly have a good body of interpreters for the administration and for private enterprise" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

Some students from the Laotian primary schools have even been sent to the Colonial School in Paris.

Apostolic missions. 797

"The missionaries who endeavor to evangelize the peoples of Laos all belong to the French Foreign Missions Society [Missions Étrangères de France]. Some are attached to the bishop of Bangkok (2),

(2) Since 1900 the missions of Laos have been under the direction of a bishop of Laos, Msgr. Cuaz, whose temporary residence is at Nong-Sene, two kilometers to the north of Lakhone.

and these are the ones whom one meets on the banks of the Mekong.

149: Reinach--365a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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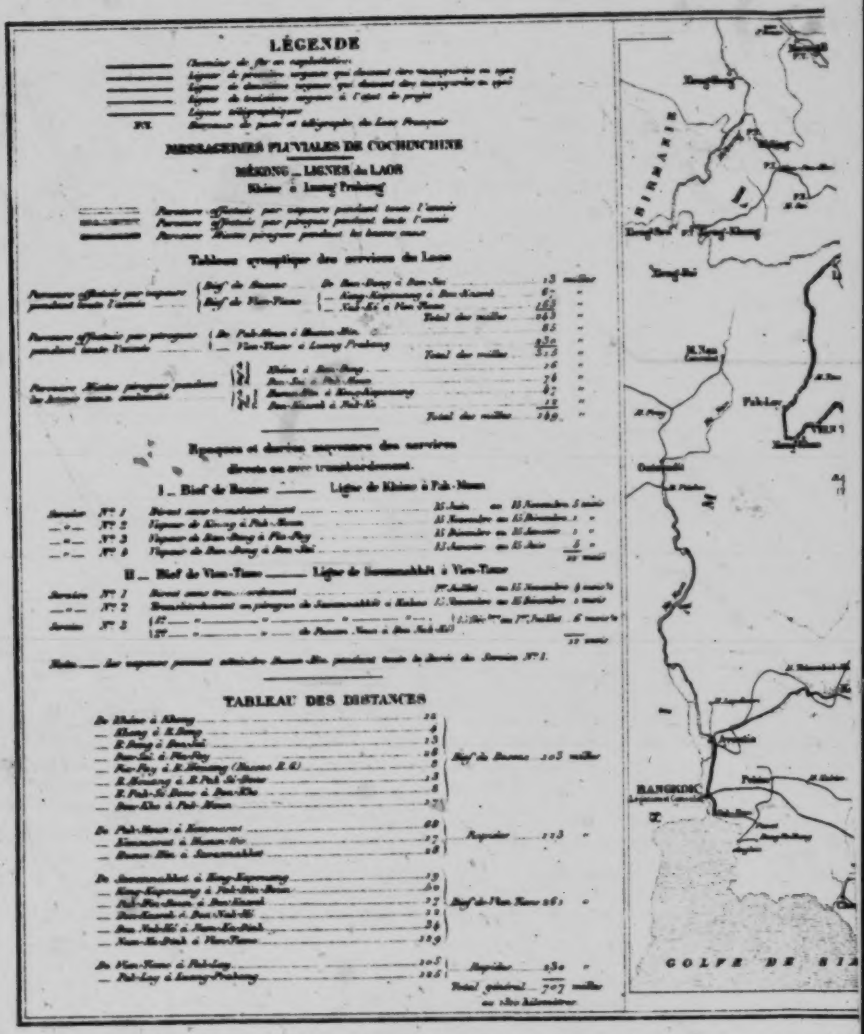

Map of means of communication by river, by postal and telegraph service and by railway in 1900.

Plate 6, Part A /between pp. 480-1/

149: Reinach--365b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Map of means of communication by river, by postal and telegraph service and by railway in 1900.

Plate 6, Part B /between pp. 480-1/

496
185
[113]

which the difficulty of communications is now impeding."
(Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, loc. cit.)
[Translator's note. Probably refers to December 1900 issue, "Rapport du Résident supérieur sur le Tran-Ninh."]

5. POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH SERVICE

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The telegraph network in Laos is quite complete. At the present time only three commissionerships are not served by a telegraph line, those of Tran-Ninh, the Hua-Pahn and Darlac. All the other provinces possess one or several telegraph offices, where postal service is also provided.

Examination of Plate VI will show the extent of the telegraph network in Laos. The lines are divided into two sections: the northern one which is under the jurisdiction of the Annam-Tonkin central office, and the southern one which is attached to the Cochinchina-Cambodia central office. [484] The two sections are not connected with one another, but soon will be. Tonkin will then be in communication with Cochinchina by means of a line which will cross all of Laos from north to south.

When this result has been achieved, that is to say when the Luang-Prabang-Vien-Tiane section has been completed, the Laotian network will be 2,283 kilometers long: 1,168 in Upper Laos and 1,115 in Lower Laos.

[505] By the terms of a contract between the administration and the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [Compagnie des Messageries Fluviales], the latter was made responsible for the transport of postal dispatches on the Mekong as far as Luang-Prabang (1). Outside

(1) This company receives an annual subsidy of 300,000 francs from the government of Indo-China for this purpose.

of the region of the river, and even in certain stretches served by the Company where service can be made more rapid, the administration has recourse either to human carriers or to pirogues.

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6. SERVICE BY THE RIVER MERCHANT FLEET [MESSAGERIES FLUVIALES]

Transport for merchandise and passengers is provided on the Mekong as far as Luang-Prabang by the Cochinchina River Merchant

23; Franck--326-327 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 206, 291, 411

"It looked strange to see men [327] wearing only a loin-cloth, and a dagger in a scabbard woven like a basket and held by a fiber band across the chest, putting up telegraph-poles; but the French insist on being able to talk to one another anywhere in Indo-China, and government ownership of telegraph lines has at least one advantage over the high-cost private system of the United States and China."

149: Reinach

AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

205, 206 ●

[For information on the postal and telegraph facilities in the various provinces and districts of French Laos at the beginning of the twentieth century, see Category 116, pp. 200-217.]

149: Reinach--4 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8 175
Colonial

Thus the agreement of July 14, 1870, regulated fishing conditions 648
on the Great Lake [Grand Lac] (3). In 1882 it was decided to set up [206]

(3) See Appendix III.

a telegraph line between Bangkok and Pnom-Penh (4). And finally, [439]

(4) See Appendix IV.

on May 23, 1883, an agreement was reached which regulated the commerce and sale of French wines and spirits in Siam (5).

(5) See Appendix V.

This fine state of affairs soon took a turn for the worse at the time of the Tonkin expedition.

The agents of Great Britain in Siam were afraid that our penetration into the valley of the Red River and into Upper Laos [5] [Illustration] [6] [Blank page] [7] would hinder British plans for commercial establishments in Yunnan and would prevent British predominance in the two Kouang. Since they were bent on preserving their influence in this region, they induced the Siamese sovereign to act first on the Chinese frontiers, where he was to bar our progress, and then in Laos with Annam as the objective, in the hope that he might create difficulties for us and perhaps succeed in concluding some form of alliance against us.

The king's pride was flattered by his foreign advisers. Feeling that he was to play the part of the sovereign of a "great nation," he abandoned his prudent reserve, no longer kept the balance equal between the rival nations, and began his adventurous course. These were his first steps towards great disappointments, and also towards territorial losses such as those resulting from the treaty of 1893 and the London convention of 1896.

Circumstances at the time, moreover, seemed to favor Siam's action and even to excuse its behavior in some measure.

The invasion of Laos by the Hôs (1) enabled the sovereign of 648

175

(1) Chinese bandits from Yunnan.

726

149: Reinach--197 G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

Service of Posts and Telegraphs. Before 1900, Upper Laos paid Tonkin a yearly sum of 157,500 francs for the service of posts and telegraphs. 205 206

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149: Reinach--365a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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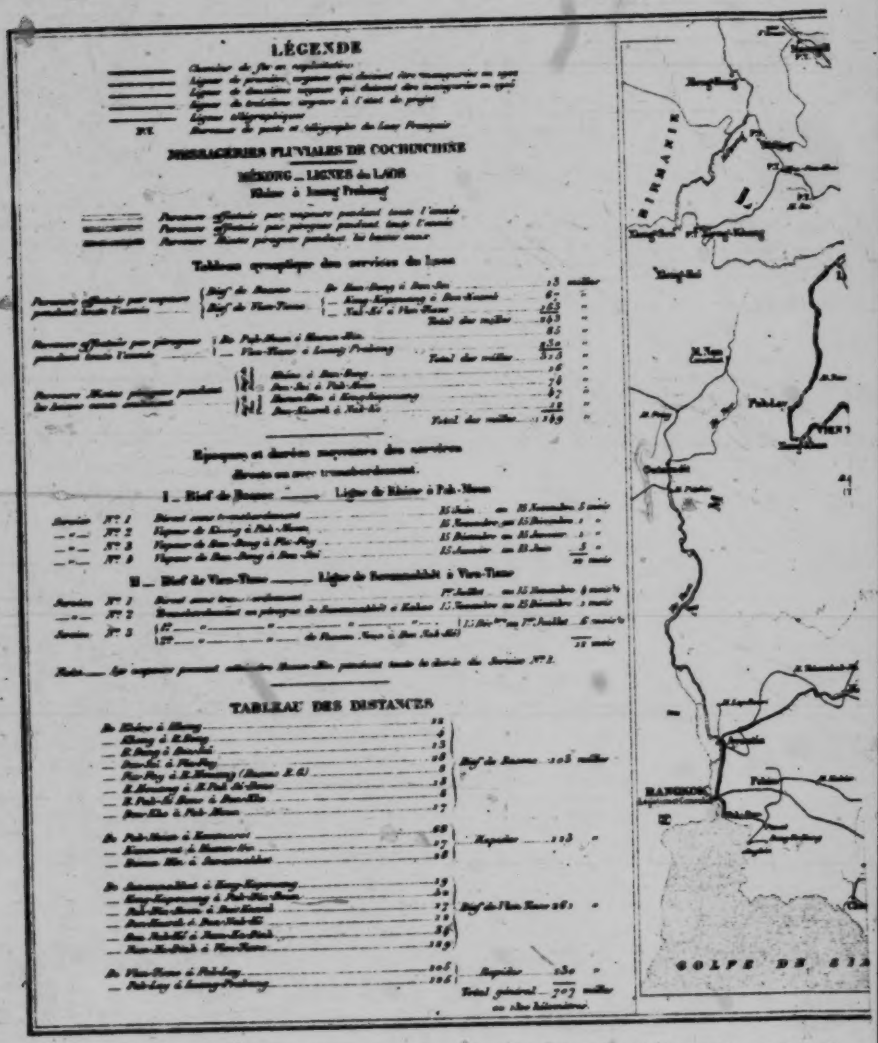

Map of means of communication by river, by postal and telegraph service and by railway in 1900.

149: Reinach--365b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Map of means of communication by river, by postal and telegraph service and by railway in 1900.

Plate 6, Part B /between pp. 480-1/

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(Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, loc. cit.)

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10: d'Orleans--296-297 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 208, 647, 651 177.65 Siam
636.65

"We find that a people is being formed; if there is not a sentiment of nationality the governing power is becoming autocratic and an administrative centralization is being effected to its profit, under the control and the direction of the Siamese. The local rulers are in communication with Bangkok, even if they have not been on a visit there; they are learning to appreciate luxury, and they are upon the point of arming their troops with European weapons, of increasing their effective, and lending aid to the forces of the invaders. In order to obtain these charming results of what may be called 'the new civilisation,' much money is needed, but if the king's expenditure has increased it has not been so with the earnings of the people. The latter were not consulted when a tax was put upon opium 'for their good,' when the tchoum-tchoum was made a monopoly, or when a capitation tax of eight rupees for each man and six for each woman was imposed. The consequence is that they are discontented and unable to make any further payments, mandarins from all parts of the kingdom writing that the villagers are willing enough to come to the capital and take the oath, but empty-handed. Last year several had to sell what they possessed, and now they are endeavouring to borrow, and are murmuring [297] against those who have ruined them. The peasants bow the head in subjection because they see no liberator; but the first man who comes forward with some arms and a relatively small sum of money, in order to drive out the Siamese, may be assured of encountering an enthusiastic and almost unanimous welcome from the population."

10: d'Orleans--298-299 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 208, 647, 651 177.64 France
636.64

"To revert to Luang Prabang, we have a Vice-Consul there, or rather an agent, for he has not got an exequatur. Assisted by twelve interpreters, he does wonders with the limited means at his disposal, but as he is generally short of money and is obliged to borrow from the Chinese to pay the staff, he cannot do much to uphold French interests. The most he can do is to keep up the few friends whom he has gained for us by his personal influence and winning ways. For his title of French agent weighs as nothing in the balance compared to his personal popularity, so that he is seconded but not feared, for it is known that he cannot speak out, that his threats will remain a dead letter, that he is not backed up, and that the Foreign Office seems indifferent to the Mekong question. Compare our mode of action to that of the English in Xieng Maï, a Laos State bordering on Burmah and similarly situated to Luang Prabang. At Xieng Maï there is a consul with an exequatur, that is to say duly recognized by the native Government and his own, well [299] paid and backed up by his superiors, having under his own orders several thousand British protégés and holding very much the same position as the Siamese Commissioner here, this latter being everything while we are nothing."

10: d'Orleans--356 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 114, 211, 622

"So far as the ethnography, the flora and the fauna of Laos are concerned, no better authority is to be had than the French naturalist, Henri Monhot, whose scientific missions were paid for with English money and who succumbed to an attack of fever at Luang Prabang on the 10th of November, 1861. A small monument erected to his memory by the Garnier Mission was restored by M. Pavie, and it is a whitewashed cenotaph upon which may be read in blue letters the inscription

H. MONHOT,
1890.

The site of this is a space which has been cleared in the woods which skirt the Nam Kane about an hour's march above Luang Prabang, Monhot having died in a village beyond this. The chief of a Leu village receives six piastres to keep the monument in order and collect insects, besides being the ballet-master and master of ceremonies in his native place."

23: Franck--334 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 211, 609, 771 Ethnic subgroup

"In contrast to China, the only visible evidences of religious belief in these wilder parts of Luang Prabang kingdom are bamboo arrows and bits of woven wicker squares and the like, beside the trail here and there. These, the prince told me, were warnings, either that a trap of arrows had been set for wild animals somewhere on the path leading off into the brousse, or that a Kha village was engaged in formalities to which strangers were not invited. Docile as they are, the Kha have been known to kill even Frenchmen who have overlooked or persisted in disobeying these warnings. Hence little is known of the religion of this primitive tribe, except that it acknowledges innumerable genii, good and bad, and that there are many things the visitor must not do, many things taboo not only for the Kha themselves but for any one who enters their villages, because to do them would be to stir up the evil spirits to wreak vengeance on the villagers themselves."

149: Reinach--103 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

177 Notice should also be taken of the transformation which has been
563 going on for half a century or so, in the fusion of Khas with Lus,
144 Laos and Thais. From these fusions have emerged the mixed-blood
races which are known as Phou-Thèngs, Phou-Thîlongs, Soué
Phongs, Phou-Oks, Laos-Nîds, etc. [137] [Illustration] [138]
[Blank page]

[139] Later on in 1898 and 1899 the 1894 experiment was tried once more, thanks to the intelligent initiative taken by the Superior Commandant in Upper Laos. His Majesty the king of Luang-Prabang proclaimed the emancipation of the Khas in his kingdom on both banks of the Mékong and even of those who, while natives of Luang-Prabang, are employed in Siam in the lumber camps of the upper Ménam valley.

In résumé, the Khas of French Laos are anything but a negligible quantity, but rather constitute a force and a reserve of energy from which we may draw great profit.

3. LANGUAGES

197 It is impossible here to examine in detail the many Kha idioms
194 and dialects, which only a long and attentive special study could succeed in coordinating, in grouping by similarities and in identifying with other languages, idioms and dialects which contributed to their formation.

The Kha dialects have harsh consonant sounds, among which the R and K are particularly noticeable, in contrast to what is the case in the other forms of the Thai language spoken in Laos where R, except in Siamese, is replaced by L or H.

Insofar as it is possible to judge, the primitive languages must have been corrupted when the land was invaded by foreigners. From that time on they dissolved, changed and became subdivided into idioms, and then into varied dialects. Besides the regional and racial
•211 idioms and the various local dialects the Khas, who do not (except for the Khouènes) have any form of writing, use various means to translate their thoughts, and symbolic objects such as strips of wood in which they make notches in accordance with a conventional system.

This method may be compared to that of a great many illiterate persons, who sometimes succeed in keeping quite complicated accounts by this means.

If one were to entrust a letter to a Kha courier, for example, one [140] would give him the following symbolic objects grouped together:

Kha

two strips of rattan, two feathers from the wing of a chicken or any other bird, two dry red peppers and two pieces of partly burned charcoal. The significance of these objects would be as follows: if the bearer of the letter does not make haste to deliver his message he will be whipped, whence the rattan; the feathers remind him that he must have the speed of a bird, together with the ardent fire of spices (the red pepper); and finally the charcoal means that he must even keep going at night by lighting torches or making a fire. 211

The Khmou Kha idiom, among others, is quite widespread, especially in the territory to the northwest of Luang-Prabang where it is in current use for relations between groups which do not speak the same dialect. These idioms are highly rudimentary, moreover, and do not lend themselves to the expression of ideas which are at all subtle or abstract. 197

Some of them are even composed of only two or three hundred words, invariable in form, the use of which naturally does not involve any grammatical rule.

The Thai language is the fundamental tongue of Laos. It is spoken and written in five variotonic and graphic forms which vary from one another by slight differences in detail, that is to say by differences which bear much more on graphic and phonetic representation than on syntax.

Classified by order of highest development from the point of view of their ability to translate thought, these forms of the Thai language are Siamese, Laotian, Youn, Lu and Phouthai.

In order to give some idea of the gradation which there is between these different forms in the way of alphabetic wealth, variety of accentuation and flexibility of phonetic nuances, we might say that Phouthai is to Siamese what Montaigne's French is to the present-day language.

Siamese is Thai which has been perfected, stabilized phonetically, enriched and complicated alphabetically to such a point as to enable it to translate European languages almost literally.

But although Siamese is easy to read correctly, writing it is extremely complicated by reason of its highly varied tones and the profusion of its accentuation.

[141] The Phouthai language. Phouthai, on the other hand, and we refer here to the written language rather than the present-day spoken language, is rather a primitive form of Thai from the graphic point of view.

10: d'Orleans--277 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 2D2, 212, 533, 563, 802 Ethnic subgroups

"From their [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] own account, they have no special songs, but they use the Laotian music.

Writing is unknown to them; but they keep their accounts, or send their messages by means of small pieces of bamboo, marked with notches which are made at closer or longer intervals according to the signification that has been arranged. This is like our bakers' sticks. (1)

1. M. Harmand has found amongst the peoples of the south of Indo-China the same method of correspondence that Father Crabouillet discovered amongst the Lolos of Setchoun. (Cf. 'Note on the Writing of the Indo-Chinese Khas,' by M. P. Lefèvre-Pontalis, L'Anthropologie, Mars-Avril, 1892.) "

15: Benedict--388-389 L-5 (no date) 1947 Laotians
116, 171, 212, 538

"The Lao script was derived from Khmer writing, probably in the thirteenth century. It is a simpler archaic version of Siamese writing, which is also of Khmer (and ultimately Indian) origin. The White Tai and Black Tai of Tonkin employ similar alphabets, possibly later derivatives of the Lao alphabet. Remarkably enough, the White Tai of Nghê-an, under Annamese influence, write this script in vertical lines, from right to left, as in Chinese! Lao literature naturally has much in common with Khmer literature, as described above, and bears the same deep imprint of Buddhist India. Native Lao (Thai) features are apparent in the more folkloristic aspects of the literature, however, and the poetic forms are [389] much freer than those of Khmer."

162
144
197

2. The Khas (2) or descendants of the prehistoric aborigines.

(2) In Laos the word Kha means slave, individual of inferior and scornful condition, or else one who lives as a savage. The name, which was applied by the last invaders of Laos to the races which had preceded them there, has the same meaning as Moï in Annamite, Stieng or Peunong in Cambodian and Orang Oulou in Malay.

They mixed with newcomers to form a large variety of secondary tribes which, despite their common origin, differ from one another in type, language, dialect or idiom, mores, customs, dress, etc.

[771]
[212]

The Khas have no form of writing, except for the Khouènes and the Khmous who have been partly converted to Buddhism while their [127] fellows have clung to a crude fetishism in which belief in spirits (Phis) prevails.

[641]

A few of these tribes have not yet submitted to our domination and do not pay any taxes.

The principal Kha tribes in Laos are the following:

a) In northern Laos. (The names below should be followed by the word Khas.)

1. PURE KHAS

Khouènes-Khao.	Koussoungs.	Bos.	Kouangs.
Khouènes-Dam.	Bits.	Sapouans.	Saks.
Lemets.	Phèng-Mis.	Kasèngs.	Mouçeus.
Leups.	Sos.	Tiols.	Khmous.
Lawas.	Siengs-Di.	Alous.	
Khos.	Giois.	Ouxas.	
Khouis.	Hock-Roï.	Panas.	

2. KHAS MIXED WITH LAOTIANS, THAIS, LUS AND YOUNS OR IN THE COURSE OF CHANGE

Oks.	Sos.	Phongs.	Phou-Thuongs.
Youngs.	Soués.	Laos-Niôs.	Phou-Oks.
Phou-Phays.	Sèks.	Phou-Thengs.	

212 197

This is doubtless due to the use of the brush, which does not make it possible to draw characters as fine and as purely rounded as with a dry point, a wooden stylus, a pen or a pencil, which are the only instruments used to write the other varieties of the Thai language.

Phouthai, like Laotian, is written in characters, but these differ in number and in form. The vowels are intercalated between the consonants, or are placed like accents above the line when the consonant stands alone, or may even always be placed above in the case of some vowels. This way of understanding the use of vowels can also be found in certain primitive languages.

[101]

In the regions where Phouthai writing is used the influence of the proximity of Annam and China has clearly manifested itself, and the alphabet has become syllabic. Scholars are able to learn by heart a certain number of syllables in which consonants and vowels are joined to form a single character, but those who have not learned Laotian cannot distinguish between the vowels and consonants nor use them separately.

The Phouthais, who have the same basic spoken language as the Laotians but who have a different writing and religion, must either have separated from the primitive groupings before writing was created and have attained sufficient cohesion to create their own form of writing, or else must have learned it in a perfected state of development through some foreign current. It may also be said that when the Laotians adopted the Buddhist religion they lost their old Phouthai signs and took over those of the bonzes who had come to teach them the new faith. Then the brush was abandoned for the stylus and the point, which make it possible to write more rapidly and finely and to form a greater number of signs--these being necessary, moreover, to express and define the abstract ideas and subtle dogmas of the new religion.

[177 795]

[142] The Phouthai alphabet includes only twenty-three characters, almost all of which are syllabic.

212 194

The Siamese language. Of all the forms of the Thai language, Siamese, as we have seen, is the most complete and the most highly developed. Thus it will perhaps be of interest to give some notion, as rapidly as possible, of this language.

The alphabet is composed of forty-four letters which are divided into three classes, as follows:

11 letters on a rising tone, or high letters;
9 letters on a middle tone, or recto tono middle letters;

•212 194

24 letters on a falling tone, or low letters.
These forty-four letters can be broken down into:
18 consonants;
5 vowels;
21 diphtongs.
The Siamese language has five tones:
1. Long recto tono and short recto tono;
2. Long circumflex tone, short circumflex tone and very short circumflex tone;
3. Long falling tone and short falling tone;
4. Long rising tone and short rising tone;
5. Long acute tone and short acute tone.
To represent these tones there are four accents which are placed above the syllables or vowels.

193

Nouns or substantives. The simple nouns are in large part monosyllabic. Only a few are polysyllabic. The compound nouns are formed of two words.

A large number of verbs and adjectives can be changed into substantives by means of a prefix. From the grammatical point of view, nouns do not have any gender or number. To distinguish between men and women a suffix is used which designates sex. In the case of animals, except for a few exceptions, the name is the same for the male and for the female. The male or female prefix is added to distinguish between them.

Numerals and numerical designations. Nouns do not have any number, and this is compensated for by adding expressions signifying [143] singular or plural, but which vary with each object. In French, for example, we would say "two kings, several leaders." In Siamese they say "kings, two persons; leaders, several persons."

These numerals are different, depending on whether it is a question of men, animals, plants or various objects.

For men, for example, there are three numerals. One applies to everybody, the second is used for God, the king, princes, priests and great men, and the third is used only for bonzes.

There are also thirty-five numerals which apply to animals, plants, fruit, material things, books, clothing, grain, flowers, stars, jewels, cloth, packages, string, thread, carts, weapons, etc.

Adjectives. Certain expressions may be construed either as adjectives or as substantives or verbs, depending on the construction of the sentence. A suffix after the noun forms a descriptive adjective,

193 while a prefix before the noun transforms it into a demonstrative adjective. The comparative is expressed by a suffix placed after the noun.

There are eleven expressions to indicate the superlative. They are used as prefixes or suffixes in accordance with fixed rules.

Personal pronouns. There are eleven pronouns for the first person which vary in accordance with the status of the speaker and the person being spoken to.

There are ten for the second person and eight for the third.

Possessive pronouns. There is no such pronoun in Siamese. It is replaced by the genitive of the person or animal which possesses.

Relative pronouns. They are in the number of three, and stand before the object which they modify.

Interrogative pronouns. They are five in number. When repeated they become relative or indefinite and signify, for example, whoever instead of who, whatever instead of what, etc.

Verbs. Verbs do not have conjugations, moods, tenses or persons. Like nouns, they are always invariable. Some semblance of conjugation may nevertheless be achieved by means of particles or auxiliary words. These words, in the number of eleven, change the [144] meaning of sentences by expressing an action or an idea, according as they stand before the verb or after.

Principal adverbs. There are seventy-eight principal adverbs. Moreover, certain nouns or adjectives take an adverbial form by means of seven particles which are placed after them.

Prepositions and conjunctions. There are twenty-eight main prepositions and twenty-five conjunctions (1).

[113] (1) Pallegoix, Dictionnaire siamois-français-anglais, 1896.

212 194 The Lao or Laotian language. The Lao alphabet is composed of twenty-eight letters divided into fourteen simple or compound consonants and fourteen vowels or diphthongs. They are divided into three classes, as follows:

1. Six letters on a rising or aspirated tone;
2. Eight letters on a middle or recto tone;
3. Fourteen letters on a falling or low tone.

To obtain the grave, long grave, short, open and close tones, signs and accents are used. These may be placed above or below the consonant, or may be formed by joining certain vowels and

consonants. Vowels or diphthongs are also sometimes written before the consonant. 212 194

This system of accentuation is, however, not at all fixed, because of the lack of tonic accents. This is what explains the great number of synonyms, as far as spelling goes--synonyms which differ only in prominciation. It is therefore essential to know the meaning of the sentence in order to give it the necessary accentuation and the proper intonation.

It is easy to write, but reading it is fraught with difficulty. To be sure, the orthography is not very complicated, and after a certain time one can manage to write it fairly correctly.

The same is not true of Siamese, and the fixed rules of tonality which it has make it possible, when one has a firm grasp of them, to read all texts without understanding anything.

The Youn language. The Youn language which is in current usage in all of western Laos, [145] that is to say in the basin of the upper Ménam and in part of the Laotian Shan States, is Lao which has been modified graphically by the introduction of certain forms borrowed from the alphabetic signs of the Burmese language. There is no doubt but that it is a compound of the Thai language and that which was brought to Laos by the Pégouans and the Burmese and which underwent profound modifications on contact with Buddhism. [177]

What seems to lend credence to this hypothesis is that the Youn alphabet is used almost exclusively in all parts of Laos for the sacred books and manuscripts of the pagodas. It is a kind of transition between Pali, which is too little known and little suited to expressing the sounds of the Thai language, and this latter language itself which is regarded as too vulgar. A somewhat modified Youn alphabet was then created, and was reserved for religious writings, both texts and copies. A knowledge of this special alphabet is, in Laos, the mark of a superior degree of education. 212 176

The Lu language. Like the preceding, the Lu language is complex and formed of the same elements. That is to say, it is due to the introduction of a Burmese graphic element into the already existing Thai element. In this way it has answered to new needs which resulted from the milieu and from social relations. 212 177

Thus the Lu language includes a certain number of Chinese, Kha and Burmese words which have been added to the original Thai mass.

The Lu alphabet includes twenty-six letters, twelve vowels and fourteen consonants.

584 their mutual sentiments and decide in complete freedom on the principle of their future union.

Natural inclinations are rarely opposed by parents, and so it is primarily out of form and a sentiment of respect that a young man, after reaching an agreement with his fiancée, sends an old man to convey his proposal to the parents of the future bride.

[554] On the other hand, since Laotian customs establish the size of the dowry which young men must, depending on their social status, [192] deliver to their in-laws, girls eligible for marriage encourage only those suitors who are in a position to provide such a dowry (1).

(1) The sum varies, for the lower and middle classes, between ten and 250 francs. But in the families of notables it may go as high, counting jewelry and gifts, as 1200 or 1500 francs.

When an agreement has been reached the fiancée's parents give a feast to which relatives, friends, neighbors and bonzes are invited. The latter then set a day and hour for celebrating the marriage, taking care to choose a propitious day.

585 On the appointed day the groom, accompanied by his friends and by musicians, goes to the house of his future wife's parents, to whom he delivers the sum agreed on as his dowry as well as the clothes, jewels and various gifts which he may care to add. As a sign of homage he also gives his in-laws wax candles and flowers, which are often accompanied by various foods, brandy, tobacco, etc.

The marriage contract is immediately drawn up in the presence of a mandarin and notables of the region. The act gives the names of the bride and groom, as well as those of their parents and the witnesses and magistrates present. The sum of the dowry, the jewels and other objects delivered by the groom to his future bride and her parents are carefully listed. Then after the document is signed by the young couple the authorities affix their seal to it and it is given to the girl's parents (2).

[212] (2) When the bride or groom does not know how to write, his or her signature is replaced by a black or red thumbprint or by an outline of the joints of the index finger (generally of the left hand).

Tribal Tai

whole match, instead of keeping their legs rigid and remaining on 535
the same line, the opponents turn constantly around a central point and raise each leg in turn, the knee bent. This exercise, in which all four limbs work at once and which requires a sure eye and rapid execution, is surely one of the most graceful in existence when it is performed with the facile ease and supreme elegance of the Lus.

"Lu dancing has that particular character of morbidness which one finds among most Mohammedan peoples and also in Spain. The men (for the men are the ones who dance) imprint on their feet only those movements which are indispensable for making the body pivot and facilitating slow, undulating movements by the hips, torso and arms. The dancers are accompanied by tom-toms and kettledrums, and they sigh out lingering, voluptuous chants which harmonize well with their movements. These are veritable harem dances, or such as dancing girls might perform." (Le Laos français.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

We have already seen what the religion of the Lus is like, and 771
need add only that their bonzes are highly respected and that the pagodas are much frequented by the children and young people. Thus 212
the number of scholars is higher among the Lus than among the Laotians. Many women even know how to read and write.

The Lus do not cremate their dead, but bury them, even at a 764
very shallow depth, after wrapping the bodies in a mat or a piece of cloth. The bonzes recite a few prayers over the grave when it has been filled, and in return for this service usually receive an object of some value which belonged to the deceased.

[250] The tombs are not kept up.

The Youns. The natives called Youns are Laotians who have 619
settled on the right bank of the Mekong, in the basin of the Upper 304
Menam and in the territories of Xieng-Hai, Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen. There are, however, Youns living in French Laos where they have mixed with the other Laotians. [Illustration alongside text here]

The Youns may be distinguished from their fellow Laotians by the extent to which they are tattooed. Whereas a Laotian will only be tattooed from the bend of the knee to the waist, a Youn will be tattooed from the calf of the leg to the chest. This has caused the inhabitants of the right bank to be baptized "Black Bellies" (Lao-Phoung-Dam), while those of the left bank are called Lao-Phoung-Khao or "White Bellies."

149: Reinach--182 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Tyibal Tai
Kha

291 The men's costume is like that of the Laotians. A few, however, have adopted the Burmese costume, turban and all, in which case they let their hair grow and roll it in a coil instead of having a brush cut.

The women wear a very long skirt with broad stripes running across it which is fastened beneath the breasts. The bust is covered by a closed jacket or bodice which is cut straight and made of cotton or silk of varied colors. Their hair is rolled in a coil on the nape of the neck or is held in place around the head by a narrow band of cloth and allowed to fall freely down the back. Both sexes wear metal cylinders in their ears, like the Lus, and silver jewelry.

[302] [301]

The Youns are more robust than their fellows, and also more industrious. The women are perhaps less pretty than the Laotian women, but they are just as friendly and merry.

[142]

[251] Both men and women chew betel, and also "Mieng" (green tea, fermented and salted). They smoke tobacco in enormous cigarettes rolled in dried banana leaves. [Illustration alongside text here]

276

The Youns are primarily farmers and livestock breeders. They excel in breeding and training oxen as draft animals.

We have seen that the Youns, although they speak the same language as the Laotians, have their own form of writing which is generally used for religious writings. Their bonzes, who are highly learned for the most part, are renowned for their expert knowledge of the rites of the Buddhist religion.

212 292

Marriage, divorce, polygamy, births, funerals, celebrations and festivities are all the same among the Youns as among the Laotians, except for a few minor differences in detail which we need not mention here.

101

THE KHAS

Before entering into detail about the mores and customs of the main Kha families, we shall again have recourse to the learned work by the Superior Resident in Laos in order to give a general sketch of this race which represents at least a third of the population.

619 181

[252] "They are to be found throughout the territory, and are divided into more than sixty families. As much as those who inhabit northern Laos are docile, manageable and respectful, so are those who inhabit the southern part of Laos proud, independent and warlike, particularly the tribes inhabiting the mountains which separate us from Annam.

149: Reinach--191 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Hill Tribes

595 There is polygamy among the Meos, and the Meo women do not enjoy any higher regard than the Kha women.

[101] The Yaos. The Yaos have the same origin as the Meos, and are strikingly like them in many respects. Their mores, their beliefs and their habits are identical.

619 As we have seen above, the Yaos are divided into three varieties, these being the Lantenes, the Khao and the Ao-Tchaine.

291 The Lantenes (blacks) wear broad trousers, a long smock buttoning at the side and a turban, all made of black cottonstuff. They wear
302 their hair long and either wound under a turban or braided in Chinese style.

[342] Their houses are like those of the Meos and shelter several families, each of which has its own quarters. They are generally clean and well kept-up.

593 The mores of the Lantene Yaos are patriarchal, and these folk are monogamous. The women are very reserved and do not let them-
562 selves be seen much by strangers. They enjoy a certain respect and are treated with consideration by their husbands.

231 The Lantenes are great livestock breeders, and cultivate the opium poppy in addition to rice and maize. They are skilled hunters of wild
241 animals, and each man owns a rifle from which he is rarely separated.

224 Besides a dialect peculiar to them, they speak Quoan-hoa (a
[212] Cantonese idiom), and many of them can write Chinese characters.

[198] The Khao Yaos are less outgoing than their fellows and do not
101 greet strangers with as much good will.

The men's clothing is like that of the Lantenes, [269] but the
291 women are garbed in a different manner and wear their hair in a special way which has earned their tribe the name "Khao" (horns).

Over a pair of black trousers ornamented with colored embroidery and held in place by leggings, Khao Yao women wear a tunic which comes down to the knees but the flaps of which are fastened to the belt. This tunic also has colored embroidery on the chest, back, neck and cuffs, and is held shut with wide silver hooks.

Their hairdress consists of a coil which is smeared with wax and
302 lacquer to hold it in place and in which a wooden socket is imbedded. A light bamboo framework is inserted into the socket, and over this is spread a red cloth or a black cloth embroidered in red. The women thus appear to have two horns on their head.

301 Silver jewelry, neckbands, bracelets and ear pendants are worn by the Khao Yaos.

805 give a summary of the System in force in Laos.

802 Numbers. Laotian numeration is decimal, and goes up into tens of billions (1).

(1) Like all primitive peoples, the Laotians have no conception of such high numbers. Scholars, mandarins and bonzes are the only ones who know these expressions.

[212] [410] Numbers are written, just as we do, in groups of three figures.

516 progresses at an even, elongated pace, carrying as much as 30 kilo-
417 grams in his pack without even seeming to suspect the feats of strength,
suppleness and balance which he accomplishes. As long as he remains
[132] on high ground his resistance to fatigue is very great indeed, but he
cannot go down to the lowlands without danger, especially in the hot
season.

101 Certain authors claim that the word "Meo" which, when pronounced
with a certain intonation, means cat in several Indo-Chinese languages,
was given to these folk by reason of their agility. However, we must
note that in [109] Laotian the word "Meo" used to designate these
mountainfolk is neither written or pronounced like the word meo
which is used to designate cats. There is the same difference between
these two words as there is in French between the words maitre and
mètre.

342 A Meo house is built at ground level on slightly leveled ground.
The walls are made of puddled clay or of ill-fitting boards, and the
house is roofed with thatch or crudely-squared wooden shingles. The
doors are made of wood which has been shaped with an ax, and there
[592] are no windows. Often several families live in the same house, and
then each has a fireplace to itself and a compartment which serves
it as a bedroom. In the common room there is an oven and fireplaces
above which objects are placed to dry on a bamboo framework.
Behind the house a narrow passageway is left free separating the
[343] building from the sheer mountainside. In front there is a narrow
veranda where the horses are kept when they are not housed in a
stable built on piles and overhanging the mountainside, as are the
animal barn and pig sty, the rice granary and the goat pen. This
system has the advantage of protecting the animals from the dampness
of the ground, since the planks which form the floor jut out over
empty space on their solid piles.

[101] Inside the house there are a few furnishings, as among all peoples
of Chinese origin. There are benches, tables, camp beds, dishes,
352 iron and copper cooking utensils and opium smoking accessories, all
so repulsively filthy that even the least delicate would hesitate to
356 enter and stay in these hovels, where vermin swarm under the pro-
tection of the ancestors' altar.

Although amongh themselves and with their families the Meos
198 speak a rather unharmonious language, nearly all the men can under-
stand and speak Qouane-hoa, the language of the Chinese mandarins,
212 which is the official language in Yunnan. They can neither read nor
write Chinese characters, and have no system of writing of their own.

173: Deydier--49 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

[76] LAOTIAN WRITING AND LANGUAGE

212 Laotian writing has an alphabet. It is written from left to right. The Laotian characters derive from the Thai writing created by King Rama Kamheng of Sukhodya in A. D. 1283. But this Thai writing is merely a substitute for the cursive form of the writing of inscriptions in ancient Khmer of Cambodia. This explains the striking similarities of Laotian and Khmer letters.

The tham characters are used especially in religious texts, but also sometimes in novels.

Two other writings close to the Laotian alphabet are the lu, whose use is localized in the extreme north, and the yuon, used at Xieng Mai and in the bordering provinces.

213 The Laotian manuscripts written on four lines are engraved with a pointed instrument on palm leaves of varying length pierced with two holes, at one third and at two thirds of their length. The cord which is to hold them together must only be put through the hole on the left side. A bundle of about twenty leaves forms a phuk (pronounced p'ouk). These phuk are grouped in bundles (mat) which are wrapped up in a piece of cloth or else they are put in a pile held at the top and bottom by two wooden boards, and pierced from right to left with a double series of holes through which a thin cord is passed. The two extremities are tied in a knot used to carry this mass.

[77] The Laotian Language

194 It is a tonal language. It possesses three series of letters, medium, high and low.

193 Morphology. The purely Laotian words rarely have more than two syllables. There is no article. The words are invariable. There is no gender, nor number, only generic terms used to define men, animals, vegetables, etc. The generic categories are numerous. There is one used for leaves and all that is flat, another for round and elongated objects, such as trees and columns, etc., in all there are about twenty.

Like the other words, the verb is invariable. Verbal time is unknown, but there are auxiliaries indicating a completed action. Personal pronouns differ according to whether the person addressed is an inferior, an equal or a superior.

[554]

Syntax. Laotian construction is direct: subject, verb, object. The determinant follows the determined. A question is made without

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69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

000 eventually to the Buddhas to solicit their curative powers; and if so what we should learn from it about the prevalence of disease among Europeans.

217 The museum of Vientiane, which I visited in the hope of learning
532 something of the living art of the country, has also little more to
771 show than a collection of Buddhas. There is a tranquillity, a lack of compulsion in the Hinayanist Buddhism of Cambodia and Laos — so different from the neurotic deformation practised by the later Khmer kings — which is not propitious to the development of religious art. There was no violence or drama in the life of Buddha comparable to that of Christ, and the Indian Epics have been eschewed in Laos as improperly secular. It has been enough to carve Buddhas, and more Buddhas *ad infinitum*, seeking perhaps to multiply in this way the magic virtues which each image contains. The curator takes you round, explaining the characteristic postures — there are seven or eight — all of which can be appreciated in five minutes. After that there are minute differences of physique and physiognomy to be noted that reflect the influences of India, of Java, of Thibet or of Ceylon. That is all.

177 By the time the museums turn to the art of the people, the
532 grotesque animals in bamboo, the carved movable figures which
782 are obscene to European eyes — all of which become a pagan burnt-offering at the end of each *boun*[1] — it will be too late. The microphone is an infallible sign of what is to come. Nothing of this kind will survive the era of materialism, under whatever form it arrives.

253 These are the sights of Vientiane, but in addition there is a
825 spectacle which is popular with Europeans, who, remote, isolated, and living under difficulties, tend to shut themselves up within the protective social rituals of people in exile.

This spectacle is the slaughterhouse at work. I do not know whether or not it is illegal in Laotian law to kill animals, but certainly it is thought shameful, and the killing for Europeans is done at the dead of night on the outskirts of the town. The

[1] [Laotian religious festival. -- Analyst]

175 the fourteenth century. Archaeological discoveries made in recent
177 years in the region of Luang Prabang and more recent ones in the
779 neighborhood of Vientiane may enable this important event in the religious history of Laos to be moved back more than two centuries.

[23] The Pagoda.

346 "Laotians liked to place their pagodas on high points, but their
778 marked taste for the edge of the water made them prefer the neighborhood of rivers. This location of pagodas is a natural consequence of
[792] the relations between bonzes and inhabitants. The former drew their livelihood from the latter, and these are crowded on the river banks."
In principle the pagoda consists of three elements:

346 1) The buildings connected directly with the cult: vat, chapels, libraries; that, standing landmarks and niches;

2) The surrounding enclosures, exterior and interior;

3) The buildings for the immediate use of the inhabitants of the pagoda: monastery [bonzerie], cells for the bonzes, reception halls.

The vat consists of a large hall furnished with a pedestal on which stands the statue of the Buddha often accompanied by a preaching pulpit. The columns and walls are frequently ornamented with paintings.

Among the annexes of the vat, the most numerous are the chapels which are in the form either of delicate buildings or small compound halls.

The that is a votive and sometimes a funereal monument. (See appendix on Vientiane).

The only piece of furniture always found in the vat is the preaching pulpit, an elegant construction, often made of gilded wood. By way of furniture there are a few seats for the chiefs of the bonzes,
[788] particularly for the torch bearer. Finally, particularly in the region of Luang Prabang, one finds the hang-lin, a curious spout-shaped object, with elegant decoration, which is used for sprinkling the Buddhas on great feast days (cf. the New Year). These various finely carved objects are usually made of gilded wood and are sometimes inlaid with enamelled lead [24] whose brilliant gleam makes
[217] them sparkle. The manuscript chests are usually collected in the libraries, piled up in the shape of an inverted pyramid; they are generally carved and gilded.

10: d'Orleans--322 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 222, 262

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "We notice, on the sand-banks near the water, rows of poles, which women, with baskets passed through their arms, come to inspect, and apparently to wipe at frequent intervals. This excites our curiosity, and when we get closer, we find that these poles are done over with glue to catch the grasshoppers which alight upon them, and which are sold in the market as a staple article of food."

10: d'Orleans--323 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 222

GRASSHOPPER HUNTERS, LUANG PRABANG.

824
314 when mixed with curcuma. The trees are found in the forest, and
386 sometimes in gardens.

10. Yams.

The yam is an edible tubercle of the Dioscorea family. It is
262 represented by two varieties, the white and the black, which are called
241 "Mane-Phuek-Khao" and "Mane-Phuek-Dam" in Laotian. These tubercles are the main standby when there is a scarcity of rice and [335] maize, but in ordinary times they are used only to supplement the usual diet.

11. Taro or cush-cush (Mane-Pa).

Taro is also a food plant of the Aroïdées caladiées genus (Caladium esculentum). Like the yam, it is one of the most useful edible tubercles in times of famine.

12. Medicinal plants.

824 Designated by the generic name "Ya" in Laotian, these plants
278 are represented by special types of orchids, roots, bark, berries, leaves and even pieces of wood of different kinds, the whole forming an assortment of medicaments.

[438] The Khas are the ones who collect these various products from the depths of the forests, and they trade them either to Chinese or to Laotians for money or other goods.

[435] Certain of these plants and barks are used by the Laotians while others, such as the leaves from orchid plants, for example, are purchased by Chinese merchants at prices which vary between 33 and 62 francs per hundred kilograms.

13. Cloves.

The clove tree (Caryophyllus aromaticus. Kane-Phou in Laotian) is quite scarce in Laos. Cloves are mixed with various ingredients in masticatories or are taken as medicine.

Cultivation of the clove tree ought to be developed in Laos because of the high value of its flowers which, when dried on the tree, constitute the cloves of commerce.

14. Beeswax (Phung).

• 222 Beeswax is much sought-after in Laos, where a great deal of it is
[231] consumed. It is a scavenging product par excellence since, except in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na, the inhabitants do not practice apiculture and
314 are content to go into the forest and look for honeycombs in order to extract the wax. The latter is used for domestic needs and for worship
[438] ceremonies. It also forms the basis of quite an important trade.

23: Franck--335 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 224, 411 Ethnic subgroup

"On the swift slope we passed an old man and a boy [EJ: of the Kha group] with a crossbow and some pencil-like arrows, who were evidently stalking birds, for all the rain."

25: Brodrick--101 [3] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 181, 224, 276

"The men and the women both smoke and often they smoke pan, a sort of hemp, not unlike the Moroccan kif, but the Laotians mix their pan with tobacco. And everyone chews betel.

The Laotians' ideal in life is to chew betel, to drink rice-alcohol, to make love and to sleep--they are very good sleepers. Their economy is still half pre-agricultural, hunting and fishing afford food and amusement, and amusement, of course, because men are not wholly dependent upon the product of the chase."

25: Brodrick--107-108 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-2
116, 224, 411

"Nowhere in the Laos is the big-game shooting as good or as exciting as in Cambodia or in Annam. It is forbidden throughout the Laos to shoot elephant except in self-defence and the rhinoceros is as rare as in any other part of Indo-China. The Chinese have, for centuries past, imported vast quantities of rhinoceros horn for medicine and for carving into those rhinoceros horn cups now so sought after by collectors. No cups have been fashioned now for a century or more and, indeed, many are broken up and ground down to supply the demand for tonics, aphrodisiacs and antidotes among the Chinese. But in Mouhot's time, not a century ago, rhinoceros was fairly common in all the region between the Meking [HD: in Luang Prabang province] and the Annam Range, and the old traveller whose body lies buried in the jungle not far from Luang-Prabang, tells a vivid tale of his hunting:

'We were eight men, all armed with guns. Mine was fitted with a sharp bayonet. The Laotians carried only iron javelin-blades mounted on strong bamboo sticks, but their chief had a long, sharp [108] sword, not heavy, but very supple and almost unbreakable. After about two miles march through the forest, we heard the branches crackle and the dry leaves rustle. Motioning us to slow down and to hold ourselves ready, the chief strode forward. Soon we heard a piercing cry. It was the chief's signal that the beast was not far off. Then the chief began striking two bamboo rods together while his men shouted so as to force the rhinoceros from his lair. A few

minutes later, the animal, furious at being disturbed in his retreat, came straight at us. He was a very large male. With no sign of fear, but as joyful as though he were sure of his victory, the intrepid hunter advanced towards the monster and, with poised lance defiant, awaited the onrush. The animal charged straight forwards, his mouth wide open and alternately raising and lowering his head. Just as he came within range, the man flung his javelin, from a distance of about five feet, into the beast's mouth. Then, he left the weapon in place and walked back to us. We remained at a respectful distance in order to watch the rhinoceros's death-agony without danger to ourselves. He gave out the most terrifying roars and rolled on his back in dreadful convulsions while our men shouted for joy. A few minutes later, as the beast was vomiting streams of blood, we were able to approach him. I then shook hands with the chief and complimented him upon his skill and courage. He replied that I alone had the right to finish off the quarry and this I did by ramming my long bayonet into its throat. The chief, having jerked his javelin from out the body of Behemoth, offered the weapon to me and asked me to accept it as a souvenir. I gave him in exchange a magnificent European dagger.'"

643* Khamone-Noi seems to have been a most unusual man, and it
157 is to be regretted that we cannot paint a more precise picture of
175* him. Brought up at first as an exile in Vientiane, far from his native land, then the companion of Souligna's grandsons in their peregrinations, and finally king of Luang-Prabang which he had to leave in order to combat the Burmese and mount the throne of Xieng-Mai, this wandering prince experienced a thousand adventures which he faced with equanimity, manifesting on all occasions, both good and bad, a surprisingly philosophical humor and a most un-
/224/ usual carefreeness. He had one passion, hunting, to which he devoted all his time and which gained him the surname "Ong-Nok," the /185/ prince of the birds (unless it meant the prince who was "always out").

669 Intha-Som's bold stroke (1727). One day in 1727 when he was
643* away from Luang-Prabang and, as the Annals say, in the company
175* of Phya-Keo, Thai-Sang, Chabane, Thao-Bang-Khom and Thao-Bang-Houak, Intha-Som suddenly closed the gates of the city and occupied the palace. The maneuver was not accomplished without some disturbance, and on the way back Khamone-Noi had wind of some kind of treachery. He sent Thao-bang-Houak up to the approaches of the capital to find out what was going on. When he learned of the defection of all those in whom he had placed his confidence he halted, bewildered, and broke a gold carafe which he was holding in his hands. Then, as if ashamed of a gesture of anger which he had not been able to repress, he turned on his heel, leaving his companions free to follow him or not as they wished, and set out calmly in the direction of Xieng-Mai where new destinies awaited him.

This is how tradition relates the last part of this odd man's life:

643* Odyssey of Khamone-Noi. "The inhabitants of Luang-Prabang
175* had grown tired of seeing /186/ their king always absent from the palace and neglecting the management of their affairs. One day as he was returning from a long outing he was surprised to find the gates of his palace solidly closed. The people whom he met avoided him or fled when he approached. Some children who had gathered round and who were looking at him curiously said to him: 'You are never there, the leaders and the people are not satisfied, they have closed the gates of your palace so that you can leave it.' Then Khamone-Noi went away sadly, entered the pagoda of

133 The market of Bassac owes its importance to the proximity of the
433 plateau. It is therefore a storehouse for the Laotians of the whole region, a reservoir [51] from which they draw. The part which it
438 plays is obviously a fine one, and no more can be asked of it.

There has also been much discussion as to whether large-scale breeding of buffalo and oxen would be successful there, for at present livestock is found only in the villages situated near the Sédone, that is to say, quite far from the plateau. The question has not yet been settled, and sufficient tests have not yet been made.

At the southernmost corner of the plateau there is a conical
133 mountain about 800 meters in altitude which Francis Garnier baptized The Breast [le Téton] because of its shape, and to which he later gave the name Lagrée's Peak [Pic de Lagrée] in commemoration of the President of the Exploratory Commission of 1866.

[224] The elephant hunters of southern Laos go to the mountainous region of Saravane and Attopeu every year, and there they capture an annual quota of fifty to a hundred elephants.

133 To the east of Attopeu the mountains are inhabited by well-
[177] nigh independent Kha tribes--Cédangs, Djarais, Rognaos and
[797] Bahnars. The two latter tribes have almost been pacified, thanks to the persevering efforts of the Christian missionaries of Kon-Toum. This point is the center of the mission, and through it passes the road from Attopeu to Qui-Nhon. It crosses the Annamitic Chain
563 between Kon-Xalam and Kon-Tiorak at an altitude of about 900 meters. Near Attopeu this same road goes up over Pou-Satièng (400 meters), the last ramification of the great chain, which separates the basin of the Sé-Souk from that of the Sé-Kémane.

[135] This region of Pou-Satièng, Sé-Souk and Sé-Kémane has long been known to be rich in gold deposits.

§ IV--HYDROLOGY

a.--THE MÉKONG--GENERALITIES

133 It has often been said, and rightly so, that the Nile constituted Egypt. In the same way it can be said that the Mékong makes Laos, for is it not the river which gives what vitality there is to these vast isolated regions? Is it not the river which, by its annual floods, helps the growth of rice? Does it not supply, with its fish, a large

149: Reinach--191 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Hill Tribes

595 There is polygamy among the Meos, and the Meo women do not enjoy any higher regard than the Kha women.

[101] The Yaos. The Yaos have the same origin as the Meos, and are strikingly like them in many respects. Their mores, their beliefs and their habits are identical.

619 As we have seen above, the Yaos are divided into three varieties, these being the Lantenes, the Khao and the Ao-Tchaine.

291 The Lantenes (blacks) wear broad trousers, a long smock buttoning
302 at the side and a turban, all made of black cottonstuff. They wear their hair long and either wound under a turban or braided in Chinese style.

[342] Their houses are like those of the Meos and shelter several families, each of which has its own quarters. They are generally clean and well kept-up.

593 The mores of the Lantene Yaos are patriarchal, and these folk
562 are monogamous. The women are very reserved and do not let themselves be seen much by strangers. They enjoy a certain respect and are treated with consideration by their husbands.

231 The Lantenes are great livestock breeders, and cultivate the opium
241 poppy in addition to rice and maize. They are skilled hunters of wild animals, and each man owns a rifle from which he is rarely separated.

224 Besides a dialect peculiar to them, they speak Quoan-hoa (a
[212] Cantonese idiom), and many of them can write Chinese characters.
[198] The Khao Yaos are less outgoing than their fellows and do not
101 greet strangers with as much good will.

The men's clothing is like that of the Lantenes, [269] but the
291 women are garbed in a different manner and wear their hair in a special way which has earned their tribe the name "Khao" (horns).

Over a pair of black trousers ornamented with colored embroidery and held in place by leggings, Khao Yao women wear a tunic which comes down to the knees but the flaps of which are fastened to the belt. This tunic also has colored embroidery on the chest, back, neck and cuffs, and is held shut with wide silver hooks.

302 Their hairdress consists of a coil which is smeared with wax and lacquer to hold it in place and in which a wooden socket is imbedded. A light bamboo framework is inserted into the socket, and over this is spread a red cloth or a black cloth embroidered in red. The women thus appear to have two horns on their head.

301 Silver jewelry, neckbands, bracelets and ear pendants are worn by the Khao Yaos.

149: Reinach--251 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Hunting

•224 Hunting, for the inhabitants of Laos, is another form of scavenging, since it procures them either live animals or the remains of the same without any great labor or expense.

411 For the Laotian, time does not count. He makes his powder him-
224 self, and with the exception of firearms his hunting devices are also of his own fabrication. With the help of this far from perfect equipment he is nevertheless able to capture live elephants and to procure the ivory and remains of those which he kills, as well as the hide,
[438 262] talons, bones and horns of a multitude of other animals. All these products are so many trade commodities for him. The flesh of all these animals, moreover, makes a sizeable contribution to the diet of the Laotian hunter. It is a feast for him, for his family and for his entourage.

[825] [344] The natives have a perfect knowledge of the habits and customs of all the representatives of the local fauna. Patient, adroit,
224 endowed with excellent powers of hearing and sight which are further developed and sharpened by practice, they are not afraid to attack the tiger and other large animals despite their rudimentary weapons.

Lying hidden for hours at a time, motionless and silent and abstaining from smoking, the hunter waits for his victim without losing his self-control. When it approaches within a few meters of him, his sure eye and untrembling arm enable him to strike it dead with a bullet or with a poisoned arrow shot from a powerful crossbow.

One is astounded at the results achieved with weapons which are so imperfect, as much by their rudimentary construction as by their age, and which often lead one to fear more for the hunter's life than for the beast's. We must admire these men who, although reputed to be cowardly, brave danger with such primitive weapons and go in search of wild animals in their very lairs, killing them at almost point-blank range so that oftentimes the wad from the gun singes the animal's fur or the arrow goes in one side and out the other.

411 The firearms used by the Laotians are flintlock or muzzle-loading
439 rifles, some of which are of Siamese or Burmese manufacture. Others are imported from Europe through trade or in private cargoes. There are also old regulation rifles, British and others, chiefly those which bear the image of a cock and the word "Tower" stamped on the lock or breech.

149: Reinach--252 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

The Laotian, as we have said before, makes his powder himself. 411
He also casts his bullets, which are usually only shapeless masses of lead or iron. In view of this fact it is not surprising, with such ammunition, that his guns do not have even a medium range. He is therefore forced to shoot from a very short distance, often less than five meters, if he wants not merely to hit his prey but to strike it in the right place so as to fell it on the spot and not risk becoming the victim of a wounded beast.

[345] European weapons tempt him because of their careful construction and long range, but if by chance he does try them they do not yield the same results in his hands as his own do, imperfect as they are. Thus he prefers his own weapons to ours, finding them better adapted to his eye and his arm.

For several years now, however, double-barreled hunting rifles [439]
of an inferior quality and Winchester muskets of the already outdated 1878 model have been imported into Laos through Siam and Burma. The careful maintenance which such weapons require, the high price of ammunition and the difficulty of obtaining new supplies are all reasons preventing their widespread use. Thus they are, so to [554]
speak, only luxury items possessed by a few fortunate Laotians who have acquired them out of ostentation rather than for use.

Firearms and crossbows are not the only hunting devices used in Laos. Indeed, there is no lack of ingenious instruments, some simple and some complicated, but always perfectly adapted to the particular purpose to which they are destined. They are made with perfect artistry and care, with a view towards capturing the most diverse forms of wild life, from the largest pachyderms such as the elephant down to the smallest bird. Traps, deadfalls, snares, springes, nets, birdcalls, etc. complete the Laotians' hunting equipment. All these devices are manufactured by them during the rainy season, when they are confined to their houses. They are like our peasants who profit from the long winter evenings to make all the little things which they will need during the course of the year.

Rifles and crossbows are used only in hunting the larger wild animals. The natives use special methods to capture elephants.

This pachyderm once lived in great herds in all the parts of 224
Laos which offered grassy plains, valleys and high plateaus, especially where certain varieties of bamboo, wild banana trees and graminaceous plants which were to its taste grew. Nowadays, because

224 this animal has been hunted to excess and because of [346] the value of ivory, it has disappeared from certain regions. It is scarcely ever found now except in the valleys of the Sesane, the Se-Ia-Drang and the Srepok and in the Muong of Maha-Say in Lower Laos, and in Vien-Tiane, Tran-Ninh, the Hua-Pahn, the Sib-Song-Chau-Thai, etc., in Upper Laos.

313 For the last ten years or so the working of the teak forests in the Siamese and Shan territories of the basin of the Upper Menam (1) has

224 438

(1) Elephants are used in Siam to carry teak logs from the place where they are felled to nearby watercourses.

necessitated the use of an ever-increasing number of these pachyderms, among which overwork and accidents claim many victims. Thus to fill the gaps elephants have to be sought where there are still some left, and it is precisely in French Laos, on the left bank of the Mekong, that a few wild herds are still found.

Since there is no shortage of buyers, it is to the interest of the hunters to capture as many of these valuable animals each year as possible and to train them with a view towards selling them. Since demand even greatly exceeds supply, an inflationary tendency has resulted which has caused prices to rise by sixty to eighty percent. Besides the sum paid to the sellers, the purchasers have to pay an exit duty amounting to half of the purchase price. This tax, like other similar ones of which we shall speak later on, is levied to compensate for the real estate tax which Laos does not yet have.

224 The methods now used to capture wild elephants are identical, except for minor details, in all parts of Laos. In order to summarize 231 them and to provide a description of an elephant hunt, we shall have recourse to the interesting account which Captain Gosselin (2) has given.

(2) Le Laos et le Protectorat français, op. cit. [Paris, 1900.]

"At the beginning of the dry season, the owners of tame elephants make ready for the great beats which take place in the mountains near the Annam frontier. They train their elephants to run, so that they will develop speed, and manufacture immense ropes forty to fifty meters long, made from strands of buffalo hide [347] and rattan and strengthened with copper wire. A collar is fitted at one end of each rope which is large enough to be put around an elephant's neck, while a ring about sixty centimeters in diameter is fitted to the other end.

224 The rings and collars are made of the same materials as the ropes themselves.

231 "Towards the middle of November, a caravan composed of some ten of the largest elephants in the Muong leaves Mahasay. Each elephant bears two men, one of whom will be the carnac and the other the hunter. Many men follow the caravan on foot, some to keep it supplied with provisions and the others solely for their own pleasure...

"...As soon as the moon begins to appear above the trees the whole caravan sets out, the hunters following one another in single file. When confronted with a herd of wild elephants the whole troop falls on them, and the talent of the hunters then consists in separating a fairly young elephant, and one which seems a likely prospect for training, from its companions. The trained eye of the Laotian is very rarely deceived. Two hunters with trusty mounts then take charge of it, while the others hold off the enemy with trunk and tusk blows. Battle is often not necessary, and the attacked elephants which have been taken by surprise during a moment of repose think only of fleeing from their adversaries.

"It is then that speed is indispensable for the two elephants pursuing the chosen young one. When they have succeeded in placing it between the two of them, each hunter tries, by means of his pole, to pass the ring around its foot so as to impede its progress. The hunter who succeeds in achieving this difficult maneuver is the true vanquisher, for when this initial goal has been reached there is less danger involved in placing a second ring, and then the elephant is a captive. It utters cries and rolls on the ground, but to no avail, for its two adversaries use their strength to hold it. Overcome by fatigue, the prisoner finally stands up. The ropes holding it are fastened to trees, and with the help of several tame elephants which unite their efforts a leather collar which has previously been attached to large trees with ropes is fastened around its neck. Then only can the rings placed on its feet during the chase be removed. The captive is left thus for two days, without any food, so as to lose part of its strength. Only on the third day is it allowed to eat, and then the hunt begins again and continues in this fashion for two or three months. The elephants taken prisoner are led to the village by the tame elephants, and their training exercises are begun immediately."

The purpose of this special training is to subject the elephants to the will of its carnac, and then to accustom it to bearing burdens. It takes [348] about six months to tame a wild elephant and bring it to a point where it is perfectly docile.

10: d'Orleans--267 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 226, 516

"Below Muong-Ngoi the river widens to 100 or 150 yards in breadth. In the narrower places some fishing traps have been erected: some bundles of three posts each are tied together at the top forming a faggot, in the centre is a basket full of stones, their weight keeping them in place. Between one bundle and the next a triangular net is placed, point in front; a man raises it by means of a long pole, which acts as a lever; when at work the fisherman squats, head downwards, upon a small terrace formed of bamboos. Several have covered their heads with a red veil, and their position reminds me of Mussulmans at their prayers. Here they are watching the water, and when a fish is caught they suddenly raise the net. I have sometimes counted seven or eight terraces across the river."

10: d'Orleans--322-325 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 226, 228, 255, 439

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "A good deal of net fishing goes on in the river itself, but it is not till later in the season that the prabeuc, a fish resembling the sturgeon, is caught. At fixed [pages 323 and 324 contain illustration] [325] periods, this fish ascends the river as far as the confluent of the Nam Ou, and its capture is a source of great profit for the inhabitants, as its eggs (which make excellent caviar when fresh) are sent as far as Xieng Mai, while the fish itself is canned and isinglass is obtained from its skin."

10: d'Orleans--369 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 226, 782

"After leaving Muong Liep we camp at the right of the river near a sand-bahk covered with the remains of former encampments. A hundred paces off is a large pond some 150 feet broad and of considerable length. It owes its name to its green waters nong kiou (green pond). In the month of February people come from all directions, and even from Luang Prabang, to camp on its edge and to fish. Many big fish are caught here, but now, we are told, they are in a cavern which extends under the sand-bank. I do not know how true this may be, but it is certain that in walking on the sand and striking it, a hollow sound is heard. Before fishing two bullocks are sacrificed to the dragon of the lake, and tchoum-tchoum is drunk.

When we talk of fishing ourselves with dynamite our boatmen dissuade us: 'they cannot dive because of the dragon.' "

23: Franck--297-298 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 226, 501, 526

"Huge fish are caught in the Mekong, weighing a hundred and fifty, two hundred, sometimes even two hundred and fifty--not pounds, but kilograms, fish so big that it takes ten men to carry one of them and one man to carry a severed head. It is easy to understand what the flap of such a fish-tail sometimes means to the fishermen in their frail vine-tied canoes. But it is just the fishing for such a people in such a climate; for every time they catch a fish they can--and usually do--[298] rest for a week without going hungry. Racing pirogues as much as twenty paces long lie bottom up on bamboo-horses under little thatch roofs here and there upon the high weed-grown river-bank at the edge of the capital, being used only in November during the annual regattas. For rowing--more exactly paddling--is the athletic sport of Luang Prabang."

133 vast impenetrable forests and "the traveler sees only tall grass or
137 gigantic trees intertwined with lianas, then all at once, through a break in the foliage, he discovers the cascades of a river. This is the only noise to interrupt the impressive silence of these great forests" (2).

2. L. de Reinach, Le Laos, 1911.

133 Set against the huge mountain masses of Yunnan, this tormented region has always been the natural refuge of peoples driven out of India or China by famine, great invasions or religious discord, and its orography explains, in large measure, the multiplicity of tiny
/631/ states which were formed there throughout the ages. Its abrupt defiles radiate out and, so to speak, become calmed in the valleys of the Ménam, the Mékong and the Red River, and its principal substructure spreads out /5/ and ends in a vast plateau known as the plateau of Tran-Ninh, whose hillocks are planted with pine trees and drop suddenly from east to west.

In the southeast, however, the Tran-Ninh plateau clings "like an excrescence" to a long artery known as the Annamitic Chain which forms a distinct line of demarcation between Laos and Annam. This chain runs parallel to the coast in a northwest-southeast direction, and its peaks go all the way down to the Mékong by successive stages, first forming plateaus or folds of ground covered with thick forests (dông in Laotian), then slighter undulations where there are forest glades (khok in Laotian), and finally vast ricefields ending in the river.

The Mékong. This great river frontier which, over 800 kilometers of its length, marks the political separation of French Indo-China from the kingdom of Siam, gives life to Laos, together with its tributaries, "as the Nile constitutes Egypt." It fertilizes it with
● /226/ its alluvia, feeds the native with its fish and guarantees transport for
/505/ his rafts and pirogues from north to south. But this liquid highway where nature seems to have taken pleasure in piling up obstacles and which is cut by numerous rapids and barred by waterfalls, can not be
/502/ /6/ regarded as usable for regular navigation over all of its length.
133 Fed by the melting snows of Tibet, the Mékong enters Laos through a capricious gorge, widens for a moment in the alluvia of an old lake basin and narrows again towards Luang-Prabang. Grandiose surroundings framed by the blue line of the far-off peaks give it what

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Fishing, preserved fish

Laos, with its extensive hydrological network and its water- 226
courses of all sizes, is a fishing land par excellence. We have already noted the chief varieties of fish which populate its rivers, and have seen that most of them are represented by large-sized specimens.

Since the produce of fishing makes a considerable contribution to the food supply of the inhabitants, it has been necessary to create devices and combine various means for capturing this prey.

The methods, primitive at first, have been increasingly perfected, and each one has been modified so that it is adapted to some particular feature either of the watercourses or of the fish.

The devices used today are wholly made by the inhabitants. 226
They vary greatly in form and--the fact is worth noting--are much 227
like those used in Europe. Indeed, the floating line is common, but in its most rudimentary form, with a thorn for a hook and then the ground-line and long-line. There are also nets in great abundance, and they are identical with the ones found among our fishermen. The most common ones are the seine, the cast-net, the square dipping-net, the shrimping-net, the hoop-net, the landing-net and the large trammel. All this equipment is supplemented with bottles, [350] single and double bow-nets and traps. The Laotians also build large barrages across watercourses and provide them with corridors leading to bow-nets or hoop-nets.

Hiding places in the form of fixed huts on the watercourses are used for spear fishing. A light in these huts attracts the fish and the native, who is armed with a hardwood fork, spears it as soon as it comes within range. [Illustration here]

226 A few varieties of fish in the Mekong go down to the sea at certain periods, then return to the great river and go up it for more than two thousand kilometers to an altitude of four hundred meters. Enormous rays are caught which are as much as four meters long from head to tail, and fish similar to the whiting, the mackerel, the sardine, the tuna, the sole and the limanda are found, almost all of which have retained a sea fish taste despite the distance.

The kings of the Mekong, in respect to size and weight, are the Pa-Beuk, [351] the Pa-Leum, the Pa-Sa-Ho, the Pa-Kheung, the Pa-Kai and the Pa-Khoun, which vary in weight from 35 to 200 kilograms. The Pa-Beuk and the Pa-Leum have characteristic habits, in that the first of these works its way up to points between Vien-Tiane at Luang-Prabang at a distance of 2,000 kilometers from the sea, and the second comes up beyond Xieng-Khong, or more than 2,600 kilometers upriver. The two points on the Mekong where, from the middle of February to the middle of March, the Pa-Beuk gather at [Illustration here] spawning time are, first, a point slightly downstream from Ban-Sam-Pan-Na (above Vien-Tiane), exactly at the Keng-Hang, and, second, a little below Pak-Lay at the Nong-Keo. These spots, where the fish choose to stay, are depressions in the rocky bed of the river, generally between small islands, where there are still 18 to 25 meters of water at low water time.

Hundreds of pirogues gather in these regions (1) and within [352]

(1) On the Lower Mekong the "Pa-Phon" (alosa) is fished for in the same way as it goes upriver (January) and downriver (October).

a few days the fishermen take a great number of Pa-Beuk weighing, on the average, from 120 to 200 kilograms. The number of fish caught varies from year to year, sometimes doubling from one year to the next. In the last few years the average has been between 60 and 130 Pa-Beuk, representing approximately 12 to 25 tons of fish. They may be eaten fresh or preserved.

262 The meat of the Pa-Beuk is separated into slices in the form of long strips which are put out to dry in the sun. Its eggs, which form
226 two enormous masses weighing nearly ten kilograms, are used to make a kind of caviar which is highly esteemed in the land.

The meat of the other large varieties of fish is used to make various preserves, the chief of which are:

"Pa-Ka-Deng," composed of medium-sized or small fish which have been salted, dried and smoked.

149: Reinach--258 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"Pa-Niang," formed of slices from a large fish which have been smoked. 226

"Pa-Heng," or a small dried fish. 262

"Pa-Khem" corresponds fairly closely to our salted and dried fish of the sardine type known as Nantes, which are left in salt for only a few days.

Finally, "Pa-Dek" is the form in which most of the large varieties of fish are preserved, and is an almost indispensable part of the native food supply. To prepare Pa-Dek the meat is cut into small pieces and ground in a mortar with salt and pepper so as to produce a kind of paste which is then put in jars with salt. The resulting brine helps to preserve the product (1). 263

(1) The price of Pa-Dek varies between 18 and 25 francs per hundred kilograms. This is the "Mam" of the Annamites.

The price of fish is subject to fluctuations, depending on the scarcity of it. The large fish of which we have just been speaking sell at prices between one and forty francs, depending on their weight and their abundance on the market. 226 435

Eels, shrimp of the prawn type and crabs are also found in the ponds and rivers of Laos during the rainy season, and in the water-courses there are various edible shellfish [353] such as the river mussel and small winkle. The ponds and swamps shelter several varieties of frogs, some of which reach an enormous size. All of them are edible, and are caught with a red ribbon on the end of a line fastened to a long bamboo pole. 226 [227]

II

PRESENT-DAY CROPS

Together with an enumeration of the crops grown in Laos we should like to be able to give the area which each occupies and the cultivable surfaces with the nature of the soil and the type of crops which would be suited to them, but as the Superior Resident states in his report for 1899: 241 311

"We have been in the colony for too short a time to have been able to set up a cadastral registry service. In view of the large area of the territory (267,000 square kilometers), the small and sparse population which inhabits it (2.7 inhabitants per square kilometer in

leafage, and arrange them in bundles. In the evening everyone returns in a procession to the town, and the wood which has been gathered is put out to dry in the courtyard of the pagoda. A month later, the wood is ready to burn, and another feast takes place at the pagoda. The day before all the women assemble to prepare the offerings of food for the bonzes. They take the wood cut the previous month to cook the ball of rice as big as one's fist on which oil and the contents of an egg are poured so as to form a light surrounding crust. The old people take advantage of this wood- [71] cutting and of its burning to hear additional sermons. The Hit Sip Song Khong Sip Si tell a legend of the origin of this feast, which takes place in memory of an old woman who met a bonze while going to gather wood in the forest. She offered him a ball of rice on which lay an egg. After having done this charitable deed, she was bitten by a snake and died. Since that day the Khao Chi is celebrated.

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[72] ANNUAL RITES OF THE FISHING OF THE PA BEUK

Every five years the fishing of the pa beuk takes place in five different places. This fish, belonging to the Siluridae family, has a long smooth silvery-white body, without any scales and may attain a weight of 200 kilograms. The five places are Ang (about 25 kilometers upstream from Vientiane) from the 13th to the 15th day of the crescent moon of the 3rd Laotian month, between January and February; at Luang Prabang (in the middle of the river opposite the town) from the 6th to the 7th Laotian months between May and June; at Nong Khieu (about 22 kilometers upstream from Paklay) on the 15th day of the crescent moon of the 3rd Laotian month (February); at Nong Theo (about 30 kilometers upstream from Paklay) between the 4th and 5th Laotian months, without any fixed date; at Ban Seo (about 27 kilometers upstream from Houei Sai) from the 6th to the 7th Laotian month, between May and June.

527 226

In the section of the river at Vientiane, as early as the 9th day of the crescent moon, the Chao Muong of the province or his representative leaves the capital to organize the festival. He goes by small stages in a dugout as far as Ang, a sort of wide cove or creek favorable to pa beuk fishing. First the Chao Muong and his retinue stop at Ban Si Khay, "village of the lower orders" ["village de la crasse" may have the above meaning or it may mean "village of filth"--Translator] where lives the village genie who has a wide reputation, and who is continually worshipped by the sorcerers living to the north of the

226 village. At the foot of the tree which is supposed to contain the
[782] dwelling of the genie, there is an altar about two meters high. Here,
the Chao Muong, surrounded by all the fishermen, places five roasted
chickens, two bottles of [73] rice alcohol, six coconuts, some betel
527 leaves, some areca nuts, some cakes, some small sticks of incense,
some beeswax candles. These he offers to the genie, asking him to
intervene in his favor so that the fishing this year be fruitful.

787 The genie is addressed by the intermediary of one of the village
sorceresses. As soon as she is "possessed" by the genie, she goes into
527 a trance. She is then unconscious of what is happening around her
and the genie answers through her mouth to the questions asked of her
226 by the fishermen. Invariably the genie's answer is the same: the
catch will be fruitful if traditions peculiar to the fishing of the pa beuk
are followed. The possessed woman, surrounded by a circle of fishermen,
is at first standing up and is holding a cup in which are flowers,
[292] small sticks of incense, and ten beeswax candles. Her hands begin to
tremble when the genie enters into her; she then sets the cup down at
her feet, and, on top of her own clothes, puts on those of the fishermen
who present her with them on a tray for the sacrifice: an ordinary
sin, a cotton shirt dyed red, a belt and a turban also of cotton dyed
red to which are added a metallic piaster, and two yards [brasse]
of white cotton cloth for her personal use. After turning all around,
she squats down, her bust moving in a gyrating motion, and from
this moment she speaks in the name of the genie.

On the 10th day of the crescent moon the Chao Muong and the
preachers arrive at Kao Lieu, "the nine windings" of the Mekong,
where there is a very famous genie who is much more powerful than
that of Ban Si Khay. Forming a large procession, they fetch the
village sorceress with parasols, lances, swords and gongs. Piled high
on an offering tray are nine bars of silver, two kilograms of beeswax,
ten candles, four coconuts, some betel leaves, some areca nuts,
[74] a metal piaster, two yards [brasse] of white cloth, a raw hen's
egg, a bottle of rice alcohol. The procession returns with the sorceress to the front of the altars which are regular houses, and everyone
settles down in them. The entrance is to the west, that is, opposite
[782] the town. The offerings for the genie are four times greater than at
Ban Si Khay as each altar receives nine roast chickens, nine bars of
silver, four coconuts, some areca, some betel, candles, small
sticks of incense. In addition, every three years, a buffalo is sacrificed, and in the years between, a pig. There are the same questions
and the same answers as at Ban Si Khay.

173: Deydier--48 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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In the night of the 11th to 12th day of the crescent moon, the stop is at Hat Hin Siou where some offerings are made to the local genie: two coconuts, two chickens, etc., with the request that he be favorable to the fishing. There are two more stops before arriving at Ang which must be reached on the 12th day of the crescent moon, at eight o'clock in the morning. In the evening all the fishermen go to the village to question the sorceress. There is no procession, but the same gifts as at Ban Si Khay; same questions, same answers. On the 13th day, at seven in the morning, they go to the altar of the genie with offerings to invite him to come and live in the temporary shelter which has been erected on the sandbank at Ang, north of the village, and to beg him to favor the fishing. The whole procession then goes toward the temporary altar and deposits its offerings.

On the 13th day of the crescent moon, the fishing starts at the precise moment when the moon disappears behind the mountain, that is at about four o'clock in the morning.

The gong is struck and immediately the 384 fishing dugouts go into the harbor. Each dugout is decorated with leafy branches, with seven untwisted cotton threads and with a bottle of rice alcohol, and is occupied by two fishermen. They throw a net measuring three meters in width and six meters in length which sinks down to a depth of [75] 35 brasses [70 meters] by means of lead sinkers. The first fish caught is offered to the genie. It is laid gently on its side, its head turned towards the rising sun, its tail lifted towards the setting sun. Some flowers are laid on its cheek and sprinkled with alcohol, while the master of ceremonies says: "The moment of celebrating the feast of Ang, which is your feast, has arrived. The ritual offerings have been made to you. To bring this feast to a happy close we beg you to give the fishermen pa beuk in great quantities."

The fish is then killed with a pointed bamboo which is sunk between the fish's eyes. It is then divided in two. The prepared liver is offered to the genie after it has been fixed in various ways according to ritual recipes, while candles and small sticks of incense decorate the nine offering trays each of which bears the bowl of food.

23: Franck--292 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 227

"... Curious wigwam-shaped fish-traps, held down by heaps of stones on a platform part way up them, are placed at the heads of rapids on the Nam-khan. Then there were weirs, draining into jug-shaped baskets with small entrances which forked prongs made almost impossible as exits, with a single opening in them just wide enough for the narrow pirogues to slip through, and even these were made impassable to the fish by a row of bamboos, one end of each held down in the river and the upper floating one pointing down-stream."

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149: Reinach--258 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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173a Deydier --64 N B-3 (no date) 1952, AMI Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotiens AM8

Fig. VII. Valley of the Nam Hou. Rapids and fishing gear (Cl. Presse Information).

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10: d'Orleans--322-325 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 226, 228, 255, 439

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3: Robequain --315-316 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 231

"Pasturage and Fishing Products. While the European's influence is seen in new types of agricultural products exported from Indo-China, it has hardly affected pasturage products or fishing, which remain almost entirely in native hands. They [316] have been seriously studied but this has not yet resulted in practical improvements. The back country plateaus, particularly in Laos, have frequently proved suitable for raising cattle and antelope. But the obstacles in any tropical country to this type of enterprise are well known--there are the ravages of epizootic diseases, the dearth of pasture in the dry season, the natives' carelessness and ingrained habits and primitive agricultural techniques."

10: d'Orleans--264 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 231, 342, 361

"We find some villages in the afternoon, and I get out at one of them--Sop Kin. It contains about twenty huts--small houses built upon piles like those of the Thai's, but more elegant, and half hidden amongst clumps of flowering trees, orange groves, palms, cocoanut palms and bananas. The mulberry tree is also cultivated for the purpose of rearing silkworms."

10: d'Orleans--265 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 231, 342

"... The houses in the village [LSS: at Muong Ngoi] are built upon piles; in front of them, I notice some round cages containing doves, and these being half enveloped in stuff to protect them from the sun, produce from a distance, the effect of Chinese lanterns."

10: d'Orleans--345 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 231, 252, 262, 527

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"I notice also some iguanas, the flesh of which is said to be excellent, but they are so quick in their movements that they can only be caught by dogs trained to the work. Flowers, including piles of gardenias picked in the gardens, four varieties of orchid and red and white flowers from different trees, are also bought in large quantities for the decoration of the pagodas, and at the stalls set up in the open is sold vermicelli cooked with grasshoppers, a small bag made out of banana leaves answering the purpose of a cup."

"Higher up there were two or three villages that seemed to have inhabitants of both sexes and all ages, some of whom we now and then met making their way along the winding, perpetually climbing road. The sound of our horn drove them mad. The more fearful tried their best to climb the sheer earth or rock wall of the blasted mountain-slide; the others, as if imploring us to be merciful and realize that they would run away if they could, snatched themselves bare-headed and, placing their hats against their stomachs, tried to break their spines in kowtowing to me as they might to a long dead emperor suddenly returned to earth. A few, less obsequious, or less quick-witted, watched us pass with open mouths and stupefied expressions, bawling children scurrying in and out between their legs. Near the top of the climb there suddenly appeared horses and other pack-animals, and the panic we created among these unusual carriers in Indo-China could not easily be described. We passed not a [265] few traveling pigs along the way too, for wherever there is Chinese culture there must also be pork. Though they are credited with infinite patience, the Chinese will not drive pigs to market. But the Annamese, more afraid of work perhaps, rather than more patient, usually try to, with a cord tied to each porker's leg. This may possibly be easier than the Chinese way of bodily carrying them, two on a one-man shoulder-pole or one between two men, so that carrier and carried, bound to market in this undignified manner, seem fellows in misery. In Hanoï and the larger towns of Annam this more certain form of transportation may also now and then be seen. But the Annamese pig is ordinarily

driven, which is hard on motorists. For most of the pigs we met were too strong for the holder, and yet not quite strong enough to get away entirely and dash themselves over the mountain-side. Therefore, as they seemed bent on suicide in any form--and who could blame them?--the car always had to wait while the would-be pig-driver and several of his fellows united in one mighty tug of war that dragged the squealing animal out from under our wheels. For the most foolhardy of Annamese chauffeurs, however disdainful of the pig-driving populace, would scarcely have risked running over one of these porcine obstructions on this pathway along the bottomless pit."

23: Franck--276-277 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 231, 242, 361

"Small villages appeared once more, this time of the real Laosians, villages of thatched houses raised on poles [277] well above snakes and possible floods, with a bit of cultivation about them. Each house had rounded gable walls at either end, one a kind of family veranda all but covered with a curving roof of thatch, where visitors are received and the family does its gossiping, the other a granary and store-room, where the cooking also seemed to be done. The walls of the houses, everything possible, in fact, were made of strips of narrow palm-leaves folded over a stick, forming panels overlapped like shingles. Many small but stout horses dotted the landscape here and there."

23: Franck--279 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 231, 342, 793

"I spent the morning in a hot walk about the scattered thatched town, [EJ: Xieng Khuang] climbing to jungle-guarded half-ruined old stupas on the rounded hills behind it. Priests of the yellow robe had again appeared, dawdling about their simple monasteries with the leisureliness of men who know that to step on an insect means to be set back that far on the long and difficult road to Nirvana. Speaking of insects, the people of Tran-ninh boast that they are never troubled by mosquitos, because, all their domestic animals being at home under their pole-legged houses, these pests are so busy down there that they never trouble to rise to human height. The custom of living over unconfined stables is further exonerated by the warmth the animals are reputed to give the householders above--for so thin-blooded a race needs its central heating-plant also, during the short tropical 'winters.' "

23: Franck--292[2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 231, 361

"The villages were as much alike, once one had seen a few of them, as our own stereotyped cities: from half a dozen to a score of woven-bamboo-and-leaf shacks, light as big baskets, raised on posts, in a little clearing overrun with children, curs, pigs, and chickens--four forms of life all but universal the world over--and little else except the surrounding jungle. Chickens of both sexes, perhaps I should have specified, for in this one matter the people seemed to believe in monogamy and to have as many roosters as hens."

23: Franck--316-317 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 231, 643

"The king of Luang Prabang keeps a number of royal elephants; and he is no nonentity as a business man either, by the way. Supplementing his salary, if the word suits a monarch,, of forty-six thousand piastres a year, and thereby offsetting his consumption of silk stockings, he has much private property, including great forests and sawmills, in [317] which many of his elephants work for him. For a time some of the royal elephants were assigned the task of dragging rollers used in the making of roads about the capital, but they are a tender beast, for all their size and reputed longevity, and even with only four or five hours of labor a day, at their two-mile-an-hour gait, with the privilege of resting every third day, two of them died from this unwonted exertion. The king, evidently no figurehead in his capacity as business manager of his personal estates and property, protested, and from four to six water-buffaloes to each roller now take the place of an elephant.

In theory the many wild elephants in the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha also belong to the king. When new recruits are needed in the royal stables, some of the wild beasts are caught by digging pits. Then a tame and a wild one are chained together, leaving the wild elephant to tug furiously at a collar with sharp iron points in it. The most bellicose are fastened to a tree by a lasso about a hind leg until they are worn out with struggle and hunger, when the two largest éléphants de chasse available take

the captive between them and shake and roll him until he decides, like the man who foresees the lawyer fees involved in an action for divorce, that after all he will be happier in the domestic state. Most of those captured do not wait for this third degree, but, suddenly resigned to their new fate, give in to the barbed collar and stroll homeward with their false brother, pulling up tufts of good grass as they go and calmly tapping each mouthful on a front foot to shake the earth off the roots before transferring it to their dainty mouths."

23: Franck--319-320 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 231, 643

"It became more and more evident however, that Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah was not born anybody's fool, even if circumstances and the foolishness of his father Zacharine had left him and his kingdom in an embarrassing position. There was something behind his Oriental-Gallic courtesy and his almost perpetual smile. Nor did he seem to take himself or his regality or his white elephants or any of the rest of his royal trappings too seriously. On this subject of white elephants, by the way, he mentioned that one was now supposed to be on its way to him, some Laotian merchants among his loyal subjects having captured or purchased such an animal that had been seen in a distant part of his kingdom. He thought Bangkok used to have one but that his Siamese peer was now forced to do without this adornment to their respective kinghoods. They were not white anyway, he went on, but rather a pinkish light-gray, like the albino water-buffalo; and his manner implied that whatever his royal cousin of Siam might think about it, a [320] white elephant to him would be merely an interesting addition to his menagerie. 'May you live as long as an elephant!' is a common form of greeting in some parts of the East; but quite aside from the doubtful kindness involved, it is based on one of those many mistaken beliefs of mankind, according to the king, corroborated by all the French present, who asserted that no elephant ever lives longer than have many men and women."

68: Mouhot--125 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 231, 489, 492

"In all this mountainous region [HD: i.e. from Korat in Siam north to Luang Prabang] elephants are the only means of transport. Every village possesses some, several as many as fifty or a hundred. Without this intelligent animal no communication would be possible during seven months of the year, while, with his assistance, there is scarcely a place to which you cannot penetrate."

68: Mouhot--126-129 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 231, 489, 492

"We must not, however, exaggerate his merits. Probably the saddles used by the Laotians are capable of great improvement; but I must admit that the load of three small oxen, that is to say, about 250 or 300 pounds, is all that I ever saw the largest elephants carry easily, and 18 miles is the longest distance they can accomplish with an ordinary load. Ten or twelve miles are the usual day's work. With four, five, or sometimes seven elephants, I travelled over all the mountain country from the borders of Laos to Louang-Prabang, a distance of nearly 500 miles.

All this eastern portion, with the exception of a few villages filled with 'black-bellied savages'--so called from the manner in which they tattoo themselves--is inhabited by the same race, the 'white-bellied Laotians,' who call themselves Laos, and are known by this name to all the Siamese, Chinese, and surrounding nations. [127-128 contain illustration] [129]

The black-bellied or western Laotians are called by their eastern brethren by the same name which, in Siam and Cambodia, is bestowed on the Annamites, Zuène, Lao-Zuène. The only thing that distinguishes them is, that they tattoo the under part of the body, principally the thighs, and frequently wear the hair long and knotted on the top of their heads. Their language is nearly the same, and differs little from the Siamese and Eastern Laos, except in the pronunciation, and in certain expressions no longer in use among the former."

149: Reinach--178 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai

619 The Neua-Thais. The Neua-Thais differ very little, in all
361 respects, from their fellows. They generally live on higher ground than the other Thais, but they change the location of their village quite frequently. [241] [Illustration] [242] [Blank page] [243]

291 The women knot their skirts under their armpits, above their breasts, and always wear a very short jacket made of cotton, silk or velvet, depending on the season.

231 They engage in sericulture, and with the silk spin and weave brocaded cloth with harmonious colors.

779 At the same time as ancestor worship, the Neu-Thais practice an attenuated form of Buddhism. Pagodas are rare and the bonzes, few in number, serve several centers in turn.

461 Their character is docile. They do not have a very marked taste for trade and are content to be excellent farmers and livestock breeders.
276 Unfortunately, they are inclined to be opium smokers. This is doubtless due to the proximity of the Meos and Yaos who are the producers of the drug.

619 The Phou-Eunes. This branch of the Thai family is very close to
101 the Laotians in mores and customs.

There are only a few modifications in costume and language, modifications due to the age-old proximity of the Annamites and the continuous relations which have existed between the two peoples.
[438] These latter may be explained by the fact that the territory long inhabited by the Phou-Eunes in the east and southeast of Tran-Ninh is situated on the Tonkin Gulf side, and that their produce naturally flows towards the ports on the Annamite coast (1).

(1) To be sure, there are several groupings of Phou-Eunes in the Mekong basin, in Tran-Ninh, to the northeast of Vien-Tiane and in Camkeut-Cammon.

361 The Phou-Eunes prefer to live in high valleys and on high plateaus where the climate is quite severe during the winter. They are more reserved in character than the Laotians, more industrious and less inclined to celebrations and festivities of all kinds.

779 Their religion is Buddhism, but the bonzes are less numerous than elsewhere. It is probable that the little taste which Phou-Eunes have for the religious life is due to the influence of nearby Annam, where the bonzes are a long way from being venerated and coddled as they are in Laos.

Tribal Tai

291 cover their bust with a small short jacket which is very close-fitting and bright in color. It has a heart-shaped opening on the chest and, like the men's jacket, is ornamented with galloons and passementerie. For celebrations and ceremonies Lu women wear a heavy turban on their head which is folded flat or pleated, shaped like a mitre and generally made of black silk spangled with gold.

301 Both men and women pierce the lobes of their ears [246] with a broad opening, into which they introduce hollow gold or silver cylinders which are sometimes as large as three centimeters in diameter.

306 Great lovers of jewelry, the Lus number skilled jewelers and goldsmiths among them who make hair coil plaques, ear cylinders, flat braided metal belts with wide chased and checkered buckles, bracelets, rings, hilts and sheaths for daggers and swords, etc. [Illustration alongside text here]

411 The Lus almost always wear daggers and swords. Each of them, so to speak, possesses a rifle, generally flintlock, which by the shape of
293 the stock, the length of the barrel and the many bands which adorn it greatly resembles the long Moukhala so dear to our Arabs in Algeria.

[36] Lu villages are clean, and the houses are arranged in a checkerboard pattern.

[33] The Lus have a high reputation as breeders of oxen and horses.

A great lover of celebrations and parades, this boisterous people
527 sets off gunpowder at every opportunity, and there is no festival, private or public, so small that it is not accompanied by salvos and fireworks.

[77] From their contact with the Burmese the men have retained a [247] [Illustration] [248] [Blank page] [249] taste for dancing and for
535 sword fights mingled with dance steps in which they manifest a real grace and elegance.

"Among other forms of amusement, the men execute, with a truly remarkable suppleness and skill, sword dances which are perfectly elegant. Naked to the waist, with their trousers rolled up and bunched and a wooden sword in each hand whose cutting edge has been dipped in dye so that the thrusts will leave a mark, the two champions confront one another. Moulinets, parries and returns follow one another without apparent effort, and the movements are undulating and rapid but without any abruptness. The men seem to be caressing one another, not fighting, and yet the slashes leave their colored traces on the skin of the vanquished. Direct thrusts are forbidden, but the entire body from head to foot is fair game for the opponent. Thus during the

149: Reinach--188 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Kha

"The most varied types are to be found among the Khas. Some are just like the American 'Redskins,' others have a heavier and more bestial appearance, and still others are small and puny. Certain of them are veritable savages who have never heard of clothing and live in shapeless huts, taking to the trees or fleeing into the forest at the slightest alarm, with monkey-like habits and the instincts of wild animals. 142 291

"Others, on the other hand, wear clothing quite like that of the Lus, build proper houses and enjoy a comparative degree of civilization. But they all carry a bag of dark blue cloth which never leaves them.

"It is a long way between the primitives which some of them are and the half-civilized beings which the better policed among them are. Thus the greater part of these poor folk have long been in servitude, especially in the northern and central part, and have become the humble servants of more highly refined races which exploit them. 563

"In the south, however, some tribes of particular origin have been able to resist all outer authority and are still free and independent today." [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

The Khas of northern Laos. All the Khas of northern Laos have been brought under control, and even emancipated, and live grouped in villages or hamlets which are distributed over the mountainsides, generally near some watercourse. 361

Houses. Kha houses, which are built on piles and in the same style as those of the Laotians although in less careful fashion, are set down without any care for symmetry or alignment. They are generally much smaller and built for a single family. The houses are extremely dirty. 242

The Khas have very little in the way of large livestock, and so the under part of the houses shelter only pigs and poultry. 231

A few Kha tribes, such as the Khouenes (white and black), Khmous and Lemets, which are the most civilized have quite fine villages with well built and carefully aligned houses. A pagoda will sometimes be found in these. 361

Costume. Khas of both sexes wear their hair long and wound in a coil on the nape of the neck or top of the head. The [253] Lemets comb part of their hair down over their forehead and cut it off straight at the eyebrow level. 291

149: Reinach--188 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

101 [261] [Illustration] [262] [Blank page] [263] As far as marriages, deaths, etc. go, we find practically the same customs among the Kha tribes of southern Laos as among their fellows in northern Laos.

231 It should be noted that the Rades breed a variety of small horses which are highly prized in Annam, Laos and Siam.

439 "These Khas love music and dancing. Their favorite instruments [533] are gongs and bells.

"A set of gongs consists of seven, nine or twelve single ones. 534 Made of copper and often very beautiful, these gongs take the shape of a cylinder from forty to eighty centimeters in diameter, only one end of which is closed by a vibrating plate. The cap worn by our judges and professors, although on a smaller scale, gives a fairly clear idea of the shape of these instruments. A few of the instruments are artfully cast and ornamented with much elegance. There is a solid ring about a third of the way along the gong's length which is part and parcel with the rest of the gong and makes it possible to hang it up on a side of the house, at about the height of a man's head, by means of a rattan thong fastened to the frame.

"The performers stand facing the battery and pummel it with their fists, taking care to strike the vibrating plate in the center so that it will emit a true tone. This procedure produces perfect musical notes, which are accompanied by the dull resonances of the tom-toms and the sharp sonorities of the bells made of a copper and tin alloy. The gongs bring a high price, and when it is a fine one a complete series is worth from 1,200 to 1,500 francs.

"In some villages the performers each take an instrument and hold it in a sling fastened to their shoulder, then form a column in single file. This Indian-style procession marches from the center of the house towards one of its extremities, striking more and more gently as it moves away from its point of departure. Then it returns to the center, unleashing a compensating crescendo. The maneuver begins again towards the other end of the house, and the musical promenade continues until the musicians are exhausted.

535 *"When the Khas begin to play and perform the Kimlang (a very* stirring war dance) and the warriors grow excited from dancing and 272 from drinking rice wine, it is wise to make them stop as soon as they 579 begin to pick up their weapons, for when drunk with alcohol and enflamed with ardor they are no longer masters of themselves.

714 "War dress includes feathers in the hair and a sort of cross of Saint Andrew formed of cloth rolled and crossed on the chest. Weapons, quivers, arrows, crossbows, bucklers, spears and swords complete their equipment.

149: Reinach--191 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Hill Tribes

595 There is polygamy among the Meos, and the Meo women do not enjoy any higher regard than the Kha women.

[101] The Yaos. The Yaos have the same origin as the Meos, and are strikingly like them in many respects. Their mores, their beliefs and their habits are identical.

619 As we have seen above, the Yaos are divided into three varieties, these being the Lantenes, the Khao and the Ao-Tchaine.

291 The Lantenes (blacks) wear broad trousers, a long smock buttoning at the side and a turban, all made of black cottonstuff. They wear
302 their hair long and either wound under a turban or braided in Chinese style.

[342] Their houses are like those of the Meos and shelter several families, each of which has its own quarters. They are generally clean and well kept-up.

593 The mores of the Lantene Yaos are patriarchal, and these folk are monogamous. The women are very reserved and do not let them-
562 selves be seen much by strangers. They enjoy a certain respect and are treated with consideration by their husbands.

231 The Lantenes are great livestock breeders, and cultivate the opium
241 poppy in addition to rice and maize. They are skilled hunters of wild animals, and each man owns a rifle from which he is rarely separated.

224 Besides a dialect peculiar to them, they speak Quoan-hoa (a
[212] Cantonese idiom), and many of them can write Chinese characters.

[198] The Khao Yaos are less outgoing than their fellows and do not
101 greet strangers with as much good will.

The men's clothing is like that of the Lantenes, [269] but the
291 women are garbed in a different manner and wear their hair in a special way which has earned their tribe the name "Khao" (horns).

Over a pair of black trousers ornamented with colored embroidery and held in place by leggings, Khao Yao women wear a tunic which comes down to the knees but the flaps of which are fastened to the belt. This tunic also has colored embroidery on the chest, back, neck and cuffs, and is held shut with wide silver hooks.

Their hairdress consists of a coil which is smeared with wax and
302 lacquer to hold it in place and in which a wooden socket is imbedded. A light bamboo framework is inserted into the socket, and over this is spread a red cloth or a black cloth embroidered in red. The women thus appear to have two horns on their head.

301 Silver jewelry, neckbands, bracelets and ear pendants are worn by the Khao Yaos.

313 M. Lussan merely had to see that they were followed at a distance by two light pirogues, the duty of the latter being to explore the banks and islands and push back into the current any of the small rafts which might have gone aground along the way.

"All the logs were then halted above the rapids by lookout posts judiciously located at narrow points in the river. They were again set free, but this time singly in order to traverse the rapids. Below the rapids the logs were collected by the same lookout system, the lookouts now being located at two points on the downstream reaches. The distance between the two points had been calculated so that the logs would pass by the first outpost at night and be collected at the second outpost twelve hours later, that is to say during the day." (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900.)

We shall study below, in Chapter VII, the methods of cultivating, extracting and exploiting the forest resources and the measures which the administration has taken for their conservation and development.

[309] 2. FAUNA, ANIMAL HIDES AND REMAINS

136 The fauna of Laos is scarcely different from that of India. It is just as varied and just as abundant, proportionately speaking.

Domesticated Fauna

•231 Domesticated fauna includes the elephant, horse, buffalo, ox, pig, goat, poultry (chickens and peacocks), turtle-doves, dogs and cats (some with a straight or curved tail, others with a short tail ending in a ball, and still others without a tail, of Siamese origin). [Illustration alongside text here]

Wild Fauna

136 a) Mammals and rodents. These animals include the wild elephant and the rhinoceros (both Indian and Sumatran varieties, that is to say with one or two horns), the buffalo, the ox, the stag, the elk, the buck, the gazelle, the agouti, the wild boar, the otter, a great variety of monkeys (lemurs, paresseux, dormeurs, macaques, gibbons), the scaly anteater, the mongoose (ctenomis), the genet, the civet cat, the shrew-mouse, the polecat, the ordinary squirrel

149: Reinach--223a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

231

Fig. 81 /p. 309/ An elephant with its pack-saddle.

and the flying squirrel (polatouche assapanick), the muskrat, [310] the water rat, the palm-squirrel, the field mouse, the mouse, the bat, the flying fox, etc. 136

In the forests one also finds domesticated animals which have reverted to a wild state, such as goats, bucks, dogs, cats and most kinds of gallinaceous birds (1). [231]

(1) Some notices also remark the presence of tapirs, but we cannot vouch for the accuracy of this information.

b) Carnivores. These are represented by the tiger, the jaguar, the ocelot, the panther, the tiger-cat, the wild cat, the climbing bear, the cave bear, etc.

c) Birds. In addition to numerous varieties not yet identified, the following have been noted:

1. Long-flying birds: first the birds of prey, such as the mountain eagle, two kinds of vultures, the sparrow hawk, the falcon, the kite, etc.; then the passerines, doves, etc., such as the peacock, the gilded pheasant and the silver pheasant, the wild cock and hen, a large variety of parakeets, the toucan, the hooded hornbill, the crow, the magpie, the jay, the swallow, the lark, the sparrow, the lapwing, the partridge, the quail, the snipe, the turtle-dove, the pigeon (several varieties), the blackbird, the crane, the green woodpecker, the owl and the screech owl, not to mention a large number of colibris, humming-birds, etc.

2. Water birds and grallatores: the fishing eagle (two varieties), the pelican, the wild goose, the marsh hen, the plover, the cormorant, the grebe, the flamingo, the marabou stork, the heron, the kingfisher, the egret, the swan, the gull, the wagtail, etc.

Reptiles

a) Ophidians. Since varieties of this class are quite numerous, we have summarized them in the opposite table, which is based on a notice by M. Grand, government commissioner in Luang-Prabang.

824
314 when mixed with curcuma. The trees are found in the forest, and
386 sometimes in gardens.

10. Yams.

262 The yam is an edible tubercle of the Dioscorea family. It is
271 represented by two varieties, the white and the black, which are called "Mane-Phuek-Khao" and "Mane-Phuek-Dam" in Laotian. These tubercles are the main standby when there is a scarcity of rice and [335] maize, but in ordinary times they are used only to supplement the usual diet.

11. Taro or cush-cush (Mane-Pa).

Taro is also a food plant of the Aroïdées caladiées genus (Caladium esculentum). Like the yam, it is one of the most useful edible tubercles in times of famine.

12. Medicinal plants.

824 Designated by the generic name "Ya" in Laotian, these plants
278 are represented by special types of orchids, roots, bark, berries, leaves and even pieces of wood of different kinds, the whole forming an assortment of medicaments.

[438] The Khas are the ones who collect these various products from the depths of the forests, and they trade them either to Chinese or to Laotians for money or other goods.

[435] Certain of these plants and barks are used by the Laotians while others, such as the leaves from orchid plants, for example, are purchased by Chinese merchants at prices which vary between 33 and 62 francs per hundred kilograms.

13. Cloves.

The clove tree (Caryophyllus aromaticus. Kane-Phou in Laotian) is quite scarce in Laos. Cloves are mixed with various ingredients in masticatories or are taken as medicine.

Cultivation of the clove tree ought to be developed in Laos because of the high value of its flowers which, when dried on the tree, constitute the cloves of commerce.

14. Beeswax (Phung).

222 Beeswax is much sought-after in Laos, where a great deal of it is
[231] consumed. It is a scavenging product par excellence since, except in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na, the inhabitants do not practice apiculture and
314 are content to go into the forest and look for honeycombs in order to extract the wax. The latter is used for domestic needs and for worship
[438] ceremonies. It also forms the basis of quite an important trade.

149: Reinach--247 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"What makes everything easy and is used for everything is this hollow wood, at once so solid and so light, the incomparable bamboo. In France we see it only in the form of pleasant but useless little articles of furniture. Here bamboo is sufficient to every task. It provides the whole house, frame as well as walls. The inner walls and floors are made of matted bamboo lathwork. Yet such a house, with its furniture, bed, tables, various accessories and its luxury objects, if you are a person of refinement, can be improvised for you in a space of two hours wherever you want. 313 341 352

"Has a bridge been washed out? In two hours, thanks to this wood which is easy to manage and to work, men will have made a new bridge. One is especially struck, at the beginning of this life which is so free and, more than any other, independent of men and things, by the great simplicity and ingenuity of all the procedures. Objects are rudimentary but practical, easy to make, soon ready and simple to repair. Everyone knows how to build ordinary furnishings, and no interruptions are caused here as they are when even the slightest damage occurs to one of our highly developed utensils, which only a specialist knows how to repair.

"A bamboo tube is a safe place for your maps and papers. It is a drinking glass, and it is also a pipe for smokers. On a larger scale, it is a bucket for carrying water, and the receptacle for all liquid and solid provisions. When provided with a handle it serves as a pot for the Laotians to cook their rice in, or to prepare syrup from the sugar palm. When torn into thongs it is used as rope and string. Ligatures of sapeks are threaded on kelates, or bamboo filaments, and this is what makes our new Indo-Chinese sou, with its round hole in the middle, so impractical. Those who preside over the striking of our coins are unaware that the kelate is square, a fact which the first comer from the interior could have told them. Baskets of all kinds are made with these same kelates for holding and transporting material. Hats are also made of them to provide shelter from the sun and rain. At night, when the stage of your journey is too long and you have to continue after nightfall even at the risk of meeting a tiger, setting fire to a bamboo branch is enough to frighten any off and to light your way. And not only is bamboo used to make torches, hats, string, dishes, furniture, houses and bridges, but it also serves as animal fodder and even as food for the natives, who eat the tenderest shoots as we would eat asparagus. 313 415 436 285 313 291 [372] [262] [231]

224 this animal has been hunted to excess and because of [346] the value of ivory, it has disappeared from certain regions. It is scarcely ever found now except in the valleys of the Sesane, the Se-Ia-Drang and the Srepok and in the Muong of Maha-Say in Lower Laos, and in Vien-Tiane, Tran-Ninh, the Hua-Pahn, the Sib-Song-Chau-Thai, etc., in Upper Laos.

313 For the last ten years or so the working of the teak forests in the Siamese and Shan territories of the basin of the Upper Menam (1) has

224 438 (1) Elephants are used in Siam to carry teak logs from the place where they are felled to nearby watercourses.

necessitated the use of an ever-increasing number of these pachyderms, among which overwork and accidents claim many victims. Thus to fill the gaps elephants have to be sought where there are still some left, and it is precisely in French Laos, on the left bank of the Mekong, that a few wild herds are still found.

Since there is no shortage of buyers, it is to the interest of the hunters to capture as many of these valuable animals each year as possible and to train them with a view towards selling them. Since demand even greatly exceeds supply, an inflationary tendency has resulted which has caused prices to rise by sixty to eighty percent. Besides the sum paid to the sellers, the purchasers have to pay an exit duty amounting to half of the purchase price. This tax, like other similar ones of which we shall speak later on, is levied to compensate for the real estate tax which Laos does not yet have.

224 The methods now used to capture wild elephants are identical, except for minor details, in all parts of Laos. In order to summarize 231 them and to provide a description of an elephant hunt, we shall have recourse to the interesting account which Captain Gosselin (2) has given.

(2) Le Laos et le Protectorat français, op. cit. [Paris, 1900.]

"At the beginning of the dry season, the owners of tame elephants make ready for the great beats which take place in the mountains near the Annam frontier. They train their elephants to run, so that they will develop speed, and manufacture immense ropes forty to fifty meters long, made from strands of buffalo hide [347] and rattan and strengthened with copper wire. A collar is fitted at one end of each rope which is large enough to be put around an elephant's neck, while a ring about sixty centimeters in diameter is fitted to the other end.

224 The rings and collars are made of the same materials as the ropes
•231 themselves.

"Towards the middle of November, a caravan composed of some ten of the largest elephants in the Muong leaves Mahasay. Each elephant bears two men, one of whom will be the carnac and the other the hunter. Many men follow the caravan on foot, some to keep it supplied with provisions and the others solely for their own pleasure...

"...As soon as the moon begins to appear above the trees the whole caravan sets out, the hunters following one another in single file. When confronted with a herd of wild elephants the whole troop falls on them, and the talent of the hunters then consists in separating a fairly young elephant, and one which seems a likely prospect for training, from its companions. The trained eye of the Laotian is very rarely deceived. Two hunters with trusty mounts then take charge of it, while the others hold off the enemy with trunk and tusk blows. Battle is often not necessary, and the attacked elephants which have been taken by surprise during a moment of repose think only of fleeing from their adversaries.

"It is then that speed is indispensable for the two elephants pursuing the chosen young one. When they have succeeded in placing it between the two of them, each hunter tries, by means of his pole, to pass the ring around its foot so as to impede its progress. The hunter who succeeds in achieving this difficult maneuver is the true vanquisher, for when this initial goal has been reached there is less danger involved in placing a second ring, and then the elephant is a captive. It utters cries and rolls on the ground, but to no avail, for its two adversaries use their strength to hold it. Overcome by fatigue, the prisoner finally stands up. The ropes holding it are fastened to trees, and with the help of several tame elephants which unite their efforts a leather collar which has previously been attached to large trees with ropes is fastened around its neck. Then only can the rings placed on its feet during the chase be removed. The captive is left thus for two days, without any food, so as to lose part of its strength. Only on the third day is it allowed to eat, and then the hunt begins again and continues in this fashion for two or three months. The elephants taken prisoner are led to the village by the tame elephants, and their training exercises are begun immediately."

The purpose of this special training is to subject the elephants to the will of its carnac, and then to accustom it to bearing burdens. It takes [348] about six months to tame a wild elephant and bring it to a point where it is perfectly docile.

000 to a point where it is perfectly docile.

231 435 The sale price of elephants varies with their size, their sex, their age, and according to whether or not they have tusks and according to the quality and size of these latter. It also varies with the region.

At Outhai-Thani (Luang-Prabang) an elephant costs from 1,500 to 3,000 francs, and the cost is about the same at Vien-Tiane. In Lower Laos the price varies from 750 to 1,200 francs.

When an elephant dies it still leaves highly valuable remains, especially ivory.

237 1. Ivory.

438 435 A hundred kilograms of ivory sells for 1,800 francs at Outhai-Thani (Luang-Prabang), from 935 to 1,770 francs in Nong-Khay, from 750 to 1,250 francs in Song-Khone, from 750 to 1,670 francs in Saravane, from 1,000 to 1,670 francs in Bassac and from 1,500 to 1,670 francs in Khong, Saung-Treng and Attopeu. Its average cost in Cholen (Cochinchina) is 2,500 francs per hundred kilograms.

2. Bones.

The price of elephant bones is generally from 12 francs 50 centimes to 15 francs per hundred kilograms.

3. Hides.

Elephant hides cost from 60 to 70 francs per hundred kilograms.

The remains of other elephants furnish the markets of Laos with the following products: rhinoceros horns and hides, horns and hides from buffalo and oxen, horns and hides from all the deer tribe, hides, talons and bones from the cat family, bear and otter pelts, scales from anteaters, tortoises and caymans, etc. To this list should be added snake venom, bear gall and soft hartshorn, which are regarded as specific remedies against certain diseases.

The prices of some of these products are as follows:

Rhinoceros horns	111 to 137 francs per kilogram
Rhinoceros hides	60 to 70 francs per 100 kilograms
Soft hartshorn	1,666 to 2,200 francs per 100 kilograms or 18 to 40 francs per pair
[349] Horns of stags, elk and bucks (hard)	25 to 75 francs per 100 kilograms
Hides of stags, elk, bucks, goats	37 to 83 " " " "
Wild buffalo horns	50 to 60 " " " "
Wild buffalo hides	46 to 50 " " " "
Ox horns	50 to 58 " " " "

149: Reinsch--280 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Dry rice may be grown in the plains, but is generally cultivated in mountain rais, for the peoples who consume it are settled in the highlands. Indeed, the Khas are the ones who mainly practice its cultivation. The ratio of total dry rice production to that of glutinous rice is about one to four. 243

It is difficult to give any official figures, even approximate ones --for the reasons given above--regarding the total quantity of rice, whether the year be a good or bad one, which Laos produces. It differs, moreover, from one year to the next because of meteorological variations and also because of the damaging epizootic diseases which recur periodically, decimating the farming animals and forcing the inhabitants to reduce the area of their plantings. [231]

[355] One can, however, given the amount necessary for the subsistence of a family of five, deduce the approximate weight of rice which is indispensable for feeding any given group of people. 262 146

It is estimated that the average yearly consumption by a family of five is 28 piculs of paddy (1,700 kilograms), which yield about 17 piculs of threshed rice (1,026 kilograms). 243

Now the total population of Laos, which is estimated at 470,000, will normally contain 94,000 families of five, or groupings of five individuals of all ages and both sexes. On this basis it is easy to calculate that the amount of paddy needed to feed these 94,000 groups will be 2,632,000 piculs (159,800,000 kilograms) of paddy and 1,598,000 piculs (96,440,000 kilograms) of threshed rice.

In addition to this indispensable minimum merely for feeding the inhabitants, other quantities of rice are also necessary: 1) For fodder for certain animals and for making alcohol, pastry, etc., a consumption figure which we estimate at one-fifth of the above figure, or 526,400 piculs of paddy (31,794,560 kilograms) or 319,600 piculs of threshed rice (19,308,840 kilograms); 2) For seed and emergency reserves. These latter may be calculated at the rate of 5 piculs of paddy per house or per family of five, and require about 600,000 piculs of paddy (36,240,000 kilograms). 243 262 273

In recapitulation, it is clear that the amount of paddy which Laos ought to produce for food for its inhabitants, fodder for certain animals, the manufacture of alcohol, miscellaneous uses, seed and reserves is some 3,758,000 to 3,800,000 piculs or 226,983 to 229,520 tons, giving an average ratio of 1) 485 kilograms or 8 piculs of paddy per inhabitant; or 2) 2,425 kilograms or 40 piculs per family.

248 There are three harvests each year. In the first the shoots are .9 meter high, in the second 1.4 meters and in the third 1.6 meters. They yield, respectively, for an area of 14 square meters, 18, 20 and 24 kilograms of fiber.

At harvest time the shrub is split and left to soak in water for three hours, for the fiber is difficult to tear off. The work of decortication takes a long time, and this drawback has so far prevented the cultivation of this crop from spreading although it is an easy one on the whole and not at all exhausting for the soil, since it is possible to grow it twenty years in succession on the same plot of ground.

438 Exports from the provinces of southern Laos were more than fifty
248 tons in 1899. A great deal is used locally, since all the nets used for hunting and fishing are made with this fiber.

Prices are as follows (1):

248 (1) In view of the price at Bassac (37 francs), it would be ad-
435 vantageous to export this product to Cambodia, where it sells for twice as much.

	Per hundred kilograms
Plateau of the Bolovens	25 to 35 francs
Bassac	37 "
Saravane	60 "
Khong	60 to 80 "
Attopeu	30 "
Stung-Treng	54 to 62 "
Pnom-Penh	60 to 80 "

248 [367] HEMP. Hemp is grown in Upper Laos, but only for local consumption. It is used in making string, light rope, nets, etc. A very strong and fairly good-tasting alcohol is also extracted from its seeds. It is called "Pane" or "Nhia-Pane."

241 BATATAS. Various kinds of batatas which are more or less sweet are grown each year on the banks of the watercourses and in the still
[262 moist sandy alluvia. These tubercles are chiefly consumed by the
231] inhabitants, although small quantities are used to fatten certain animals, particularly pigs. The large variety of batata which is round and not very sweet is called "Mane-Phao" and the one which is elongated and sweeter is called "Mane-Keo."

149: Reinach--274 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

245 Here, as a sample, is a table showing cardamom production on the
435 plateau of the Bolovens during the last few years, with purchase and sale prices:

Year	Production in kilograms	Price per hundred kilograms: On the plateau, Purchase	Price per hundred kilograms: At Pnom-Penh, Sale
		francs	francs
1895	120,000	37.50 to 50	66.20 to 85.60
1896	48,000 to 60,000	50 to 58.30	70 to 93
1897	96,000 to 108,000	50 to 62.50	77.80 to 97.30
1898	270,000	50 to 66.60	85.60 to 136.
1899	216,000	54.10 to 75	77.80 to 136

249 [375] MULBERRY TREES. There are two kinds of mulberry trees
for feeding silkworms in Laos: the annual mulberry and the shrub or
231 perennial mulberry (1). In Laotian the latter is called "Kok-Mone,"

(1) It is no doubt to be identified with the multicauline mulberry and the white or Chinese mulberry.

which may be translated literally as silkworm tree.

[311] The mulberry is grown near villages, on the banks of watercourses. Oftentimes the foot of an arborescent mulberry will even be inundated during the rainy season, and it has been noted that the worms which devour the leaves of these trees are more subject than other worms to the diseases of the species and produce less silk. It is therefore probabl that excess humidity is harmful to the mulberry. But if at the present time most of these shrubs are planted in humid regions, this is due to the fact that in many places the higher ground has been abandoned and the inhabitants have settled in the bottoms of valleys. It will be understood that the natives like to have the gardens of mulberry trees

near their silkworm breeding houses, but it is unfortunate that the new 249
conditions in which the trees are placed should have an adverse effect 231
on silk production. On the plateaus and in the high valleys, in the vicinity of land once occupied by villages, there are many mulberry trees which have continued to survive. They send out new leaves again even after the annual burnings of the forest clearings, and bear leaves which are vigorous and have a more pithy appearance than those of their fellows in the low, humid parts of the country. They are also said to be preferable for feeding silkworms (2).

(2) See Appendix XXIV.

Local consumption absorbs the greater part of the silk production, 231
for the majority of Laotians, both men and women, use it in making 286
the garments which they wear.

We do not possess exact data on the total production of silk in Laos. It has been estimated at about twenty tons annually. The price varies from 400 to 500 francs per hundred kilograms.

OPIUM POPPIES. The opium poppy is cultivated by the Yaos and 276
the Meos, in northern Laos. Towards the end of the rainy season, [376] 249
in September, the poppy seeds are sowed broadcast on land from which 314
maize has just been harvested. Germination is activated by the last rains of the season and the plant flowers at the beginning of December. Harvesting is done shortly after the petals have fallen.

Closely spaced lengthwise incisions are made all along the surface of the capsule, allowing the plant juice to escape. It coagulates upon contact with the air and is collected daily until the plant has been completely exhausted (1).

(1) See Appendix XXV, report of M. Lussan, Cochinchina customs agent. The latter was sent on a mission to Upper Laos to experiment with growing opium poppies by less rudimentary methods than the ones in use among the Meos and the Yaos. [654]

PAPER TREES. There are several trees in Laos whose bark is used 249
to make paper. They seem to be of the mulberry type and are called 289
"Kok-Sa."

The paper is made by hand on forms, by extremely rudimentary methods. Its manufacture occupies several villages of northern Laos.

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of the highest merit entitled Petit traité d'Agriculture tropicale, by H.A. Alford Nicholls, translated from the English by E. Raoul (Paris, 1895, Challamel). This work, which is as complete as it is practical, cannot be too highly recommended.

IV

LIVESTOCK BREEDING

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Without speaking of the poultry which goes to feed the population, the Laotians engage in breeding elephants, horses, buffalo, oxen, pigs, goats and silkworms.

Elephants. Elephant breeding is profitable, even [397] though this animal does not acquire any commercial value until about its fifth year. It is true that young elephants do not necessitate any special care or any expense, since they always go with their mother and provide for their own food.

In one part of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang, in a province on the right bank of the Mekong which numbers scarcely 13,000 inhatitants (Outhai-Tani), there were a hundred some domesticated elephants in 1898, plus twelve young ones which were the result of breeding. If the example of this province were followed throughout all Laos the number of elephants would rapidly increase, and within a relatively short time would constitute a new source of wealth for the country, one part alone of which was said to possess a million of these animals before the Siamese incursions (1).

(1) The kingdom of Luang-Prabang used to be called "Lan-Xang," The Land of the million elephants.

But with each invasion which Laos underwent, especially during the nineteenth century, the Siamese, the Annamites and the Cambodians did not fail to take turns despoiling it of this veritable wealth in order to increase their own.

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In southern Laos, breeding consists mainly in the training of young animals which have been recently captured. Thus in the province of Ban-Mouang the vast plains of the Se-Kampho and the Sepien provide excellent pasturages for elephants. Indeed, there are always fifty or so newly captured animals in the vicinity of Ban-Pa-Pho, which are being trained for sale. It is to be regretted that these beautiful plains are not used for raising livestock in general and

231 elephants in particular.
[439] Exports of elephants from Lower Laos in 1899 numbered 115 animals worth 100,754 francs.

Horses. Most regions of Laos lend themselves to the raising of horses, although these animals do not occupy the prominent place which they might. On the contrary, an appreciable decrease in the number of horses has occurred, and it is difficult today to obtain suitable mounts in the immediate locality. The causes underlying this decrease seem to be the following:

[398] 1. The many purchases made in southern Laos for Cochinchina, Cambodia, Annam and Siam;

2. The high prices offered to breeders, leading them to get rid of their stud-horses and their mares.

As a consequence, mares have become rare in the country. As for stud-horses, it is difficult to obtain any, since horses find buyers as soon as they reach the age of two and are taken out of the [Illustration here] country. Most of the finest stallions have disappeared, and practically nothing but old horses, scarcely worthy of the name of stallions, are left.

651 It was to remedy this state of affairs that the Governor-general of Indo-China, acting on a proposal by the Superior Resident, created
231 depots of stallions.

Premiums are also paid to breeders who put up mares for covering, and during three consecutive years a premium is also awarded to the issue if it is in good condition.

It would seem that the establishment of these depots has not yielded all the results which might have been expected.

[399] The stud-horses have not always been chosen with all the care desirable, and as for the Laotians, despite the premium which is paid them, they do not seem at all eager to put up their mares for covering.

Under present conditions, horse breeding cannot give good results. As long as the heads of province do not have chief guardsmen in their service who not only have a sufficient knowledge of horses, but above all have an interest in the matter, they will have to give up all hope, except for a few exceptions, of improving the breed of horses. Moreover, the pecuniary resources placed at their disposition seem to be insufficient. Nor can too much reliance be placed on the natives, for whom the bait of premiums is not an effective stimulus.

[563] 231 The breed of horses in Laos is therefore continuing to degenerate. Certain Kha tribes (Djarais and Rades), however, still possess very fine specimens, but these Khas will not sell their horses and mares except with a great deal of urging and at a very high price. They never come and offer their horses to buyers, and only by chance can the latter discover any by traveling through their villages. It is a certain fact that most of the fine horses of Phu-Yen and Binh-Dinh come from the region of the Rades (1).

[654] (1) The establishment of a depot of stud-horses in Darlac, in the midst of these Kha tribes, may soon give excellent results from the point of view of production and breeding.

In southern Laos, no epizootic disease has yet been noted among horses. The same is not the case in northern Laos, where it causes great ravages every year in the province of Vien-Poukha. The progress of this epidemic has been described in the following manner by M. Garanger, former Government Commissioner at Vien-Poukha:

"Well before any exterior symptoms of the disease appear, the horse manifests a bad disposition, sulks over its food, carries its head low and is anxious to lie down. Its hair becomes dull.

"Then under the abdomen a swelling appears which extends from the breast to the testicles (to the vulva in mares). It rapidly increases in volume and grows as thick as a man's hand. The scrotum and penis (the vulva in mares) [400] take on an abnormal growth. Exploration by hand reveals considerable obstruction in the hollow space within the lower jaw, yet there is no discharge.

"The animal then has difficulty in walking, then the hindquarters act as though paralyzed. It falls down in the stable and remains down until death, which is not far off.

"The period of algidity varies in length. Old horses do not last more than seven or eight days after the swelling forms, while young animals may not die until around the twentieth day.

"The epidemic always strikes during the rainy season and seems especially active in July and August.

"If the carcass is opened after death it is found that the whole interior (viscera) is covered with thousands of little black dots the size of a pinhead. This disease seems to be extremely contagious. In vain did I practice isolation and burn three contaminated stables in succession. Yet it also breaks out spontaneously, since it struck at the same time in Vien-Poukha, in Xieng-Khong and in the brush,

231 whereas each group was separated by a distance of about sixty kilometers. Consequently no contact was possible and no passing animal could have transmitted the disease germ. I should add that some were in service and that others had been at rest for more than two months.

"A mule belonging to the group was stricken at the same time as the horses and died under the same conditions.

"Ruminants are not affected by this disease" (1).

(1) Contrary to this statement, the presence of this epidemic has been noted among herds of oxen in the Hua-Pahn and in Nong-Khay.

At Muong-Sai in the province of Luang-Prabang, many horses die of this epidemic. Epizootic disease has also put in an appearance at Vien-Tiane, where several horses died within a period of three or four days. One of the horses of the Tran-Ninh commissariat was stricken along the road a little while ago, while it was traveling towards Luang-Prabang.

In southern Laos the average height of horses is from 1.16 to 1.18 meters. The maximum height found was 1.3 meters. This relatively tall stature, for Indo-Chinese horses, can be noted among the specimens of Chinese origin, which are nearly all piebald (2).

(2) A peculiarity worth noting is that many horses sold by the Chinese caravans are gelded.

[401] The horses of northern Laos are less fine in appearance than those of the low regions. They are also said to be less spirited.

All these animals nevertheless perform great services, for they are very sure-footed, are not skittish and can go almost everywhere--through the rocks in the mountains and through the mud and on the narrow ricefield paths in the plains. One can place complete trust in their skill.

Although small in stature they are robust, quick, nervous, courageous and extremely temperate. Height is the only thing which they lack, and all our efforts ought to go towards producing finer animals. For this purpose, it is an absolute necessity to force the natives to modify their primitive methods of inducing reproduction. Indeed, they act with horses as they would with buffalo and oxen, and their manner of operation may be summed up as a complete absence of care and supervision and allowing nature to take its course.

231 Horses and mares live in the utmost liberty, and no selection is made for covering. The latter occurs completely at random, and mares are covered by the first old nag which is so inclined.

Nor is any greater supervision given to the young colts. They get their food where and as they can, for except for a few rich mandarins the natives never give paddy to their horses.

Furthermore, they are broken much too young. Most of the time they are soon wounded on the back, and since they are never bandaged their injuries often turn into great wounds which soon render them incapable of any service.

In sum, the first improvement ought to consist in the following: feeding and bandaging horses well, eliminating all specimens in covering which are inferior with respect to age and stature, and supervising the growth of offspring.

Once this first step has been taken, and when an improvement has been noted in the breed, a few Tarbes or Arabian stallions can be introduced into the land. Such a depot of stallions should be placed under some European who belongs to the French Stud-farm Department [Administration des Haras de France]. Under him as stablemen he should have Annamites [402] or better still Malays from Cambodia, who have special aptitudes for work as grooms and who are known as Sais (1) in Indo-China. For the present it will be of no use to employ

(1) Sais, donkey drivers in Egypt, coachmen and grooms in the Far East.

Laotians, until such time as they acquire more of the taste and habit for horses.

The establishment of this initial stud-horse depot would enable only a few commissionerships to regain a good stock of horses, and even then only animals at least four years old should be released. Thus no thought need be given for some time as yet to the commercial question, that is to say the exporting of fine horses.

As to the establishment in the principal commissionerships of depots of Tarbes or Arabian stud-horses, no thought need be devoted to this possibility either, since the resources of Laos are too scanty and can be utilized in a more useful fashion.

231 439 Here are the figures for exports of horses, in southern Laos only, for 1898 and 1899, together with their domestic prices and their sale prices at the outlet markets:

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Years	Number of animals exported	Average purchase price in Laos	Sale price at outlet markets
		francs	francs
1898	103 Horses	50	112.50
1899	185 Horses	From 30 to 125	From 88.50 to 225
	14 Mares	From 30 to 75	From 40 to 95

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Finally, we recommend the introduction of donkeys into Laos, with a view toward producing mules by coupling the donkeys with Laotian mares. The mules of Yunnan, which are highly reputed, reach heights as great as 1.32 meters. Extremely sturdy, they can readily carry a net weight of ninety kilograms of merchandise, not counting the saddle and pack-saddle. It is obvious that much use might be made of these animals in Laos for all kinds of transport.

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Buffalo. Buffalo breeding is much in honor throughout all of Laos. It supplies the needs of agriculture and of food consumption, which [403] absorbs a large number of these animals, particularly young ones. Many of them, in fact, are sacrificed on the occasion of celebrations and various ceremonies, while others are used daily for food in some of the larger centers.

It may truly be said that buffalo are raised everywhere, and since this animal is extremely hardy it can always find enough to eat, even in the forests.

The administration is encouraging the raising of buffalo in a most effective way, and since our arrival in Laos the work has grown by such proportions that exports of buffalo to nearby regions has assumed genuine importance. (4,721 head in 1898 and 3,144 in 1899.) When we entered into possession of Laos, however, the land had been largely depopulated of its animals. They had been removed by the Siamese, and it is nothing short of miraculous that the herds have been restored in so short a time despite the considerable losses caused by periodic outbreaks of epizootic disease, often extremely violent.

These favorable results have been achieved thanks to the wise foresight of the higher authorities, who prohibited all exports and imports as long as the bovine plague lasted.

231 654 It is much to be desired that the work of our physiologists may finally be successful and place at the disposal of everyone serums which will be capable of fighting the epizootic diseases which are decimating horned animals. In the meantime our administrators can only recommend to the natives a few rules of veterinary hygiene, a feeble protective measure against the epidemic. They should be particularly careful to see that dead carcasses are not thrown into watercourses.

231 492 Oxen. In Laos, oxen are raised mainly for use in transport or for export as animals for slaughtering. In the far north they are also harnessed to carts.

262 825 The Laotians have an instinctive repugnance for beef meat, and eat it only when an animal dies by accident or has to be killed as the result of a wound or broken bone. There are even certain prejudices and certain customs in this matter, which are doubtless vestiges of another age when the ancestors of the present-day inhabitants were pastoral people among whom slaughtering [404] oxen for food was prohibited under penalty of a fine.

231 Whereas the buffalo in Laos are sturdy and of a fine height, the oxen often leave much to be desired. This is due to the fact that the natives raise oxen as they do buffalo, that is to say by leaving it to forage for itself. Although the buffalo, a hardy and autochthonous animal, requires almost no care in breeding, the ox, which is a cross-bred animal, imported and not so tough, requires a great deal of care and management. But when ox raising is treated like buffalo raising, the result is an inferior product and thence a progressive degeneration of the breed.

The Youns, the Lus and the Burmese are the only ones who have a complete mastery of raising oxen as draft and pack animals, and who produce individuals of comparatively tall stature which are sturdy, courageous and resistant to fatigue. They are even able, thanks to suitable treatment and care, to condition and train the often puny specimens which they sometimes go great distances to buy, even into southern Laos.

231 The oxen of Song-Khone (1) and of the Kham-Thong--Niai-Saravane

439 (1) In 1898 the presence of about 1,500 oxen and cattle was reported in this province.

region are destined mainly to be sold for meat in Cambodia and in Cochinchina, and this is quite a lucrative trade.

Cochinchina, and this is quite a lucrative trade.

231 178 The following are the main points in Laos where the raising of oxen would have a good chance of success, in view of the nature of the soil and the forage plants which grow there:

1. Northern Laos. Valleys of the upper Nam-Tha; plain of Muong-Sing; plains of the Mekong and of the Nam-Hou in the province of Luang-Prabang; valleys of the Nam-Het and of the upper Song-Ca; plains of Tran-Ninh (2); plains between the Mekong, the Nam-Tone

[175 727] (2) Tran-Ninh used to be the greatest livestock region in Laos as recently as thirty some years ago, and all the buffalo and oxen needed in nearby regions came from there. The occupation of the region by the Hos and its pitiless depopulation by the Siamese completely halted this form of industry. It is beginning to be reborn with the peace and order which we have brought to this region, and the herds are reforming. Exports have already begun again in the last year.

Livestock is the principal form of wealth of the region, and could yield high profits to a European company which had sufficient capital at its disposition to engage in large-scale breeding. [113] (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, December 1900. Report of the Superior Resident on Tran-Ninh.)

and the Nam-Ngum, in the province of Vien-Tiane.

[405] 2. Southern Laos. Plain of Tha-Khek and basin of Mahasay, in the province of Cammon; plains of the Mekong, valleys of the Se-Bang-Hien and of its tributaries in the province of Song-Khone; plains between the Se-Set and the Sedone, valley of the Se-Katam, slope of Pou-Pai-Mai, in the province of Saravane; valleys of the Bla (1), of the Poko and of the Ayoun, in the province of

(1) The raising of oxen might be greatly increased here. In all the villages, especially the Catholic villages, I saw superb herds containing animals with every fine point. If breeding is not more extensive here, this is because the prices offered at Ang-Ke are not greatly higher than those at which the animals are sold in the region, since the Khas use large numbers of them to supplant buffaloes in their superstitious ceremonies. [113] (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, December 1899. Notes by the Superior Commandant of Lower Laos on the eastern region of Lower Laos.)

231 178 Attopeu; slopes of the plateau of the Bolovens; plains of the Se-Kampho and of the Se-Pien (2); plains of the upper Sebang-Khan and of the

(2) I have never crossed these great and beautiful plains which stretch as far as the eye can see between these two rivers which have water all year long, intersected here and there by wooded hills whose slopes provide the herds with a refuge and with a guaranteed food supply during the inundation of the lowlands--an inundation lasting three or four months--without regretting that no European colonist has ever thought of taking advantage of this situation. (Report of the Superior Commandant of Lower Laos, April 1897.)

Ia-Drang.

231 435 The sale prices for buffalo and oxen vary from one point to another and are also subject to fluctuations due to the age, stature, abundance or scarcity of the stock, the law of supply and demand, etc.

In 1899 livestock exports from Lower Laos only were 2,184 oxen valued at 54,600 francs, 362 cows valued at 5,430 francs and 3,144 buffalo valued at 235,800 francs, or a total of 6,690 head with a value of 295,830 francs.

In Lower Laos buffalo sold for from 50 to 112 francs in 1899, and oxen for from 20 to 30 francs. In Upper Laos the prices for [406] buffalo varied from 60 to 110 francs. Oxen may cost more or less there, depending on whether they are trained as draft and pack animals or fattened for export. In the first case they bring from 40 to 70 francs and in the second from 10 to 15 francs.

231 262 Pigs. Pigs are used mainly for food by the natives, who consume a great many. The meat of this animal enjoys great favor among the population, and it is pork which, prepared either alone or with fish, enters most often into the composition of meals. [Illustration here]

[563] The Lus, the Meos, the Chinese and the Khas are past masters at raising pigs, and their stock might figure successfully in our regional competitions. They fatten them in closed compartments, after first castrating them.

231 The most common variety is the one known as "Cochinchinese or Tonkinese pig." It is gray with white spots and sometimes almost black, and bears on its back a mane of long, stiff bristles similar to those of the wild boar. Even when domesticated these pigs have

231 highly developed canine teeth.

There is another variety, not so tall and lighter in color, which is widespread mainly among the Laotian population on the banks of the Mekong and its tributaries.

[407] Cammon exports pigs to Annam. In 1899, 6,038 of these animals representing a value of 30,565 francs were exported from this province.

Chickens. The Meos have a variety of chicken which is much taller than the chickens of the plains. They make a current practice of caponizing, and this procedure produces chickens which are highly esteemed by Europeans for the firmness of their meat and the delicacy of their taste.

Goats. The raising of goats does not call for any particular remarks. It is done naturally without any particular care, and is localized in northern Laos. In southern Laos goats are found only in the wild state. Europeans have brought in a few domesticated goats for their own use.

231 Sheep. It would be interesting to try sheep raising on the
185 high plateaus of northern Laos. It has been denied that any undertaking of this nature could succeed, but it would seem that no serious attempt has as yet been made. It would first be necessary to choose a breed capable of multiplying on ground similar to that of northern Laos with respect to altitude, climate, forage, hygrometric conditions, constitution of the soil, etc. Since sheep do not withstand humidity well, it would also be necessary to move the flocks to high, dry points during the months of the rainy season. Afterwards, at the beginning of the dry season, they could be returned to pasturages in the plains.

[408] [Blank page]

[409] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER VIII

1. NUMBERS, WEIGHTS, MEASURES AND COINAGE

805 Since numbers, weights, measures and coinage serve as a basis
802 for all transactions and all commercial evaluations, we shall here

149: Reinach--323 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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A) ANIMALS

Total exports from Lower Laos during 1898

Kind	Average purchase price of animal	Average sale price outside Lower Laos	Number of animals exported	Total value of animals exported. Average purchase price in country	Total value of animals exported. Average sale price	Observations
Elephants	350$	1,200$	192	67,200$	230,400$ (1)	(1) Prices offered in teak yards along the Menam.
Horses	20	45	103	2,060	4,635	
Buffalo	20	36	4,721	94,420	169,956	
Steers	9	20	1,056	9,504	21,120	
Pigs	3	6	500	1,500	3,000	
		Totals	6,572	174,684$	429,111$	

149: Reinach--324 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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B) ANIMALS

Total exports from Lower Laos during 1899

Kind	Average purchase price of animal	Average sale price outside Laos	Number of animals exported	Total value of animals exported. Average purchase price in country	Total value of animals exported. Average sale price	Observations
Pigs	2 to 4$	4 to 8$	6,038	12,226$	24,452$	
Steers	8 to 12	10 to 24	2,184	21,840	43,680	
Cows	4.80 to 8	6 to 10	362	2,172	2,896	
Buffalo	20 to 45	35 to 80	3,144	94,320	157,200	
Horses	12 to 50	35 to 90	185	5,550	11,100	
Mares	12 to 30	16 to 38	14	280	400	
Elephants	300 to 450	12 to 1600	115	40,300	172,200	
		Totals	12,042	176,688$	411,928$	

313 185 439

with the greatest value on European markets, but woods which are very common in Indo-China are often just as highly esteemed. Among others we may cite the "Mai-Niang," the "Mai-Thon" (mock walnut), the "Mai-Deng" (rosewood), the "Mai-Dou" (thuja), the "Mai-Lang-Dam" (ebony), etc.

a great many other varieties of trees could be used to feed the saw-mill and, like alcohol, find an easy outlet in Cambodia and Cochinchina.

185 231 232

[519] Finally, one other enterprise might be attempted. This is livestock breeding and particularly the raising of oxen, which sell in Cambodia and Cochinchina for double their value in their country of origin. We have previously mentioned some of the points which would be particularly well-suited to undertakings of this nature. The greatest hazard to be feared is the appearance of epizootic epidemics such as the ones which occur almost periodically and against which there is no weapon. The Pasteur Institute of Nha-Trang does not send out [Illustration here] anti-plague serum as is done with cow-pox vaccine, for as yet its incoulation must be left in the hands of specialists.

We believe that the system of livestock leasing would perhaps yield good results with the Laotian peasants.

241 185

Since no serious attempt has as yet been made in Laos, it is difficult to treat of agricultural enterprises which Europeans might undertake. Nor must we forget that affairs of this sort require comparatively large sums of capital and professional knowledge which takes a long time to acquire. It is, moreover, up to the administration to provide the initial impetus, for it has the necessary means, equipment and personnel. When plantations have succeeded it [520] will easily find colonists to continue the work which has been begun, and capital will then find its way into Laos.

000

Speaking for ourselves, we are persuaded that this land will soon be open to colonization. Only the coast of Indo-China is well-known, and on the day when it has been demonstrated that the mountains as well are a source of wealth, the fortune of Laos will be made. There is a blank page on which it is up to us, by profiting from the gropings and errors of the past, to trace the principles of true colonization, which provides well-being for the population and creates outlets for our industry and our commerce.

A very high official of Laos recently wrote, speaking of the development of this land: "Once everything was for Tonkin and

619 traditions and the annals which I have been able to consult, they are
643 the descendants of the last kings of the land before the Cham invasion.
[648] The kings of Cambodia have had to appeal to them for help on one
[175] or two critical occasions, and it was in return for services rendered
563 that the king of Cambodia, up until recent times, used to send them presents every year (annual tribute, according to them, payment of which stopped only five years ago).

[726] They have never been willing to recognize our authority. The king of Pa-Tac-la, who is situated on the Laotian side, twice attacked the Government Commissioners of Stung-Treng when the latter were making a tour of inspection in this region, first in December 1894 and a second time in January 1897. They were given a severe lesson this second time, for the village was entirely destroyed and they suffered many losses. The Sadete Loum (the Master of water) settled on the Annamite side alongside the Master of fire after the affair, and since that time has given no further orders to our faithful Djarais.

[108]

APPENDIX XIX
NOTE ON THE MEOS

563 The Meo has a savage and distrustful character. He does not
609 like the presence of foreigners, or even of people of his own race.

Clinging to the side of a mountain, and always as high up as possible, he asks only to be allowed to live in peace in his wild solitude and bodes no ill to anyone provided he is left alone and independent.

He is a great hunter of wild beasts and large game. More in-
433 dustrious than the Thais, he makes all his farming implements him-
241 self (picks and shovels), as well as his wooden buckets and mills for grinding maize and paddy. He raises fine poultry, pigs, oxen, goats
231 and horses with particular care and success. If he stays in one place for any length of time he also produces, in addition to the maize and rice which form the basis of his food supply and the opium which he smokes, very fine eggplants, gourds, sweet potatoes and non-sweetened batatas very much like the common potato, sorrel, green beans and all the French vegetables whose seeds are given him. On his heights he cultivates the fruit trees which merely vegetate in the plains, such as the peach tree, and the peaches which he harvests can compete without any fear with those of our own country.

516 The Meo climbs like a cat. Over sheer paths, up ladders com-
417 posed of a single bamboo pole standing upright in which notches are cut at regular intervals which are large enough for two toes, the Meo

249 It is reckoned that about 100 tobacco plants are needed to supply one "mun" of cut tobacco, and this would mean, in accordance with what has been said above, a yield of 1,800 to 3,000 kilograms per hectare.

[145]

APPENDIX XXIV
NOTE ON SERICULTURE

231 178 It would appear that sericulture was once one of the most active branches of the country's industry. It must even have been quite extensive, if we are to rely on the sayings of the older folk who deplore its present decline.

231 Today the production by this entirely familial breeding industry is not as great as it used to be and its quality leaves much to be desired, as does the general yield from the silkworms. This decline stems both from certain unfavorable climatic conditions and from a defective food supply for the worms resulting from the poor state of mulberry tree cultivation.

Since the temperature in places where there are silkworm breeding houses never falls below a certain point, except perhaps during a few nights in the cold season, there can be no wintering for the silkworms. As a consequence there is never any stop to the fecundation, egg-laying, incubation, hatching and rearing of the worms, and all these operations can be carried out continuously all year long.

Under such a regimen it is not surprising that the native varieties of silkworms should degenerate and produce only a mediocre and rather scanty yield. From the point of view of breeding returns, there are considerable losses. Thus if eight females lay 2,500 to 3,000 eggs, for example, these will yield only 250 or 300 worms; and only half of the latter, that is to say about 125 or 150, will reach a final stage of development and spin a cocoon. This return amounts to only ten percent of the eggs placed in incubation and fifty percent of the worms subsequently hatched.

Fecundation and egg-laying. The male and female insects which have been selected and chosen for reproduction are mated for fecundation. Afterwards the females are separated from the males, which serve no further purpose, and placed in groups of six or eight on a small square of cottonstuff which is covered with an ordinary porcelain bowl. [146] The females lay their eggs, and when they have done so some 2,500 or 3,000 eggs are found on the

231 square of cotton.

Incubation. Each square of cotton containing silkworm eggs is hung up with its corners gathered together in the silkworm rearing-house. Here the surrounding temperature prevails in summer, and the house is slightly heated in winter. Great care is taken to protect the eggs from attacks by ants. Hatching occurs seven or eight days later, depending on the season, and the number of eggs hatched amount to about ten percent of the eggs placed in incubation, as we have just noted.

Rearing. From the time when incubation is over until the cocoons are spun, 34 or 35 days are reckoned, as follows:

1. From hatching to the end of the fourth mutation or age, four periods of six days each, or 24 days in all.

2. From the fourth mutation to the "rising," 8 to 10 days, at the end of which time each worm spins its cocoon within a space of one day.

Food is administered in the following proportions:

1. From hatching to the fourth mutation, three meals per day of finely chopped mulberry leaves.

2. From the fourth mutation to the rising, four meals per day of mulberry leaves which have been cut into four pieces if they are excessively large, or into two if they are of the usual size.

The transformation of the chrysalis into a moth takes place ten days after the cocoon is sealed. During the first three days of this period a selection is made of the finest cocoons, the insects in which will be used for reproduction. The other cocoons are then unwound.

At the present time and with the existing varieties of worms, about 800 raw cocoons empty of their insects are required to make up a weight of 100 grams. The cocoons may be either yellow or cream-colored, and their color can be predicted by examining the abdomen and rear legs of the worms. The yellow cocoons are the most numerous and represent about 75 percent of the total.

During the rearing period, silkworm losses due to disease generally amount to fifty percent.

283 231 **Reeling off the cocoons and spinning the thread.** These operations are carried out during the nine days which follow the formation of the cocoon, and before the moth has broken through. The methods employed are quite rudimentary, and consist in throwing some fifty cocoons into an earthenware pot containing boiling water. The pot is surmounted by a reel fastened to its rim. Nine or ten strands of silk coming from the same number of cocoons are wound

283 together with the aid of a slotted thread gauge to produce one thread
231 of raw silk. Tension on the strands is provided by hand as they are wound, and the thread is wound on the drum of the reel. From this process there results an uneven thread with many nodosities, especially in the case of the third-grade thread which comes from the cocoon floss.

[147] **Production.** Fifty cocoons usually produce 2.25 grams of raw silk. This includes three different grades, in the following proportions:

1. First grade, glossy, fine and regular silk: 25 centigrams;
2. Second grade, less glossy silk, semi-fine and fairly regular: 50 centigrams;
3. Third grade, dull, coarse and irregular silk, 1.5 grams.

It is reckoned that 2,000 to 2,500 cocoons are required on the average to produce one kilogram of silk.

In summary, 800 raw and empty cocoons weigh 100 grams. When reeled off these 800 cocoons yield only 36 grams of silk. Thus there is a loss of 64 grams, representing 64 percent of the weight of the cocoons and thereby constituting a waste product composed of unwindable fragments, whereas the amount which can be utilized is only 36 percent (1).

(1) Report by P. Macey.

[148]

APPENDIX XXV
NOTE ON THE CULTIVATION OF OPIUM POPPIES

249 Poppies are grown in all the high regions inhabited by the Meos and especially in the north of Upper Laos. But the latter scarcely grow any but the amount which they themselves need each year, and are content merely with selling their surplus, if there is any.

Their method of cultivation is extremely primitive. They begin by burning the trees and brush in order to clear the soil, then spade up the ground to a depth of about five centimeters and sow the seed in the first two weeks of September. They try to choose hillsides which are exposed to the rising sun, and do not irrigate the land.

If rain is plentiful they obtain one or two capsules per plant by this manner, on the average. If rain is scarce, then the yield is nil. They do not use any kind of fertilizer.

Poppies thrive especially in clay soil with a substantial, sound

173: Deydier --75 H, B-8 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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Fig. XVIII. Luang Prabang. Training an elephant (Cl. Deydier). [158]

313 185 439

with the greatest value on European markets, but woods which are very common in Indo-China are often just as highly esteemed. Among others we may cite the "Mai-Niang," the "Mai-Thon" (mock walnut), the "Mai-Deng" (rosewood), the "Mai-Dou" (thuja), the "Mai-Lang-Dam" (ebony), etc.

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A very high official of Laos recently wrote, speaking of the development of this land: "Once everything was for Tonkin and

536 There is no scenery. The costumes and headdresses vary according to the characters represented. The masks of colored lacquer worn by the actors, their accessories (weapons, scarves, etc.) being traditional and invariable enable the fictitious characters on the stage to be identified.

/178 The theatre of animated shadows, similar to the shadow theatre
101/ of China and Java, tends to disappear little by little.

Laotian Decoration.

Laotian decoration is characterized by a somewhat mannered
531 elegance which can be noticed in the motifs of the pagoda doors and
178 windows. The Laotian artisan is, however, endowed with an extremely well developed artistic sense, but the present day demands do not enable him any longer to live by his handiwork, and the importation of manufactured articles tends to make the artist disappear. /89/ He can only survive by royal patronage. The royal palace for this reason shelters sculptors on wood and ivory as well as goldsmiths, but
/644/ their produce is not sold and the tourist will hardly be able to bring back with him typical Laotian objects.

However, the weaving of silk materials of divers shades, often laminated with gold or silver, is still done on a sufficient scale to
● /236/ satisfy the passing tourist.

The Sin

This is a skirt reaching from the hips to the ankles. It is of a
291 rather somber color with a design of vertical stripes very close together and not very evident. This skirt is decorated on its lower edge with a flat trimming of two or three rows of gold or silver braid. At the top of the skirt a belt of red cloth, more or less embroidered, relieves the rather dark tone. This garment is a regular cylinder having the same width on its entire length. When the woman emerges from her bath she lifts her skirt, gathered into the shape of a crown, above her head and lets it slide down the length of her body. She fixes it without hooks or fasteners to her belt by means of a turned in pleat tied in front leaving most of her belly exposed. A bright colored scarf of cotton or silk thrown over one shoulder and completely covering the breasts completes the costume. The most beautiful scarves come from Samneua, Luang Prabang and Khong. The jewelry most frequently seen consists of
301 silver bracelets, necklaces and buttons, rings, long crossed over chains /chaînes-sautoirs/, flat clasps, and belts usually of silver but sometimes of gold.

/Pages 90 to 135 not translated/ /136 blank/

10: d'Orleans--370 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 136, 237

"Paklay owes its importance to its situation on the Mekong at the extremity of the shortest route from the Menam. In the neighbourhood there is a good deal of teak which might be advantageously exploited. Wild animals abound, stags and oxen being killed for their antlers and horns. Some years ago, I am told, a tapir was killed near here, but native information is so little to be trusted that no confidence can be put in this story, and I have never before heard it said, moreover, that tapirs come so high up."

000 to a point where it is perfectly docile.

231 435 The sale price of elephants varies with their size, their sex, their age, and according to whether or not they have tusks and according to the quality and size of these latter. It also varies with the region.

At Outhai-Thani (Luang-Prabang) an elephant costs from 1,500 to 3,000 francs, and the cost is about the same at Vien-Tiane. In Lower Laos the price varies from 750 to 1,200 francs.

When an elephant dies it still leaves highly valuable remains, especially ivory.

• 237 438 435 1. Ivory.

A hundred kilograms of ivory sells for 1,800 francs at Outhai-Thani (Luang-Prabang), from 935 to 1,770 francs in Nong-Khay, from 750 to 1,250 francs in Song-Khone, from 750 to 1,670 francs in Saravane, from 1,000 to 1,670 francs in Bassac and from 1,500 to 1,670 francs in Khong, Stung-Treng and Attopeu. Its average cost in Cholen (Cochinchina) is 2,500 francs per hundred kilograms.

2. Bones.

The price of elephant bones is generally from 12 francs 50 centimes to 15 francs per hundred kilograms.

3. Hides.

Elephant hides cost from 60 to 70 francs per hundred kilograms.

The remains of other elephants furnish the markets of Laos with the following products: rhinoceros horns and hides, horns and hides from buffalo and oxen, horns and hides from all the deer tribe, hides, talons and bones from the cat family, bear and otter pelts, scales from anteaters, tortoises and caymans, etc. To this list should be added snake venom, bear gall and soft hartshorn, which are regarded as specific remedies against certain diseases.

The prices of some of these products are as follows:

Rhinoceros horns	111 to 137 francs per kilogram
Rhinoceros hides	60 to 70 francs per 100 kilograms
Soft hartshorn	1,666 to 2,200 francs per 100 kilogram or 18 to 40 francs per pair
[349] Horns of stags, elk and bucks (hard)	25 to 75 francs per 100 kilograms
Hides of stags, elk, bucks, goats	37 to 83 " " " "
Wild buffalo horns	50 to 60 " " " "
Wild buffalo hides	46 to 50 " " " "
Ox horns	50 to 58 " " " "

149: Reinach--256 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Ox hides	58 to 65 francs per 100 kilograms 237
Bones of tigers and other cats	58 to 75 " " " " 438
Pelts of tigers, panthers and other large cats	3 francs to 12 francs and 50 centimes apiece 435
Anteater scales (without the skin)	50 to 72 francs per 100 kilograms
Anteater hides (with scales)	46 to 50 " " " "
Skins of various monkeys	83 to 88 " " " "
Tortoise shells	37 francs and 50 centimes per 100 kilograms.

Fishing, preserved fish

Laos, with its extensive hydrological network and its watercourses of all sizes, is a fishing land par excellence. We have already noted the chief varieties of fish which populate its rivers, and have seen that most of them are represented by large-sized specimens. 226

Since the produce of fishing makes a considerable contribution to the food supply of the inhabitants, it has been necessary to create devices and combine various means for capturing this prey.

The methods, primitive at first, have been increasingly perfected, and each one has been modified so that it is adapted to some particular feature either of the watercourses or of the fish.

The devices used today are wholly made by the inhabitants. 226
They vary greatly in form and--the fact is worth noting--are much 227
like those used in Europe. Indeed, the floating line is common, but in its most rudimentary form, with a thorn for a hook and then the ground-line and long-line. There are also nets in great abundance, and they are identical with the ones found among our fishermen. The most common ones are the seine, the cast-net, the square dipping-net, the shrimping-net, the hoop-net, the landing-net and the large trammel. All this equipment is supplemented with bottles, [350] single and double bow-nets and traps. The Laotians also build large barrages across watercourses and provide them with corridors leading to bow-nets or hoop-nets.

Hiding places in the form of fixed huts on the watercourses are used for spear fishing. A light in these huts attracts the fish and the native, who is armed with a hardwood fork, spears it as soon as it comes within range. [Illustration here]

centimes per kilogram, depending on quality, in northern Laos.

Betel nuts. It is a well-known fact that commerce in betel nuts is quite extensive in the Far East, since the number of consumers runs into several millions. It is therefore a crop to be developed and encouraged, all the more so because the climate, soil and temperature of Laos are perfectly suited to plantations of this type. 24 185 435

In Laos the harvest from about three trees sells for one tical (1 franc, 50 centimes). In Cochinchina the produce of a single tree is worth about one piaster (2 francs, 50 centimes). It is therefore evident that it would be profitable to export this nut in large quantities.

PRUNING AND GRAFTING FRUIT TREES. The natives in Laos, as a consequence of ignorance, lack of initiative, carelessness and also lack of the necessary means, do not give sufficient care to fruit trees. The result is that the latter, at least in the case of most varieties, bear only degenerate fruits. 24 185

It is to be desired that these trees should no longer be abandoned in this manner, without being pruned, trimmed or grafted. Thought might then be given not only to improving the natives' diet in the way of fruit, but perhaps also to creating new resources by preparing certain kinds of preserves, fruits with juice, compotes and jams.

Again it is the administration alone, with the means of action at its disposition and the authority in its possession, which could act in an effective manner.

The colonial and botanical gardens, etc., should be able to provide administrators with precise information on the care to be given to the various fruit trees, both in order to improve their fruit and to increase their yield.

The obvious middlemen between the administration and the population are the bonzes. The latter, if they were the possessors of industrial knowledge, would be listened to and imitated above all others when they provided an example by giving their care to the numerous varieties of fruit trees which they keep up within the enclosures of pagodas or nearby.

6: Goudal--192-193 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians
116, 241, 423

"In Laos and the Moïs districts, which are sparsely populated and where there is an abundance of unoccupied land, strict rules of land tenure were much less necessary than in the countries mentioned above. Every type of ownership is to be found: the [193] tiny holding cultivated successively by father and son, ownership being confirmed merely by custom; areas belonging to a community, certain parts being temporarily cleared by fire and then abandoned again (rays), strips of forest or of grassland which are roughly developed for a time as tribes migrate from place to place."

10: d'Orleans--316 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 175, 197, 241, 511, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"In speaking of the inhabitants of the principality of Luang Prabang, I referred to the Lus, the Meos and the Chinese, and a few words must be said about all three.

The first mentioned strike me as being, from an ethnographical point of view, very similar to the Laotians, whose language they speak, with a few slight differences of dialect, but they are smaller, punier and in a more poverty-stricken state. We saw one of their villages, just behind Luang Prabang, and its poverty was the most salient feature about it. Coming originally from Sibsompanas, where they form the principal element of the population, they have been driven south by Chinese wars and invasions, and several of them told me that they had not the means of returning home. Moreover, they are just as well off where they are, for, like the Kas, they cultivate the soil, planting rice fields for the Laotians."

10: d'Orleans--357 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 137, 241, 439

"At the present time two vegetable products are exported from Luang Prabang, one being cardamome and the other benzoin, the latter having recently decreased 50 per cent. in value on the Bangkok market, doubtless because this perfume is now extracted from hippuric acid and other matters by chemical processes, while in time the flora of the country, which is very rich in other wild plants highly perfumed, will doubtless lend itself to fresh sources of industry.

In addition to the native products it will be easy to introduce fresh cultivations, such as the pepper tree, which already thrives in Annam, the vine, which grows wild on the plateau of the Poûon, and fruit trees of various kinds."

10: d'Orleans--368 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 241, 262, 438

"... The village of Muong Liep (Diap on the map), once important, now possesses only a few houses. The gardens are full of fruit trees, cocoa trees, areca nut trees, oranges, bananas, and the mak tan la late, (1) which are eaten with a spoon.

1. In French, cœur-de-bœuf.

We cannot buy any rice, the inhabitants having very little. They got it from Nam Ou, or certain villages especially given to its growth."

23: Franck--271-272 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 131, 241, 311 Ethnic subgroup

"Sturdy enough in their natural habitat, they [EJ: of the 'Black Miao.'] must live at least three thousand feet above sea-level to be either happy or healthy, just as the Annamese must stick [272] to their miasmic rice-plains; and they never descend below that altitude if there is any way out of it. Of all the races of Indo-China the Miao are probably the most self-sufficient. In common with some other mountain tribes of Laos they burn off steep hillsides, normally every nine years, for their cultivation. When they need new fields to plant, they fell the biggest trees and set afire great patches of the jungle-forest, destroying wood and lumber enough to supply a large city for years to come. This burning is partly to drive off the blackleg fever and partly to give room for grass for their cattle; and as cinders make good fertilizer for a few years, their crops are abundant until it comes time to burn off another mountain-side. As this burning by patches has probably been going on for centuries, much of the Laos is not so forested as one expected to be, but often covered with those half-grown forests which the French call brousse. Yet with all the uneven growth there are many magnificent panoramas of densely forested ranges."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

slaughterers are obliged to work by flares, which is responsible, the 253
French think, for an unusually picturesque effect. It is 'not done' to 825
go along while the actual killing is in progress, but shortly after, when the carcasses are suspended from hooks to be cut up, and the workers, stripped to their loincloths, and garishly splashed, paddle about in a vermilion sea. Cars are stationed just beyond the reach of the steaming odours, and one is recommended to see the thing as one views a nude in a picture gallery – that is, divorced from all but a disinterested abstraction, in this case the colour.

The possibilities of Vientiane, it was clear, would be quickly 292
exhausted. Thao Nhouy, the Laotian Minister of Education, lent 301
me his jeep to see some of the surrounding villages, but the roads 535
were so appalling that it broke down after being driven for about five miles. He then suggested that I might like to see the local schoolgirls dancing, and when I said that I would be delighted, and asked for permission to take photographs, the girls were sent off home, on their bicycles, to get their best clothes. An hour or two later they began to trickle back, wearing their mothers' jewellery as well as their own and with their silk finery done up in paper parcels. When they had dressed and were ready they made a glittering sight. One girl wore a scarf ornamented with real gold thread said to be worth about £50 in English money. They danced under the supervision of a teacher whom I recognized as a professional actor, from the *boun*,[1] and who occasionally intervened when a girl failed in some minor feat, such as bending her fingers back at an expressive ninety degrees from the palm.

All these girls, dressed as they were like princesses, came from 493
shacks in the forest. Each one had a bicycle – infallibly fitted with 511
dynamo lighting, and sometimes 3-speed gears. It seems that a bicycle for his daughter is one of the essentials for which a Laotian will work. It is considered ill-bred and irreligious in Laos to work 241
more than is necessary. The father of a family cultivates an amount 461
of land, estimated, by a bonze who is expert in such matters, to be 511
792

1 [i.e., Laotian religious 255
festival. -- Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

241 sufficient for his requirements. If there are six members of the
461 family, six standard, equal sized portions of land will be cultivated.
511 If a child is born into the family another piece of land is cleared and
792 worked. When a member of the family dies, whether it be a baby or the grandfather, cultivation of his portion will be stopped. Just enough is produced for the family to eat and to provide a small surplus sold in the market – *with the bonze's approval* – to buy occasional strict necessities, like a silk shawl and a bicycle for the
735 daughter. There is no social insurance and there are no poor. The
556 old and the sick are supported by the young, or, where they are
792 left without able-bodied providers, by the community, and the
771 bonzes give instructions for the necessary land to be placed under cultivation for them. The accumulation of wealth which is not to be used for definite, approved purposes, causes a man to lose prestige among his neighbours, just, as in the West, the process is reversed. The main difference, it seems, between Buddhism in Indo-China, and Christianity – apart from any question as to their relative merits – is that, whether we admire it or not, the former is largely put into practice.

It is a stimulating reflection that the Western millionaire, obsessed for the sake of social distinction with the amassing of enormous possessions – little of which he can personally consume – would attain the same ends of personal celebrity under a Laotian Buddhistic order of things by his priestly austerities – by embracing the most abject and prestige-conferring form of poverty.

181 For this reason perhaps the local Evangelist missionary and his
771 wife have made no converts. Like all who have lived among the
785 Laotians they are charmed with them – although, of course,
797 disappointed at their blindness. They also deplore their immorality.

In the matter of converts the Evangelists have been no more unsuccessful than their Portuguese, Spanish and French forerunners. The Laotians having little capacity for abstractions, either in their

115: Le Boulanger--140 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

000 If death had not placed a brutal term on his wanderings a few weeks later, the serious Mouhot might also have been the first man to question the impassive Buddhas on the mysterious past of this remote land, felt the infinite charm of its melodious nights when the khenes give voice to their moving chords, and -- who can say? -- sung the grace of the pretty girls with bare and gilded breasts who in their carefree way weave multicolored scarves under their flowered huts.

105 He contents himself with noting rapidly: "Fortunately this is not like Siam, and I can get help from the natives. . . . The /225/ Laotians are peaceable, submissive, patient, sober, trusting, credulous, superstitious, faithful, simple and naive. They naturally
/685/ hold robbery in horror. The story is told that one of their kings had thieves fried in a cauldron of boiling oil, but since the ravages of the last wars a certain number of thieves are beginning to be found among them who have been driven to rapine by poverty or by the spirit of vengeance.

/685/ "Besides cultivating rice and maize the Laotians grow batatas,
/241/ gourds, red peppers, melons and other vegetables. . . . They sell
/438 the Chinese ivory and pelts from tigers and wild animals. They
434/ also trade gold dust, silver and copper ore, gamboge, cardamom, lac, wax, dyeing wood, cotton, silk and all the products of their soil for heavy porcelain, small glassware and other small commodities of Chinese industry.

"The Laotians are not made for war. Ever since the beginning they have been subjected to the neighboring kings, and have never been able to shake off this heavy yoke.

"They seem to be more industrious than the Siamese and to
/101/ possess more of the spirit of adventure and trade. Although both peoples /226/ have many points of resemblance, both physical and moral, the Laotians can nevertheless be distinguished by their dialect and especially by their customs, which are simpler and more amiable.

533 ". . . Their music is very sweet, harmonious and sentimental.
101 Only three people are needed to make a melodious concert. One plays a bamboo organ, the second signs romances with the accent of a man inspired, and the third strikes strips of a sonorous wood together in rhythm, the clicking sounds of which have a striking effect" (1).

1. This praise of Laotian music should be compared with the

132 a climatic dividing line. On the Annam side, in fact, each monsoon
133 has its rainy season, a fact which makes it possible to grow two rice
crops per year. On the Laotian side there is one rainy season and
[241] one dry season. The two are sharply separated, so that there can be
only one crop. The chain runs parallel to the coast of Annam in a
northwest-southeast direction, leaving Annam only a narrow strip of
terrain, while it enables the Mékong to be joined on its left bank by
watercourses which often stretch over wide extents. On the Annam
side the slopes are steep and the valleys narrow. On the Laotian
[137] side the slopes generally do not terminate so abruptly. They come
down to the Mékong in successive stages, first forming plateaus or
folds in the terrain which are covered with thick forests (Dong in
Laotian), then gentler undulations on which there are forest glades
(Khok in Laotian) and finally the vast ricefields which stretch down
to the Mékong.

137 The large thick forests have the same wild appearance as in
northern Laos. Oftentimes they do not even let the sun's rays through,
132 and form domes of foliage which hide the horizon.

The forest glades have two different aspects, depending on the season. During the rainy season there is shadow and often a carpet of verdure, while during the dry season the bare trees and the naked soil which is covered only with dead leaves and reflects the burning rays of the sun, give the appearance of a desolate and abandoned land.

133 The Annamitic Chain first separates the Nam-Nhoong, a right-bank
tributary of the Nam-Ka-Dinh, from the Song-Ca which flows into
the Gulf of Tonkin near Vinh. It enters the province of Cammon,
where its average altitude is 1000 to 1200 meters. The ridge of Tram
Mua, on the road from Vinh to Pak-Hin-Boun, is at the 1280 meter
level. In Cammon there are, so to speak, no forest glades, [47]
[Illustration] [48] [Blank page] [49] for the plateaus themselves
usually run down to the banks of the Mékong.

Of the latter, the most noteworthy is that of Na-Kaï or Pou-Hac,
133 the limits of which are formed by the courses of the Nam-Hin-Boun
137 and of the Sé (1) -Bang-Faï. This vast plateau lies at an altitude

(1) Nam and Sé mean river. Nam is the term generally employed in northern Laos, and Sé in southern Laos.

of about 800 meters and, like the plain, is covered with forest

glades, but "instead of the oil trees, bogus teaks with their whitish foliage and their trunks deeply dented with wide grooves, we find gigantic, shade-giving pines; and instead of the bare, powdery or viscous soil, a fine level turf on which it is a pleasure to walk and where it is enjoyable to linger and slow one's pace" (2). 133 137

(2) Letter from Captain Rivière, reproduced by Captain Gosselin in Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900. [113]

It is also a region of wild beasts, and the inhabitants of the muong of Ma-Ha-Saï come there every year to hunt elephants. [136]

At the very source of the Sé-Bang-Faï there springs up a noteworthy peak about 1200 meters high from which many watercourses flow down to the Annam coast.

South of this point the Annamitic Chain drops to give way to the gap of Aï-Lao (about 410 meters in altitude) on the road from Savannakhèt to Quang-Tri. Then the chain rises to form walls which are often more than 2000 meters high in the provinces of Saravane and Attopeu. Thus, Pou-Atonat has an altitude of about 2500 meters. It is an important orographic center from which spring the Sékhong and the Poyo, which belong to the Mékong basin, and also the Song-Buong, a tributary of the Song-Caï which is a coastal river of Annam. 133

Between the Sédone and the Sékhong, at about the 15th parallel, stands the remarkable plateau of the Bolovens, which takes its name from the Kha tribe which inhabits it. It is a mass about 100 kilometers in diameter, and its height varies between 600 and 1200 meters. Travelers who have explored it have extolled the mildness of the climate, the wealth of the vegetation, the beauty of the plains and the abundance of water, so [50] that Dr. Harmand suggested the idea that the plateau, which could easily be linked by road with the port of Tourane, might be made into the administrative center and sanatorium of our Indo-Chinese empire. [132]

The part which the plateau may be called on to play in the future has been somewhat exaggerated. It would be imprudent to envisage it as a wonderland, [illustration here] an eldorado destined to a great future from the administrative, commercial and sanitary point of view. Today it is a plateau with well-cultivated slopes which yield fine harvests of cardamom and rice, as well as tobacco, cotton and Chinese nettles [ortie de Chine], and is inhabited by gentle, peaceful folk who live in handsome, well kept-up villages. 133 241 361

of the Moun (1).

000

(1) See table, Chapter VIII.

The most difficult rapid to negotiate is the Keng-Tanah, situated only three kilometers from Pak-Moun. During the low water period it is necessary to unload them completely and transport them by hand across dry land over extremely rough sandstone rocks. It has been negotiated during the high water period by the single-wheeler the Haiphong, and since the current beyond the rapids is weak and the width sufficient (300 meters), steam navigation is possible as far as Oubône for perhaps two or three months.

505 133

Francis Garnier describes this region as follows (2):

(2) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

"From Pi-Moun on the river is once more unobstructed. A very weak current, straight banks and a uniform width give it, in certain spots, the appearance of a canal dug by man."

At Pak-Sédone the Mékong is joined on its left bank by another important tributary, the Sédone. This river, which is about 200 kilometers in length, rounds the northern part of the plateau of the Bolovens. All the roads which descend from this mountain mass end in its valley, and all the products of the region leave it by way of the Sédone. Cardamom, which is the most important of these, is [94] an item much dealt in at the temporary market of Champi. The latter is the terminus of the convoys which come down from the plateau, and from this point on merchandise goes by river to Bassac or Oubône.

438 361 241

The market of Champi had to be established fairly near the mouth of the Sédone, for just upriver and less than thirty kilometers from Pak-Sédone the river is barred by insurmountable waterfalls [Illustration here] fifteen meters in height. From the point of view of navigation the Sédone is therefore divided into two sections: the part situated above the falls and the part situated below.

505 133

To the north of the falls the Sédone has a reach some thirty kilometers in length which can be navigated in all seasons by pirogues

23: Franck--333 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 241, 311 Ethnic subgroup

"Here and there patches of hillsides, even of mountain-sides, were being or had recently been cleared in this primitive way and were now more or less velvety-brown and strewn with fallen charred trees. For like the Miao the Kha still burn a new strip of forest whenever they wish to plant, cutting down mammoth trees just to clear the way, and leaving them to rot. What the coffin-makers of China would not have given for some of them! But I saw nothing planted, perhaps because the end of April is too early in these highlands, as in the grass-grown rice-fields we came upon lower down. Every now and then a tiny hut as bright as if it had been made of new straw stood forth in the middle of a recent clearing, the sleeping-place evidently of a pioneer husbandman too far from home to commute. Upland rice, needing no flooding, and other jungle products are grown by the Kha and the other hill people, and sometimes carried to Luang Prabang itself, though most of them merely grow enough to feed themselves."

34: Thompson--174[3] J-4 (no date)1947 Laotians
116, 241, 423

"In Laos, where there has always been plenty of unoccupied arable land, every type of ownership may be found--family possession and cultivation, communal lands, and shifting agriculture."

35: Ennis--130 H-3 (no date) 1936 Laotians
116, 241, 311, 464, 496

"The colonization schemes sponsored by the Indochinese government in other parts of the peninsula have not touched Laos. The local administration, however, has been encouraging small-scale settlements. The Société de l'Houle Pakhout has placed 12,000 coffee plants upon the plateau of Boloven, and in the same region a group of natives has set out 100 hectares of kapotiers. The colonization of Laos cannot be initiated until the railroad from Tanap to Thaklek is completed, which will link up the interior to river nagivation [sic] upon the Mékong. Here, as elsewhere, one of the chief problems is inadequate labor supply. (58)

58. Rapports au grand conseil, pp. 85 ff."

132 and accompanied or preceded by hurricanes, cyclones and even tornadoes, sudden showers, hail, etc.

The first manifestations of the rainy season occur in April after a period of two months during which great dry, hot winds blow which [241] make respiration difficult. Clearing mountain land and burning the stubble in the ricefields further increase the natural heat of the atmosphere, for it is at this time that the stubble is burned in order to obtain soda with which to fertilize the next crop.

The first storms are preceded by high electrical tensions which light up the horizon, but without thunder. Then when the clouds break the water of the first storms comes down in veritable sheets. The earth, which has become hardened and cracked for nearly a meter below the surface, [109] begins to steam. It absorbs instantly, so to speak, and without leaving any traces thereof, the enormous quantity of water which pours down, exuding an odor sui generis and freeing clouds of mosquitoes, myriads of febriferous microbes and other infectious bacillae.

When the rain stops between two storms the purified atmosphere becomes light and diaphanous. The electrical tension disappears, the air is saturated with ozone and the temperature falls several degrees. The refreshed leaves absorb carbon dioxide more easily from the air and consequently give off more oxygen, and men as well as animals, panting and oppressed a few moments before by the heavy heat, enjoy the happy effects of the rain.

During this period the temperature rises at night and people begin to rid their beds of the blankets which had been necessary ever since December.

Depending on the altitude, the latitude and the disposition of the terrain, the variations in temperature for the two parts of Laos from March to May are as follows:

1. Northern Laos:

(a) Valleys and Low Plains

Morning..... 20° to 22°
Noon..... 25° to 30°
Afternoon..... 15° to 25°
Night..... 15° to 20°

(b) Plateaus and High Valleys

Morning..... 15° to 17°
Noon..... 20° to 25°
Afternoon..... 10° to 15°
Night..... 10° to 12°

[114] of what has been observed, and because no better expression of the facts could be hoped for.

THE THAI RACE

142 "Laotians. Of all the Thais, the Laotian is the one who has
144 remained the purest, although he has a much higher proportion of Aryan blood than the other varieties, with the exception of the Lus. Fairly tall in stature, his hair cut short, elegant in his movements and more refined than all the other inhabitants of the land, he is the aristocratic type of Laos. His upbringing, his education, his religion and even his vices have a mark of distinction which make
438 them stand out above those of his neighbors. An excellent boatman,
505 and a trader rather than a farmer, he is the one who seems the master of the land, as much by virtue of his commercial aptitudes as by the
484 ease with which he ranges the country. Mounted on his long and narrow shaped pirogue, made in one piece of a tree trunk hollowed out by fire, he goes great distances to visit peoples of the most varied races [175] [Illustration] [176] [Blank page] [177] and serves as a link between all the human varieties which populate Laos. He is at home and at his ease everywhere, standing out clearly above all his countrymen in this respect.

[361] "The Laotian prefers to settle along navigable watercourses and in proximity to plains of ricefields. He is glad to have his land
[241] worked by mercenaries or by dependents of inferior race, and some-
[567] times by slaves (at least before our arrival). He himself, with quite an extensive knowledge of the needs and resources of the other inhabitants of the land, particularly likes to traffic in all kinds of merchandise. He it is who goes to buy forest products and cereal grains on the spot from the mountainfolk or from sedentary farmers, and sells them cloth, salt, tobacco, earthenware, farming implement
[439] etc. in exchange. He it is who exports the products of Laos to neighboring countries and brings back the things which Laotian industry cannot produce. His business as a commercial traveler, which he likes and which gives him a good standard of living, occupies him for only a few months of the year but brings him into contact with all the neighboring peoples and also with the Europeans and Chinese in the Siamese, Annamite and Cochinchinese trading posts. Thence arises his veneer of civilization which strikes one at first glance.

149: Reinach--136 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

301
306
who work gold mines--and by the inhabitants of several regions, [563]
whose state of fortune would nevertheless enable them to use a more precious metal.

Jewelry and examples of the goldsmith's art are found in different forms and types which vary greatly with the region and race, as will be seen by the nomenclature given in Chapter IX.

Food. The Laotian scorns the pleasures of the table, and is 262
generally a moderate eater and drinker. Steam-cooked glutinous rice forms the basis of his food supply. To this he adds salt, peppers, various other spices, fresh or preserved fish, etc. Besides these, but less frequently, his day-to-day diet may be varied with poultry, eggs, buffalo meat, beef and pork, as well as venison. To be sure, it is mainly on the occasion of public or private festivals, which are fairly numerous in the course of the year, that the Laotian improves on his usual rather frugal fare in this way.

The customary beverage is water which may be taken directly 271
from the rivers or first be hastily decanted into jars or water-coolers 273
of porous earthenware. In general, Laotians prefer water taken directly from the river to that which has been filtered. Finally, the people of Laos consume rice brandy which is obtained by distillation, and a kind of beer made by cold fermentation of rice mixed with paddy husks.

The use of these drinks, aside from rare exceptions, is reserved [527]
for holidays.

Physical appearance, character, occupations. The Laotian's 152
character is, in general, mild, friendly and happy. His physiognomy is [181] open and smiling. Not quarrelsome by nature, he even shrinks from coming to blows in extreme cases and prefers to end a dispute with an outburst of laughter rather than with blows.

Since, all in all, it has few needs and inhabits a land with luxuriant vegetation which is abundantly favored with products to be had for the scavenging, this happy people can easily satisfy its needs and be content with its fate. [Illustration alongside text here.]

It is assuredly lazy, but out of indifference much rather than 461
out of any deliberate intent. It cannot grasp the advantage or utility of a regular and prolonged effort beyond what is strictly necessary to provide it with a living and a few distractions to which, in reality, its own joyous disposition makes the greatest contribution.

To the men are reserved the chief tasks, which have a more 462
virile and noble character than those which are the women's lot. 241

462 Tilling the ricefields, hunting, fishing and managing rafts and pirogues take up about six months of the year. The rest of the time
241 they rest and enjoy themselves. The status of women in Laos, although not as low and painful as that of other women of Asiatic races, is nevertheless not as pleasant as that of their husbands. In fact, all the petty farming tasks fall on them. They perform all the household labors, care for the poultry yard and the livestock, etc. They do the cooking, decorticate the paddy, go and fetch wood and water, spin, weave and dye cotton and silk, take care of the children, etc. Less [182] fortunate than her husband, the Laotian woman has no leisure except on holidays, and even then she has to make all the preparations without letting her daily occupations suffer.

Of ordinary height, generally well made and even elegant of
142 figure, the Laotian woman has a friendly face and is not without
562 either grace or coquetry before her marriage. This does not mean that there are no homely girls, but these are rather an exception. As she grows older and worn from bearing children the Laotian woman loses much of her early grace, but in spite of everything she retains her joyousness, her high spirits and her very pronounced taste for celebrations when there is singing and feasting.

862 Laotian mothers worship their children. They take great care of them and often push their weakness for their children to such a
858 point as to prolong the period of breast-feeding, often beyond the child's fourth year.

342 Dwellings. Like all the representatives of the Thai family, the Laotians inhabit houses which are rectangular in shape and are always
574 raised one or two meters above the ~~house~~ GROUND on piles. Wood and bamboo, in the form of beams, framing members, rafters, door and window casings, partitions, doors, windows, floors and shingles, are used to build houses, without the use of any nails, all joints and assemblies being fastened together with rattan.

The dimensions of the houses vary greatly and depend on the number of families that they are designed to shelter. Verandas with roofs which are sharply inclined and come down quite low are placed around the house, mainly on the south and west, to temper the heat of the sun and serve as a vestibule, a reception hall or a workshop. The family stays there during the day, as on a sort of neutral ground where people who are coming and going can be received without transgressing custom, which decrees that no one except members of the family and close friends shall have access to the inner apartments, which form the private home of the house's inhabitants.

149: Reinach—174 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai

181 bread by their work, they have scarcely a care for the morrow.
461 Scrupulous observers of the traditions handed down to them by their ancestors, they live an utterly carefree life and instinctively dread everything foreign or unknown to them.

463 Occupations. The men busy themselves with the tasks of farming, fishing and hunting. They are very industrious and skilled farmers,
● 241 and can draw admirably on the soil's resources. They bring in the water needed for irrigating their rais or mountain ricefields through ingenious
462 canals built along the sides of hills, and they also know how to capture springs, often very distant ones, for the same purpose. To decorticate paddy, they use mills driven by artificial waterfalls. The women perform the household chores, take care of the children, make and mend clothes, harvest and spin cotton, breed silkworms, unwind the cocoons and mill the silk. Theirs also is the task of supplying the home with water and with wood which they gather in the forest, as well as sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, getting in and decorticating the rice. These many tasks leave Thai women and girls little leisure, and it would thus seem only natural that they should profit by a momen of pleasure, whenever one presents itself in the midst of their multiple duties. They do, in fact, go in for fun eagerly and behave as keenly, despite their more reserved appearance, as their Laotian sisters.

361 Houses. There is no difference between Laotian villages and Thai villages, except that the latter are better kept and cleaner.
342 Thai houses are generally longer and higher than those of the
592 Laotians, by reason of the custom which decrees that the whole family—parents, children and grandchildren—shall live under the same roof. Some Thai houses are as much as thirty meters long and from eight to ten meters wide. In rare cases one finds much larger houses which are from seventy to seventy-five meters long and twenty-five meters wide.

342 Thai houses very often have no verandas on their long sides, but always have two, one at each end, which are covered by rounded roofs
554 and serve as reception terraces or antichambers.

The houses of mandarins and notables can be distinguished from the others by the fact that the roof rafters and the trusses of the gables extend above the line of the roof and cross. These members are decorated with wooden silhouettes or scallops ending in discs which, depending on their number and arrangement, indicate the rank of the house's owner.

149: Reinach--191 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Hill Tribes

595 There is polygamy among the Meos, and the Meo women do not enjoy any higher regard than the Kha women.

[101] The Yaos. The Yaos have the same origin as the Meos, and are strikingly like them in many respects. Their mores, their beliefs and their habits are identical.

619 As we have seen above, the Yaos are divided into three varieties, these being the Lantenes, the Khao and the Ao-Tchaine.

291 The Lantenes (blacks) wear broad trousers, a long smock buttoning
302 at the side and a turban, all made of black cottonstuff. They wear their hair long and either wound under a turban or braided in Chinese style.

[342] Their houses are like those of the Meos and shelter several families, each of which has its own quarters. They are generally clean and well kept-up.

593 The mores of the Lantene Yaos are patriarchal, and these folk are monogamous. The women are very reserved and do not let them-
562 selves be seen much by strangers. They enjoy a certain respect and are treated with consideration by their husbands.

231 The Lantenes are great livestock breeders, and cultivate the opium poppy in addition to rice and maize. They are skilled hunters of wild
241 animals, and each man owns a rifle from which he is rarely separated.
224 Besides a dialect peculiar to them, they speak Quoan-hoa (a
[212] Cantonese idiom), and many of them can write Chinese characters.
[198] The Khao Yaos are less outgoing than their fellows and do not
101 greet strangers with as much good will.

The men's clothing is like that of the Lantenes, [269] but the
291 women are garbed in a different manner and wear their hair in a special way which has earned their tribe the name "Khao" (horns).

Over a pair of black trousers ornamented with colored embroidery and held in place by leggings, Khao Yao women wear a tunic which comes down to the knees but the flaps of which are fastened to the belt. This tunic also has colored embroidery on the chest, back, neck and cuffs, and is held shut with wide silver hooks.

302 Their hairdress consists of a coil which is smeared with wax and lacquer to hold it in place and in which a wooden socket is imbedded. A light bamboo framework is inserted into the socket, and over this is spread a red cloth or a black cloth embroidered in red. The women thus appear to have two horns on their head.

301 Silver jewelry, neckbands, bracelets and ear pendants are worn by the Khao Yaos.

149: Reinach--220 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

The trees also support incomparable wild orchids with strange flowers, and climbing or twining plants of every possible shape and color which are as graceful as they are delicate, which cross, intertwine and with their lianas form an inextricable jungle, a curtain of flowers, stems and foliage which moves at the whim of the winds and is so thick in certain spots that it casts an almost perpetual shadow (1). 137

(1) The exact nomenclature of these floral species is almost impossible to establish. We shall content ourselves with noting, among many others which are still unknown: the acacia, and principally the farnese acacia; various kinds of lilacs; the double and single hibiscus, the African marigold and the zinnias, the lotus, the cockscomb, the marvel of Peru, the sunflower, several kinds of magnolias, syringa, camellias, etc.

Various plants used for food, medicine and dye also grow in the forests, such as yams, taros, ginger, cardamom, annatto, curcuma, catechu (sisiet), Campeachy wood, wild indigo, etc., as well as trees and lianas which produce resins, oil lac, black and red lacquer, damarine (huile de bois), benzoin, wax, gums and rubber. 824

Rice and maize are cultivated on the plateaus, low hills, mountainsides and in the valleys, as well as on the alluvial deposits of the Mekong. These form the basis of the natives' food supply and are essential elements in the manufacture of alcohol. 243 273

The banks of the watercourses, which are covered by inundations every year and constantly fertilized by alluvial deposits, are [305] used for the cultivation of cotton, tobacco, indigo, castor oil plants, batatas, peanuts, manioc and vegetables and fruits such as onions, garlic, tomatoes, squash, melons, fennel, mustard, edible convolvuluses, sensitive d'eau, etc. In the gardens which are cultivated near the banks one also finds sugar cane, coconut palms, sugar palms, betel palms, latania palms, the poivrier bétel, the arborescent mulberry, peppers, coriander, mint, the citronella and [Illustration here] purslane. Here also are a large variety of fruit trees: banana trees (more than twenty-four varieties), cinnamon trees, fig trees, orange trees, tangerine trees, grapefruit trees, lemon trees, lime trees, pineapple trees, pomegranate trees, guava trees, mango trees, papaw trees, ebony trees (Diospyros ebenum), mangosteen trees, jack trees, durian trees, custard-apple trees, avocado trees, litchi trees, sapodilla trees (red balata), fayolliers (légumineuses), silk-cotton trees 241 245

245 (bombax and callotropis), tamarind trees, jujube trees, cucumber trees, water chestnuts, etc.

In the north of Laos grow peach trees, plum trees, almond trees, [306] walnut trees, cherry trees, apple trees, pear trees, strawberry plants and medlar trees, the fruits of which are similar in taste to that of their counterparts in Europe, although they are neither as large nor as succulent as the latter.

On the edges of the forest, and sometimes even in the middle, there are also other wild fruit trees reminiscent of the plum tree, the cherry tree, the apple tree (a rose-apple tree with red or green fruits), the fig tree, the quince tree, etc. Their fruits have remained in a wild state or reverted to one because of a lack of adequate care, and are not edible. Their seeds, pits and stones have developed excessively, to the detriment of the pulp which remains tough, bitter or tasteless.

248 Finally, opium poppies, tea, ramie, hemp, etc. are cultivated
249 on the plateaus and in the high valleys.

Most European vegetables grow in Laos, in the gardens of the
241 Europeans. They are seeded at the end of the rainy season. Early varieties can be harvested and a new crop seeded well into July, but care must be taken to cover the beds during downpours, which occur frequently from May on.

The forests of Laos may have two characteristic forms, depending
134 on whether the soil is mountainous and composed of clay or limestone,
137 or else flat or slightly sloped and sandy, rocky or stony. In the first case the soil has a high percentage of vegetable matter, is moist and rich in humus and consequently covered with thick forests (Dong or Pa). In the second case it has a low percentage of vegetable matter, is hot and poor in humus and is covered with light forestation (Khok or Pa-hang).

A table contained in the Appendices (No. XX) gives the nomenclature of some sixty varieties of trees on which we have information. In addition to the trees which we cite, we should also note the bamboos, rattans and banana trees.

There are some twenty varieties of bamboo, in which the stalks vary from the size of the little finger to as much as thirty or even thirty-five centimeters in diameter. They sometimes reach a height
824 of twenty meters. There are six or seven varieties of rattan of different grades and sizes, but they are used only for local needs. Among the many wild banana trees, a few varieties such as the "Kok-Koue-Kene" yield a sort of fiber rather like abaca.

137 [307] Although we are able today to evaluate the forest wealth of Laos approximately and to compute its immense commercial value,

Se-Bang-Fai. But studies are not yet sufficiently advanced for us to be able to give any useful information. 316

We have nevertheless felt that we should mention these deposits, in order to establish the importance of all this part of Laos from the point of view of mineral wealth.

[327] [Illustration at ~~top of page~~]

CHAPTER VII

I

SCAVENGING

We have seen that the inhabitants of Laos are apathetic and little inclined to work. They nevertheless find, although they go to scarcely any trouble, enough to supply their needs easily. 461 241

Indeed, with the exception of a few annual crops such as tobacco, cotton and indigo which are grown on the ever-renewed alluvia of the watercourses, the production of rice and of maize are the only occupations which require--and even then during a relatively short time--any degree of work or perseverance. We may mention the opium poppy, ramie, hemp and the mulberry tree merely as a reminder, for only a small part of the population devotes its time to these crops, which are still not at all extensive. [249]

Yet, it may be objected, the native has an easy life, dresses adequately, [328] lives in a house which is solid and comfortable from his point of view, has various tools and utensils, weapons, and sometimes even valuable cloth goods, jewels, etc. He spends money for celebrations and for offerings to the bonzes and pagodas. He pays taxes, he supports court costs which are often large with respect to the question at issue, and he is subject to the exactions of his mandarins to a greater or less degree. Finally, the commercial transactions of Laos involve quantities and sums which are quite high in comparison to the sparse population. 511 [438]

How are we to reconcile all these factors, and how is it that the Laotian, who produces so little with his labor, nevertheless has all he needs to get along on?

This is due to the fact that Laos is above all else a scavenging country. 314

824
314 when mixed with curcuma. The trees are found in the forest, and
386 sometimes in gardens.

10. Yams.

The yam is an edible tubercle of the Dioscorea family. It is
262 represented by two varieties, the white and the black, which are called
241 "Mane-Phuek-Khao" and "Mane-Phuek-Dam" in Laotian. These tubercles are the main standby when there is a scarcity of rice and [335] maize, but in ordinary times they are used only to supplement the usual diet.

11. Taro or cush-cush (Mane-Pa).

Taro is also a food plant of the Aroïdées caladiées genus (Caladium esculentum). Like the yam, it is one of the most useful edible tubercles in times of famine.

12. Medicinal plants.

824 Designated by the generic name "Ya" in Laotian, these plants are represented by special types of orchids, roots, bark, berries,
278 leaves and even pieces of wood of different kinds, the whole forming an assortment of medicaments.

[438] The Khas are the ones who collect these various products from the depths of the forests, and they trade them either to Chinese or to Laotians for money or other goods.

[435] Certain of these plants and barks are used by the Laotians while others, such as the leaves from orchid plants, for example, are purchased by Chinese merchants at prices which vary between 33 and 62 francs per hundred kilograms.

13. Cloves.

The clove tree (Caryophyllus aromaticus. Kane-Phou in Laotian) is quite scarce in Laos. Cloves are mixed with various ingredients in masticatories or are taken as medicine.

Cultivation of the clove tree ought to be developed in Laos because of the high value of its flowers which, when dried on the tree, constitute the cloves of commerce.

14. Beeswax (Phung).

222 Beeswax is much sought-after in Laos, where a great deal of it is
[231] consumed. It is a scavenging product par excellence since, except in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na, the inhabitants do not practice apiculture and
314 are content to go into the forest and look for honeycombs in order to extract the wax. The latter is used for domestic needs and for worship
[438] ceremonies. It also forms the basis of quite an important trade.

"Pa-Niang," formed of slices from a large fish which have been smoked. 226

"Pa-Heng," or a small dried fish. 262

"Pa-Khem" corresponds fairly closely to our salted and dried fish of the sardine type known as Nantes, which are left in salt for only a few days.

Finally, "Pa-Dek" is the form in which most of the large varieties of fish are preserved, and is an almost indispensable part of the native food supply. To prepare Pa-Dek the meat is cut into small pieces and ground in a mortar with salt and pepper so as to produce a kind of paste which is then put in jars with salt. The resulting brine helps to preserve the product (1). 263

(1) The price of Pa-Dek varies between 18 and 25 francs per hundred kilograms. This is the "Mam" of the Annamites.

The price of fish is subject to fluctuations, depending on the scarcity of it. The large fish of which we have just been speaking sell at prices between one and forty francs, depending on their weight and their abundance on the market. 226 435

Eels, shrimp of the prawn type and crabs are also found in the ponds and rivers of Laos during the rainy season, and in the water-courses there are various edible shellfish [353] such as the river mussel and small winkle. The ponds and swamps shelter several varieties of frogs, some of which reach an enormous size. All of them are edible, and are caught with a red ribbon on the end of a line fastened to a long bamboo pole. 226 [227]

II

PRESENT-DAY CROPS

Together with an enumeration of the crops grown in Laos we should like to be able to give the area which each occupies and the cultivable surfaces with the nature of the soil and the type of crops which would be suited to them, but as the Superior Resident states in his report for 1899: 241 311

"We have been in the colony for too short a time to have been able to set up a cadastral registry service. In view of the large area of the territory (267,000 square kilometers), the small and sparse population which inhabits it (2.7 inhabitants per square kilometer in

241 Lower Laos and 1.1 inhabitant in Upper Laos), the considerable expense
311 which the establishment of a registry would involve, and the slight interest attached to such a measure in a land where our advantage lies in exercising only an indirect administration, it is impossible for me to reply in any precise fashion.

"All that I can say is that the area of cultivable land is about 80,000 square kilometers, and that it is very unevenly distributed.
[312] The southern part of the possession does offer a certain number of vast plains which are well irrigated or can be irrigated and which are admirably suited to agriculture.

"The northern part, on the other hand, is almost exclusively made up of a series of juxtaposed mountain masses in a nearly unbroken line which leaves only an insignificant place for the rare valleys and plateaus satisfying the conditions required by agriculture.

"The area of cultivated land may be estimated arbitrarily at 30,000 square kilometers, distributed as follows:

Southern Laos, 20,000 square kilometers.
Northern Laos, 10,000 square kilometers.
} Giving about 15 inhabitants per cultivated square kilometer."

In the preceding chapter we gave a list of the plants which compose the flora of Laos. We shall supplement it here by studying those which are grown as regular crops.

243 RICE. Rice, being the basic food of the Laotians, occupies first place among the country's crops.

Two varieties of rice are grown in Laos, glutinous rice or "Nep" (in Annamite) which is called "Khao-Niaou" in Laotian; and dry rice or "Khao-Tiao" which is known in trade as Cochinchina white rice.

The first is more nourishing and contains a higher percentage of starchy matter. Because of its particular qualities, it is the type most widely cultivated for food and for the manufacture of alcohol.

Dry rice or "Khao-Tiao" is also cultivated, but in smaller quantities. It is primarily used for making pastry and for food by inhabitants of certain races which do not eat glutinous rice.

[554 Persons of a certain standing even go so far as to eat only "Khao-
262] Tiao" out of ostentation.

Glutinous rice is grown in plains ricefields as well as in terraced ricefields on hillsides and in "Rais" or temporary clearings in the mountains.

248 There are three harvests each year. In the first the shoots are .9 meter high, in the second 1.4 meters and in the third 1.6 meters. They yield, respectively, for an area of 14 square meters, 18, 20 and 24 kilograms of fiber.

At harvest time the shrub is split and left to soak in water for three hours, for the fiber is difficult to tear off. The work of decortication takes a long time, and this drawback has so far prevented the cultivation of this crop from spreading although it is an easy one on the whole and not at all exhausting for the soil, since it is possible to grow it twenty years in succession on the same plot of ground.

438 Exports from the provinces of southern Laos were more than fifty tons in 1899. A great deal is used locally, since all the nets used for
248 hunting and fishing are made with this fiber.

Prices are as follows (1):

248 (1) In view of the price at Bassac (37 francs), it would be advantageous to export this product to Cambodia, where it sells for
435 twice as much.

	Per hundred kilograms
Plateau of the Bolovens	25 to 35 francs
Bassac	37 "
Saravane	60 "
Khong	60 to 80 "
Attopeu	30 "
Stung-Treng	54 to 62 "
Pnom-Penh	60 to 80 "

248 [367] HEMP. Hemp is grown in Upper Laos, but only for local consumption. It is used in making string, light rope, nets, etc. A very strong and fairly good-tasting alcohol is also extracted from its seeds. It is called "Pane" or "Nhia-Pane."

241 BATATAS. Various kinds of batatas which are more or less sweet are grown each year on the banks of the watercourses and in the still
[262] moist sandy alluvia. These tubercles are chiefly consumed by the
[23] inhabitants, although small quantities are used to fatten certain animals, particularly pigs. The large variety of batata which is round and not very sweet is called "Mane-Phao" and the one which is elongated and sweeter is called "Mane-Keo."

incorporate into the teas which they send abroad. But they appeal to the Chinese and other Orientals, and part of the crop is even set aside and sent as tribute to the court of the Emperor in Peking. 245 [648]

The Shans, the Lus and the Youns use a masticatory called "Mieng" which is composed solely of tea leaves which have been preserved in brine. [276]

PIMENTOS. Since pimento is a much sought-after condiment, and one which is even indispensable to the people of Laos, as to those of neighboring countries, the cultivation of this product is quite widespread. [244 263]

This pimento is of the large, red variety. It is prepared by [378] drying and smoking it, thereby guaranteeing that it will keep. Its name in Laotian is "Mak-Phik." The price of dry pimento varies from 25 to 37 francs per hundred kilograms.

FARMING IMPLEMENTS AND TOOLS USED IN LAOS. We shall conclude this rapid listing of the chief crops grown in Laos by giving a list of the farming implements used in the country. These latter are just as primitive and just as rudimentary as the farming methods, and the Laotians do not make any more effort to improve the ones than to improve the others. 412 241

The plow (Thai). The plow is extremely simple and is the primitive swing-plow formed of a single piece of bent wood. A share or "Mak-Sob-Thai" is fitted to its front end. Sometimes the share is even supplanted by cutting the stick of wood diagonally and hardening it in a fire. Drawn by a buffalo, this tiny plow cannot break the soil to any great depth, and so is used in ricefields only when the soil has been sufficiently softened by the annual inundations.

The harrow (Khat). The harrow is a sort of wooden rake .9 meter long, the teeth of which are made of ironwood or any other very hard wood, "Mai-Lek" or "Mai-Khen-Hine." This rake forms one of the sides of a triangle, the peak of which is harnessed to a buffalo.

The roller (Ham). The roller is the trunk of some hardwood tree, "Mai-Khen-Hine" for example. It has pins over which two shafts fit, leaving space to harness a buffalo.

The sickle. There are sickles of several sizes, which are called either "Kio" or "Lek Kio" without distinction. Sickles are used to cut grasses and rice.

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The spade. Two kinds of spades are used. These are called "Siem" (this is more of a scoop) and "Tiok-Kout-Dine" or, literally, Pick for breaking ground. The first is formed by a narrow iron blade which is slightly concave lengthwise and is provided with a socket into which a handle is fastened. The second is made of wood, and the blade and handle are in one piece. The lower part is fixed into an iron frame which also binds both sides [379] [Illustration] [380] [Blank page] [381] for about two-thirds of their height. The spade is used to make holes and to turn over the soil.

The machete. The machete [coupe-coupe] or felling sword which is used for heavy work is called "Pha." It is composed of a solid, broad and rather short iron blade with a thick back which is fitted into a wooden hilt with an iron ferrule.

Another kind of knife, called "Mit-Tok" or "Mit-Noi," has a blade which is narrower but longer than the above. This tool is used for fine work, such as cutting and splitting bamboo, rattan, etc.

The ax (Khouane-Hone, Khouane-Mou, or Khouane-Bong, "hatchet"). The ax is formed of a narrow, two-edged and rather short blade. A hardwood shank .6 to .7 meter long is fitted into the head. This shank itself is held by wedges, a third of the way along its length and slightly above the blade, in a mortise which crosses the end of a handle .6 to .7 meter long. The ax is used to cut trees, to hew posts and planks, etc.

It is at the very least odd to note that, except the blade which is a modern innovation, this ax is similar in every respect to the kind used during the age of polished stone.

The other tools used are: the hammer or "Khone-Lek," the saw or "Lueui," the file or "Lek-Sambai," the wood chisel or "Siou," the awl or "Lek-Si," the pincers or "Kab-Lek," the anvil or "Thang-Ti-Lek," and finally the bellows or "Soub."

CROPS TO BE ENCOURAGED

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Most of the crops which are now grown in Laos can be improved and developed, and this must be done if we are either to increase exports of farming products or to provide more well-being for the inhabitants.

In a general way, the administration can perform a useful task by increasing the number of experimental farms, by distributing [382]

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selected seed to the natives, and by giving them advice and, if necessary, orders.

The reader will doubtless be struck by the fact that we shall often reiterate, in speaking of the crops which should be encouraged or introduced, that the administration's role should be to make trials of such and such a plant. This is nevertheless the case. It must not be imagined that individual initiative will suffice, for the comparatively large capital investment which any agricultural enterprise requires will not be made until after any given crop has proved to be successful. It is therefore incumbent on the administration to make these first trials. Was it not the Government which set up the first plantations of tea in Assam, of cinchona in Java, and of tobacco and coffee in Sumatra? The colonists did not come until later, when the period of groping and failure was over, and they were then able to act with assurance almost everywhere.

Rice. The cultivation of glutinous rice should most particularly be developed in southern Laos, with a view towards the manufacture of alcohol.

We have seen above how small a proportion of the cultivable land has heretofore been utilized. Much land suitable for making ricefields has not yet been cleared. In spite of the remunerative price offered them for the produce of the soil, and in spite of the encouragement which they have received from all quarters, the natives do not yet understand all the advantages which they would gain from developing their crops. It is nevertheless easy to see that since our arrival in Laos the inhabitants have realized that the regime of terror and exactions has disappeared and that an era of prosperity and justice is opening up before them, and they are increasingly devoting themselves to the work of the fields. Ricefields have appreciably increased in extent, either because new land has been cleared or because abandoned fields have been brought back under cultivation.

Glutinous rice is assured of a certain and profitable sale on the markets of Cambodia and Cochinchina (1). It may be anticipated

(1) At the present time, with the existing means of transport, exporting rice from Bassac to Pnom-Penh yields an average net profit of 13 francs per ton.

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that if rice production were to increase and continue to progress, distilleries and starch factories might be established in Laos [383] to utilize the high proportion of starch which rice contains.

The cultivation of maize should also be encouraged with a view to the same end.

Tobacco. It is to be desired that the manufacturers who deal in tobaccos should become aware of the very real qualities of those of Vien-Tiane and Nong-Khay. Persons or corporations who prospected this region would immediately find, in the cultivation of tobacco and its direct marketing, resources which would greatly reduce the cost of their explorations.

There is also room for one or several Europeans who would engage in tobacco farming on a share-cropping basis, allowing natives to cultivate it in the beginning and prepare it in their own way, until it has been made into plugs. Then later on they might experiment with seed from Havana and the Philippines, and attempt industrial fermentation. Without making any advance judgment as to the eventual results of these improvements, it may yet be said that this crop would yield rewarding profits, since prices in the region of production vary between 50 and 100 francs per hundred kilograms, whereas they are as high as 125 to 187 francs in Bangkok.

Whatever the case may be, the cultivation of tobacco may be extended, since there is no shortage of suitable land. It is also capable of improvement, for production would certainly double if the natives used fertilizers less parsimoniously.

Cotton. We have noted that the existing species are all of the short staple variety and all have a low yield. Plantings of a long staple variety have been made in the experimental garden of Luang-Prabang, and have given satisfactory results. The Superior Commandant of Upper Laos reported the experiment as follows:

"Trials were made with seed from the botanical garden of Hanoi.

"The minimum height of the plants was one meter and a few, those from Virginia, reached heights as great as 2.5 meters.

"The bolls were as large as chicken eggs, whereas those of the native cotton plants [384] were at best as large as pigeon eggs, and their average number was 400 per plant.

"As regards the quality of the textile material, it is unquestionably superior to that of all the cotton heretofore harvested in the country.

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"These results are extremely encouraging for the future, and there is every reason to believe that if undertaken on a large scale and in accordance with the most improved methods, the cultivation of cotton could within a short time become an important source of revenue" (1).

(1) Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, 1899.

This report is correct, and yet one should not think that if the natives are left to their own devices they will take any care to secure cotton seed of an improved variety or modify their farming methods.

The administration must step in and furnish this new seed to the population, and force it to cultivate the seed in accordance with the better methods.

Such intervention on the part of the administration will come as no surprise to those who are acquainted with the carefree ways of natives of all races in Laos, and their scant eagerness to give up their old routines, even when they are being asked to adopt some measure of unquestioned utility. In proof of this fact we need merely cite the difficulties encountered and the unwillingness which had to be overcome when rice storehouses were set up in each village, even though these were designed to save the inhabitants from famine.

A further example may be cited in this connection, showing that in certain cases firmness is not to be eschewed. The crop of cotton is one of the chief products of Russian Turkestan but, as is the case in Laos, the cotton being grown in the country when the Russians arrived was of the short staple and low yield variety.

The administration first tried to increase production in the country by distributing seed from Georgia cotton and by giving advice on its cultivation.

All to no avail, for it came up against the routinism, the indifferenc and the fatalistic spirit of the population. Then it acted by order, almost manu militari, and obtained amazing results, such that a section of railroad which had been constructed as a strategic line, [385] that is to say with no hope of commercial traffic, is now employed in transporting cotton. The yield from the crop is fivefold, it would seem, and prices have doubled.

The creation of the cotton farm of Tachkent has had similar results. [Illustration here]

Sugar cane. The production of sugar cane, which is still not very significant in Laos, deserves to be encouraged. Later on when this crop had been developed, the Laotians might be trained in the methods of the first stage of refinement. They would then be able to produce gray muscovado and sugar candy, which are easily exportable. 241 185

Southern Laos is the part of our possession which would lend itself [386] best to the extension of this crop. Although of secondary importance, it is nonetheless deserving of attention.

Benzoin trees. Increasing the number of trees which are producers of this precious resin is again a task for the administration. After a serious study of the conditions of growth of the plant in Laos, of its habitat and of the nature of the terrain best suited to it, it would be possible to set up seed gardens designed to supply young plants either to the natives or to Europeans who settled in the country and were interested in this crop. It yields a rich product, which brings a high price on the market. Benzoin is, in fact, widely used in perfumes and in the manufacture of varnishes.

Lac trees. All who are acquainted with Laos are unanimous in agreeing that increasing the production of sticklac is one of the main factors in increasing the country's wealth. What, indeed, could be more simple, thanks to the easy and rapid multiplication of the "Kok-Toua-He," the tree which grows almost without care and lends itself so well to the establishment of colonies of coccus lacca, the producers of a superior quality of gum lac?

Cardamom. It would seem that experiments with growing true cardamom, as it is grown in Cambodia in the province of Pursat, might be attempted in Laos. The natives would have everything to gain from giving up the cultivation of wild cardamom for that of true cardamom, since the latter brings from five to ten times more than the former on the market of Pnom-Penh. 249 263 438

Until such time as this precious seed is introduced into Laos, it will be well to extend and encourage the cultivation of the present variety of cardamom. All those who have engaged in the production and commerce of this seed (1)--the mountainfolk who grow it, the

(1) It is much sought-after by the Chinese, who use it as a condiment as well as in pharmaceutical preparations.

149: Reinach--285 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[389]

CROPS TO BE INTRODUCED

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Here is a list of some crops which, among others, might profitably be introduced into Laos.

Manioc and sorghum. Trials successfully carried out, particularly in Muong-Son, prove that these plants can be grown there on a large scale.

Abaca. In Laos there are several varieties of musa which grow wild and whose fiber is used in the country for making various kinds of string and cord, tow for caulking pirogues, etc. These trees are the "Kok-Kouey-Ken" or seed banana, and the "Kok-Kouey-Pa" or forest banana. They are found on the lowest slopes of hills, along water-courses and in the bottoms of valleys. It would be interesting to try and identify these varieties of banana tree with the trees which produce abaca or Manila hemp, and to make comparisons between the fibers which they all produce.

In any case, seeds or plants could always be imported from Manila in order to create plantations in Laos.

Cinchona. The cinchona tree grows on land from which forestation has been newly cleared, at altitudes between 800 and 1200 meters. The soil must moreover be rich in humus. It would therefore seem that northern Laos is clearly indicated as a region for growing the cinchona (1). In the Laotian forests there is even a

(1) The Cinchona succirubra has been extremely successful in Jamaica and Java.

liana called "Khua-Khao-Ho" (2) which is used for its fever-inducing

(2) See Chapter III, p. 120.

properties. Both wood and bark are ground up, as is done with licorice root. It would be worthwhile to see whether this liana has any relation to the cinchona.

Cacao trees. This crop is among those whose introduction into Laos may be recommended. In order to develop, cacao trees need a hot and humid climate and high valleys with deep alluvia which are situated at altitudes between 100 and 200 meters. [390] Thus it might very well be that this shrub should prove successful in southern Laos.

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Coffee. The coffee bushes which have been planted in Laos by way of experiment in different regions and at different altitudes, depending on the variety (Liberian or Arabian), seem to be thriving. A few small plantations, like those on the Black River (on the frontier of the Sib-Song-Chau-Thai) and at the mission of the Bahnars, are even said to be producing a full yield already. But these results are still too sketchy for us to be able to state that the cultivation of coffe in Laos is ready to leave the period of experimentation and be undertaken on a large scale.

If it is true, as some say, that planting coffee in Annam and Tonkin has been extremely disappointing, then this does not offer encouragement for trying this crop in Laos.

Jute. The fiber of this plant is in great demand for making grain sacks and cloth wrapping material known as gunny. Although some jute is grown in Annam and Tonkin, in Indo-China we are still dependent for this product on British India, which sends us large quantities of it. The cultivation of this plant might be tried in Laos, in the higher parts of the country.

III

FOREST PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION--REFORESTATIO

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The administration of Laos has made an effort to remedy, insofa as possible, the indifference of the population as concerns conservati of forest resources. It has taken measures to facilitate the reforestati of hills and plateaus which have been cultivated as rais.

These measures were indispensable, if any attempt was to be made to prevent the hills and hillocks of Laos, as well as the mounta sides, from becoming bald and sterile over the years as has already occurred in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na and the northern regions. The heights do not have any trees or green foliage, the rock is bare on their [391] prominences, and only in the valleys which face to the north is there any soil containing vegetable matter.

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This deforestation and denudation are due to the annual burning which spread from one rai to another at the time when the inhabitant turn to new clearings. Out of indifference they allow the fires to consume the young vegetation which was beginning to cover the old rais and which, by holding back the soil containing vegetable matter was attenuating the destructive effects of erosion.

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Furthermore, the oft-repeated clearings cannot fail to have a certain influence on the atmospheric state of the region and on the constitution of the soil. Deforestation, in fact, brings about the denudation of high points all the way down to the rock which has not yet become decomposed, and rainwater, by carrying sterile alluvia down to the valley bottoms, partly obstructs the beds of rivers and causes the latter to overflow and erode their banks.

Furthermore, since clouds are no longer stopped by the forests which used to cover the heights they carry their fecundating water elsewhere at the very time when it is the most needed.

The result, in the last place, is a diminution in the yield from plains ricefields, which suffer from this insufficiency of natural irrigation.

Finally these clearings, made in a brutal, arbitrary and irrational manner, were causing the disappearance of useful varieties of trees forever. A little soda and potash is the only benefit to be drawn from combustion of the forests, and even this fertilizer is carried off by water in the following rainy season.

Henceforth, in accordance with the instructions published throughout the whole country by the superior administration of Laos and by the province administrators, cultivation on rais will be subject to the following regulations.

1. Sites to be cleared shall be determined by the local authorities, who shall choose land sufficiently far from old rais which are in the process of being reforested so that fires may be kept from spreading.

2. Rais in the process of being reforested shall be surrounded by a ditch [392] and by felled trees and brush. The owners of the nearest rais shall keep a careful watch, despite these precautions, in order to prevent fires from spreading.

3. When trees of a fine growth or of a useful variety are found on land which has been selected for the purpose of making a new rai, these shall be felled according to custom. But instead of burning them on the spot the woodcutters must push them off the limits of the rai and into a place safe from fire, so that they may later be utilized.

4. Furthermore, the local authorities shall oblige the inhabitants to sow or plant rapid-growing trees with roots sufficiently powerful to hold back the soil containing vegetable matter, over the whole area of abandoned rais.

By following the above procedure on all abandoned rais, it is to be hoped that they will be restored within fifteen or twenty years and will have enough humus so that they will again lend themselves to cultivation.

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When restored in this manner, their vegetation will reestablish the hygrometric regime of the region and the rational distribution of ground water.

FOREST PLANTATIONS

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Starting from the principle that trees of hardwood or precious varieties will rapidly disappear as soon as the forest riches of Laos are regularly exploited, a few administrators have thought that it would be wise to begin now and plant selected varieties.

This precaution will not seem either excessive or premature if one considers the time it takes for any tree whatsoever to reach full growth and acquire commercial value.

Since no reliance can be placed either on the people's initiative or on their willingness to concern themselves with plantings, it has been proposed that action be taken by way of authority. The inhabitants of each village, and particularly the registered inhabitants, would be forced to plant each year, in suitable spots which are easily accessible and near inhabited centers and watercourses, a certain number of trees of the [393] [Illustration] [394] [Blank page] [395] most useful varieties, which were well suited to the climate and soil of the region, and then forced to supervise their growth.

An example has already been provided in the way of teak plantations, for higher authorities had seeds of this precious tree distributed to the natives through their administrators.

The Laotians are so carefree and have so little concern for the morrow that many of them allowed the seeds to spoil without sowing them. It was necessary to issue orders and even make threats before the seeds were finally sowed.

One day we may therefore hope to see a great many teak trees rising from the ground where today there grow only the dwarfed and inferior quality trees of the forest glades. They will provide a source of inestimable wealth for the land (1).

(1) In Siam, teak exports represent an annual value of six to seven million francs.

Colonel Tournier, the Superior Resident in Laos, recently took the following measures for the conservation and reforestation of the teaks in the region of Xieng-Khong:

1. Designation by the Administration to the concessionnaire of trees which must be notched;

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2. The obligation on the part of the concessionnaire to rid the young teaks of the lianas which choke them;

3. The obligation to replant ten young teak shoots for every tree which is felled;

4. The obligation on the part of villages near groups of teaks to open up roads leading to these groups; a prohibition against making rais and cutting down trees without permission; the obligation to plant from fifty to a hundred teaks per house each year, depending on the remoteness of the village.

In return, the inhabitants of these villages need not fulfill the twenty days of labor drafts due each year.

Besides teak, we may recommend the planting of certain other trees, such as the "Mai-Niom-Pha" (mock mahogany), the "Mai-Thon" (mock walnut), the "Mai-Kha-Nioung" (mock rosewood), the "Mai-Lang-Dam" (ebony), etc.

The eucalyptus would doubtless grow well in certain regions of Laos.

PROVINCE EXPERIMENTAL GARDENS

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For several years now there have been experimental gardens in each commissionership. They serve as trial fields for the cultivation of certain European and Asian plants which are unknown or rare in Laos.

[396] These gardens are also schools of practical agriculture for the natives. Seeds and plants are distributed to the latter, and they are given extremely summary bits of information about certain plants whose cultivation would be advantageous from the point of view of commercial transactions. These gardens are destined to render services to future colonists, and the trials which are made there deserve encouragement.

Although not all heads of provinces possess the same degree of agricultural and horticultural knowledge, they devote the utmost zeal to making the most of their gardens. Seconded by their staff and guided by the enlightened counsels of the Superior Residency, of the department of Agriculture and of the directors of the botanical gardens of Indo-China, most of them have already achieved satisfactory results.

[113] The special periodicals such as the Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, the Revue des cultures coloniales, etc. which are sent to each commissioner are of invaluable help in this connection (1).

(1) Some of the libraries in the commissionerships contain a book

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of the highest merit entitled Petit traité d'Agriculture tropicale, by H.A. Alford Nicholls, translated from the English by E. Raoul (Paris, 1895, Challamel). This work, which is as complete as it is practical, cannot be too highly recommended.

IV

LIVESTOCK BREEDING

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Without speaking of the poultry which goes to feed the population, the Laotians engage in breeding elephants, horses, buffalo, oxen, pigs, goats and silkworms.

Elephants. Elephant breeding is profitable, even [397] though this animal does not acquire any commercial value until about its fifth year. It is true that young elephants do not necessitate any special care or any expense, since they always go with their mother and provide for their own food.

In one part of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang, in a province on the right bank of the Mekong which numbers scarcely 13,000 inhatitants (Outhai-Tani), there were a hundred-some domesticated elephants in 1898, plus twelve young ones which were the result of breeding. If the example of this province were followed throughout all Laos the number of elephants would rapidly increase, and within a relatively short time would constitute a new source of wealth for the country, one part alone of which was said to possess a million of these animals before the Siamese incursions (1).

(1) The kingdom of Luang-Prabang used to be called "Lan-Xang," The Land of the million elephants.

But with each invasion which Laos underwent, especially during the nineteenth century, the Siamese, the Annamites and the Cambodians did not fail to take turns despoiling it of this veritable wealth in order to increase their own.

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In southern Laos, breeding consists mainly in the training of young animals which have been recently captured. Thus in the province of Ban-Mouang the vast plains of the Se-Kampho and the Sepien provide excellent pasturages for elephants. Indeed, there are always fifty or so newly captured animals in the vicinity of Ban-Pa-Pho, which are being trained for sale. It is to be regretted that these beautiful plains are not used for raising livestock in general and

436 It will perhaps be of some interest to note here that the peoples of Laos have no respect for European gold coins, [420] because their gold
822 is alloyed with copper! In this country, as in all of the Far East in
439 general, it is thought that gold is the noble metal par excellance, that
177 it is polluted and diminished by alloying it with copper, which is unworthy of it, and that it can endure being made into an alloy only with silver.

The only "gold" coins in use, and still not at all currently in northern Laos, are books of gold leaf the thickness of tinfoil. They come from China and bear the official stamps of the country's banks which put them into circulation as "merchandise" in the same way as bars of silver.

Weighing instruments

405 The weighing instruments used in Laos include the "Ta-Dieng" or "Sing," a Chinese steelyard made of wood which has three rows of graduations. It may have a hook or a single platform, and is used for weights ranging from one "Sang" (1.23849 kilograms) up to several piculs.

For weights of less than a "Sang" the same kind of Chinese steelyard, with a hook or platform, is used, but it is smaller and made of ivory or bone.

A small pair of beam scales with platforms shaped like cupels, which is called "Sing-Dieng," is used mainly for weighing precious metals and gems.

There are several series of weights for balances. They are made of bronze, iron or copper and are most diverse in shape, representing elephants, imaginary birds, hexagons, pentagons, cones, pyramids, etc.

2. TRADE COMMODITIES AND PRODUCTS OF EXCHANGE

438 Since there is no industry to speak of in Laos, the local products which make up the basic commodities of interior trade and exports come
241 mainly from agriculture, livestock raising, scavenging, fishing and hunting. Mention may be made, however, of certain products of local, not to say familial, industry which enter into interior commerce and to some extent into the trade which goes on with neighboring countries.

438 [421] These include cloth goods of pure silk, either plain or spangled with gold, goods of silk blended with cotton, and wholly
433 cotton goods, then articles of jewelry and goldsmithing, and finally metals and ores from the still rudimentary mining industry and pottery goods, edge-tools, basketry, etc.

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with the greatest value on European markets, but woods which are very common in Indo-China are often just as highly esteemed. Among others we may cite the "Mai-Niang," the "Mai-Thon" (mock walnut), the "Mai-Deng" (rosewood), the "Mai-Dou" (thuja), the "Mai-Lang-Dam" (ebony), etc.

a great many other varieties of trees could be used to feed the saw-mill and, like alcohol, find an easy outlet in Cambodia and Cochinchina.

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[519] Finally, one other enterprise might be attempted. This is livestock breeding and particularly the raising of oxen, which sell in Cambodia and Cochinchina for double their value in their country of origin. We have previously mentioned some of the points which would be particularly well-suited to undertakings of this nature. The greatest hazard to be feared is the appearance of epizootic epidemics such as the ones which occur almost periodically and against which there is no weapon. The Pasteur Institute of Nha-Trang does not send out [Illustration here] anti-plague serum as is done with cow-pox vaccine, for as yet its incoulation must be left in the hands of specialists.

We believe that the system of livestock leasing would perhaps yield good results with the Laotian peasants.

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Since no serious attempt has as yet been made in Laos, it is difficult to treat of agricultural enterprises which Europeans might undertake. Nor must we forget that affairs of this sort require comparatively large sums of capital and professional knowledge which takes a long time to acquire. It is, moreover, up to the administration to provide the initial impetus, for it has the necessary means, equipment and personnel. When plantations have succeeded it [520] will easily find colonists to continue the work which has been begun, and capital will then find its way into Laos.

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Speaking for ourselves, we are persuaded that this land will soon be open to colonization. Only the coast of Indo-China is well-known, and on the day when it has been demonstrated that the mountains as well are a source of wealth, the fortune of Laos will be made. There is a blank page on which it is up to us, by profiting from the gropings and errors of the past, to trace the principles of true colonization, which provides well-being for the population and creates outlets for our industry and our commerce.

A very high official of Laos recently wrote, speaking of the development of this land: "Once everything was for Tonkin and

Kha

563 in a few particulars. They all inhabit the peaks of mountains, where they generally engage in the cultivation of poppies and maize.

[439 241] Hos. The Hos are genuine Chinese who came in with the caravans from Yunnan and settled in the land to engage in trade or to grow cotton (1).

(1) According to a monograph by Government Commissioner Grand.

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APPENDIX XVIII
NOTE ON THE EASTERN REGION OF LOWER LAOS (1)

[113] (1) Extract from a report by Colonel Tournier, Superior Commandant of Lower Laos. (Bulletin Economique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900, No. 19.)

PRESENT STATUS OF THE DIFFERENT KHA TRIBES

563 TRIBES LIVING ON THE GREAT ANNAMITIC CHAIN. 1. The tribe of Tha-Hoi may be regarded as being entirely pacified. It is a dependency of both Annam and Laos, but the spheres of influence of the two lands were perfectly delimited at the time of the establishment by Annam of the administrative post in Lao-Bao.

2. The Khon-Tou-Khas, the Ve-Khas and the Alak Khas are completely pacified and extremely tranquil. They are dependencies of Saravane.

Between the high valleys of the Se-Kemane and the Sesane (where the word Legnau, which is unknown in the region, is found on the Pavie map), there is an absolutely deserted region which serves as a buffer between the abovementioned tribes and the Cedangs.

[316] 3.The great tribe of the Cedangs, so far unconquerable. It occupies both sides of the chain, and its villages are situated in extremely 563 difficult positions. The land is very poor, and until the last few years, besides the iron deposits which they work, their real commerce 567 was the slave trade. All the Annamite slaves of the Mekong valley, both on the left bank and the right, came from raids made by these tribes in Annamite territory, even down as far as the sea. The abolition of slavery in Laos was a great blow to them, but since it is absolutely necessary for them to procure buffalo and oxen in order to live and especially for their superstitious practices, they still continue to make occasional captures in Annam and find a market for

619 traditions and the annals which I have been able to consult, they are
643 the descendants of the last kings of the land before the Cham invasion.
[648] The kings of Cambodia have had to appeal to them for help on one
[175] or two critical occasions, and it was in return for services rendered
563 that the king of Cambodia, up until recent times, used to send them
presents every year (annual tribute, according to them, payment of
which stopped only five years ago).

[726] They have never been willing to recognize our authority. The
king of Pa-Tao-la, who is situated on the Laotian side, twice attacked
the Government Commissioners of Stung-Treng when the latter were
making a tour of inspection in this region, first in December 1894
and a second time in January 1897. They were given a severe lesson
this second time, for the village was entirely destroyed and they
suffered many losses. The Sadete Loum (the Master of water) settled
on the Annamite side alongside the Master of fire after the affair,
and since that time has given no further orders to our faithful Djarais.

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APPENDIX XIX
NOTE ON THE MEOS

563 The Meo has a savage and distrustful character. He does not
609 like the presence of foreigners, or even of people of his own race.
Clinging to the side of a mountain, and always as high up as
possible, he asks only to be allowed to live in peace in his wild soli-
tude and bodes no ill to anyone provided he is left alone and independen

He is a great hunter of wild beasts and large game. More in-
433 dustrious than the Thais, he makes all his farming implements him-
• 241 self (picks and shovels), as well as his wooden buckets and mills for
grinding maize and paddy. He raises fine poultry, pigs, oxen, goats
231 and horses with particular care and success. If he stays in one place
for any length of time he also produces, in addition to the maize
and rice which form the basis of his food supply and the opium which
he smokes, very fine eggplants, gourds, sweet potatoes and non-
sweetened batatas very much like the common potato, sorrel, green
beans and all the French vegetables whose seeds are given him. On
his heights he cultivates the fruit trees which merely vegetate in
the plains, such as the peach tree, and the peaches which he harvests
can compete without any fear with those of our own country.

The Meo climbs like a cat. Over sheer paths, up ladders com-
516 posed of a single bamboo pole standing upright in which notches are
417 cut at regular intervals which are large enough for two toes, the Meo

23: Franck--276-277 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 231, 242, 361

"Small villages appeared once more, this time of the real Laosians, villages of thatched houses raised on poles [277] well above snakes and possible floods, with a bit of cultivation about them. Each house had rounded gable walls at either end, one a kind of family veranda all but covered with a curving roof of thatch, where visitors are received and the family does its gossiping, the other a granary and store-room, where the cooking also seemed to be done. The walls of the houses, everything possible, in fact, were made of strips of narrow palm-leaves folded over a stick, forming panels overlapped like shingles. Many small but stout horses dotted the landscape here and there."

Kha

"The most varied types are to be found among the Khas. Some are just like the American 'Redskins,' others have a heavier and more bestial appearance, and still others are small and puny. Certain of them are veritable savages who have never heard of clothing and live in shapeless huts, taking to the trees or fleeing into the forest at the slightest alarm, with monkey-like habits and the instincts of wild animals. 142 291

"Others, on the other hand, wear clothing quite like that of the Lus, build proper houses and enjoy a comparative degree of civilization. But they all carry a bag of dark blue cloth which never leaves them.

"It is a long way between the primitives which some of them are and the half-civilized beings which the better policed among them are. Thus the greater part of these poor folk have long been in servitude, especially in the northern and central part, and have become the humble servants of more highly refined races which exploit them. 563

"In the south, however, some tribes of particular origin have been able to resist all outer authority and are still free and independent today." [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

The Khas of northern Laos. All the Khas of northern Laos have been brought under control, and even emancipated, and live grouped in villages or hamlets which are distributed over the mountainsides, generally near some watercourse. 361

Houses. Kha houses, which are built on piles and in the same style as those of the Laotians although in less careful fashion, are set down without any care for symmetry or alignment. They are generally much smaller and built for a single family. The houses are extremely dirty. 242

The Khas have very little in the way of large livestock, and so the under part of the houses shelter only pigs and poultry. 231

A few Kha tribes, such as the Khouenes (white and black), Khmous and Lemets, which are the most civilized have quite fine villages with well built and carefully aligned houses. A pagoda will sometimes be found in these. 361

Costume. Khas of both sexes wear their hair long and wound in a coil on the nape of the neck or top of the head. The [258] Lemets comb part of their hair down over their forehead and cut it off straight at the eyebrow level. 291

23: Franck--343 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 243, 252, 415

"They hull their rice as it is needed, by stepping on the end of a long pole ending in a big wooden pestle, which falls monotonously into a wooden mortar, a hollowed section of large tree-trunk. These seem to be the chief occupations, but there are many others, as the traveler with time to watch their goings and comings during a few evenings will discover. As in southern China, the pan-basket in which rice is screened and prepared for cooking is made of bamboo splints, but they use clean water rather than any filth in which to wash it."

23: Franck--345 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 243, 343

"Little huts on stilts everywhere awaited the coming of laborers to the fields, lying fallow in grass now, but planted in July and harvested in November. There is no water for flooding at other times, because it does not rain enough, though with the industry and industry and ingenuity of the Chinese they could easily harness the rivers that run away toil-less to the distant sea. But there is no need to do so, because there is no such crowding and consequent hunger as in China and its slender little offspring, Annam."

[543] 164 and prepared. This affliction is doubtless due to the Laotian peasants' prolonged stay in the hot and nauseating mud of the ricefields.

Cases of purulent ophthalmia make their appearance between December and March and, in addition to a special predisposition of the race to this disease, its cause must be attributed to the many air currents and drafts which find their way between the walls of houses during the season of great winds.

This affliction, which affects mainly children and adolescents, is aggravated by uncleanliness and by the use of already contaminated bandages. Even the most serious cases of ophthalmia disappear, often within a few days, when treated with boric acid solution or zinc sulphate applied by means of antiseptic cotton wool or gauze.

The skin disorders are leprosy, alopecia, frambecia, prurigo, a variety of watery skin disorders and types of pityriasis and stubborn sores caused by wounds by sharp weapons, tools or splinters.

At the beginning of 1900 Dr. Janselme of the Saint-Louis Hospital went on a mission in Laos the purpose of which was to diagnose and identify the existing skin disorders as well as to study treatments which might be applied.

[115] Goiter is also quite widespread among the mountainfolk, especially among those who drink water which has flowed over calcareous rock or serpentine. One sees men, women and even childre afflicted with monstrous double and triple goiters, the volume of which often exceeds that of a man's head.

Syphilis is also prevalent in Laos. It was imported by Siamese soldiers and is widespread only in the regions where they stayed most. Sufficient proof of this fact is seen in its absence in the regions inhabited by the Khas.

744 Ever since our settlement in Laos the health service has maintained a strict surveillance and its dispensaries have cared for sick persons of both sexes (1).

(1) There are three field infirmaries in Laos directed by Colonial physicians and located at Khong, Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang. Unfortunately, the reports sent by these physicians to the head of the health service have not been published.

149: Reinach--220 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

The trees also support incomparable wild orchids with strange flowers, and climbing or twining plants of every possible shape and color which are as graceful as they are delicate, which cross, intertwine and with their lianas form an inextricable jungle, a curtain of flowers, stems and foliage which moves at the whim of the winds and is so thick in certain spots that it casts an almost perpetual shadow (1). 137!

(1) The exact nomenclature of these floral species is almost impossible to establish. We shall content ourselves with noting, among many others which are still unknown: the acacia, and principally the farnèse acacia; various kinds of lilacs; the double and single hibiscus, the African marigold and the zinnias, the lotus, the cockscomb, the marvel of Peru, the sunflower, several kinds of magnolias, syringa, camellias, etc.

Various plants used for food, medicine and dye also grow in the forests, such as yams, taros, ginger, cardamom, annatto, curcuma, catechu (sisèt), Campeachy wood, wild indigo, etc., as well as trees and lianas which produce resins, oil lac, black and red lacquer, damarine (huile de bois), benzoin, wax, gums and rubber. 824

Rice and maize are cultivated on the plateaus, low hills, mountainsides and in the valleys, as well as on the alluvial deposits of the Mekong. These form the basis of the natives' food supply and are essential elements in the manufacture of alcohol. 243 273

The banks of the watercourses, which are covered by inundations every year and constantly fertilized by alluvial deposits, are [305] used for the cultivation of cotton, tobacco, indigo, castor oil plants, batatas, peanuts, manioc and vegetables and fruits such as onions, garlic, tomatoes, squash, melons, fennel, mustard, edible convolvuluses, sensitive d'eau, etc. In the gardens which are cultivated near the banks one also finds sugar cane, coconut palms, sugar palms, betel palms, latania palms, the poivrier bétel, the arborescent mulberry, peppers, coriander, mint, the citronella and [Illustration here] purslane. Here also are a large variety of fruit trees: banana trees (more than twenty-four varieties), cinnamon trees, fig trees, orange trees, tangerine trees, grapefruit trees, lemon trees, lime trees, pineapple trees, pomegranate trees, guava trees, mango trees, papaw trees, ebony trees (Diospyros ebenum), mangosteen trees, jack trees, durian trees, custard-apple trees, avocado trees, litchi trees, sapodilla trees (red balata), fayolliers (légumineuses), silk-cotton trees 241 245

241 Lower Laos and 1.1 inhabitant in Upper Laos), the considerable expense
311 which the establishment of a registry would involve, and the slight interest attached to such a measure in a land where our advantage lies in exercising only an indirect administration, it is impossible for me to reply in any precise fashion.

"All that I can say is that the area of cultivable land is about 80,000 square kilometers, and that it is very unevenly distributed.
[312] The southern part of the possession does offer a certain number of vast plains which are well irrigated or can be irrigated and which are admirably suited to agriculture.

"The northern part, on the other hand, is almost exclusively made up of a series of juxtaposed mountain masses in a nearly unbroken line which leaves only an insignificant place for the rare valleys and plateaus satisfying the conditions required by agriculture.

"The area of cultivated land may be estimated arbitrarily at 30,000 square kilometers, distributed as follows:

Southern Laos, 20,000 square kilometers.
Northern Laos, 10,000 square kilometers.
} Giving about 15 inhabitants per cultivated square kilometer."

In the preceding chapter we gave a list of the plants which compose the flora of Laos. We shall supplement it here by studying those which are grown as regular crops.

243 RICE. Rice, being the basic food of the Laotians, occupies first place among the country's crops.

Two varieties of rice are grown in Laos, glutinous rice or "Nep" (in Annamite) which is called "Khao-Niaou" in Laotian, and dry rice or "Khao-Tiao" which is known in trade as Cochinchina white rice.

The first is more nourishing and contains a higher percentage of starchy matter. Because of its particular qualities, it is the type most widely cultivated for food and for the manufacture of alcohol.

Dry rice or "Khao-Tiao" is also cultivated, but in smaller quantities. It is primarily used for making pastry and for food by inhabitants of certain races which do not eat glutinous rice.

[554 262] Persons of a certain standing even go so far as to eat only "Khao-Tiao" out of ostentation.

Glutinous rice is grown in plains ricefields as well as in terraced ricefields on hillsides and in "Rais" or temporary clearings in the mountains.

149: Reinach--260 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Dry rice may be grown in the plains, but is generally cultivated in mountain rais, for the peoples who consume it are settled in the highlands. Indeed, the Khas are the ones who mainly practice its cultivation. The ratio of total dry rice production to that of glutinous rice is about one to four. 243

It is difficult to give any official figures, even approximate ones --for the reasons given above--regarding the total quantity of rice, whether the year be a good or bad one, which Laos produces. It differs, moreover, from one year to the next because of meteorological variations and also because of the damaging epizootic diseases which recur periodically, decimating the farming animals and forcing the inhabitants to reduce the area of their plantings. [231]

[355] One can, however, given the amount necessary for the subsistence of a family of five, deduce the approximate weight of rice which is indispensable for feeding any given group of people. 262 146

It is estimated that the average yearly consumption by a family of five is 28 piculs of paddy (1,700 kilograms), which yield about 17 piculs of threshed rice (1,026 kilograms). 243

Now the total population of Laos, which is estimated at 470,000, will normally contain 94,000 families of five, or groupings of five individuals of all ages and both sexes. On this basis it is easy to calculate that the amount of paddy needed to feed these 94,000 groups will be 2,632,000 piculs (159,800,000 kilograms) of paddy and 1,598,000 piculs (96,440,000 kilograms) of threshed rice.

In addition to this indispensable minimum merely for feeding the inhabitants, other quantities of rice are also necessary: 1) For fodder for certain animals and for making alcohol, pastry, etc., a consumption figure which we estimate at one-fifth of the above figure, or 526,400 piculs of paddy (31,794,560 kilograms) or 319,600 piculs of threshed rice (19,308,840 kilograms); 2) For seed and emergency reserves. These latter may be calculated at the rate of 5 piculs of paddy per house or per family of five, and require about 600,000 piculs of paddy (36,240,000 kilograms). 243 262 273

In recapitulation, it is clear that the amount of paddy which Laos ought to produce for food for its inhabitants, fodder for certain animals, the manufacture of alcohol, miscellaneous uses, seed and reserves is some 3,758,000 to 3,800,000 piculs or 226,983 to 229,520 tons, giving an average ratio of 1) 485 kilograms or 8 piculs of paddy per inhabitant; or 2) 2,425 kilograms or 40 piculs per family.

243 262 In reality, this is neither always nor everywhere the case. There are bad years when, because of a shortage of water, production in the ricefields falls by 30 or 40 percent, and the natives are then obliged to turn for their food to the roots, yams and taros which they find in the forest.

[311] [356] It is the northern part of Laos which mainly suffers from this sad state of things, as a result of its hydrological régime, the particular disposition of its farming land, and the fragmentation of the latter into relatively small plots which are remote from one another.

312 In southern Laos the vaster plains and a more complete natural irrigation which can easily be increased as the need arises make it possible not only to satisfy local needs but also to provide paddy and threshed rice for export. Thus in 1898 900 tons of paddy were exported to Cambodia and Cochinchina (1).

[439]

(1) These exports, which seem rather slight, will certainly increase provided that crops are good.

243 439 Here, by way of indication, are some current prices per hundred kilograms of paddy and decorticated rice:

Northern Laos	Paddy	4 francs 10 centimes to 9 francs
	Rice	8 francs 30 centimes to 10 francs 60 centimes
Southern Laos	Paddy	1 franc 65 centimes to 3 francs
	Rice	8 francs 30 centimes to 12 francs 50 centimes

243 In the figures given above as representing the amount of cereal grains needed to feed the population, we should include a certain quantity of maize. We do not have sufficient information to be able to show its importance with respect to the total production of cereals and consequently to say by how many tons the total figure for the paddy crop ought to be reduced in order for this difference to be applied to maize.

Nevertheless, if we take as a basis the total number of inhabitants who grow this crop, we may estimate that in northern Laos the ratio of maize production to that of paddy is about one to five. In southern Laos this crop is much less extensive.

149: Reinach--262 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Rice is grown in two different ways in Laos: in inundated ricefields on plains or hills, and in rais or [357] temporary mountain clearings. Only one crop is harvested per year, from November to January, since the Laotians do not practice artificial irrigation and count only on the water supplied by rain. 243 [312]

Maize is always grown in rais or on the edge of terraced hillside ricefields. In southern Laos only the Khas have any in their fields. The Laotians produce maize only in their gardens, as a vegetable. [563]

Glutinous or aquatic rice grows well only on low, hot, swampy land where the soil is heavy. Dry rice, on the other hand, thrives only on ordinary soil which is moist and slightly sandy, and on heights up to an altitude of 1,800 meters where it can endure temperatures which are relatively low for tropical regions (5° and even lower).

Plains ricefields. The land in plains ricefields generally consists of soil containing a high percentage of vegetable matter. It is composed of alluvia worked by earthworms and containing organic vegetable matter in decomposition. The clayish and sandy soil is deep enough to permit growth and nourishment of the plant roots. It generally rests either on rock, or on a compact sediment or on an alluvial strata which has a higher clay content and has not been penetrated by worms. This bottom layer prevents the ground water which is indispensable to the growth of the grain from escaping.

Terraced ricefields. In the ricefields which are terraced or arranged in steps, and which are situated on hillsides or the lower slopes of the mountains which enclose high valleys, the layer of vegetable matter is fairly thin. This is due to the fact that rocky particles removed from the peaks by running water have been deposited on natural terraces where they form a kind of alluvial cone. Man's handiwork has extended and leveled them, and arranged them in such a way that the alluvia will not be carried lower. Dikes or levees of earth and stones limit the successive terraces which cover the slopes, like the steps of a gigantic stairway. They hold back the vegetable soil, and at the same time their inner faces [358] constitute the walls of irrigation canals which circulate from one step to another from the top of the hills to the bottom, diverting into the furrows, through slits which may be opened at will, the waters of a brook or torrent which has been captured at a higher level. 243 312

Rais. Rais take their name from a Siamese unit of area measurement which is applied to ricefields and which represents a square forty meters on a side, or 1,600 square meters. They are [804] 243

243 clearings made in the mountains in the midst of the wild forest. All the vegetation cut down is burned where it falls, and its ashes constitute a fertilizer added to the humus in the soil.

Rais can generally be seeded for two years only, sometimes three but never more. They are abandoned at the end of this period, for the roots of the fallen vegetation are no longer there to hold the soil in place and rainwater, which is no longer screened and partly absorbed by the foliage of the trees and plants, strikes the denuded soil with force and gradually wears it away. Running water thus carries off all the vegetable particles one by one to the valley bottoms, sometimes leaving nothing but bare rock.

Farming methods. 1) Plains ricefields.

243 The terrain is divided into more or less regular compartments which are
312 nearly rectangular in shape and are 30, 40 or 60 meters on a side. They are separated from one another by earth dikes or levees which are .6 meter high and the same width at the base. Slits are pierced in the dikes to enable water to circulate and to permit the artificial swamps which each compartment or plains rai constitutes to be either inundated or drained. The canals which circulate through the ricefields are either diverted from a higher watercourse or else fed by various means which make it possible to raise water from a lower level.

243 Plowing is begun when the first rains have fallen and when the soil, which had acquired deep cracks under the action of the sun, has first soaked in water and then become sufficiently saturated.

This operation is carried out with the help of a rudimentary plow drawn by a buffalo and directed by a man. Furrows are thus [359] traced underwater in the semi-fluid, warm and nauseating mud of the ricefield. After this first operation the water is allowed to remain for a while, and then the ricefield is drained. It is harrowed and rolled, and water is again let in. Then the land is ready for transplanting the young rice plants.

The rice which is to supply plants for transplanting has been sowed in a chosen compartment which is sometimes [Illustration here] fertilized (lime, buffalo and ox manure). When the young shoots reach a height of 15 to 20 centimeters in the seed-garden they are uprooted and replanted in clusters of three or five plants each in the ricefield which has been prepared as above. Transplanting is done in squares or in a staggered arrangement, with the plants 30 to 40 centimeters apart.

In some parts of northern Laos there are even two successive transplantings two weeks apart. When they come out of the seed-garden

the plants are replanted a few centimeters [360] apart in a second seed-garden for growth. This procedure increases the plant's productivity quite appreciably. 243

Since the nature of the terrain and the richness of the soil vary from one point to another, it follows that the yield from the ricefields is not uniform. By reason of these conditions and the varying amount of water which falls on the fields or is piped in, this yield varies from 40 to 90 parts for one part of seed, and from 15 to 25 piculs per hectare (1). The rice is harvested about four or five months after 243 312

(1) In Cochinchina the average yield is from 28 to 30 piculs, and in Tonkin 44 piculs. But one should not lose sight of the fact that Cochinchina and Tonkin are much better favored than Laos from the point of view of irrigation, and that the Annamites are past masters in the art of farming. [101]

transplanting.

2) Terraced ricefields. The soil is worked in the same way in these ricefields, except that in some cases the land is turned over with a spade instead of plowed. 243

3) Mountain rais. In the year following the one when the land was cleared, the soil of the rais is cleaned and weeded. Then in June the rice is sowed, either broadcast or else by dropping a few grains at a time into holes made with a kind of bamboo dibble.

The rais are harvested in October and even in September in some localities. In general the yield from rais is from 90 to 120 parts for one part of seed and from 10 to 20 piculs per hectare.

Maize is sowed directly in straight furrows about March or April, and is harvested in July.

TOBACCO. Tobacco (Ia-Doute) is widely consumed in Laos, where everyone smokes. It is also an excellent commodity for trade and export. It is cultivated on a large scale on the banks and islands of the Mekong from Pak-Lay to a point below Pone-Pissay. Production from the tobacco fields in these regions not only supplies local needs, but also those of all of Upper Laos and part of Lower Laos and provides tobacco for export to Siam and Cochinchina. 249 [43]

[361] In addition to the foregoing, almost the whole population along the banks of the Mekong and the lower reaches of its tributaries also grows tobacco for its own use and for the inhabitants of the interior. The tobacco which is most prized for its high quality, however,

316 begun at judiciously chosen points [Illustration here] they can be
accommodated to the existing means of communication and transport
313 if necessary. As for the sums needed to engage in a commercial,
mining or forest enterprise, it is difficult to determine these in any
185 precise fashion for, depending on the region and the special conditions
of the terrain, such matters may require more or less capital.

[518] For dealing in teak wood (1), for example, the sums needed

(1) A rigorous investigation made by a chief guardsman of the Laotian militia of the region of Xieng-Khong, on the left bank of the Mekong, has shown that the number of teak trees ready for cutting in the province of Muong-Sing is 4,975 in all, 2,000 of which are of exceptional size for the region, that is to say that their diameter varies between 0.3 and 0.6 meter. Counting the young shoots and young trees, the total number of teaks which we possess in Muong-Sing may be estimated at about 20,000.

Another group is situated on the right bank of the Mekong, in the vicinity of Pak-Lay and in the basin of the Nam-Poun. It includes from 10,000 to 12,000 teak trees ready for cutting, concessions for about half of which have been granted. (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900.)

for purchase and transport would depend on the quantity which it was desired to export. As an average indication, the sum of 40,000 francs might be given for operations on 1,000 teak trees.

From the point of view of mineral resources, certain deposits require capital in the millions for their exploitation, while others might be worked profitably with sums varying between 250,000 to 500,000 francs.

433 In the way of industries which may be started at the present time,
185 we may cite only the establishment of rice distilleries in southern
Laos and of a mechanical sawmill at Khone.

[273 A distillery could be set up without any great expense at the
243] mouth of the Mekong and the Sedone, for example. Thanks to the
price of glutinous rice which is five or six times less expensive in
this region than at Pnom-Penh, the alcohol from such a distillery
would find a certain market in Cambodia.

185 For several years now there has been talk of establishing a
mechanical sawmill on the island of Khone which would obtain its
313 motive power from the nearby waterfalls. Besides teak wood (2),
439

(2) Teak is generally regarded, although wrongly, as the wood

[touques]. 796

The experts throw themselves on the stone, turning it over to 782
see if its underside has been wetted. According to the arrangement
of the dry spots, [41] deductions are drawn on the topography of the 787
rice fields which will be flooded, or remain dry, and on the advan- 243
tage of making rice fields either "high or low."

This sacrifice of the buffalo is found in the myth of Gavampati 789
the strange monk held aloof by the Buddhist community because
he took the attitude of being an enemy of the waters. His death
allowed the arrival of the rains.

Khao Vassa (Feast of the Eighth Month). 796

This is the date of the beginning of the Buddhist Lent. During
the three months of rains, not being able to go from one place to 792
another preaching, the Buddha and his community retired into the
park of the Jetavana. Besides the season of rains, as it awakens life 783
everywhere, causes animals to swarm in great numbers. It is
therefore impossible at this time of year to travel without violating,
at each step, the precept which forbids the destruction of all
existence, however infinitely small it may be. Thus, during this
period, the bonzes may not leave the pagoda and are obliged to be
present at the general confession.

Oldenberg describes this confession according to the Pali texts
as follows:

"No monk may miss it. Only he who is stricken with mental
alienation may be dispensed.... By the light of a torch, the monks
take their places at the place of assembly on low stools which have
been prepared for them. Neither laymen nor student bonzes
[bonzillons] nor nuns may be present, for the rule of the Order, to
be recited in the form of a formula of confession, is considered in
principle as a secret appurtenance of the monks only. This formula
of confession, the Patimokkgam, is recited aloud by the oldest
member [doyen].

"Oh Reverend one, whoever has committed a sin, may he con-
fess it.... After the third time that the question has been repeated, if
a monk does not confess a sin which [42] he has committed and which
he remembers, he is guilty of an intentional lie. Now an intentional
lie, oh reverend one, is an obstacle to religious life. Such are the
words of the Blessed One."

Then there follows a list of the sins which must be confessed.
At the head of the list are the most serious ones:

the present time only the lion is kept, for apparently its role is no longer very well known. 527 825

[68] THE HARVEST FESTIVAL

This takes place after the harvest, during the first and second months, and is held in the open countryside. Its purpose is to glorify "the soul of rice." 527 243

It is not until the threshing has been completed and the rice piled up in heaps that the master of the harvest consults his neighbors and chooses with them the day of celebration. Light shelters must then be built on his field around the threshing area to accommodate the guests. On the top of the pile of paddy a sort of pulpit is erected from which the bonzes will recite their prayers.

On the morning of the feast day, the master of the house slaughte [262] an ox from which is made the traditional lap, a dish consisting of raw meat and chopped up peppers mixed with various chopped up green vegetables the whole held together with a soup of pa dek. In the evening a court of love is held and the mo lam (professional singers) are also invited. At the end of this first night, the bonzes climb into the pulpit before daybreak to read the legend of Nang Kho Sop. 527 773

"In the olden days a grain of rice was as big as a gourd. It was cut down with an axe. Then Nang Kho Sop (the soul of rice) became angry at this barbarous treatment and flew away. Since then this feast has been celebrated so that the soul will return."

The reading closes as day breaks, and offerings are made to the bonzes. At the close of the prayer, each one of the faithful, before rising, sprinkles a few drops of water on the ground so that Nang Thorani may bear witness to their alms and so that the goddess may not forget to count it among the merits he has acquired for his future lives.

[69] The owner takes a basket filled with boiled chicken, alcohol, sweet potatoes, and all kinds of tuberous roots. He goes by himself into his rice field and walks over it in every direction, at the same time calling the soul of rice to thank it for having made his fields bear fruit and to beg it to continue being equally generous to him in future years. He offers it all the food in the basket saying: Soul of Rice, here are tuberous roots for thee, here are buds of cabbage palm, and good alcohol made from thy grain. Soul of Rice, descend on us and preside over the feast I am giving in thy honor! 243 527

527 He then places his basket at the base of the pile of paddy and
243 the me-tao come and welcome the rice whose soul the owner of the rice is supposed to have brought back.

The master of the house then brings a straw mannequin personifying rice. Immediately the old women make a bassi before it, and tie white cotton threads to its gilded wrists. They then congratulate the rice on its return and beg it never to leave the granary again.

787 An old man, known for his powers of divination, takes the boiled
527 chicken from the basket, examines minutely its beak and claws, and from signs he discovers in them, reads the fate of the coming harvest.
243 When the prophecy is completed, he slides the entrails of the animal into the stomach of the little straw man as well as all the food from the basket.

527 The Rice figure thus adorned and restored is raised to the top of
243 the pile of paddy whence it will preside over the remainder of the feast.

Before the end of the festival, the wagons are brought out. When they are loaded with the Rice figure enthroned on the first wagon, the paddy is brought into the granaries. When the final load is under shelter, the owner places on its summit the mannequin which, still personifying the soul of Rice [70] will watch over the granary, keep away fire and lightning, and "see that the pile will never diminish or become level with the floor, however many baskets are filled from it."

The master of the harvest is careful to remove a sufficient supply of paddy to last a few weeks, then closes the granary and decorates the door with branches of khoun (to bring luck) and of som seune (gaiety). These will keep luck and gaiety in the house. Hereafter, under no pretext whatever, may the door of the granary be opened before the "third day of the third month," because then "the frog has no mouth and the dragon no anus," and consequently no voracious animal will dare come and devour the harvest.

The Feast of the Khao Chi

527 According to S. Karpelès this ceremony takes place once a year
712 in every quarter of Luang Prabang. It consists of going to the neighborhood of the capital with the bonzes of the pagoda of the designated quarter. A large procession leaves the town, headed for a plateau at the entrance to the forest. While the women are busy with the cooking, the men settle the venerable old men on rugs. The young men and novices cut down branches, clean off the bark leaving a plume of

149: Reinach--270 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

GROUND NUTS. Only the subterranean varieties of ground nuts, or peanuts, are found in Laos. The inhabitants call this plant "Mak-Thoua-Dine," which means, literally, Fruit of the ground bean. Peanuts are not used for their oil, but are eaten boiled, roasted or with certain pastries in which they are incorporated. They are fed to convalescents as a tonic and restorative, doubtless because of their high nitrogen content. 244

COCONUT AND SUGAR PALMS. The former is called "Kok-Mak-Phao" and its fruit is called "Mak-Phao." The second is called "Kok-Mak-Tane" and its fruit the "Mak-Tane." The sugar extracted from the "Mak-Tane" is called "Nam-Tane." 245

These two trees are cultivated almost everywhere in the environs of villages.

Coconuts are consumed on the spot, either fresh or dried. In the latter case their meat is used to make an edible oil which is quite good when newly made, or else it is shredded and then used to make a kind of sugar cream. Coconut meat is one of the constituents of carry.

The number of coconut palms in Laos is not great enough [368] to provide for local needs and still leave any over for export of their pulp, which is known commercially as copra. Sugar palms are used only for the needs of the local population. The sugar which they yield is whiter than cane sugar as extracted by the Laotians, and so the natives give the name of "Nam-Tane" to the crystallized European and Chinese sugar, because of its color, and never apply to it the name "Nam-Oi," which designates their black cane sugar.

BETEL PALMS. Betel palms are grown wherever the altitude permits, and are even found at heights greater than eight hundred meters. [Illustration alongside text here] The betel palm, which is called "Kok-Mak," produces the "Mak" nut with the veined meat which enters into the composition of the national masticatory together with betel, lime, etc. 249 276

When it reaches maturity the betel nut is picked and prepared in two different ways in order to be either consumed on the spot or transported to parts of the country which have none. There is even a small export trade, but so slight that we need only mention it. [348]

It may be preserved whole after the floss envelope from which it is extracted has been dried, or else it may be cut up into [369] thin

incorporate into the teas which they send abroad. But they appeal to the Chinese and other Orientals, and part of the crop is even set aside and sent as tribute to the court of the Emperor in Peking. 245 [648]

The Shans, the Lus and the Youns use a masticatory called "Mieng" which is composed solely of tea leaves which have been preserved in brine. [276]

PIMENTOS. Since pimento is a much sought-after condiment, and one which is even indispensable to the people of Laos, as to those of neighboring countries, the cultivation of this product is quite widespread. [244 263]

This pimento is of the large, red variety. It is prepared by [378] drying and smoking it, thereby guaranteeing that it will keep. Its name in Laotian is "Mak-Phik." The price of dry pimento varies from 25 to 37 francs per hundred kilograms.

FARMING IMPLEMENTS AND TOOLS USED IN LAOS. We shall conclude this rapid listing of the chief crops grown in Laos by giving a list of the farming implements used in the country. These latter are just as primitive and just as rudimentary as the farming methods, and the Laotians do not make any more effort to improve the ones than to improve the others. 412 241

The plow (Thai). The plow is extremely simple and is the primitive swing-plow formed of a single piece of bent wood. A share or "Mak-Sob-Thai" is fitted to its front end. Sometimes the share is even supplanted by cutting the stick of wood diagonally and hardening it in a fire. Drawn by a buffalo, this tiny plow cannot break the soil to any great depth, and so is used in ricefields only when the soil has been sufficiently softened by the annual inundations.

The harrow (Khat). The harrow is a sort of wooden rake .9 meter long, the teeth of which are made of ironwood or any other very hard wood, "Mai-Lek" or "Mai-Khen-Hine." This rake forms one of the sides of a triangle, the peak of which is harnessed to a buffalo.

The roller (Ham). The roller is the trunk of some hardwood tree, "Mai-Khen-Hine" for example. It has pins over which two shafts fit, leaving space to harness a buffalo.

The sickle. There are sickles of several sizes, which are called either "Kio" or "Lek Kio" without distinction. Sickles are used to cut grasses and rice.

149; Reinach--220 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

The trees also support incomparable wild orchids with strange flowers, and climbing or twining plants of every possible shape and color which are as graceful as they are delicate, which cross, intertwine and with their lianas form an inextricable jungle, a curtain of flowers, stems and foliage which moves at the whim of the winds and is so thick in certain spots that it casts an almost perpetual shadow (1). 137

(1) The exact nomenclature of these floral species is almost impossible to establish. We shall content ourselves with noting, among many others which are still unknown; the acacia, and principally the farnèse acacia; various kinds of lilacs; the double and single hibiscus, the African marigold and the zinnias, the lotus, the cockscomb, the marvel of Peru, the sunflower, several kinds of magnolias, syrings, camellias, etc.

Various plants used for food, medicine and dye also grow in the forests, such as yams, taros, ginger, cardamom, annatto, curcuma, catechu (sisèt), Campeachy wood, wild indigo, etc., as well as trees and lianas which produce resins, oil lac, black and red lacquer, damarine (huile de bois), benzoin, wax, gums and rubber. 824

Rice and maize are cultivated on the plateaus, low hills, mountainsides and in the valleys, as well as on the alluvial deposits of the Mekong. These form the basis of the natives' food supply and are essential elements in the manufacture of alcohol. 243 273

The banks of the watercourses, which are covered by inundations every year and constantly fertilized by alluvial deposits, are [305] used for the cultivation of cotton, tobacco, indigo, castor oil plants, batatas, peanuts, manioc and vegetables and fruits such as onions, garlic, tomatoes, squash, melons, fennel, mustard, edible convolvuluses, sensitive d'eau, etc. In the gardens which are cultivated near the banks one also finds sugar cane, coconut palms, sugar palms, betel palms, latania palms, the poivrier bétel, the arborescent mulberry, peppers, coriander, mint, the citronella and [Illustration here] purslane. Here also are a large variety of fruit trees; banana trees (more than twenty-four varieties), cinnamon trees, fig trees, orange trees, tangerine trees, grapefruit trees, lemon trees, lime trees, pineapple trees, pomegranate trees, guava trees, mango trees, papaw trees, ebony trees (Diospyros ebenum), mangosteen trees, jack trees, durian trees, custard-apple trees, avocado trees, litchi trees, sapodilla trees (red balata), fayolliers (légumineuses), silk-cotton trees 241 245

245 (bombax and callotropis), tamarind trees, jujube trees, cucumber trees, water chestnuts, etc.

In the north of Laos grow peach trees, plum trees, almond trees, [306] walnut trees, cherry trees, apple trees, pear trees, strawberry plants and medlar trees, the fruits of which are similar in taste to that of their counterparts in Europe, although they are neither as large nor as succulent as the latter.

On the edges of the forest, and sometimes even in the middle, there are also other wild fruit trees reminiscent of the plum tree, the cherry tree, the apple tree (a rose-apple tree with red or green fruits), the fig tree, the quince tree, etc. Their fruits have remained in a wild state or reverted to one because of a lack of adequate care, and are not edible. Their seeds, pits and stones have developed excessively, to the detriment of the pulp which remains tough, bitter or tasteless.

248 Finally, opium poppies, tea, ramie, hemp, etc. are cultivated
249 on the plateaus and in the high valleys.

Most European vegetables grow in Laos, in the gardens of the
241 Europeans. They are seeded at the end of the rainy season. Early varieties can be harvested and a new crop seeded well into July, but care must be taken to cover the beds during downpours, which occur frequently from May on.

The forests of Laos may have two characteristic forms, depending
134 on whether the soil is mountainous and composed of clay or limestone,
137 or else flat or slightly sloped and sandy, rocky or stony. In the first case the soil has a high percentage of vegetable matter, is moist and rich in humus and consequently covered with thick forests (Dong or Pa). In the second case it has a low percentage of vegetable matter, is hot and poor in humus and is covered with light forestation (Khok or Pa-hang).

A table contained in the Appendices (No. XX) gives the nomenclature of some sixty varieties of trees on which we have information. In addition to the trees which we cite, we should also note the bamboos, rattans and banana trees.

There are some twenty varieties of bamboo, in which the stalks vary from the size of the little finger to as much as thirty or even thirty-five centimeters in diameter. They sometimes reach a height
824 of twenty meters. There are six or seven varieties of rattan of different grades and sizes, but they are used only for local needs. Among the many wild banana trees, a few varieties such as the "Kok-Koue-Kene" yield a sort of fiber rather like abaca.

137 [307] Although we are able today to evaluate the forest wealth of Laos approximately and to compute its immense commercial value,

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Coccus lacca, which secretes the lac to envelop its larvae.

In trade it appears in the form of half-cylindrical fragments, in breakages (seed-lac), or else adhering to the branches of the tree on which it formed. The latter is lac on sticks, whence the English name stick-lac by which it is known in Far Eastern trading circles (2).

(2) Lac in its most widespread form--lac in shells (shellac)--is not found in Laos. It can easily be produced by boiling the preceding types in alkaline water.

This product is harvested by scavenging from trees which were seeded long ago and are scattered throughout the brush, and also by regular cultivation from a triennial tree, as will be seen below. The principal varieties of trees on which lac is found are the Ficus, the butées, the Croton, the Mimosa and the Acacia.

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There are three kinds of lac: bright-colored lac (which colors a moistened finger) in whole pieces, lac on wood and brown cellular lac in more or less broken fragments. Throughout the country, however, it is sold mixed, and only at the transit markets are the three kinds separated.

[435]

[330] The price per hundred kilograms is from 35 to 42 francs at Luang-Prabang, from 45 to 48 francs at Pak-Lay, from 47 to 50 francs at Nong-Khay, 42 francs at Khong and Bassac, 62 francs at Pnom-Penh and Cholen, and from 72 to 85 francs at Korat.

Crimson lake is used for dyeing as well as in the preparation of certain colors and varnishes with an alcohol base. A small proportion remains in the country, but the greater part is exported.

3. Cardamom (Mak-Neng).

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[245]

Cardamom is the fruit of the plant Ellateria cardamomum which grows in the forests but which may be cultivated, as is the case on the plateau of the Bolovens in Laos and in the region of Pursat in Cambodia. The variety common to all parts of Laos is the great cardamom or bastard cardamom, while that cultivated in Cambodia is the true cardamom or small cardamom, much superior to the first in quality and value.

The plant grows best in the humid forests, and is harvested in August or September. The plant has vast numbers of light seeds, and it takes about eighty or a hundred thousand seeds to make up the weight of one "mune" (about twelve kilograms). The price per

[435] The price per hundred kilograms is from 50 to 54 francs in Luang-Prabang, 62 francs
824 in Pak-Lay, from 62 to 70 francs in Nong-Khay, 50 francs in Cammon, from 75 to 83 francs in Song-Khone, from 66 to 87 francs in Saravane,
314 from 70 to 83 francs in Bassac, from 83 to 95 francs in Khong, 58 francs in Attopeu, from 50 to 83 francs in Stung-Treng, 133 francs in Pnom-Penh, 140 francs in Cholen (1) and from 80 to 120 francs in

(1) At this market cardamom from Pursat brings from 625 to 830 francs per hundred kilograms.

Korat.

4. Cinnamon (Cinnamomum zeylanicum. Kai-Hom in Laotian).

The cinnamon tree must have been cultivated at one time in the territory of Vien-Tiane. Then the inhabitants were driven out as a result of foreign incursions and abandoned their gardens, which were
● 245 gradually invaded by brush. The harvesting of cinnamon has since become a scavenging operation without any form of cultivation. For several years now, doubtless in consequence of the many requests which were made when the Customs service tried to establish a monopoly of this product in Annam, [331] [Illustration] [332] [Blank page] [333] the inhabitants have once more begun to maintain the cinnamon trees and to give them some attention. Plantations have even been started, and this propitious initiative should be encouraged.

824 5. Indigo (Kok-Kam and Kok-Hom, depending on
314 whether the Indigofera tinctoria or the Indigofera anil is designated).

These two plants are not always scavenging products, since the
[245] greater part of Laotian indigo comes from crops grown on the banks of the Mekong and its chief tributaries.

There is also an indigo-bearing liana which grows wild. The Laotians call this "Bouok-Khua".

In Laos the preparation of indigo is extremely simple. The fresh
386 leaves and stalks of the different varieties of indigo plants are put to soak in wooden vats containing water and an acid element, usually the acid of lemons or limes. After a certain time the leaves are removed, then lime is precipitated in the water and the mixture is violently stirred. The lime fixes the dye and is deposited at the bottom of the vats, which are exposed to the air. When the clear water which rises to the surface has been completely evaporated, a hardened mass which is the indigo is left at the bottom of the vat. This product is not exported, but serves only for local consumption. Its price varies between 12 and 15 francs per hundred kilograms.

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These two trees are cultivated almost everywhere in the environs of villages.

Coconuts are consumed on the spot, either fresh or dried. In the latter case their meat is used to make an edible oil which is quite good when newly made, or else it is shredded and then used to make a kind of sugar cream. Coconut meat is one of the constituents of carry.

The number of coconut palms in Laos is not great enough [368] to provide for local needs and still leave any over for export of their pulp, which is known commercially as copra. Sugar palms are used only for the needs of the local population. The sugar which they yield is whiter than cane sugar as extracted by the Laotians, and so the natives give the name of "Nam-Tane" to the crystallized European and Chinese sugar, because of its color, and never apply to it the name "Nam-Oi," which designates their black cane sugar.

BETEL PALMS. Betel palms are grown wherever the altitude permits, and are even found at heights greater than eight hundred meters. 249 276
[Illustration alongside text here] The betel palm, which is called "Kok-Mak," produces the "Mak" nut with the veined meat which enters into the composition of the national masticatory together with betel, lime, etc.

When it reaches maturity the betel nut is picked and prepared in two different ways in order to be either consumed on the spot or transported to parts of the country which have none. There is even a small export trade, but so slight that we need only mention it. [348]

It may be preserved whole after the floss envelope from which it is extracted has been dried, or else it may be cut up into [369] thin

249 segments, together with its envelope, while still green. The segments
276 are threaded in groups of sixteen on plant thongs and then gathered in packets of fifty or a hundred thongs. The packets are hung up at home near the hearth, and the smoke gives them a brownish color, dries out the nut completely and soon makes it insect-proof.

438 Since every Laotian, with only a few exceptions, has betel palms around his house, trade in betel nuts takes place only in the large mar-
276 kets, where there are packets of dried nuts which a few small merchants have collected. Within the country these packets are sold according to their number of nuts, and yet statistics give sale prices by weight, at figures varying between twenty and forty francs per hundred kilograms. It is probable that the latter figure applies to whole nuts, and the former to packets of nut segments.

249 BETEL. The betel leaf, which gives its name to the well-known masticatory, is a product of the Piper Betel which is grown everywhere in Laos and for which the trunks of betel palms generally serve as a support. It is to the cultivation of this plant that the Laotians devote the most attention. The soil is manured and weeded, the foot of the plant is surrounded by an earth mound, and the plant itself is protected against animals by a wooden enclosure. The betel palms around which the betel plants climb and twine profit from the care given the latter and generally produce a better harvest than trees which have been left alone. In order to water the betel plants, which often reach a height of seven or eight meters, the natives have devised a bamboo syringe, one end of which has a rounded nozzle pierced by small holes.

• 245 LAC. The tree on which the insects which secrete sticklac grow is called "Kok-Mak-Thoua-He." It is a biennial of the leguminous family and Acacia genus. Its fruit is a small edible bean, rounded and veined, which is contained [370]in groups of five or six in a soft, semi-parchmented pod. During its two years of life each shrub produces more than a million beans or seeds. A few of these are kept for seed, and the rest are consumed on the spot.

The cultivation of the shrub and of sticklac comprises two operations seeding the "Kok-Mak-Thoua-He" and inducing colonies of coccus lacca to settle on its branches. The aphids of this insect produce the tinctorial matter called "Khang-Deng" or, literally, Red wax.

149: Reinach--272 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

245

Seeding and growth of the shrub. The seeds are sowed in April in a lightly forested area, in the natural humus of a sandy clay soil (1). Seven months later, that is to say in October

(1) In southern Laos lac trees are generally found on the embankments of ricefields. This enables the natives to keep watch over them easily and over their fields at the same time.

or November, the shrub has reached a height of about two and a half meters and bears fruit.

Seeding the coccus larvae. In September, in order to induce colonies of coccus lacca to settle on the branches of the young shrub, a small basket of sticklac containing adult insects and larvae which have not yet hatched is hung on the shrub for three days. This is enough time for about a third of the larvae to hatch, and the young aphids immediately spread over the shrub. Then the baskets are placed on another shrub for three days, where the same operation is carried out, then again on a third shrub for the same period. At the end of nine days all the larvae have hatched and three shrubs have been seeded in succession. The young insects spread over the branches to go through a new stage of development and secrete in their turn, when the time comes, the lac which will envelop their own larvae.

It has been noted above that certain varieties of trees also bore coccus colonies of the genus Carteria lacca and that on these the seeding of the insects took place naturally. It is for this reason that we have described this particularity in the section entitled [371] [Illustration] [372] [Blank page] [373] Scavenging. The advantage of the cultivated variety with which we are concerned here is the following: because of the short life span of the "Kok-Thoua-He," its branches are small in diameter; consequently the masses of lac can completely surround them, and when the second yield is harvested the wood left in the middle of the lac weighs less than if it had come from the branches of forest trees.

Harvesting the lac. The lac harvest takes place in March or April. Each shrub produces a yearly average of 1.2 kilograms to 1.5 kilograms of sticklac. The first year it is still malleable and easy to detach from the branches which it surrounds. It has a beautiful crimson color, brighter and lighter than that of the lac harvested the following year. Its commercial value is therefore greater by reason of this characteristic and because of the absence of wood.

After the first harvest a few pieces of lac containing larvae are left on the shrubs so that seeding will occur when they hatch.

The cocci then spread over the branches to form new colonies, just as on the permanent shrubs in the forest.

In March and April of the following year a second harvest is made, and after this the shrub, having completed its stages of development, dries out and dies.

During this last harvest, since the lac adheres with great strength to the branches, it is sometimes nécessary to cut the latter above and below the masses of lac, in which the wood remains imprisoned.

We have seen above the various prices of lac on the markets of Laos. As regards the total production of this commodity, we must be content with the approximate figure of 70 to 80 tons per year.

CARDAMOM. Cardamom is hardly cultivated at all in Laos except in one spot, the plateau of the Bolovens. Ban-Da-Sia, a large village of some sixty houses, is the center of production of this seed.

[374] There are two varieties of cardamom, one with a smooth reddish envelope and the other in which the pod is gray and rough.

In order to establish a cardamom plantation a large expanse of land is first cleared. Before the rainy season and when the terrain has been thoroughly cleared, large shoots are planted at regular intervals--every two meters, for example. In the spaces between the shoots rice, peppers or maize are grown. In the second year the shrubs grow and spread and leave less room for other crops. Finally in the fourth year, which is the one in which the shrubs produce, the terrain is nothing but a forest of cardamom. From the fifth year on the yield decreases by half, but remains approximately constant for three years. Then it suddenly decreases still more at about the eighth year, and after ten years the shrub becomes unproductive and the plantation is abandoned. It may be set afire, and after the land has lain fallow for a few years a new plantation may be started in the same spot.

Harvesting is done at the end of the year, towards December. Before the seeds can be marketed they must be dried over a fire for several days.

According to the still highly incomplete information which we possess, the production of cardamom in all of Laos (scavenging and cultivation) may be estimated at about three hundred tons per year.

245 Here, as a sample, is a table showing cardamom production on the
435 plateau of the Bolovens during the last few years, with purchase and sale prices:

Year	Production in kilograms	Price per hundred kilograms: On the plateau, Purchase	Price per hundred kilograms: At Pnom-Penh, Sale
		francs	francs
1895	120,000	37.50 to 50	66.20 to 85.60
1896	48,000 to 60,000	50 to 58.30	70 to 93
1897	96,000 to 108,000	50 to 62.50	77.80 to 97.30
1898	270,000	50 to 66.60	85.60 to 136.
1899	216,000	54.10 to 75	77.80 to 136

249 [375] MULBERRY TREES. There are two kinds of mulberry trees
for feeding silkworms in Laos: the annual mulberry and the shrub or
231 perennial mulberry (1). In Laotian the latter is called "Kok-Mone,"

(1) It is no doubt to be identified with the multicauline mulberry and the white or Chinese mulberry.

which may be translated literally as silkworm tree.

[311] The mulberry is grown near villages, on the banks of watercourses. Oftentimes the foot of an arborescent mulberry will even be inundated during the rainy season, and it has been noted that the worms which devour the leaves of these trees are more subject than other worms to the diseases of the species and produce less silk. It is therefore probabl that excess humidity is harmful to the mulberry. But if at the present time most of these shrubs are planted in humid regions, this is due to the fact that in many places the higher ground has been abandoned and the inhabitants have settled in the bottoms of valleys. It will be understood that the natives like to have the gardens of mulberry trees

249 The amount of paper produced is hardly significant, and is limited to
289 local needs.

245 TEA. Tea is the most important crop of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na
311 and the Burmo-Shan States on both banks of the Mekong. The regions of production are included between 21° 30' and 22° 30' N. latitude and between 97° 30' and 99° 40' E. longitude.

175 The greater part of these regions, that is to say those situated on
648 the left bank of the Mekong, belonged to us by the terms of the 1887 Franco-Chinese treaty of Tien-Tsin. But because of our slowness to occupy these territories England inherited the rights of Upper Burma and ceded them to China, and finally only the two Muong-Hou remained in our possession.

563 Unfortunately, the small tea-growing region left to us is not only the least productive, but also the one in which tea-growing has degenerated and is no longer practiced except by the Khas.

[377] Yet the climate of the Muong-Hou is similar to that of Man-La, which is located thirty kilometers to the west and whose tea has the same reputation as those of I-Hou, I-Bang, Muong-Hing, Muong-Pang and Muong-Yang, all of which are known as "S'semao and Pou-Eurl Teas." Furthermore, the altitude and configuration of the soil, the nature of the terrain and the varieties of tea plants are all similar in our territory of Muong-Hou and in that of Man-La. But as a consequence of various circumstances and especially of a long interruption in cultivation between 1884 and 1893, most of the tea plants have not been pruned. They have reached a height of more than six meters and the tea which they produce is almost valueless (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVI.

The average production of the whole tea-growing region has been estimated at from 600 to 660 tons. This tea is exported to China, to Burma, to Laos, to Tonkin and to Siam. In 1891 and 1892 France imported a trial shipment of 6,000 kilograms, but the transaction was not repeated because of a rise in transport costs and customs duties which did not leave a large enough profit for the importer.

435 In the regions of production prices vary, depending on quality, between 75 and 150 francs per hundred kilograms.

The teas which come from this region meet with little approval in Europe, because they lack the various aromas which the Chinese

incorporate into the teas which they send abroad. But they appeal to the Chinese and other Orientals, and part of the crop is even set aside and sent as tribute to the court of the Emperor in Peking. 245 [648]

The Shans, the Lus and the Youns use a masticatory called "Mieng" which is composed solely of tea leaves which have been preserved in brine. [276]

PIMENTOS. Since pimento is a much sought-after condiment, and one which is even indispensable to the people of Laos, as to those of neighboring countries, the cultivation of this product is quite widespread. [244 263]

This pimento is of the large, red variety. It is prepared by [378] drying and smoking it, thereby guaranteeing that it will keep. Its name in Laotian is "Mak-Phik." The price of dry pimento varies from 25 to 37 francs per hundred kilograms.

FARMING IMPLEMENTS AND TOOLS USED IN LAOS. We shall conclude this rapid listing of the chief crops grown in Laos by giving a list of the farming implements used in the country. These latter are just as primitive and just as rudimentary as the farming methods, and the Laotians do not make any more effort to improve the ones than to improve the others. 412 241

The plow (Thai). The plow is extremely simple and is the primitive swing-plow formed of a single piece of bent wood. A share or "Mak-Sob-Thai" is fitted to its front end. Sometimes the share is even supplanted by cutting the stick of wood diagonally and hardening it in a fire. Drawn by a buffalo, this tiny plow cannot break the soil to any great depth, and so is used in ricefields only when the soil has been sufficiently softened by the annual inundations.

The harrow (Khat). The harrow is a sort of wooden rake .9 meter long, the teeth of which are made of ironwood or any other very hard wood, "Mai-Lek" or "Mai-Khen-Hine." This rake forms one of the sides of a triangle, the peak of which is harnessed to a buffalo.

The roller (Ham). The roller is the trunk of some hardwood tree, "Mai-Khen-Hine" for example. It has pins over which two shafts fit, leaving space to harness a buffalo.

The sickle. There are sickles of several sizes, which are called either "Kio" or "Lek Kio" without distinction. Sickles are used to cut grasses and rice.

276 have decayed in the ground. To be sure, it should never be forgotten that opium cultivation is a very delicate matter and requires much care and intelligent laborers who are difficult to find in the beginning.

In résumé, this product which is obtained by cultivating poppies brings a high price and is not at all cumbersome, so that even with the present means of transport it can support competition to advantage. The great quantity of opium consumed each year in Indo-China will provide sizeable revenues for Laos, and instead of continuing to buy the drug from the British the colony will sell it at a much more remunerative price.

The quality of Laotian opium is just as good as that of Indian opium. This is a proven fact, and we may therefore forge ahead with complete confidence.

New trials will be made at Khin-Mouak near Luang-Prabang. This is a well-chosen terrain at an altitude of 800 meters where water is plentiful in all seasons of the year and is sufficient to irrigate 200 hectares of poppies. I have had seven lime kilns established there so as to manufacture fertilizer on the spot.

(Report by M. Lussan. Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine.)

[152]

APPENDIX XXVI
THE CULTIVATION OF TEA

•245 In the regions of production, the altitudes best-suited to the tea plants vary from 1,000 to 1,800 meters, and the terrain most favorable to them is the side of a mountain.

The tea plant is called "Kok-Tsa" in Laotian and its leaf "Tsa." This is obviously a corruption of the word "Tcha," which has the same meaning in Yunnanese.

Abandoned to itself and not given any care, the plant grows in complete freedom and reaches a height of six to seven meters. The leaves which it produces are hard, and the infusion which it yields has a bad taste and would seem to produce stomach trouble in those who drink it.

The cultivation of these plants consists principally in reducing their size to two meters at the most by encouraging the growth of lateral branches in a horizontal direction. The main objective of this method is to enable a man to reach all parts of the plant and to stimulate the development of leaves by frequent prunings of those branches which are becoming too voluminous. This operation is facilitated by the reduced height of the plant.

245

Occasionally, as happens in the Muong-Hou, the rather careless Khas allow the plants to reach a height as great as three meters, but they are then forced to cut them off one meter above ground level in order to obtain leaves which can be utilized.

The important thing in producing a marketable product is constantly to prevent the plant from developing. Thus only those plants destined to supply seeds are allowed to reach the flowering stage.

Seeding and care. The seeds are sowed in holes a few centimeters deep, and in twenty days the seminal leaves of the young plants appear at ground level. The land surrounding the tea plant must be carefully kept up, weeded, worked frequently and rid of [153] all foreign vegetation. Tea plantations appear in the guise of hills where, against the reddish background of the soil, the tea plants aligned and arranged in terraces stand out clearly with their beautiful green foliage.

These plantations must be carefully dressed at least once a year after the rainy season so as to condition the soil which has been compacted by water, restore the terraces and fill the gullies caused by erosion water.

As soon as the plant reaches a height of 20 centimeters, the end of the stalk is pinched in order to force it to grow horizontally out from the foot of the plant.

Yield. Harvesting. Harvests are obtained from the plants from the third year on. In the sixth year the plant is cut down to a height of one meter (two sauks, to be exact, or .9 meter), and two years later it begins to produce utilizable leaves again.

Harvesting goes on continuously from January to December, as the leaves reach the stage of development where they can be used. They are divided into three kinds:

1. The white points, which are the youngest; they are still covered with down;

2. The leaves of a delicate green color, which have reached a middle stage of development;

3. Those which are darker green, somewhat thicker and larger than the above. Blends are created with these different kinds of leaves by varying the amounts of one kind or another and by using a greater or lesser quantity of white points, thereby making up the three grades in which the tea is sold.

The following table gives the composition of each of these blends:

10: d'Orleans--345 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
247, 782

[LSS:During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"Flowers, including piles of gardenias picked in the gardens, four varieties of orchid and red and white flowers from different trees, are also bought in large quantities for the decoration of the pagodas..."

10: d'Orleans--271-272 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 248, 286, 402, 462

[LSS: in the village of Ban Sop Huan] "Under the houses the women are busy in various employments, and the young girls are separating the cotton from its grain. They use an ingenious machine for this purpose: a tray is placed upon a support about the level of the waist; above it, two rollers, one of iron and one of wood, turn in contrary directions, as the cotton passes between them it is freed from its impurities, which drop on one side, while the textile fabric falls on the other. One of the rollers is moved with one hand by a simple crank while the other is worked by the foot and a pedal [272] which corresponds with an eccentric, it is also furnished with a flywheel (the machine is made entirely of wood). After the cotton is cleaned it is placed in baskets, about twenty-four inches high and ten wide. When full they are sold for one rupee each.

Elsewhere the spun cotton is being dyed, while other women are making a blue stuff, crossed with yellow threads. They are seated, and use a weaving loom with two pedals, two shuttles, and three small boards. They throw one shuttle after the movement of the two small boards, and the other after the third. Tobacco is being dried on some bamboos and further away another group is winding silk."

-23: Franck--343 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 248, 283, 286

"These Laosian villagers grow their own cotton, and the women spin this and the kapok of their great tropical trees on a crude wheel without a felly, then weave it on handlooms into the garment they wear as skirt or wrapper. Beneath many a house, or under the projecting porch roof at the end of it, may be seen the lady of the family, in the usual comfortable and economical upper garment of nothing at all, leisurely engaged at her household tasks, while others, some of them far from ugly, sit in the shade beneath their pile-raised dwellings weaving their simple wardrobes, in rather striking patterns and of excellent wearing qualities, on the crudest of looms, with a stick shuttle that is thrown back and forth by hand."

245 (bombax and callotropis), tamarind trees, jujube trees, cucumber trees, water chestnuts, etc.

In the north of Laos grow peach trees, plum trees, almond trees, [306] walnut trees, cherry trees, apple trees, pear trees, strawberry plants and medlar trees, the fruits of which are similar in taste to that of their counterparts in Europe, although they are neither as large nor as succulent as the latter.

On the edges of the forest, and sometimes even in the middle, there are also other wild fruit trees reminiscent of the plum tree, the cherry tree, the apple tree (a rose-apple tree with red or green fruits), the fig tree, the quince tree, etc. Their fruits have remained in a wild state or reverted to one because of a lack of adequate care, and are not edible. Their seeds, pits and stones have developed excessively, to the detriment of the pulp which remains tough, bitter or tasteless.

248 Finally, opium poppies, tea, ramie, hemp, etc. are cultivated
249 on the plateaus and in the high valleys.

Most European vegetables grow in Laos, in the gardens of the
241 Europeans. They are seeded at the end of the rainy season. Early varieties can be harvested and a new crop seeded well into July, but care must be taken to cover the beds during downpours, which occur frequently from May on.

The forests of Laos may have two characteristic forms, depending
134 on whether the soil is mountainous and composed of clay or limestone,
137 or else flat or slightly sloped and sandy, rocky or stony. In the first case the soil has a high percentage of vegetable matter, is moist and rich in humus and consequently covered with thick forests (Dong or Pa). In the second case it has a low percentage of vegetable matter, is hot and poor in humus and is covered with light forestation (Khok or Pa-hang).

A table contained in the Appendices (No. XX) gives the nomenclature of some sixty varieties of trees on which we have information. In addition to the trees which we cite, we should also note the bamboos, rattans and banana trees.

There are some twenty varieties of bamboo, in which the stalks vary from the size of the little finger to as much as thirty or even thirty-five centimeters in diameter. They sometimes reach a height
824 of twenty meters. There are six or seven varieties of rattan of different grades and sizes, but they are used only for local needs. Among the many wild banana trees, a few varieties such as the "Kok-Koue-Kene" yield a sort of fiber rather like abaca.

137 [307] Although we are able today to evaluate the forest wealth of Laos approximately and to compute its immense commercial value,

249 is that grown in the regions which we have just mentioned. Because of its origin and the name of the two main distribution markets of the trade, it is called Nong-Khay or Vien-Tiane tobacco.

We do not have exact data on the annual production of tobacco in Laos, because of the excessive fragmentation of the plantings and the absence of a crop registry. But information gained from commercial statistics enables us to say that in 1898 exports from the Paklay-Pone-Pissay region reached more than 42 tons. Also, if we attribute to each [276] inhabitant two grams of tobacco per day (this is not an excessive figure) or ten grams per family of five, we find that total consumption in Laos would be from 340 to 345 tons annually, or a total production of about four hundred tons (1).

(1) See Appendix XXIII.

[435 439] The export sale price varies from fifty to a hundred francs per hundred kilograms, depending on the quality.

248 COTTON. Cotton, a herbaceous and annual plant, is cultivated almost everywhere in Laos for local consumption, and particularly in 439 northern Laos for export to Yunnan. In fact, this product is almost the only return cargo for the mule and horse caravans which come in each year from Yunnan-Fou, Tali, S'semao, etc. with tea, furs, iron and copper pots, knick-knacks, etc.

248 The farming methods in northern Laos are as follows. Seeds are placed in pairs in holes which are about ten centimeters deep and spaced at varying distances depending on the region. Stony ground is preferred, on which the brush has been burned away both to clear the land and also [362] to fertilize the soil. No other fertilizer is used except the ashes of the vegetation which covered it.

The seeds are sowed in April or May and usually germinate a few days later. The plantings are harrowed and weeded twice each season, and harvesting is usually finished in November. The cotton is of a mediocre quality, with short staples, but despite this defect it is highly sought-after, as we have seen above, by the Chinese caravans which buy all of the available supply each year at the chief local markets. The height of the plant at full yield does not exceed sixty centimeters, and the yield per kilogram of bolls averages thirty percent or about 300 grams.

248 In southern Laos the cotton fields are small in extent, widely 311 scattered and formed chiefly of narrow strips of alluvial terrain on the

149: Reinach--268 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Indigo is grown on the banks of the Mekong and other rivers which are covered by water each year, so that when the waters withdraw they leave behind an alluvial deposit which is quite rich in organic vegetable matter. 249

The seeds are planted when the rains have completely ceased, that is to say between October and December, depending on the region, and somewhat earlier in the North than in the South.

Germination takes place within a few days, six at the most, and the ground is harrowed and weeded immediately after. At the end of [365] three months the first cutting is made, and this is the most productive one in terms of indigotin. A second cutting can sometimes be made two months later. If the rains are late it is even possible to make a third cutting seven months after the seeds have been planted.

The yield from the plants varies according to the type of terrain, the season and the region. Since plantings of this crop are far too scattered, it is at present impossible [Illustration here] to give the proportionate yield per hectare in terms of stalk weight or volume and weight of liquid indigo and dry indigo, as well as the indigotin content of this product.

Up to the present time this crop has been grown in Laos only to satisfy the country's own needs, without any view toward exporting the product. In view of the diminution of the harvests in Java and Bengal in the last three years, moreover, a diminution which coincides with the appearance of synthetic indigo or industrial indigo, we do not believe that any advantage is to be gained from encouraging the spread of this crop.

CASTOR OIL. Castor oil plant production is limited, since its oil [366] is used only for lighting bonzeries and as a hair dressing. The ordinary variety which grows spontaneously on the banks of watercourses and in cool places is found in Laos, as well as the red castor oil plant and the arborescent castor oil plant. The oil is extracted from the beans by means of pressure.

RAMIE. Ramie or the Chinese nettle, China grass, is a kind of urticaceous plant grown chiefly in the highlands by the Phou-Thais, the Khas, the Meos and the Yaos. It is called "Nhia-Gay" in northern Laos and "Pane" in southern Laos. 248

In April the old roots are buried about .7 meter apart. A month later clumps of twigs sprout and grow.

248 There are three harvests each year. In the first the shoots are .9 meter high, in the second 1.4 meters and in the third 1.6 meters. They yield, respectively, for an area of 14 square meters, 18, 20 and 24 kilograms of fiber.

At harvest time the shrub is split and left to soak in water for three hours, for the fiber is difficult to tear off. The work of decortication takes a long time, and this drawback has so far prevented the cultivation of this crop from spreading although it is an easy one on the whole and not at all exhausting for the soil, since it is possible to grow it twenty years in succession on the same plot of ground.

438 Exports from the provinces of southern Laos were more than fifty tons in 1899. A great deal is used locally, since all the nets used for
248 hunting and fishing are made with this fiber.

Prices are as follows (1):

248 (1) In view of the price at Bassac (37 francs), it would be ad-
435 vantageous to export this product to Cambodia, where it sells for twice as much.

	Per hundred kilograms
Plateau of the Bolovens	25 to 35 francs
Bassac	37 "
Saravane	60 "
Khong	60 to 80 "
Attopeu	30 "
Stung-Treng	54 to 62 "
Pnom-Penh	60 to 80 "

248 [367] HEMP. Hemp is grown in Upper Laos, but only for local consumption. It is used in making string, light rope, nets, etc. A very strong and fairly good-tasting alcohol is also extracted from its seeds. It is called "Pane" or "Nhia-Pane."

241 BATATAS. Various kinds of batatas which are more or less sweet are grown each year on the banks of the watercourses and in the still
[262] moist sandy alluvia. These tubercles are chiefly consumed by the inhabitants, although small quantities are used to fatten certain animals,
[231] particularly pigs. The large variety of batata which is round and not very sweet is called "Mane-Phao" and the one which is elongated and sweeter is called "Mane-Keo."

249 Chinese and Laotian middlemen and even the few European merchants--
263 have found that it brings in rewarding profits. Indeed, by exporting
438 this product the latter are assured of an almost certain gain of 20 to 30 percent.

248 [387] Ramie. There is also much to be gained from increasing
439 the production of ramie or Chinese nettle. It is assured of an outlet in Cambodia, where it sells for as much as 80 francs per hundred kilograms.

249 Cinnamon. The extension of the plantations and gardens of cinnamon trees already in existence in the province of Vien-Tiane
185 deserves serious encouragement. The bark of these trees is a valuable product which is much sought-after in China and in Europe.

276 Opium poppies. The Government of Indo-China, which is both the preparer and seller of chandoo or opium for smoking, is the
656 party which would gain most from obtaining the raw drug on French territory. It is, indeed, still dependent on British India for this product, and can acquire it only on extremely disadvantageous terms.

Since much time must still pass, however, before the Meos and the Yaos give up their age-old methods, it would be essential for the intensive cultivation of the opium poppy to be undertaken by Europeans on behalf of the administration. This would be possible if there were a guaranteed labor supply in the form of Chinese coolies, who would be enlisted primarily for the greater part of the work, and of native specialists who would deal only with scarification of the capsules, harvesting the opium and the first stage of its preparation.

These delicate operations are the ones which the Meos and the Yaos like best, but they dislike plowing, fertilizing, weeding and irrigation, all of which tasks are indispensable for obtaining a high yield of capsules and consequently of the raw drug. It would therefore be best to entrust this heavy work to foreign coolies, and it is probable that after a certain time they too would be capable of extracting the opium. Impelled by their example, the natives would doubtless then be seen to break with their prejudices and devote themselves also to intensive cultivation so as to reap its full benefits.

The role of the administration would then be at an end, and it would gradually diminish its intervention as free cultivation of the poppies increased.

[435 Raw opium which is produced locally or which comes from [388] neighboring countries is worth 22 francs, 50 centimes to 32 francs, 25 centimes per kilogram, depending on quality, in northern Laos.

10: d'Orleans--368-369 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 249, 314, 513

[LSS: in the village of Muong Liep (Diap)] "In front of the huts pods gathered from the trees are drying, full of seeds which are surrounded by a silky down like those of some of our poplars. It is known as nghioue, and it is used here for pillows and mattresses.

I note, also, on the dryers, tobacco in shreds. [369] This plant grows well here, and one sees it everywhere about the villages, rank as weeds."

245 (bombax and callotropis), tamarind trees, jujube trees, cucumber trees, water chestnuts, etc.

In the north of Laos grow peach trees, plum trees, almond trees, [306] walnut trees, cherry trees, apple trees, pear trees, strawberry plants and medlar trees, the fruits of which are similar in taste to that of their counterparts in Europe, although they are neither as large nor as succulent as the latter.

On the edges of the forest, and sometimes even in the middle, there are also other wild fruit trees reminiscent of the plum tree, the cherry tree, the apple tree (a rose-apple tree with red or green fruits), the fig tree, the quince tree, etc. Their fruits have remained in a wild state or reverted to one because of a lack of adequate care, and are not edible. Their seeds, pits and stones have developed excessively, to the detriment of the pulp which remains tough, bitter or tasteless.

248 Finally, opium poppies, tea, ramie, hemp, etc. are cultivated
249 on the plateaus and in the high valleys.

Most European vegetables grow in Laos, in the gardens of the
241 Europeans. They are seeded at the end of the rainy season. Early varieties can be harvested and a new crop seeded well into July, but care must be taken to cover the beds during downpours, which occur frequently from May on.

The forests of Laos may have two characteristic forms, depending
134 on whether the soil is mountainous and composed of clay or limestone,
137 or else flat or slightly sloped and sandy, rocky or stony. In the first case the soil has a high percentage of vegetable matter, is moist and rich in humus and consequently covered with thick forests (Dong or Pa). In the second case it has a low percentage of vegetable matter, is hot and poor in humus and is covered with light forestation (Khok or Pa-hang).

A table contained in the Appendices (No. XX) gives the nomenclature of some sixty varieties of trees on which we have information. In addition to the trees which we cite, we should also note the bamboos, rattans and banana trees.

There are some twenty varieties of bamboo, in which the stalks vary from the size of the little finger to as much as thirty or even thirty-five centimeters in diameter. They sometimes reach a height
824 of twenty meters. There are six or seven varieties of rattan of different grades and sizes, but they are used only for local needs. Among the many wild banana trees, a few varieties such as the "Kok-Koue-Kene" yield a sort of fiber rather like abaca.

137 [307] Although we are able today to evaluate the forest wealth of Laos approximately and to compute its immense commercial value,

Se-Bang-Fai. But studies are not yet sufficiently advanced for us to be able to give any useful information. 316

We have nevertheless felt that we should mention these deposits, in order to establish the importance of all this part of Laos from the point of view of mineral wealth.

[327] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER VII

I

SCAVENGING

We have seen that the inhabitants of Laos are apathetic and little inclined to work. They nevertheless find, although they go to scarcely any trouble, enough to supply their needs easily. 461 241

Indeed, with the exception of a few annual crops such as tobacco, cotton and indigo which are grown on the ever-renewed alluvia of the watercourses, the production of rice and of maize are the only occupations which require--and even then during a relatively short time--any degree of work or perseverance. We may mention the opium poppy, ramie, hemp and the mulberry tree merely as a reminder, for only a small part of the population devotes its time to these crops, which are still not at all extensive. [249]

Yet, it may be objected, the native has an easy life, dresses adequately, [328] lives in a house which is solid and comfortable from his point of view, has various tools and utensils, weapons, and sometimes even valuable cloth goods, jewels, etc. He spends money for celebrations and for offerings to the bonzes and pagodas. He pays taxes, he supports court costs which are often large with respect to the question at issue, and he is subject to the exactions of his mandarins to a greater or less degree. Finally, the commercial transactions of Laos involve quantities and sums which are quite high in comparison to the sparse population. 511 [438]

How are we to reconcile all these factors, and how is it that the Laotian, who produces so little with his labor, nevertheless has all he needs to get along on?

This is due to the fact that Laos is above all else a scavenging country. 314

the plants are replanted a few centimeters [360] apart in a second seed-garden for growth. This procedure increases the plant's productivity quite appreciably. 243

Since the nature of the terrain and the richness of the soil vary from one point to another, it follows that the yield from the ricefields is not uniform. By reason of these conditions and the varying amount of water which falls on the fields or is piped in, this yield varies from 40 to 90 parts for one part of seed, and from 15 to 25 piculs per hectare (1). The rice is harvested about four or five months after 243 312

(1) In Cochinchina the average yield is from 28 to 30 piculs, and in Tonkin 44 piculs. But one should not lose sight of the fact that Cochinchina and Tonkin are much better favored than Laos from the point of view of irrigation, and that the Annamites are past masters in the art of farming. [101]

transplanting.

2) Terraced ricefields. The soil is worked in the same way in these ricefields, except that in some cases the land is turned over with a spade instead of plowed. 243

3) Mountain rais. In the year following the one when the land was cleared, the soil of the rais is cleaned and weeded. Then in June the rice is sowed, either broadcast or else by dropping a few grains at a time into holes made with a kind of bamboo dibble.

The rais are harvested in October and even in September in some localities. In general the yield from rais is from 90 to 120 parts for one part of seed and from 10 to 20 piculs per hectare.

Maize is sowed directly in straight furrows about March or April, and is harvested in July.

TOBACCO. Tobacco (Ia-Doute) is widely consumed in Laos, where everyone smokes. It is also an excellent commodity for trade and export. It is cultivated on a large scale on the banks and islands of the Mekong from Pak-Lay to a point below Pone-Pissay. Production from the tobacco fields in these regions not only supplies local needs, but also those of all of Upper Laos and part of Lower Laos and provides tobacco for export to Siam and Cochinchina. 249 [439]

[361] In addition to the foregoing, almost the whole population along the banks of the Mekong and the lower reaches of its tributaries also grows tobacco for its own use and for the inhabitants of the interior. The tobacco which is most prized for its high quality, however,

249 is that grown in the regions which we have just mentioned. Because of its origin and the name of the two main distribution markets of the trade, it is called Nong-Khay or Vien-Tiane tobacco.

We do not have exact data on the annual production of tobacco in Laos, because of the excessive fragmentation of the plantings and the absence of a crop registry. But information gained from commercial statistics enables us to say that in 1898 exports from the Paklay-Pone-Pissay region reached more than 42 tons. Also, if we attribute to each [276] inhabitant two grams of tobacco per day (this is not an excessive figure) or ten grams per family of five, we find that total consumption in Laos would be from 340 to 345 tons annually, or a total production of about four hundred tons (1).

(1) See Appendix XXIII.

[435 439] The export sale price varies from fifty to a hundred francs per hundred kilograms, depending on the quality.

248 COTTON. Cotton, a herbaceous and annual plant, is cultivated almost everywhere in Laos for local consumption, and particularly in 439 northern Laos for export to Yunnan. In fact, this product is almost the only return cargo for the mule and horse caravans which come in each year from Yunnan-Fou, Tali, S'semao, etc. with tea, furs, iron and copper pots, knick-knacks, etc.

248 The farming methods in northern Laos are as follows. Seeds are placed in pairs in holes which are about ten centimeters deep and spaced at varying distances depending on the region. Stony ground is preferred, on which the brush has been burned away both to clear the land and also [362] to fertilize the soil. No other fertilizer is used except the ashes of the vegetation which covered it.

The seeds are sowed in April or May and usually germinate a few days later. The plantings are harrowed and weeded twice each season, and harvesting is usually finished in November. The cotton is of a mediocre quality, with short staples, but despite this defect it is highly sought-after, as we have seen above, by the Chinese caravans which buy all of the available supply each year at the chief local markets. The height of the plant at full yield does not exceed sixty centimeters, and the yield per kilogram of bolls averages thirty percent or about 300 grams.

248 In southern Laos the cotton fields are small in extent, widely 311 scattered and formed chiefly of narrow strips of alluvial terrain on the

banks of the Mekong and its larger tributaries. 248

It is also grown on former rais in the highlands of southern Laos. 311

The climate of the Mekong valley is essentially favorable to the production of cotton, but the extent of the plantings has so far been limited, because of the lack of outlets, to what is strictly necessary to satisfy current local consumption.

Farming methods, in the lowlands of Lower Laos as well as in the highlands, are extremely primitive. The brush is cleared from the piece of land chosen, then without either weeding or fertilization the seeds are sowed in holes made with a dibble. 248

Two varieties are grown:

1. The large-flowered variety (Fai-Dok-Niai), which is preferred as being more productive and having fewer seeds. It is sowed at the end of the rainy season, usually in October, and harvested in March. This variety is cultivated only on the banks of watercourses. Its average height is one meter.

2. The small-flowered variety (Fai-Dok-Noi). It is cultivated only on higher ground, on former rais or in mountainous regions and is similar to the variety found in northern Laos. [363] It is sowed and harvested at about the same times as the above, that is to say from May to July for sowing and November or December for harvesting. Its average height is .7 meter.

It is difficult to determine the yield per hectare, in view of the fact that the cotton fields are irregular and variable in shape and size. On the basis of results in a certain number of fields which were measured separately, however, we may hazard the approximate figure of 200 to 400 kilograms of raw cotton per hectare, depending on the type of soil and its disposition.

On-the-spot purchase prices vary appreciably between the two parts of Laos. In the northern part, for example, the second-grade cotton bought by the Chinese sells for 35 to 40 francs per hundred kilograms. [435]

This crop should be developed further, and in a later paragraph we shall outline the steps which might be taken (1).

(1) Based on the reports of the Superior Commandants of Upper and Lower Laos. [113]

SUGAR CANE. Sugar cane is cultivated everywhere, both in the hills and on the low prairies. It is used only for local consumption, 249

249 either in the natural state or in the form of black, pasty, molasses-laden sugar.

There are several varieties, the chief of which are the heavy, green cane which is highly cellulated, and the small violet-colored cane with joints closer together, which is fuller than the first.

Farming methods do not differ from those used in other countries. Cuttings are planted, and the plants are topped if they show a marked propensity to excessive leafy growth.

257 To manufacture sugar, the cane is crushed between two vertical cylinders driven by two wooden gears of a most ingenious construction.
407 A buffalo turns the whole by means of a crossbar or shaft, the end of which is attached to its neck and constitutes a whim. Sometimes the cane is crushed between two pieces of stone or hardwood, one of which rests on the ground while the other [364] is applied on top of it by means of a wooden lever. One or several persons work the other end of the lever with all their weight and move it up and down in a series of
[439] jerky motions. The juice extracted from the cane is placed in large
[415] cast iron cauldrons shaped like cupels, which are imported by Chinese merchants. Condensation takes place over an open fire laid in primitive hearths which are cut into the ground itself, if it is clayey. When the syrup reaches the desired degree of thickness the whole mass is poured into rectangular or circular molds made of wood or bamboo. After cooling the loaves of sugar which come from the molds, and which are from three to six centimeters thick, are wrapped in dry leaves. They are transported and sold in this form. The cane itself is called "Oi" and the sugar "Nam-Oi" or, literally, water of cane.

[276] The Laotians do not refine alcohol from the juice of sugar cane,
[101] and are even ignorant of the initial refining stage which the Annamites use and which produces brown sugar.

[435] The price of sugar on the markets of Laos varies from one point to another, and transactions involve small quantities only. Statistics do give evidence, however, from which market prices of 35 to 50 francs per hundred kilograms can be deduced.

249 INDIGO. We have seen above that the Laotians use the indigo-bearing properties of certain plants which grow wild in the forests in order to dye cloth goods blue. They also produce a variety of indigo, the Indigofera tinctoria, which is similar to the variety found in Bengal. The plant itself is called "Kok-Kame" and the extract or dye "Nam-Kame

149: Reinach--268 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Indigo is grown on the banks of the Mekong and other rivers which are covered by water each year, so that when the waters withdraw they leave behind an alluvial deposit which is quite rich in organic vegetable matter. 249

The seeds are planted when the rains have completely ceased, that is to say between October and December, depending on the region, and somewhat earlier in the North than in the South.

Germination takes place within a few days, six at the most, and the ground is harrowed and weeded immediately after. At the end of [365] three months the first cutting is made, and this is the most productive one in terms of indigotin. A second cutting can sometimes be made two months later. If the rains are late it is even possible to make a third cutting seven months after the seeds have been planted.

The yield from the plants varies according to the type of terrain, the season and the region. Since plantings of this crop are far too scattered, it is at present impossible [Illustration here] to give the proportionate yield per hectare in terms of stalk weight or volume and weight of liquid indigo and dry indigo, as well as the indigotin content of this product.

Up to the present time this crop has been grown in Laos only to satisfy the country's own needs, without any view toward exporting the product. In view of the diminution of the harvests in Java and Bengal in the last three years, moreover, a diminution which coincides with the appearance of synthetic indigo or industrial indigo, we do not believe that any advantage is to be gained from encouraging the spread of this crop.

CASTOR OIL. Castor oil plant production is limited, since its oil [366] is used only for lighting bonzeries and as a hair dressing. The ordinary variety which grows spontaneously on the banks of watercourses and in cool places is found in Laos, as well as the red castor oil plant and the arborescent castor oil plant. The oil is extracted from the beans by means of pressure.

RAMIE. Ramie or the Chinese nettle, China grass, is a kind of urticaceous plant grown chiefly in the highlands by the Phou-Thais, the Khas, the Meos and the Yaos. It is called "Nhia-Gay" in northern Laos and "Pane" in southern Laos. 248

In April the old roots are buried about .7 meter apart. A month later clumps of twigs sprout and grow.

149: Reinach--270 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

GROUND NUTS. Only the subterranean varieties of ground nuts, or peanuts, are found in Laos. The inhabitants call this plant "Mak-Thoua-Dine," which means, literally, Fruit of the ground bean. Peanuts are not used for their oil, but are eaten boiled, roasted or with certain pastries in which they are incorporated. They are fed to convalescents as a tonic and restorative, doubtless because of their high nitrogen content. 244

COCONUT AND SUGAR PALMS. The former is called "Kok-Mak-Phao" and its fruit is called "Mak-Phao." The second is called "Kok-Mak-Tane" and its fruit the "Mak-Tane." The sugar extracted from the "Mak-Tane" is called "Nam-Tane." 245

These two trees are cultivated almost everywhere in the environs of villages.

Coconuts are consumed on the spot, either fresh or dried. In the latter case their meat is used to make an edible oil which is quite good when newly made, or else it is shredded and then used to make a kind of sugar cream. Coconut meat is one of the constituents of carry.

The number of coconut palms in Laos is not great enough [368] to provide for local needs and still leave any over for export of their pulp, which is known commercially as copra. Sugar palms are used only for the needs of the local population. The sugar which they yield is whiter than cane sugar as extracted by the Laotians, and so the natives give the name of "Nam-Tane" to the crystallized European and Chinese sugar, because of its color, and never apply to it the name "Nam-Oi," which designates their black cane sugar.

BETEL PALMS. Betel palms are grown wherever the altitude permits, and are even found at heights greater than eight hundred meters. [Illustration alongside text here] The betel palm, which is called "Kok-Mak," produces the "Mak" nut with the veined meat which enters into the composition of the national masticatory together with betel, lime, etc. 249 276

When it reaches maturity the betel nut is picked and prepared in two different ways in order to be either consumed on the spot or transported to parts of the country which have none. There is even a small export trade, but so slight that we need only mention it. [348]

It may be preserved whole after the floss envelope from which it is extracted has been dried, or else it may be cut up into [369] thin

249 segments, together with its envelope, while still green. The segments
276 are threaded in groups of sixteen on plant thongs and then gathered in packets of fifty or a hundred thongs. The packets are hung up at home near the hearth, and the smoke gives them a brownish color, dries out the nut completely and soon makes it insect-proof.

438 Since every Laotian, with only a few exceptions, has betel palms
276 around his house, trade in betel nuts takes place only in the large markets, where there are packets of dried nuts which a few small merchants have collected. Within the country these packets are sold according to their number of nuts, and yet statistics give sale prices by weight, at figures varying between twenty and forty francs per hundred kilograms. It is probable that the latter figure applies to whole nuts, and the former to packets of nut segments.

249 BETEL. The betel leaf, which gives its name to the well-known masticatory, is a product of the Piper Betel which is grown everywhere in Laos and for which the trunks of betel palms generally serve as a support. It is to the cultivation of this plant that the Laotians devote the most attention. The soil is manured and weeded, the foot of the plant is surrounded by an earth mound, and the plant itself is protected against animals by a wooden enclosure. The betel palms around which the betel plants climb and twine profit from the care given the latter and generally produce a better harvest than trees which have been left alone. In order to water the betel plants, which often reach a height of seven or eight meters, the natives have devised a bamboo syringe, one end of which has a rounded nozzle pierced by small holes.

245 LAC. The tree on which the insects which secrete sticklac grow is called "Kok-Mak-Thoua-He." It is a biennial of the leguminous family and Acacia genus. Its fruit is a small edible bean, rounded and veined, which is contained [370]in groups of five or six in a soft, semi-parchmented pod. During its two years of life each shrub produces more than a million beans or seeds. A few of these are kept for seed, and the rest are consumed on the spot.

The cultivation of the shrub and of sticklac comprises two operations seeding the "Kok-Mak-Thoua-He" and inducing colonies of coccus lacca to settle on its branches. The aphids of this insect produce the tinctorial matter called "Khang-Deng" or, literally, Red wax.

149: Reinach--274 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

245 Here, as a sample, is a table showing cardamom production on the
435 plateau of the Bolovens during the last few years, with purchase and sale prices:

Year	Production in kilograms	Price per hundred kilograms: On the plateau, Purchase	Price per hundred kilograms: At Pnom-Penh, Sale
		francs	francs
1895	120,000	37.50 to 50	66.20 to 85.60
1896	48,000 to 60,000	50 to 58.30	70 to 93
1897	96,000 to 108,000	50 to 62.50	77.80 to 97.30
1898	270,000	50 to 66.60	85.60 to 136.
1899	216,000	54.10 to 75	77.80 to 136

249 [375] MULBERRY TREES. There are two kinds of mulberry trees
for feeding silkworms in Laos: the annual mulberry and the shrub or
231 perennial mulberry (1). In Laotian the latter is called "Kok-Mone,"

(1) It is no doubt to be identified with the multicauline mulberry and the white or Chinese mulberry.

which may be translated literally as silkworm tree.

[311] The mulberry is grown near villages, on the banks of watercourses. Oftentimes the foot of an arborescent mulberry will even be inundated during the rainy season, and it has been noted that the worms which devour the leaves of these trees are more subject than other worms to the diseases of the species and produce less silk. It is therefore probabl that excess humidity is harmful to the mulberry. But if at the present time most of these shrubs are planted in humid regions, this is due to the fact that in many places the higher ground has been abandoned and the inhabitants have settled in the bottoms of valleys. It will be understood that the natives like to have the gardens of mulberry trees

near their silkworm breeding houses, but it is unfortunate that the new 249
conditions in which the trees are placed should have an adverse effect
on silk production. On the plateaus and in the high valleys, in the 231
vicinity of land once occupied by villages, there are many mulberry trees which have continued to survive. They send out new leaves again even after the annual burnings of the forest clearings, and bear leaves which are vigorous and have a more pithy appearance than those of their fellows in the low, humid parts of the country. They are also said to be preferable for feeding silkworms (2).

(2) See Appendix XXIV.

Local consumption absorbs the greater part of the silk production, 231
for the majority of Laotians, both men and women, use it in making 286
the garments which they wear.

We do not possess exact data on the total production of silk in Laos. It has been estimated at about twenty tons annually. The price varies from 400 to 500 francs per hundred kilograms.

OPIUM POPPIES. The opium poppy is cultivated by the Yaos and 276
the Meos, in northern Laos. Towards the end of the rainy season, [376] 249
in September, the poppy seeds are sowed broadcast on land from which
maize has just been harvested. Germination is activated by the last 314
rains of the season and the plant flowers at the beginning of December. Harvesting is done shortly after the petals have fallen.

Closely spaced lengthwise incisions are made all along the surface of the capsule, allowing the plant juice to escape. It coagulates upon contact with the air and is collected daily until the plant has been completely exhausted (1).

(1) See Appendix XXV, report of M. Lussan, Cochinchina customs agent. The latter was sent on a mission to Upper Laos to experiment with growing opium poppies by less rudimentary methods than the ones in use among the Meos and the Yaos. [654]

PAPER TREES. There are several trees in Laos whose bark is used 249
to make paper. They seem to be of the mulberry type and are called 289
"Kok-Sa."

The paper is made by hand on forms, by extremely rudimentary methods. Its manufacture occupies several villages of northern Laos.

249 The amount of paper produced is hardly significant, and is limited to
289 local needs.

245 TEA. Tea is the most important crop of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na
311 and the Burmo-Shan States on both banks of the Mekong. The regions of production are included between 21° 30' and 22° 30' N. latitude and between 97° 30' and 99° 40' E. longitude.

[175] The greater part of these regions, that is to say those situated on
648 the left bank of the Mekong, belonged to us by the terms of the 1887 Franco-Chinese treaty of Tien-Tsin. But because of our slowness to occupy these territories England inherited the rights of Upper Burma and ceded them to China, and finally only the two Muong-Hou remained in our possession.

[563] Unfortunately, the small tea-growing region left to us is not only the least productive, but also the one in which tea-growing has degenerated and is no longer practiced except by the Khas.

[377] Yet the climate of the Muong-Hou is similar to that of Man-La, which is located thirty kilometers to the west and whose tea has the same reputation as those of I-Hou, I-Bang, Muong-Hing, Muong-Pang and Muong-Yang, all of which are known as "S'semao and Pou-Eurl Teas." Furthermore, the altitude and configuration of the soil, the nature of the terrain and the varieties of tea plants are all similar in our territory of Muong-Hou and in that of Man-La. But as a consequence of various circumstances and especially of a long interruption in cultivation between 1884 and 1893, most of the tea plants have not been pruned. They have reached a height of more than six meters and the tea which they produce is almost valueless (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVI.

The average production of the whole tea-growing region has been estimated at from 600 to 660 tons. This tea is exported to China, to Burma, to Laos, to Tonkin and to Siam. In 1891 and 1892 France imported a trial shipment of 6,000 kilograms, but the transaction was not repeated because of a rise in transport costs and customs duties which did not leave a large enough profit for the importer.

[435] In the regions of production prices vary, depending on quality, between 75 and 150 francs per hundred kilograms.

The teas which come from this region meet with little approval in Europe, because they lack the various aromas which the Chinese

Sugar cane. The production of sugar cane, which is still not very significant in Laos, deserves to be encouraged. Later on when this crop had been developed, the Laotians might be trained in the methods of the first stage of refinement. They would then be able to produce gray muscovado and sugar candy, which are easily exportable. 241 185

Southern Laos is the part of our possession which would lend itself [386] best to the extension of this crop. Although of secondary importance, it is nonetheless deserving of attention.

Benzoin trees. Increasing the number of trees which are producers of this precious resin is again a task for the administration. After a serious study of the conditions of growth of the plant in Laos, of its habitat and of the nature of the terrain best suited to it, it would be possible to set up seed gardens designed to supply young plants either to the natives or to Europeans who settled in the country and were interested in this crop. It yields a rich product, which brings a high price on the market. Benzoin is, in fact, widely used in perfumes and in the manufacture of varnishes.

Lac trees. All who are acquainted with Laos are unanimous in agreeing that increasing the production of sticklac is one of the main factors in increasing the country's wealth. What, indeed, could be more simple, thanks to the easy and rapid multiplication of the "Kok-Toua-He," the tree which grows almost without care and lends itself so well to the establishment of colonies of coccus lacca, the producers of a superior quality of gum lac?

Cardamom. It would seem that experiments with growing true cardamom, as it is grown in Cambodia in the province of Pursat, might be attempted in Laos. The natives would have everything to gain from giving up the cultivation of wild cardamom for that of true cardamom, since the latter brings from five to ten times more than the former on the market of Pnom-Penh. 249 263 438

Until such time as this precious seed is introduced into Laos, it will be well to extend and encourage the cultivation of the present variety of cardamom. All those who have engaged in the production and commerce of this seed (1)--the mountainfolk who grow it, the

(1) It is much sought-after by the Chinese, who use it as a condiment as well as in pharmaceutical preparations.

249 263 438 Chinese and Laotian middlemen and even the few European merchants--have found that it brings in rewarding profits. Indeed, by exporting this product the latter are assured of an almost certain gain of 20 to 30 percent.

248 439 [387] Ramie. There is also much to be gained from increasing the production of ramie or Chinese nettle. It is assured of an outlet in Cambodia, where it sells for as much as 80 francs per hundred kilograms.

249 185 Cinnamon. The extension of the plantations and gardens of cinnamon trees already in existence in the province of Vien-Tiane deserves serious encouragement. The bark of these trees is a valuable product which is much sought-after in China and in Europe.

276 656 Opium poppies. The Government of Indo-China, which is both the preparer and seller of chandoo or opium for smoking, is the party which would gain most from obtaining the raw drug on French territory. It is, indeed, still dependent on British India for this product, and can acquire it only on extremely disadvantageous terms.

Since much time must still pass, however, before the Meos and the Yaos give up their age-old methods, it would be essential for the intensive cultivation of the opium poppy to be undertaken by Europeans on behalf of the administration. This would be possible if there were a guaranteed labor supply in the form of Chinese coolies, who would be enlisted primarily for the greater part of the work, and of native specialists who would deal only with scarification of the capsules, harvesting the opium and the first stage of its preparation.

These delicate operations are the ones which the Meos and the Yaos like best, but they dislike plowing, fertilizing, weeding and irrigation, all of which tasks are indispensable for obtaining a high yield of capsules and consequently of the raw drug. It would therefore be best to entrust this heavy work to foreign coolies, and it is probable that after a certain time they too would be capable of extracting the opium. Impelled by their example, the natives would doubtless then be seen to break with their prejudices and devote themselves also to intensive cultivation so as to reap its full benefits.

The role of the administration would then be at an end, and it would gradually diminish its intervention as free cultivation of the poppies increased.

[435 Raw opium which is produced locally or which comes from [388] neighboring countries is worth 22 francs, 50 centimes to 32 francs, 25 centimes per kilogram, depending on quality, in northern Laos.

314 lose forever the plant which they have mutilated. The Superior Resident in Laos has had studies made of the methods of extraction which can be employed without danger, and he proposes to make
314 them obligatory within a short time. As of the present time, he
656 has issued the following decree relative to the exploitation of rubber:

"Any native desiring to engage in harvesting rubber on Laotian territory must obtain a special authorization which will be conferred by the chau-muong if the interested party resides in the muong where he desires to operate, and in all other cases by the Government Commissioner of the province.

[65] [110] "This authorization shall indicate, in as clear a manner as possible, the limits within which exploitation is to take place, the methods of extraction which may be employed and those which are prohibited, and finally the point where the rubber must be submitted for checking and payment of the duties which represent land tax before it leaves Laos.

"Businessmen and corporations desirous of sending their paid agents into the regions of rubber production may address to the Government Commissioner a collective request, in which the names and residences of such agents shall be listed and in which they shall agree to abide by all regulations which the authorities shall deem it useful to prescribe. In return they shall be sent permits drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the preceding article, these permits to be delivered to their employees.

"The above authorizations shall be granted entirely free of charge.

"Contraventions to the present decree shall be prosecuted and punished by the provincial tribunals in accordance with the laws and customs in force in Laos." (Decree of September 21, 1900.)

[141]

APPENDIX XXIII
NOTE ON TOBACCO

249 Growth and preparation. Tobacco is best grown on the banks of watercourses which are left dry each year when the waters fall and which are fertilized by deposits of alluvia.

Tobacco is also grown, however, on the banks in old alluvia which are no longer inundated by the river, but where an ample supply of water is assured by the presence of a nearby stream.

134 In Laos the soil which is suited to tobacco is light and sandy and
249 contains a high proportion of potash, relatively little lime and an average quantity of nitrogenous vegetable matter.

249

average quantity of nitrogenous vegetable matter.

The tobacco of the region of Pak-Lay and Pone-Pissaye, although it has been subjected only to agricultural fermentation, is nevertheless of good quality. It is low in hygrometric content, keeps easily, burns well at a low temperature and, although quite strong, has a pleasant odor.

In the alluvia which are covered every year by rising water, tobacco is grown without previous fertilization. Not until two weeks after transplanting are the holes in which the tobacco plants are set filled with a compost made up of buffalo, ox, horse or other manure which has been mixed with paddy husks. On ground which is not inundated every year the same procedure is followed, but care is first taken to burn all existing grass and shrubs on the soil where they stand, so that their ashes will communicate to the soil the fertilizing elements which they contain.

Seeding. Tobacco is sowed in a seed-garden during the month of September, shortly before the rains are over. Germination takes two weeks, after which time the seminal leaves spring out of the ground.

During this time the ground has been prepared for transplanting. Holes from 10 to 15 centimeters in diameter and 20 to 30 in depth have been dug [142] in a triangular arrangement, and spaced from 60 to 90 centimeters apart. The soil taken from the holes is left in mounds around the edges.

Transplanting. A month after its emergence from the ground, when the plant has three or four well-formed leaves, it is transplanted into the holes. Then the latter are almost entirely covered with segments of banana stalks.

Two weeks after transplanting the tobacco plant has seven or eight leaves. Then it is that the holes are filled with the compost of which mention has already been made, and that the plants are watered.

Flowering. Two and a half months after transplanting (70 days), when the tobacco is beginning to flower, all the heads of the plant which have begun to flower are cut off. Floral buds then grow at the axil of each leaf, and these are also cut off as they appear.

Maturation and harvesting. Two months after the start of flowering, that is to say four and a half months after transplanting and five months after sowing, the tobacco leaves begin to show brownish-yellow spots. They are then ripe, and they are harvested as they reach complete development.

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This operation always takes place towards the end of the afternoon when the heat has subsided, and the harvested leaves are left on the ground at the foot of each plant until dusk.

During the last two months particular care is taken to weed the tobacco fields, and worm-eaten or stunted leaves are removed from each plant so that only eight to twelve good leaves are left on each plant. When all the leaves have been harvested the plants are left to go to seed and provide seed for the next season.

Yield. Deducing an average from many tobacco fields which we have examined and the content of which varied greatly, we may estimate that a hectare planted in this manner contains from 15,000 to 25,000 plants depending on the spacing which has been used. This spacing varies with the richness of the soil.

Agricultural fermentation. After harvesting the leaves are placed on top of one another in piles of five, and these packets (Phoc or Kam-Nung) are laid out either on a mat or on earth which has been beaten hard and dried by fire, under a shed or under the house. The packets are laid side by side in a circle without overlapping, so that the leaf-stalks form what might be called the spokes of a wheel with the points of the leaves towards the center. The first layer thus placed represents a disc, at the center of which a small space has been left empty for aeration. A second layer of packets is then placed over the intervals of the first, that is to say that each pack in this layer is set astride two halves of two other packs in the bottom layer. This process is continued until a cylindrical stack some .9 meter to 1.2 meters in height is formed.

Fermentation lasts three days, releasing heat which may be as high as 40° to 45° during which the leaves turn completely yellow.

[143] During this operation care is taken to shift the stack several times, moving the top and bottom layers to the middle of the stack where the heat is greatest. The quality and strength of the tobacco are then tested simply by examination and by odor. The quality, which varies from one year to another in respect to appearance and taste, is then pronounced very good, good or ordinary.

Sorting. Sampling. Making into plugs. The purpose of sorting is to match up tobacco leaves in accordance with their color and quality. Then the outer part of the leaf-stalk is entirely removed simply by pulling it off, beginning at the base.

The tobacco may then have any one of three appearances, each one constituting a different sample lot:

249

1. Dark in color and with a strong taste. This lot comes from the upper part of the plant and is represented by the smaller leaves, which are sweet and supple.

2. Yellowish-brown in color and with an average taste. This tobacco includes the leaves from the middle part of the plant, which are somewhat larger than the preceding but less sweet and supple.

3. Yellow in color and less strong in taste. This last sample lot is made up of the leaves from the base of the plant, which are large, somewhat thicker and rougher than the preceding.

The leaves are matched in accordance with their color, surface and thickness, and then joined in packs of ten for the first sample lot, eight for the second and five for the third. They are rolled into plugs, and the tobacco is then ready for cutting.

Cutting and packing. The cutting operation is done on a horizontal bench ending in a vertical riser. This riser is pierced by a circular hole, the diameter of which is equal to the size of the plugs to be cut.

A plug is placed on the horizontal bench and its end stuck through the hole. It can then be advanced by stages with the left hand, the size of the stages to be determined by the degree of fineness desired, which depends on the type of sample lot. (The first number is as fine as Egyptian tobacco, to give some basis for comparison.) A special knife with a thin blade which is somewhat concave on the inside and is well sharpened is maneuvered with the right hand and rubs along the riser on the outside of the hole. It cuts through the plug as the latter is advanced along the horizontal bench, cutting diagonally like the blade of a guillotine.

When cut the tobacco is in the form of a flat, thin, filamentous web, and it falls into a kind of winnowing-basket. The strips of cut tobacco are carefully collected and spread out full-length on bamboo wattles, then exposed out of doors to sun, mist and dew, both day and night. The drying operation [144] lasts five days, and during the first days the tobacco is turned over several times on the wattles.

[804] After this treatment it is rolled into egg-shaped balls which are strongly compressed by hand and weigh from 100 to 150 grams each. It is then put into cylindrical baskets which are lined inside with dry leaves or bamboo leaflets.

Each basket contains one "mun" or one-fifth of a picul (12.2 kilograms), and the tobacco is sold and exported in this form and in this kind of package.

249 It is reckoned that about 100 tobacco plants are needed to supply one "mun" of cut tobacco, and this would mean, in accordance with what has been said above, a yield of 1,800 to 3,000 kilograms per hectare.

[145]

APPENDIX XXIV
NOTE ON SERICULTURE

231 It would appear that sericulture was once one of the most active branches of the country's industry. It must even have been quite ex-
178 tensive, if we are to rely on the sayings of the older folk who deplore its present decline.

231 Today the production by this entirely familial breeding industry is not as great as it used to be and its quality leaves much to be desired, as does the general yield from the silkworms. This decline stems both from certain unfavorable climatic conditions and from a defective food supply for the worms resulting from the poor state of mulberry tree cultivation.

Since the temperature in places where there are silkworm breeding houses never falls below a certain point, except perhaps during a few nights in the cold season, there can be no wintering for the silkworms. As a consequence there is never any stop to the fecundation, egg-laying, incubation, hatching and rearing of the worms, and all these operations can be carried out continuously all year long.

Under such a regimen it is not surprising that the native varieties of silkworms should degenerate and produce only a mediocre and rather scanty yield. From the point of view of breeding returns, there are considerable losses. Thus if eight females lay 2,500 to 3,000 eggs, for example, these will yield only 250 or 300 worms; and only half of the latter, that is to say about 125 or 150, will reach a final stage of development and spin a cocoon. This return amounts to only ten percent of the eggs placed in incubation and fifty percent of the worms subsequently hatched.

Fecundation and egg-laying. The male and female insects which have been selected and chosen for reproduction are mated for fecundation. Afterwards the females are separated from the males, which serve no further purpose, and placed in groups of six or eight on a small square of cottonstuff which is covered with an ordinary porcelain bowl. [146] The females lay their eggs, and when they have done so some 2,500 or 3,000 eggs are found on the

283 together with the aid of a slotted thread gauge to produce one thread
231 of raw silk. Tension on the strands is provided by hand as they are wound, and the thread is wound on the drum of the reel. From this process there results an uneven thread with many nodosities, especially in the case of the third-grade thread which comes from the cocoon floss.

[147] **Production.** Fifty cocoons usually produce 2.25 grams of raw silk. This includes three different grades, in the following proportions:

1. First grade, glossy, fine and regular silk: 25 centigrams;
2. Second grade, less glossy silk, semi-fine and fairly regular: 50 centigrams;
3. Third grade, dull, coarse and irregular silk, 1.5 grams.

It is reckoned that 2,000 to 2,500 cocoons are required on the average to produce one kilogram of silk.

In summary, 800 raw and empty cocoons weigh 100 grams. When reeled off these 800 cocoons yield only 36 grams of silk. Thus there is a loss of 64 grams, representing 64 percent of the weight of the cocoons and thereby constituting a waste product composed of unwindable fragments, whereas the amount which can be utilized is only 36 percent (1).

(1) Report by P. Macey.

[148]

APPENDIX XXV
NOTE ON THE CULTIVATION OF OPIUM POPPIES

249 Poppies are grown in all the high regions inhabited by the Meos and especially in the north of Upper Laos. But the latter scarcely grow any but the amount which they themselves need each year, and are content merely with selling their surplus, if there is any.

Their method of cultivation is extremely primitive. They begin by burning the trees and brush in order to clear the soil, then spade up the ground to a depth of about five centimeters and sow the seed in the first two weeks of September. They try to choose hillsides which are exposed to the rising sun, and do not irrigate the land.

If rain is plentiful they obtain one or two capsules per plant by this manner, on the average. If rain is scarce, then the yield is nil. They do not use any kind of fertilizer.

Poppies thrive especially in clay soil with a substantial, sound

249 understratum. The land must be watered towards the end of October, after the rainy season, if a good yield is to be obtained. Various fertilizers, barn manure, ashes and lime are also necessary.

It will be difficult to induce the natives to use these methods of cultivation. Only Frenchmen who already have some knowledge of agriculture will be able, within the immediate future and with the help of the administration, to transform the cultivation of opium and obtain good results. Then Indo-China will produce the opium which it needs for its own consumption and will no longer be dependent on India.

The trials which I have just completed at Phou-Wai-Som are conclusive, and yet I was unable to obtain a yield which was proportionate to the money I spent because of an exceptional drought which almost dried up the springs. One thing is sure, however: the poppies which could be sufficiently watered gave [149] good results. The natives whose fields lay near my plantings were astounded at the yield I obtained, whereas they themselves, over an extent of six villages and a larger area of ground, harvested barely 100 grams of opium.

The most favorable season for sowing is from September 15 to November 15.

I tried different types of seed. All of them--the white poppy from France, the one from India, the one from Laos and the Burmese opium poppy--were entirely successful. The stalks reached a height varying between a meter and a meter and a half, and each plant produced from one to sixteen capsules.

To achieve this result the ground must be spaded up to a depth of about twenty-five centimeters. On this should be spread forty cubic meters of barn manure per hectare, mixed with lime and ashes if possible, then the soil should be plowed a second time and leveled. Next the field is divided into lands 1.2 meters wide which are separated by small irrigation canals communicating with the other water supply canals.

With the soil thus prepared, the seed is sowed broadcast at the times already indicated, and at the rate of three kilograms of seed per hectare.

The poppies sprout eight or ten days later, and when they are five centimeters above ground the weeds have to be removed and the plants thinned so as to leave a space of ten centimeters between each plant. Two weeks later the plants are thinned again and the intervals increased to 25 or 30 centimeters, depending on the strength of the

249 plants. Then the soil is given a second dressing.

Up to the time when the stalk reaches a height of twenty centimeters, the poppy is often attacked by a worm which eats it either at ground level or a little below. It can easily be discovered buried in the soil near the stricken plant, and it is essential that the worm be destroyed. Whenever the surface of the soil is dry around the plants, it will be well to water the ground and thereby prevent these worms from hatching. At flowering time, that is to say three months after sowing the seed, the leaves are devoured by caterpillars. Sometimes also a small toadstool forms at the foot of the plant. These parasites are caused by soil that is too damp. It is then best to uproot the contaminated plants and drain the field, for although the poppy is fond of water it does not like to remain in it, and if forced to do so may suddenly wither away.

249 When the petals will come off easily and almost by themselves,
276 they should be removed, sorted into packs, and dried by exposing them in a well-aerated and very dry place. From time to time care should be taken to turn them over and remove those which are mouldy. These petals will be used to wrap balls of opium.

276 A few days later when the capsules have become somewhat harder, they are [150] scarified with a knife which has a rectangular blade and is placed so as to make four shallow incisions at the same time on the capsule walls, but affecting only the epidermis. The opium is at once exuded in the form of small drops which remain glued to the skin until the following day. In the morning after the dew the opium is collected with a scraper, then placed in a container and taken to the drying room. This operation is repeated each day until the end of the harvest.

If scarification is done in rainy or misty weather, it sometimes happens that after the opium is collected a blackish liquid forms which is rather like very strong coffee. This has to be carefully removed, or the quality of the opium will suffer. But since it is easy to recognize in advance, for the opium is laden with water, it is better then to convert it into chandoo which will be used as paste in wrapping the balls. When the west wind blows, as very frequently happens in Laos, this phenomenon does not occur.

The natives do not by any means take all these precautions, however, and so the opium which they produce is of inferior quality.

Each day the opium is stirred, either in the open sun or in a spot which is under cover but well aerated and very dry. It is worked in this manner until it reaches the desired consistency, then it is

2: Gourou--407 N-5 (1939 ?) 1945 Laotians
251, 262

The padec fish paste prepared by the Laotians on the banks of the Mekong has characteristics comparable to those of prahoc.

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

road; but as all the men were thoroughly tired this operation would 494
be postponed till early next morning. Dupont was determined not 725
to stay in Vang Vieng, but even he seemed to think twice about 669
deliberately disobeying the convoy-commander's orders, and when
he finally did so it was done in gentle stages, rather than in one
flagrant act of insubordination. The excuse given for this phobia
about Vang Vieng was that all the sleeping space would be taken
up and we should find nowhere to stretch out comfortably.

We were still filthy from our travels; sweat-soaked and covered 494
in bright yellow dust, through which the perspiration trickled down
regular courses. As part of his campaign Dupont suggested that
we should have a meal first and after that get permission from the
convoy-commander to go for a bathe in a river, twelve kilometres
down the road, where we should still be three kilometres short of
the village with the Viet-Minh. Dupont described this river as if
it had magical curative properties. It came out of a cave not far
away, he said, and the water was icy cold. This course being agreed 251
upon, we went to the usual Chinese eating-house run by one Sour 265
Hak. Taken by surprise by our invasion, Sour Hak found himself
short of food. However, as these villages are completely cut off
during the six months' rainy season, there are always standbys for
emergency. Reaching to the top of the cupboard he found a hunk
of venison *boucané*, dusted it off and set it before us. This meat,
prepared in a manner similar to that employed by the Argentine
gauchos, was black, fine grained in texture as cheese, odourless and
tasted slightly of liquorice. According to the usages of life in the
bush, strips were cut off it with one's clasp knife. Fortunately, Sour
Hak was found, quite mysteriously, to have a stock of first-rate
Burgundy; doubtlessly bought in the belief that it was Algerian.
Dupont's sudden optimism was only lowered by Sour Hak's refusal 000
at any price to sell a green parakeet, which had flown in one day
and attached itself to the house. Since tasting civilization nothing
could persuade this bird to use its wings again, although like a true
Laotian it enjoyed being taken for a ride on a bicycle. Dupont's

10: d'Orleans--345 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 231, 252, 262, 527

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"I notice also some iguanas, the flesh of which is said to be excellent, but they are so quick in their movements that they can only be caught by dogs trained to the work. Flowers, including piles of gardenias picked in the gardens, four varieties of orchid and red and white flowers from different trees, are also bought in large quantities for the decoration of the pagodas, and at the stalls set up in the open is sold vermicelli cooked with grasshoppers, a small bag made out of banana leaves answering the purpose of a cup."

23: Franck--343 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 243, 252, 415

"They hull their rice as it is needed, by stepping on the end of a long pole ending in a big wooden pestle, which falls monotonously into a wooden mortar, a hollowed section of large tree-trunk. These seem to be the chief occupations, but there are many others, as the traveler with time to watch their goings and comings during a few evenings will discover. As in southern China, the pan-basket in which rice is screened and prepared for cooking is made of bamboo splints, but they use clean water rather than any filth in which to wash it."

342 bedrooms separated from each other by partitions or curtains, the
[178] other is the communal room. In the space between the inner and outer beam, and not limited by the longitudinal partition, is the altar on which there are always one or several buddhas. It is placed on the side of the bedrooms, on the "soung" side of the dwelling, that is on the side opposite the entrance. The dimensions of the dwellings vary between six and twenty-four meters long by four to nine meters wide.

342 The houses are most often open to the east or to the north. They may also overlook what is passing by in the streets or the paths and,
823 as the case may be, the whole length of the river. For there is a superstition which forbids building "across the current," which is considered as unconquerable and invincible, and it would be dangerous to defy it.

343 The outhouses consist of an adjoining kitchen and a granary, a few meters removed from the principal dwelling. Near this granary
[252] is found the picturesque rice pestle (khok khao) which the women work with their feet.

343 [62] All the villagers participate in building the house. When the propitious day and moment have been determined, the owner feeds
476 everybody the whole time the house is being built.

Tattooing

301 Every self-respecting Laotian must be tattooed. The absence of
885 tattooing is a sign of mental and moral, therefore of social, inferiority.
562 As a general rule, however, the Laotian woman is not tattooed. This custom is found only among the women of Youan, Kha or Lu.

The Laotian is tattooed chiefly on his thighs, forearms and chest.
301 The tattooing on the thighs is so close together that from a distance a tattooed man looks as if he were wearing close-fitting blue shorts. The Laotians are called "white bellies" as opposed to those who are tattooed down to the navel and are then called black bellies. The colors used for tattooing are indigo blue, red, and black made from a mixture of lampblack diluted with buffalo gall.

[757] Those who have been tattooed are convinced that the signs they wear give them certain supernatural powers, particularly making them invulnerable to bullets and snake bites. During the events of 1941 Siamese soldiers were found wearing white cotton vests covered with cabalistic signs closely related to tattooing. These are a kind of removable tattooing intended to protect those who are wearing them.

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

000 eventually to the Buddhas to solicit their curative powers; and if so what we should learn from it about the prevalence of disease among Europeans.

217 The museum of Vientiane, which I visited in the hope of learning
532 something of the living art of the country, has also little more to
771 show than a collection of Buddhas. There is a tranquillity, a lack of compulsion in the Hinayanist Buddhism of Cambodia and Laos — so different from the neurotic deformation practised by the later Khmer kings — which is not propitious to the development of religious art. There was no violence or drama in the life of Buddha comparable to that of Christ, and the Indian Epics have been eschewed in Laos as improperly secular. It has been enough to carve Buddhas, and more Buddhas *ad infinitum*, seeking perhaps to multiply in this way the magic virtues which each image contains. The curator takes you round, explaining the characteristic postures — there are seven or eight — all of which can be appreciated in five minutes. After that there are minute differences of physique and physiognomy to be noted that reflect the influences of India, of Java, of Thibet or of Ceylon. That is all.

177 By the time the museums turn to the art of the people, the
532 grotesque animals in bamboo, the carved movable figures which
782 are obscene to European eyes — all of which become a pagan burnt-offering at the end of each *boun*[1] — it will be too late. The microphone is an infallible sign of what is to come. Nothing of this kind will survive the era of materialism, under whatever form it arrives.

253 These are the sights of Vientiane, but in addition there is a
825 spectacle which is popular with Europeans, who, remote, isolated, and living under difficulties, tend to shut themselves up within the protective social rituals of people in exile.

This spectacle is the slaughterhouse at work. I do not know whether or not it is illegal in Laotian law to kill animals, but certainly it is thought shameful, and the killing for Europeans is done at the dead of night on the outskirts of the town. The

[1] [Laotian religious festival. -- Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

slaughterers are obliged to work by flares, which is responsible, the 753
French think, for an unusually picturesque effect. It is 'not done' to 825
go along while the actual killing is in progress, but shortly after, when the carcasses are suspended from hooks to be cut up, and the workers, stripped to their loincloths, and garishly splashed, paddle about in a vermilion sea. Cars are stationed just beyond the reach of the steaming odours, and one is recommended to see the thing as one views a nude in a picture gallery – that is, divorced from all but a disinterested abstraction, in this case the colour.

The possibilities of Vientiane, it was clear, would be quickly 292
exhausted. Thao Nhouy, the Laotian Minister of Education, lent 301
me his jeep to see some of the surrounding villages, but the roads 535
were so appalling that it broke down after being driven for about five miles. He then suggested that I might like to see the local schoolgirls dancing, and when I said that I would be delighted, and asked for permission to take photographs, the girls were sent off home, on their bicycles, to get their best clothes. An hour or two later they began to trickle back, wearing their mothers' jewellery as well as their own and with their silk finery done up in paper parcels. When they had dressed and were ready they made a glittering sight. One girl wore a scarf ornamented with real gold thread said to be worth about £50 in English money. They danced under the supervision of a teacher whom I recognized as a professional actor, from the *boun*,[1] and who occasionally intervened when a girl failed in some minor feat, such as bending her fingers back at an expressive ninety degrees from the palm.

All these girls, dressed as they were like princesses, came from 493
shacks in the forest. Each one had a bicycle – infallibly fitted with 511
dynamo lighting, and sometimes 3-speed gears. It seems that a bicycle for his daughter is one of the essentials for which a Laotian will work. It is considered ill-bred and irreligious in Laos to work 241
more than is necessary. The father of a family cultivates an amount 461
of land, estimated, by a bonze who is expert in such matters, to be 511
792

1 [i.e., Laotian religious 255
festival. -- Analyst]

10: d'Orleans--322-325 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 226, 228, 255, 439

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "A good deal of net fishing goes on in the river itself, but it is not till later in the season that the prabeuc, a fish resembling the sturgeon, is caught. At fixed [pages 323 and 324 contain illustration] [325] periods, this fish ascends the river as far as the confluent of the Nam Ou, and its capture is a source of great profit for the inhabitants, as its eggs (which make excellent caviar when fresh) are sent as far as Xieng Mai, while the fish itself is canned and isinglass is obtained from its skin."

249 either in the natural state or in the form of black, pasty, molasses-laden sugar.

There are several varieties, the chief of which are the heavy, green cane which is highly cellulated, and the small violet-colored cane with joints closer together, which is fuller than the first.

Farming methods do not differ from those used in other countries. Cuttings are planted, and the plants are topped if they show a marked propensity to excessive leafy growth.

257 To manufacture sugar, the cane is crushed between two vertical
407 cylinders driven by two wooden gears of a most ingenious construction. A buffalo turns the whole by means of a crossbar or shaft, the end of which is attached to its neck and constitutes a whim. Sometimes the cane is crushed between two pieces of stone or hardwood, one of which rests on the ground while the other [364] is applied on top of it by means of a wooden lever. One or several persons work the other end of the lever with all their weight and move it up and down in a series of
[439] jerky motions. The juice extracted from the cane is placed in large
[415] cast iron cauldrons shaped like cupels, which are imported by Chinese merchants. Condensation takes place over an open fire laid in primitive hearths which are cut into the ground itself, if it is clayey. When the syrup reaches the desired degree of thickness the whole mass is poured into rectangular or circular molds made of wood or bamboo. After cooling the loaves of sugar which come from the molds, and which are from three to six centimeters thick, are wrapped in dry leaves. They are transported and sold in this form. The cane itself is called "Oi" and the sugar "Nam-Oi" or, literally, water of cane.

[276] The Laotians do not refine alcohol from the juice of sugar cane,
[101] and are even ignorant of the initial refining stage which the Annamites use and which produces brown sugar.

[435] The price of sugar on the markets of Laos varies from one point to another, and transactions involve small quantities only. Statistics do give evidence, however, from which market prices of 35 to 50 francs per hundred kilograms can be deduced.

249 INDIGO. We have seen above that the Laotians use the indigo-bearing properties of certain plants which grow wild in the forests in order to dye cloth goods blue. They also produce a variety of indigo, the Indigofera tinctoria, which is similar to the variety found in Bengal. The plant itself is called "Kok-Kame" and the extract or dye "Nam-Kame

2: Gourou--407 N-5 (1939 ?) 1945 Laotians
251, 262

The padec fish paste prepared by the Laotians on the banks of the Mekong has characteristics comparable to those of prahoc.

10: d'Orleans--281 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 262, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Watching our boatmen [LSS: Kha boatmen in the service of a Laotian] would be sufficient to occupy us, for they are a very interesting study; their chief pre-occupation is to point out some game to us, and with this aim they search the banks with their eyes. The steersman seems particularly fond of hunting, and he is doubly keen upon it now, for he has all the men to feed, so he is not at all sorry to give them some monkey flesh or a few birds, which do not cost him anything."

10: d'Orleans--281-282 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 262, 522, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Our men, [LSS: Kha boatmen in the service of a Laotian] have one resource, which I cannot make up my mind to try; they have picked up a kind of cricket on the banks, and after amusing themselves by making it chirp as they hold it between [282] two fingers, they throw it into the saucepan, and eat it stewed."

10: d'Orleans--322 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 222, 262

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "We notice, on the sand-banks near the water, rows of poles, which women, with baskets passed through their arms, come to inspect, and apparently to wipe at frequent intervals. This excites our curiosity, and when we get closer, we find that these poles are done over with glue to catch the grasshoppers which alight upon them, and which are sold in the market as a staple article of food."

10: d'Orleans--345 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 231, 252, 262, 527

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"I notice also some iguanas, the flesh of which is said to be excellent, but they are so quick in their movements that they can only be caught by dogs trained to the work. Flowers, including piles of gardenias picked in the gardens, four varieties of orchid and red and white flowers from different trees, are also bought in large quantities for the decoration of the pagodas, and at the stalls set up in the open is sold vermicelli cooked with grasshoppers, a small bag made out of banana leaves answering the purpose of a cup."

10: d'Orleans--368 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 241, 262, 438

"... The village of Muong Liep (Diap on the map), once important, now possesses only a few houses. The gardens are full of fruit trees, cocoa trees, areca nut trees, oranges, bananas, and the mak tan la late, (1) which are eaten with a spoon.

1. In French, cœur-de-bœuf.

We cannot buy any rice, the inhabitants having very little. They got it from Nam Ou, or certain villages especially given to its growth."

23: Franck--318-319 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 262, 643

"He was received like any other invited luncheon guest, though he was always addressed as Majesté by the commissaire and his well chosen wife, and the half-dozen French functionaries they had been able to scrape together in the kingdom. In lieu of a box of chocolates his Majesty had sent ahead some Laosian food that is served as dessert at the royal table. One dish was a kind of custard cooked in small cocoanuts, the base of the husk cut down to resemble the shank of a goblet, and preserving the cocoanut taste. Another was a kind of vermicelli covered with nut dust, not unlike a similar dish in China. The ordinary people do not indulge in such delicacies, which are reserved for the royal palace. Even there, according to my hostess, there are few changes of menu. The king was well versed in Western table manners, though he did not take a very active part in the conversation, which of course was in French. He showed up best as a sympathetic listener, and was easily amused. In so far as my own almost unknown country was concerned, he seemed to be particularly interested in the Mormons and in what the French call the régime sec. He laughed for some time in his merry yet kingly way when told that Brigham Young had forty wives and a correspond-[319]ing number of children, apparently without seeing any connection between this and his own fifteen and forty respectively. Or it may be that he was laughing at the plight of Brigham from the vantage-point of his own experience. The régime sec, in other words,

prohibition, he plainly did not understand at all, any more than does the average Frenchman, and there was nothing to be gained in trying to make clear the American point of view on the subject. He would of course have been horrified to learn that there are persons in that benighted wineless land from which I came who have never heard of his ancient kingdom; nor did I feel it quite safe to pad out the conversation by bringing up the question of silk stockings in its relation to our national economic problem, for one can never be sure just how sensitive kings may be on these very personal matters."

23: Franck--331 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 262, 411, 415, 482 Ethnic subgroup

"These fellows [EJ: Kha] carried a slim ration of glutinous rice in little round baskets with a telescope cover, and some uncooked rice in a cloth at the back of the waist, just as do some South American Indians. At their sides hung a kind of machete, in a sheath made of half bamboo with wooden strips across it, much the sort of thing a Boy Scout turned loose in the woods might contrive. They were as small as upper grammar-school boys, and though they looked hardier than almost any tame people, they were really even less useful as carriers than the Pwun. They prefer to carry by a band across the forehead, but as my baggage was not arranged for that method most of them were forced to endure one end of the stiff whole-bamboo that takes the place of the wiser springy split-bamboo or hickory carrying-poles of the Chinese--because one of them alone cannot carry a real load. Yet on the whole the long file of silent, rather anemic fellows made better time, thanks perhaps to their lighter loads, than those of the day before."

25: Brodrick--101 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 262, 272, 342, 352

"[HD: The Laotian's] bamboo house on stumpy piles costs nothing to make. He has no furniture, no chairs, no tables. He sleeps on a mat. There may be a few bowls in his hut, but most of the meal is served on palm-leaves. His food is simple--rice, salt fish in brine, raw pork chopped up and smothered in a pungent, aromatic sauce, cakes of rice and bananas (and delicious they are), and he eats iguanas, alligator's eggs and red ants.

When he is not swigging lao, or rice-alcohol, he drinks water and uses tea--Laotian tea is poor stuff--as we did until a few generations ago, as medicine."

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region.

At the beginning of the rainy season and of the dry season it will be well to wear a cholera-belt, especially at night.

In northern Laos garments of cloth suiting may be worn in the morning and evening during the mixed half-season.

Woolen clothing is also very good, even in the hot season after sundown, for persons who can stand it.

As protective headgear against the sun one should wear the colonial helmet or else the various types of hats made of Indian "saja" pith, cork, elder or rubber. One should provide oneself with a parasol if one fears overexposure to the sun.

Before sunrise and after sunset any kind of headgear will do, and in winter when the sky is clouded over a felt or straw hat is sufficient for the whole day.

In the matter of shoes one should consult one's own need and wear heavy ones or light ones, made of leather or cloth, as one wishes. For walking trips and traveling on horseback one needs waterproof shoes with iron cleats. Above the latter one should wear soft woolen puttees, which are quite superior to leather boots, leggings or gaiters, whatever the advantages of the latter.

One's diet in Laos should consist almost exclusively of the local staples and produce to which should be added, during six months of the year, the produce of a vegetable garden planted with European vegetables. The rest of the time one may content oneself with the native vegetables, which are less varied, to be sure, but which can be grown during the rainy season.

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[119] Beef, pork, goat meat, rabbit meat, venison, fish, poultry, chickens and ducks, geese and guinea fowl, etc. provide, together with eggs, the main elements in the diet, especially if garden produce be added. It is well to use canned food only when one cannot do otherwise.

One very important question which should not be neglected is the making of bread. Faulty workmanship, the use of spoiled flour or of poor quality leaven are, in fact, the often unknown causes of most stomach disorders. The ideal thing would be to replace bread completely with local rice either steam-cooked and eaten as it is, or else pressed into cakes.

Experience has shown that Europeans living in tropical regions stay healthier when they use only native produce and approach the native diet as closely as possible, which is based on rice and maize.

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It is thus that the Missionaries, for example, whose resources are extremely limited and do not enable them to use imported foodstuffs, remain in the land for many long years without any great damage to their health. It goes without saying that one should avoid overindulgence in food, and especially in alcoholic beverages. Drinking iced tea at and between meals gives excellent results, but then it is well to take a small quantity of pure wine. Coffee is an indispensable tonic and stimulant for aiding digestion and fighting off the heaviness which generally manifests itself after meals.

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One should avoid long siestas immediately after the noonday meal. Newcomers will do well not to succomb to this damaging habit, which slows digestion, softens the organism and in the long run robs the brain of its lucidity and vigor. It is preferable to move about a bit immediately after meals on the verandas or in the rooms of the house. Billiards provide excellent exercise in this case.

Around two o'clock, when digestion is complete and before business is resumed, a cold shower is extremely hygienic. [120] According to one's tastes and temperament one may take a shower bath, pour water over oneself with the help of a basin held in the hand, or bathe in a tub with a large sponge.

In the evening after sunset it is well to take a little exercise in the form of horseback riding, bicycling, tennis, etc. But one should avoid going too far and becoming tired, since all that is needed is enough effort to maintain the suppleness and elasticity of the muscles. After such exercise one should take a quick shower or tub bath, then, if desired, a small glass of generous or tonic wine such as quinquina, cola, coca, Désiles wine, etc.

One should avoid all the so-called alcoholic aperitifs, which necessitate the use of a great deal of water and ice, for they cause overabundant perspiration and, by filling the stomach, retard the secretion of the gastric juices. It is precisely this secretion which gives the sensation of appetite.

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In the matter of general preventive hygiene, a great many persons will do well to follow the regimen outlined below. Every day one should take a few centigrams of salts of quinine, hydrobromide, bihydrobromide, sulfate, etc. If excessive fatigue is anticipated as a consequence of prolonged exposure to the sun, a long march or a stay in the forest, one should take a larger dose of quinine. The dose may be as large, depending on temperament and experience, as one gram for the sulphate and fifty centigrams for the hydrobromide.

149: Reinach--136 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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who work gold mines--and by the inhabitants of several regions, [563]
whose state of fortune would nevertheless enable them to use a more precious metal.

Jewelry and examples of the goldsmith's art are found in different forms and types which vary greatly with the region and race, as will be seen by the nomenclature given in Chapter IX.

Food. The Laotian scorns the pleasures of the table, and is 262
generally a moderate eater and drinker. Steam-cooked glutinous rice forms the basis of his food supply. To this he adds salt, peppers, various other spices, fresh or preserved fish, etc. Besides these, but less frequently, his day-to-day diet may be varied with poultry, eggs, buffalo meat, beef and pork, as well as venison. To be sure, it is mainly on the occasion of public or private festivals, which are fairly numerous in the course of the year, that the Laotian improves on his usual rather frugal fare in this way.

The customary beverage is water which may be taken directly 271
from the rivers or first be hastily decanted into jars or water-coolers 273
of porous earthenware. In general, Laotians prefer water taken directly from the river to that which has been filtered. Finally, the people of Laos consume rice brandy which is obtained by distillation, and a kind of beer made by cold fermentation of rice mixed with paddy husks.

The use of these drinks, aside from rare exceptions, is reserved [527]
for holidays.

Physical appearance, character, occupations. The Laotian's 152
character is, in general, mild, friendly and happy. His physiognomy is [181] open and smiling. Not quarrelsome by nature, he even shrinks from coming to blows in extreme cases and prefers to end a dispute with an outburst of laughter rather than with blows.

Since, all in all, it has few needs and inhabits a land with luxuriant vegetation which is abundantly favored with products to be had for the scavenging, this happy people can easily satisfy its needs and be content with its fate. [Illustration alongside text here.]

It is assuredly lazy, but out of indifference much rather than 461
out of any deliberate intent. It cannot grasp the advantage or utility of a regular and prolonged effort beyond what is strictly necessary to provide it with a living and a few distractions to which, in reality, its own joyous disposition makes the greatest contribution.

462

To the men are reserved the chief tasks, which have a more
virile and noble character than those which are the women's lot. 241

Tribal Tai

291 the Deng-Thais, is applied to the edges of the gown. It is further
563 ornamented [233] on the outside edge opposite the buttonholes with colored silk embroidery which does not go down below the waist.

This garment is also folded in half lengthwise and worn rolled around the body with the sleeves left hanging.

302 The women wear their hair parted down the middle in front
301 and rolled into a sort of long tassel behind which is contained within the folds of a little turban. The latter is wound above the forehead and the free end inserted under the first turn, on the nape of the neck. This headdress is quite similar to that of the Annamite women in Tonkin.

In certain regions of Laos, Thai women wind their hair into a sort of coil which girls wear loosely down their neck and betrothed or married women wear on top of the head. Thai jewelry is made of heavy silver and is of the same type as Laotian jewelry. The men wear bracelets on their wrists.

262 Food. The Thai diet is like that of the Laotians, but they prefer
264 non-glutinous white rice and use chopsticks like the Chinese and Annamites.

The use of betel is quite widespread among the Thais, but in
276 contrast to the Laotians they keep their teeth white. The Thais smoke the oily, opiated tobacco of Tonkin and China in bamboo waterpipes whose tiny bowls only contain a small pinch of tobacco. They also smoke a local variety of tobacco, either in cigarettes or in pipes with a highly worked clay bowl into which a long stem ending in a glass or jade mouthpiece is inserted.

156 Character. Although serious and reflective, the Thais have a vivacious and friendly character. They are somewhat cold in appearance, but are sound friends and highly affable when one gets to know them better.

[701] Gentler and more timid than the Laotians, they have no taste for the art of war and it is difficult to get them to stay in the native militia.

433 They are very self-seeking and much more miserly than the Lao-
438 tians. [234] It should be noted, moreover, that since they produce everything themselves and are a people of farmers and livestock
156 breeders, they do not have, by virtue of their ever sedentary occupations, the opportunities which these latter have to enjoy fairly high profits resulting from commercial transactions, nor the special habits which contact with different races gives.

181 The Thais love pleasure and celebrations. Guaranteed their daily
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149: Reinach--184 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

291 Men's clothing consists of a jacket and pair of trousers which have the same shape as those of the Lus and are made of coarse cotton cloth manufactured locally. Their headgear is a turban cut from a piece of Turkey-red cotton.

For work, clothing is generally reduced to a narrow strip of cloth forming a belt, one of the ends of which is passed between the legs and fastened in the middle of the back.

During the cold season a jacket is added to this loin-cloth.

The women wear a skirt of the Laotian type which is fastened under the armpits so that it does not come down below the calves of the legs. A short jacket completes their costume. On their head they wear a turban which is generally dark in color. [Illustration alongside text here]

301 Jewelry. Both sexes have silver or copper jewelry such as wide stiff neckbands, bracelets, rings, buttons, clasps, etc. Like the Lus and the Youns, the Khas pierce the lobes of their ears. Often the holes are of such dimensions that a roll of leaves or a bouquet of flowers can be inserted in them.

262 Food. Their diet is very like that of the Laotians and Thais. When there is a shortage of rice its place is taken, until the following harvest, by yams, taros, bamboo sprouts, banana flowers, etc.

462 Occupations. Women and children are given the hardest tasks imaginable, and it is unusual to meet them without baskets on their backs. The men carry only their bag, their sword, their rifle and their pipe.

595 Marriage. Divorce. Adultery. Polygamy is widespread among the Khas, and the number of wives a man possesses is the sign of his wealth. For, regarded as they are rather like beasts of burden and working constantly, the more numerous these wives are the more they will produce.

584 [254] The rules for marriage preliminaries closely resemble the Laotian customs and the ceremony itself, although much less splendid, comprises the same rites. To be sure, the role of the bonzes is filled here by "Pho-Tao," that is to say elders or sorcerers.

586 Divorce may be requested by the wife, or one of the wives, for personal reasons. It may also take place by mutual consent. Finally,
684 it is compulsory in the case of adultery, since the guilty woman must marry her accomplice.

Contrary to what is the case elsewhere, adultery on the part of the husband is punished by a double fine awarded to his wife's family

824
314 when mixed with curcuma. The trees are found in the forest, and
386 sometimes in gardens.

10. Yams.

262 The yam is an edible tubercle of the Dioscorea family. It is
241 represented by two varieties, the white and the black, which are called "Mane-Phuek-Khao" and "Mane-Phuek-Dam" in Laotian. These tubercles are the main standby when there is a scarcity of rice and [335] maize, but in ordinary times they are used only to supplement the usual diet.

11. Taro or cush-cush (Mane-Pa).

Taro is also a food plant of the Aroïdées caladiées genus (Caladium esculentum). Like the yam, it is one of the most useful edible tubercles in times of famine.

12. Medicinal plants.

824 Designated by the generic name "Ya" in Laotian, these plants are represented by special types of orchids, roots, bark, berries,
278 leaves and even pieces of wood of different kinds, the whole forming an assortment of medicaments.

[438] The Khas are the ones who collect these various products from the depths of the forests, and they trade them either to Chinese or to Laotians for money or other goods.

[435] Certain of these plants and barks are used by the Laotians while others, such as the leaves from orchid plants, for example, are purchased by Chinese merchants at prices which vary between 33 and 62 francs per hundred kilograms.

13. Cloves.

The clove tree (Caryophyllus aromaticus. Kane-Phou in Laotian) is quite scarce in Laos. Cloves are mixed with various ingredients in masticatories or are taken as medicine.

Cultivation of the clove tree ought to be developed in Laos because of the high value of its flowers which, when dried on the tree, constitute the cloves of commerce.

14. Beeswax (Phung).

222 Beeswax is much sought-after in Laos, where a great deal of it is
[231] consumed. It is a scavenging product par excellence since, except in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na, the inhabitants do not practice apiculture and
314 are content to go into the forest and look for honeycombs in order to extract the wax. The latter is used for domestic needs and for worship
[438] ceremonies. It also forms the basis of quite an important trade.

149: Reinach--247 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"What makes everything easy and is used for everything is this hollow wood, at once so solid and so light, the incomparable bamboo. In France we see it only in the form of pleasant but useless little articles of furniture. Here bamboo is sufficient to every task. It provides the whole house, frame as well as walls. The inner walls and floors are made of matted bamboo lathwork. Yet such a house, with its furniture, bed, tables, various accessories and its luxury objects, if you are a person of refinement, can be improvised for you in a space of two hours wherever you want. 313 341 352

"Has a bridge been washed out? In two hours, thanks to this wood which is easy to manage and to work, men will have made a new bridge. One is especially struck, at the beginning of this life which is so free and, more than any other, independent of men and things, by the great simplicity and ingenuity of all the procedures. Objects are rudimentary but practical, easy to make, soon ready and simple to repair. Everyone knows how to build ordinary furnishings, and no interruptions are caused here as they are when even the slightest damage occurs to one of our highly developed utensils, which only a specialist knows how to repair.

"A bamboo tube is a safe place for your maps and papers. It is a drinking glass, and it is also a pipe for smokers. On a larger scale, it is a bucket for carrying water, and the receptacle for all liquid and solid provisions. When provided with a handle it serves as a pot for the Laotians to cook their rice in, or to prepare syrup from the sugar palm. When torn into thongs it is used as rope and string. Ligatures of sapeks are threaded on kelates, or bamboo filaments, and this is what makes our new Indo-Chinese sou, with its round hole in the middle, so impractical. Those who preside over the striking of our coins are unaware that the kelate is square, a fact which the first comer from the interior could have told them. Baskets of all kinds are made with these same kelates for holding and transporting material. Hats are also made of them to provide shelter from the sun and rain. At night, when the stage of your journey is too long and you have to continue after nightfall even at the risk of meeting a tiger, setting fire to a bamboo branch is enough to frighten any off and to light your way. And not only is bamboo used to make torches, hats, string, dishes, furniture, houses and bridges, but it also serves as animal fodder and even as food for the natives, who eat the tenderest shoots as we would eat asparagus. 313 415 436 285 313 291 [372] [262] [231]

Hunting

224 Hunting, for the inhabitants of Laos, is another form of scavenging, since it procures them either live animals or the remains of the same without any great labor or expense.

411 For the Laotian, time does not count. He makes his powder him-
224 self, and with the exception of firearms his hunting devices are also of his own fabrication. With the help of this far from perfect equipment he is nevertheless able to capture live elephants and to procure the ivory and remains of those which he kills, as well as the hide, [438] talons, bones and horns of a multitude of other animals. All these [262] products are so many trade commodities for him. The flesh of all these animals, moreover, makes a sizeable contribution to the diet of the Laotian hunter. It is a feast for him, for his family and for his entourage.

[325] [344] The natives have a perfect knowledge of the habits and customs of all the representatives of the local fauna. Patient, adroit, 224 endowed with excellent powers of hearing and sight which are further developed and sharpened by practice, they are not afraid to attack the tiger and other large animals despite their rudimentary weapons.

Lying hidden for hours at a time, motionless and silent and abstaining from smoking, the hunter waits for his victim without losing his self-control. When it approaches within a few meters of him, his sure eye and untrembling arm enable him to strike it dead with a bullet or with a poisoned arrow shot from a powerful crossbow.

One is astounded at the results achieved with weapons which are so imperfect, as much by their rudimentary construction as by their age, and which often lead one to fear more for the hunter's life than for the beast's. We must admire these men who, although reputed to be cowardly, brave danger with such primitive weapons and go in search of wild animals in their very lairs, killing them at almost point-blank range so that oftentimes the wad from the gun singes the animal's fur or the arrow goes in one side and out the other.

411 The firearms used by the Laotians are flintlock or muzzle-loading rifles, some of which are of Siamese or Burmese manufacture. Others 439 are imported from Europe through trade or in private cargoes. There are also old regulation rifles, British and others, chiefly those which bear the image of a cock and the word "Tower" stamped on the lock or breech.

226 A few varieties of fish in the Mekong go down to the sea at certain periods, then return to the great river and go up it for more than two thousand kilometers to an altitude of four hundred meters. Enormous rays are caught which are as much as four meters long from head to tail, and fish similar to the whiting, the mackerel, the sardine, the tuna, the sole and the limanda are found, almost all of which have retained a sea fish taste despite the distance.

The kings of the Mekong, in respect to size and weight, are the Pa-Beuk, [351] the Pa-Leum, the Pa-Sa-Ho, the Pa-Kheung, the Pa-Kai and the Pa-Khoun, which vary in weight from 35 to 200 kilograms. The Pa-Beuk and the Pa-Leum have characteristic habits, in that the first of these works its way up to points between Vien-Tiane at Luang-Prabang at a distance of 2,000 kilometers from the sea, and the second comes up beyond Xieng-Khong, or more than 2,600 kilometers upriver. The two points on the Mekong where, from the middle of February to the middle of March, the Pa-Beuk gather at [Illustration here] spawning time are, first, a point slightly downstream from Ban-Sam-Pan-Na (above Vien-Tiane), exactly at the Keng-Hang, and, second, a little below Pak-Lay at the Nong-Kec. These spots, where the fish choose to stay, are depressions in the rocky bed of the river, generally between small islands, where there are still 18 to 25 meters of water at low water time.

Hundreds of pirogues gather in these regions (1) and within [352]

(1) On the Lower Mekong the "Pa-Phon" (alosa) is fished for in the same way as it goes upriver (January) and downriver (October).

a few days the fishermen take a great number of Pa-Beuk weighing, on the average, from 120 to 200 kilograms. The number of fish caught varies from year to year, sometimes doubling from one year to the next. In the last few years the average has been between 60 and 130 Pa-Beuk, representing approximately 12 to 25 tons of fish. They may be eaten fresh or preserved.

• 262 The meat of the Pa-Beuk is separated into slices in the form of long strips which are put out to dry in the sun. Its eggs, which form
226 two enormous masses weighing nearly ten kilograms, are used to make a kind of caviar which is highly esteemed in the land.

The meat of the other large varieties of fish is used to make various preserves, the chief of which are:

"Pa-Ka-Deng," composed of medium-sized or small fish which have been salted, dried and smoked.

"Pa-Niang," formed of slices from a large fish which have been smoked. 226

"Pa-Heng," or a small dried fish. 262

"Pa-Khem" corresponds fairly closely to our salted and dried fish of the sardine type known as Nantes, which are left in salt for only a few days.

Finally, "Pa-Dek" is the form in which most of the large varieties of fish are preserved, and is an almost indispensable part of the native food supply. To prepare Pa-Dek the meat is cut into small pieces and ground in a mortar with salt and pepper so as to produce a kind of paste which is then put in jars with salt. The resulting brine helps to preserve the product (1). 263

(1) The price of Pa-Dek varies between 18 and 25 francs per hundred kilograms. This is the "Mam" of the Annamites.

The price of fish is subject to fluctuations, depending on the scarcity of it. The large fish of which we have just been speaking sell at prices between one and forty francs, depending on their weight and their abundance on the market. 226 435

Eels, shrimp of the prawn type and crabs are also found in the ponds and rivers of Laos during the rainy season, and in the water-courses there are various edible shellfish [353] such as the river mussel and small winkle. The ponds and swamps shelter several varieties of frogs, some of which reach an enormous size. All of them are edible, and are caught with a red ribbon on the end of a line fastened to a long bamboo pole. 226 [227]

II

PRESENT-DAY CROPS

Together with an enumeration of the crops grown in Laos we should like to be able to give the area which each occupies and the cultivable surfaces with the nature of the soil and the type of crops which would be suited to them, but as the Superior Resident states in his report for 1899: 241 311

"We have been in the colony for too short a time to have been able to set up a cadastral registry service. In view of the large area of the territory (267,000 square kilometers), the small and sparse population which inhabits it (2.7 inhabitants per square kilometer in

241 Lower Laos and 1.1 inhabitant in Upper Laos), the considerable expense
311 which the establishment of a registry would involve, and the slight interest attached to such a measure in a land where our advantage lies in exercising only an indirect administration, it is impossible for me to reply in any precise fashion.

"All that I can say is that the area of cultivable land is about 80,000 square kilometers, and that it is very unevenly distributed. The southern part of the possession does offer a certain number of vast [312] plains which are well irrigated or can be irrigated and which are admirably suited to agriculture.

"The northern part, on the other hand, is almost exclusively made up of a series of juxtaposed mountain masses in a nearly unbroken line which leaves only an insignificant place for the rare valleys and plateaus satisfying the conditions required by agriculture.

"The area of cultivated land may be estimated arbitrarily at 30,000 square kilometers, distributed as follows

Southern Laos, 20,000 square kilometers.
Northern Laos, 10,000 square kilometers.
} Giving about 15 inhabitants per cultivated square kilometer."

In the preceding chapter we gave a list of the plants which compose the flora of Laos. We shall supplement it here by studying those which are grown as regular crops.

243 RICE. Rice, being the basic food of the Laotians, occupies first place among the country's crops.

Two varieties of rice are grown in Laos, glutinous rice or "Nep" (in Annamite) which is called "Khao-Niaou" in Laotian, and dry rice or "Khao-Tiao" which is known in trade as Cochinchina white rice.

The first is more nourishing and contains a higher percentage of starchy matter. Because of its particular qualities, it is the type most widely cultivated for food and for the manufacture of alcohol.

Dry rice or "Khao-Tiao" is also cultivated, but in smaller quantities. It is primarily used for making pastry and for food by inhabitants of certain races which do not eat glutinous rice.

554 Persons of a certain standing even go so far as to eat only "Khao-
262 Tiao" out of ostentation.

Glutinous rice is grown in plains ricefields as well as in terraced ricefields on hillsides and in "Rais" or temporary clearings in the mountains.

149: Reinach--260 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Dry rice may be grown in the plains, but is generally cultivated in mountain rais, for the peoples who consume it are settled in the highlands. Indeed, the Khas are the ones who mainly practice its cultivation. The ratio of total dry rice production to that of glutinous rice is about one to four. 243

It is difficult to give any official figures, even approximate ones --for the reasons given above--regarding the total quantity of rice, whether the year be a good or bad one, which Laos produces. It differs, moreover, from one year to the next because of meteorological variations and also because of the damaging epizootic diseases which recur periodically, decimating the farming animals and forcing the inhabitants to reduce the area of their plantings. [231]

[355] One can, however, given the amount necessary for the subsistence of a family of five, deduce the approximate weight of rice which is indispensable for feeding any given group of people. 262 146

It is estimated that the average yearly consumption by a family of five is 28 piculs of paddy (1,700 kilograms), which yield about 17 piculs of threshed rice (1,026 kilograms). 243

Now the total population of Laos, which is estimated at 470,000, will normally contain 94,000 families of five, or groupings of five individuals of all ages and both sexes. On this basis it is easy to calculate that the amount of paddy needed to feed these 94,000 groups will be 2,632,000 piculs (159,800,000 kilograms) of paddy and 1,598,000 piculs (96,440,000 kilograms) of threshed rice.

In addition to this indispensable minimum merely for feeding the inhabitants, other quantities of rice are also necessary: 1) For fodder for certain animals and for making alcohol, pastry, etc., a consumption figure which we estimate at one-fifth of the above figure, or 526,400 piculs of paddy (31,794,560 kilograms) or 319,600 piculs of threshed rice (19,308,840 kilograms); 2) For seed and emergency reserves. These latter may be calculated at the rate of 5 piculs of paddy per house or per family of five, and require about 600,000 piculs of paddy (36,240,000 kilograms). 243 262 273

In recapitulation, it is clear that the amount of paddy which Laos ought to produce for food for its inhabitants, fodder for certain animals, the manufacture of alcohol, miscellaneous uses, seed and reserves is some 3,758,000 to 3,800,000 piculs or 226,983 to 229,520 tons, giving an average ratio of 1) 485 kilograms or 8 piculs of paddy per inhabitant; or 2) 2,425 kilograms or 40 piculs per family.

243 262 In reality, this is neither always nor everywhere the case. There are bad years when, because of a shortage of water, production in the ricefields falls by 30 or 40 percent, and the natives are then obliged to turn for their food to the roots, yams and taros which they find in the forest.

[311] [356] It is the northern part of Laos which mainly suffers from this sad state of things, as a result of its hydrological régime, the particular disposition of its farming land, and the fragmentation of the latter into relatively small plots which are remote from one another.

312 In southern Laos the vaster plains and a more complete natural irrigation which can easily be increased as the need arises make it possible not only to satisfy local needs but also to provide paddy and threshed rice for export. Thus in 1898 900 tons of paddy were exported to Cambodia and Cochinchina (1).

[439]

(1) These exports, which seem rather slight, will certainly increase provided that crops are good.

243 439 Here, by way of indication, are some current prices per hundred kilograms of paddy and decorticated rice:

Northern Laos	Paddy	4 francs 10 centimes to 9 francs
	Rice	8 francs 30 centimes to 10 francs 60 centimes
Southern Laos	Paddy	1 franc 65 centimes to 3 francs
	Rice	8 francs 30 centimes to 12 francs 50 centimes

243 In the figures given above as representing the amount of cereal grains needed to feed the population, we should include a certain quantity of maize. We do not have sufficient information to be able to show its importance with respect to the total production of cereals and consequently to say by how many tons the total figure for the paddy crop ought to be reduced in order for this difference to be applied to maize.

Nevertheless, if we take as a basis the total number of inhabitants who grow this crop, we may estimate that in northern Laos the ratio of maize production to that of paddy is about one to five. In southern Laos this crop is much less extensive.

248 There are three harvests each year. In the first the shoots are .9 meter high, in the second 1.4 meters and in the third 1.6 meters. They yield, respectively, for an area of 14 square meters, 18, 20 and 24 kilograms of fiber.

At harvest time the shrub is split and left to soak in water for three hours, for the fiber is difficult to tear off. The work of decortication takes a long time, and this drawback has so far prevented the cultivation of this crop from spreading although it is an easy one on the whole and not at all exhausting for the soil, since it is possible to grow it twenty years in succession on the same plot of ground.

438 Exports from the provinces of southern Laos were more than fifty tons in 1899. A great deal is used locally, since all the nets used for
248 hunting and fishing are made with this fiber.

Prices are as follows (1):

248 (1) In view of the price at Bassac (37 francs), it would be ad-
435 vantageous to export this product to Cambodia, where it sells for twice as much.

	Per hundred kilograms
Plateau of the Bolovens	25 to 35 francs
Bassac	37 "
Saravane	60 "
Khong	60 to 80 "
Attopeu	30 "
Stung-Treng	54 to 62 "
Pnom-Penh	60 to 80 "

248 [367] HEMP. Hemp is grown in Upper Laos, but only for local consumption. It is used in making string, light rope, nets, etc. A very strong and fairly good-tasting alcohol is also extracted from its seeds. It is called "Pane" or "Nhia-Pane."

241 BATATAS. Various kinds of batatas which are more or less sweet are grown each year on the banks of the watercourses and in the still
[262] moist sandy alluvia. These tubercles are chiefly consumed by the inhabitants, although small quantities are used to fatten certain animals,
[231] particularly pigs. The large variety of batata which is round and not very sweet is called "Mane-Phao" and the one which is elongated and sweeter is called "Mane-Keo."

231 654 It is much to be desired that the work of our physiologists may finally be successful and place at the disposal of everyone serums which will be capable of fighting the epizootic diseases which are decimating horned animals. In the meantime our administrators can only recommend to the natives a few rules of veterinary hygiene, a feeble protective measure against the epidemic. They should be particularly careful to see that dead carcasses are not thrown into watercourses.

231 492 Oxen. In Laos, oxen are raised mainly for use in transport or for export as animals for slaughtering. In the far north they are also harnessed to carts.

262 825 The Laotians have an instinctive repugnance for beef meat, and eat it only when an animal dies by accident or has to be killed as the result of a wound or broken bone. There are even certain prejudices and certain customs in this matter, which are doubtless vestiges of another age when the ancestors of the present-day inhabitants were pastoral people among whom slaughtering [404] oxen for food was prohibited under penalty of a fine.

231 Whereas the buffalo in Laos are sturdy and of a fine height, the oxen often leave much to be desired. This is due to the fact that the natives raise oxen as they do buffalo, that is to say by leaving it to forage for itself. Although the buffalo, a hardy and autochthonous animal, requires almost no care in breeding, the ox, which is a cross-bred animal, imported and not so tough, requires a great deal of care and management. But when ox raising is treated like buffalo raising, the result is an inferior product and thence a progressive degeneration of the breed.

The Youns, the Lus and the Burmese are the only ones who have a complete mastery of raising oxen as draft and pack animals, and who produce individuals of comparatively tall stature which are sturdy, courageous and resistant to fatigue. They are even able, thanks to suitable treatment and care, to condition and train the often puny specimens which they sometimes go great distances to buy, even into southern Laos.

231 The oxen of Song-Khone (1) and of the Kham-Thong-Niai-Saravane

439 (1) In 1898 the presence of about 1,500 oxen and cattle was reported in this province.

region are destined mainly to be sold for meat in Cambodia and in Cochinchina, and this is quite a lucrative trade.

231 178 Attopeu; slopes of the plateau of the Bolovens; plains of the Se-Kampho and of the Se-Pien (2); plains of the upper Sebang-Khan and of the

(2) I have never crossed these great and beautiful plains which stretch as far as the eye can see between these two rivers which have water all year long, intersected here and there by wooded hills whose slopes provide the herds with a refuge and with a guaranteed food supply during the inundation of the lowlands--an inundation lasting three or four months--without regretting that no European colonist has ever thought of taking advantage of this situation. (Report of the Superior Commandant of Lower Laos, April 1897.)

Ia-Drang.

231 435 The sale prices for buffalo and oxen vary from one point to another and are also subject to fluctuations due to the age, stature, abundance or scarcity of the stock, the law of supply and demand, etc.

In 1899 livestock exports from Lower Laos only were 2,184 oxen valued at 54,600 francs, 362 cows valued at 5,430 francs and 3,144 buffalo valued at 235,800 francs, or a total of 6,690 head with a value of 295,830 francs.

In Lower Laos buffalo sold for from 50 to 112 francs in 1899, and oxen for from 20 to 30 francs. In Upper Laos the prices for [406] buffalo varied from 60 to 110 francs. Oxen may cost more or less there, depending on whether they are trained as draft and pack animals or fattened for export. In the first case they bring from 40 to 70 francs and in the second from 10 to 15 francs.

231 262 Pigs. Pigs are used mainly for food by the natives, who consume a great many. The meat of this animal enjoys great favor among the population, and it is pork which, prepared either alone or with fish, enters most often into the composition of meals. [Illustration here]

[563] The Lus, the Meos, the Chinese and the Khas are past masters at raising pigs, and their stock might figure successfully in our regional competitions. They fatten them in closed compartments, after first castrating them.

231 The most common variety is the one known as "Cochinchinese or Tonkinese pig." It is gray with white spots and sometimes almost black, and bears on its back a mane of long, stiff bristles similar to those of the wild boar. Even when domesticated these pigs have

149: Reinach--303 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

805 [262]

Tamlung-Si-Bate	1/1000 picul or	0.061924	kilogram
Khanane-Lao (daily ration)	1/100 picul or	0.61924	"
Khanane-Khao	1/10 picul or	6.19245	kilograms
Boung-Koite (or Mune)	2/10 picul or	12.3849	"
Bok-Noi	3/10 picul or	18.5873	"
Bok-Niai (one man's load)	4/10 picul or	24.7698	"

[482]

805 436

Coins and measurements of weight for silver

1. Sub-multiples of the Bak (or Salung) 1 Fuang=0.001876 kilogram
2. Multiples of the Bak (or Salung)

	1 Bak or 2 Fuangs=0.003753	"
Tep (Rupee)	or 3 Baks=0.011259	"
Bate (Tical)	or 4 Baks=0.015012	"
Piaster (Mane or Kib)	or 7 Baks=0.026271	"
Tael (Bia)	or 10 Baks=0.03753	"
Barre (Hang or Khane)	or 10 Bias or 100 Baks=0.3753	"
Sang or Cattie (silver pound)	or 33 Bias or 330 Baks=1.23849 kilograms	

805 [412] Measures of length for cloth, wood, etc.

		meters
	1 Niou (finger breadth) or 1/96 Fathom	=0.01895
1 Kam (closed fist) or 6 Nious	or 1/16 Fathom	=0.11375
1 Kheup (span) or 12 Nious	or 1/8 Fathom	=0.2275
1 Sok (cubit) or 2 Kheups	or 1/4 Fathom	=0.4550
1 Wa or 4 Soks or 8 Kheups	or 1 Fathom	=1.82

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1 Sok Luong (royal cubit)	or 1/4 Royal Fathom	=0.5
1 La Luong (1 Yard and a few centimeters)	or about 1/2 Royal Fathom	=1
1 Wa Luong	or 1 Royal Fathom	=2

173: Deydier--35 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

846 Next to her the child lies in a kadong (Indochinese van). Between the mattress and the kadong lies a dagger if it is a boy, a needle with some sewing thread if it is a girl, so that later the child may become a strong and brave man or a woman skilled in domestic arts.

[844] The accoucheur, who is also a sorcerer, hangs on the roof a fishnet which reaches the ground and must completely cover the bed of the woman and the kadong of the newborn child. An incantation is recited intended to protect the mother and child from the Phi Phai, the souls of women who have died in childbirth or while pregnant, and which take the form of a night bird. The sorcerer stretches a white cotton thread around the bed and the hearth which will act as a barrier to the Phi Phai, and which also has the property of preventing the mother and child from having attacks of nausea [les bourbouilles].

846 In addition to the very frequent affusions and sitz baths, the woman takes every day two or three aromatic vapor baths. Her meals taken
262 inside the fishnet consist of rice, grilled chicken or pork seasoned with grilled salt and mixed with houa kha (a kind of gingerbread). She may drink only [55] hot decoctions of the root of a wild vine which has diuretic properties.

846 During the You Kam people take turns day and night helping the family watch over the mother and child. In order to keep awake they read aloud, make music, sing or play. This is the custom of
[52] the vigil, the ngan which takes place whenever there is a feast or any other event.

The You Kam finishes at the end of eight days in Lower Laos, but lasts more than twenty days in the north.

Churching of Women. A day of ceremony is chosen for the woman who is leaving her childbed (ok Kam). This ok kam always takes place in the morning. The woman takes her bath in the river, while all the accessories which have served for the kam are removed. When she returns to the house, she attends the ceremony of the Sou Khouan. After this she takes up her normal life again, although she is obliged to abstain from certain foods which are liable to bring on post partum hemorrhages. When the mother and child are in good health, these alimentary precautions are relaxed fairly soon, and by the end of the second month many of these rules
[853] are broken. Laotian mothers are in the habit of giving their children, as soon as the ok kam is performed, chewed rice, seasoned with salt, wrapped in a banana leaf and warmed on hot ashes. The newborn usually stand this diet fairly well.

301 The use of these magic shirts is also known in Cambodia. The designs
262 usually consist of flowers, geometric figures, tools, flowers, vegetable
751 branches, and of animals. Sometimes pictures drawn from Buddhist iconography can be recognized.

[174] Apparently the origin of tattooing is to be found in totemism. By
analyzing the Laotian tattooing designs, [63] it has been possible to
301 recognize traces of sun worship, as well as the mythological role of the dog. But at the present time Laotians seem only to value tattooing as an artistic ornament.

The Divining Rod.

787 Among the curios which the tourist looks for in Laos, the most
823 easily found is a carved bamboo cane. Immediately below the head, which is often of chased silver, there is a sort of checkered diagram
825 made up of twenty-five little squares. Below this divining diagram are found, in succession from top to bottom, a zebu, a horse, a rakshasha or ogre, a tiger, a buffalo, a deer, an elephant. These animals correspond respectively to the days of the week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

It should be noted that, except for the buffalo and the deer, the others are the symbolical animals of the zodiac and correspond to the different cardinal points.

The Laotians consult these figures at different actions of their lives: choice of a wedding day, the hour for burial, etc. The diagram is used to calculate the hour, and the animals indicate the cardinal point which should be followed.

This cane is also found among the Man.

[64] THE NEW YEAR AND THE FEASTS OF THE FIFTH MONTH

527 The Laotian New Year always takes place between the 6th day
805 of the crescent moon of the 5th month and the 5th day of the crescent moon of the 6th month. The very core of the feast includes three days: the last day of the past year, the intermediate day and the New Year's day, properly so-called. The most picturesque ceremonies are those of Luang Prabang, for there tradition has been best preserved.

The programme of the feasts begins with a procession of royal
527 elephants. Their heads ornamented with red and black painted designs, their drivers dressed in red tunics with yellow lapels, on their backs, the fifteen elephants go to the pagodas of Xieng Tong, Vat

the present time only the lion is kept, for apparently its role is no longer very well known. 527 825

[68] THE HARVEST FESTIVAL

This takes place after the harvest, during the first and second months, and is held in the open countryside. Its purpose is to glorify "the soul of rice." 527 243

It is not until the threshing has been completed and the rice piled up in heaps that the master of the harvest consults his neighbors and chooses with them the day of celebration. Light shelters must then be built on his field around the threshing area to accommodate the guests. On the top of the pile of paddy a sort of pulpit is erected from which the bonzes will recite their prayers.

On the morning of the feast day, the master of the house slaughters an ox from which is made the traditional lap, a dish consisting of raw meat and chopped up peppers mixed with various chopped up green vegetables the whole held together with a soup of pa dek. In the evening a court of love is held and the mo lam (professional singers) are also invited. At the end of this first night, the bonzes climb into the pulpit before daybreak to read the legend of Nang Kho Sop. [562] 527 773

"In the olden days a grain of rice was as big as a gourd. It was cut down with an axe. Then Nang Kho Sop (the soul of rice) became angry at this barbarous treatment and flew away. Since then this feast has been celebrated so that the soul will return."

The reading closes as day breaks, and offerings are made to the bonzes. At the close of the prayer, each one of the faithful, before rising, sprinkles a few drops of water on the ground so that Nang Thorani may bear witness to their alms and so that the goddess may not forget to count it among the merits he has acquired for his future lives.

[69] The owner takes a basket filled with boiled chicken, alcohol, sweet potatoes, and all kinds of tuberous roots. He goes by himself into his rice field and walks over it in every direction, at the same time calling the soul of rice to thank it for having made his fields bear fruit and to beg it to continue being equally generous to him in future years. He offers it all the food in the basket saying: Soul of Rice, here are tuberous roots for thee, here are buds of cabbage palm, and good alcohol made from thy grain. Soul of Rice, descend on us and preside over the feast I am giving in thy honor! 243 527

Its price varies between 12 and 15 francs per hundred kilograms. 000

6. Catechu (Sisiet). 824

Catechu is produced from a decoction of the bark of two varieties 314
of trees, the catechu acacia and the leafy butée.

This product, which is used in making the national masticatory 276
together with betel, betel nuts and lime, is consumed, in the large centers of Upper Laos, in the form of a dry residue obtained from a decoction of the bark. Generally, however, it is the bark itself which is consumed after it has been broken up into small pieces.

Natural sisiet takes the form of shreds of bark about a cubit (.45 meter) long by four centimeters wide and one centimeter thick. The shreds are tied together in packs of twenty-five or fifty, depending on the region.

The whole production is consumed locally. The natives [334] [438]
go into the forest at points where suitable trees are to be found, bundle up the pieces and load them on great rafts which go down from Pak-Lay and Vien-Tiane to Bassac and even to Khong.

At Pak-Lay sisiet is worth only 7 francs and 50 centimes per [435]
hundred pieces, but it naturally costs more the further away one goes from the centers of production.

7. Curcuma (Khi-Mine). 824

This plant, of the Zingiberaceae family, has a rhizome which 314
contains an orange-yellow coloring matter used for dyeing silk and cotton. 386

Sometimes the inhabitants (chiefly the women and children) 302
rub their whole body with curcuma scrapings after a bath. The application of curcuma to the wet skin, which acquires a light yellow color, is said by the natives to ward off mosquitoes and keep the skin fresh.

Up to the present time this product has not formed the basis of [438]
any foreign trade. It is sold in small amounts on the markets of Laos.

8. Ginger. 263

The ginger which is called "Mak-Khing" in Laotian is the Zingi- 824
ber officinale or gray ginger. Used as a condiment by the entire 314
population, this product does not enter into trade. Its price varies [435]
between 12 francs and fifty centimes and 16 francs and fifty centimes per hundred kilograms.

9. Roucou. 824

The roucou, or fruit of the Roucouyer Bixia, is called "Kano- 314
Mak-Soum-Phoa" in Laotian. Literally, this means Seed of an 386
acidulous mountain fruit. It is used to make red and orange dyes

"Pa-Niang," formed of slices from a large fish which have been smoked. 226

"Pa-Heng," or a small dried fish. 262

"Pa-Khem" corresponds fairly closely to our salted and dried fish of the sardine type known as Nantes, which are left in salt for only a few days.

Finally, "Pa-Dek" is the form in which most of the large varieties of fish are preserved, and is an almost indispensable part of the native food supply. To prepare Pa-Dek the meat is cut into small pieces and ground in a mortar with salt and pepper so as to produce a kind of paste which is then put in jars with salt. The resulting brine helps to preserve the product (1). 263

(1) The price of Pa-Dek varies between 18 and 25 francs per hundred kilograms. This is the "Mam" of the Annamites.

The price of fish is subject to fluctuations, depending on the scarcity of it. The large fish of which we have just been speaking sell at prices between one and forty francs, depending on their weight and their abundance on the market. 226 435

Eels, shrimp of the prawn type and crabs are also found in the ponds and rivers of Laos during the rainy season, and in the water-courses there are various edible shellfish [353] such as the river mussel and small winkle. The ponds and swamps shelter several varieties of frogs, some of which reach an enormous size. All of them are edible, and are caught with a red ribbon on the end of a line fastened to a long bamboo pole. 226 [227]

II

PRESENT-DAY CROPS

Together with an enumeration of the crops grown in Laos we should like to be able to give the area which each occupies and the cultivable surfaces with the nature of the soil and the type of crops which would be suited to them, but as the Superior Resident states in his report for 1899: 241 311

"We have been in the colony for too short a time to have been able to set up a cadastral registry service. In view of the large area of the territory (267,000 square kilometers), the small and sparse population which inhabits it (2.7 inhabitants per square kilometer in

incorporate into the teas which they send abroad. But they appeal to the Chinese and other Orientals, and part of the crop is even set aside and sent as tribute to the court of the Emperor in Peking. 245 [648]

The Shans, the Lus and the Youns use a masticatory called "Mieng" which is composed solely of tea leaves which have been preserved in brine. [276]

PIMENTOS. Since pimento is a much sought-after condiment, and one which is even indispensable to the people of Laos, as to those of neighboring countries, the cultivation of this product is quite widespread. [244 263]

This pimento is of the large, red variety. It is prepared by [378] drying and smoking it, thereby guaranteeing that it will keep. Its name in Laotian is "Mak-Phik." The price of dry pimento varies from 25 to 37 francs per hundred kilograms.

FARMING IMPLEMENTS AND TOOLS USED IN LAOS. We shall conclude this rapid listing of the chief crops grown in Laos by giving a list of the farming implements used in the country. These latter are just as primitive and just as rudimentary as the farming methods, and the Laotians do not make any more effort to improve the ones than to improve the others. 412 241

The plow (Thai). The plow is extremely simple and is the primitive swing-plow formed of a single piece of bent wood. A share or "Mak-Sob-Thai" is fitted to its front end. Sometimes the share is even supplanted by cutting the stick of wood diagonally and hardening it in a fire. Drawn by a buffalo, this tiny plow cannot break the soil to any great depth, and so is used in ricefields only when the soil has been sufficiently softened by the annual inundations.

The harrow (Khat). The harrow is a sort of wooden rake .9 meter long, the teeth of which are made of ironwood or any other very hard wood, "Mai-Lek" or "Mai-Khen-Hine." This rake forms one of the sides of a triangle, the peak of which is harnessed to a buffalo.

The roller (Ham). The roller is the trunk of some hardwood tree, "Mai-Khen-Hine" for example. It has pins over which two shafts fit, leaving space to harness a buffalo.

The sickle. There are sickles of several sizes, which are called either "Kio" or "Lek Kio" without distinction. Sickles are used to cut grasses and rice.

Sugar cane. The production of sugar cane, which is still not very significant in Laos, deserves to be encouraged. Later on when this crop had been developed, the Laotians might be trained in the methods of the first stage of refinement. They would then be able to produce gray muscovado and sugar candy, which are easily exportable. 241 185

Southern Laos is the part of our possession which would lend itself [386] best to the extension of this crop. Although of secondary importance, it is nonetheless deserving of attention.

Benzoin trees. Increasing the number of trees which are producers of this precious resin is again a task for the administration. After a serious study of the conditions of growth of the plant in Laos, of its habitat and of the nature of the terrain best suited to it, it would be possible to set up seed gardens designed to supply young plants either to the natives or to Europeans who settled in the country and were interested in this crop. It yields a rich product, which brings a high price on the market. Benzoin is, in fact, widely used in perfumes and in the manufacture of varnishes.

Lac trees. All who are acquainted with Laos are unanimous in agreeing that increasing the production of sticklac is one of the main factors in increasing the country's wealth. What, indeed, could be more simple, thanks to the easy and rapid multiplication of the "Kok-Toua-He," the tree which grows almost without care and lends itself so well to the establishment of colonies of coccus lacca, the producers of a superior quality of gum lac?

Cardamom. It would seem that experiments with growing true cardamom, as it is grown in Cambodia in the province of Pursat, might be attempted in Laos. The natives would have everything to gain from giving up the cultivation of wild cardamom for that of true cardamom, since the latter brings from five to ten times more than the former on the market of Pnom-Penh. 249 263 438

Until such time as this precious seed is introduced into Laos, it will be well to extend and encourage the cultivation of the present variety of cardamom. All those who have engaged in the production and commerce of this seed (1)--the mountainfolk who grow it, the

(1) It is much sought-after by the Chinese, who use it as a condiment as well as in pharmaceutical preparations.

249 Chinese and Laotian middlemen and even the few European merchants--
263 have found that it brings in rewarding profits. Indeed, by exporting
438 this product the latter are assured of an almost certain gain of 20 to 30 percent.

248 [387] Ramie. There is also much to be gained from increasing
439 the production of ramie or Chinese nettle. It is assured of an outlet in Cambodia, where it sells for as much as 80 francs per hundred kilograms.

249 Cinnamon. The extension of the plantations and gardens of
185 cinnamon trees already in existence in the province of Vien-Tiane deserves serious encouragement. The bark of these trees is a valuable product which is much sought-after in China and in Europe.

276 Opium poppies. The Government of Indo-China, which is
656 both the preparer and seller of chandoo or opium for smoking, is the party which would gain most from obtaining the raw drug on French territory. It is, indeed, still dependent on British India for this product, and can acquire it only on extremely disadvantageous terms.

Since much time must still pass, however, before the Meos and the Yaos give up their age-old methods, it would be essential for the intensive cultivation of the opium poppy to be undertaken by Europeans on behalf of the administration. This would be possible if there were a guaranteed labor supply in the form of Chinese coolies, who would be enlisted primarily for the greater part of the work, and of native specialists who would deal only with scarification of the capsules, harvesting the opium and the first stage of its preparation.

These delicate operations are the ones which the Meos and the Yaos like best, but they dislike plowing, fertilizing, weeding and irrigation, all of which tasks are indispensable for obtaining a high yield of capsules and consequently of the raw drug. It would therefore be best to entrust this heavy work to foreign coolies, and it is probable that after a certain time they too would be capable of extracting the opium. Impelled by their example, the natives would doubtless then be seen to break with their prejudices and devote themselves also to intensive cultivation so as to reap its full benefits.

The role of the administration would then be at an end, and it would gradually diminish its intervention as free cultivation of the poppies increased.

[435 Raw opium which is produced locally or which comes from [388] neighboring countries is worth 22 francs, 50 centimes to 32 francs, 25 centimes per kilogram, depending on quality, in northern Laos.

Tribal Tai

291 the Deng-Thais, is applied to the edges of the gown. It is further
563 ornamented [233] on the outside edge opposite the buttonholes with colored silk embroidery which does not go down below the waist.

This garment is also folded in half lengthwise and worn rolled around the body with the sleeves left hanging.

The women wear their hair parted down the middle in front
302 and rolled into a sort of long tassel behind which is contained within
301 the folds of a little turban. The latter is wound above the forehead and the free end inserted under the first turn, on the nape of the neck. This headdress is quite similar to that of the Annamite women in Tonkin.

In certain regions of Laos, Thai women wind their hair into a sort of coil which girls wear loosely down their neck and betrothed or married women wear on top of the head. Thai jewelry is made of heavy silver and is of the same type as Laotian jewelry. The men wear bracelets on their wrists.

Food. The Thai diet is like that of the Laotians, but they prefer
262 non-glutinous white rice and use chopsticks like the Chinese and
● 264 Annamites.

The use of betel is quite widespread among the Thais, but in
276 contrast to the Laotians they keep their teeth white. The Thais smoke the oily, opiated tobacco of Tonkin and China in bamboo waterpipes whose tiny bowls only contain a small pinch of tobacco. They also smoke a local variety of tobacco, either in cigarettes or in pipes with a highly worked clay bowl into which a long stem ending in a glass or jade mouthpiece is inserted.

Character. Although serious and reflective, the Thais have a
156 vivacious and friendly character. They are somewhat cold in appearance, but are sound friends and highly affable when one gets to know them better.

[701] Gentler and more timid than the Laotians, they have no taste for the art of war and it is difficult to get them to stay in the native militia.

They are very self-seeking and much more miserly than the Lao-
433 tians. [234] It should be noted, moreover, that since they produce
438 everything themselves and are a people of farmers and livestock breeders, they do not have, by virtue of their ever sedentary occupations,
156 the opportunities which these latter have to enjoy fairly high profits resulting from commercial transactions, nor the special habits which contact with different races gives.

181 The Thais love pleasure and celebrations. Guaranteed their daily
461

naturally be "water." These two elements, opposed though they are 593
to one another, nonetheless go together. If you should happen to 647
raise your voice, see to it that it does not reach the ears of your 565
neighbors who will be sure to laugh at your domestic misunderstanding.
There is a good way to appease your anger: that is to go out and get
some fresh air. A moment of distraction will calm your irritation.
This precious and effective remedy is called, according to a Laotian
expression, "to caress one's heart with a hand drenched with fresh
water."

On a walk and on a visit.--Formerly it used to be considered 574
a disgrace for a mandarin to go for a walk by himself or to visit minor 647
functionaries. Nowadays this is no longer the case. A Laotian 565
Minister goes out alone without being accompanied by the traditional 178
retinue. He visits all classes of society without being criticized for
it by anyone at all.

At a private gathering.--In contrast to the customs of former
times, present-day mandarins accept the invitation of a simple
citizen. The host very often organizes various diversions: dances, /533/
lamvong, orchestras, songs etc. The Ministers willingly participate /535/
in these; they sing, dance, and pay their respects to the phousaos
while they mingle with the crowd. Certain Laotians whom I consider
backward criticize the liberal manner on the part of our Ministers.
Our great mandarins are their own masters. Let them turn a deaf
ear to these carpings. /978/

Honor Laotian Women

Some people consider the Laotian woman as an inferior 562
creature.

Certain women, it appears, are not permitted to eat with
their husband. Miserable husbands! You consider then that your
better half is like an animal?

Certainly, tradition says: "The woman must sleep with her /513/
head lower than her husband's. She must go to bed after him and
she must get up before him. The husband must have eaten three /264/
mouthfuls of rice before the wife can begin to eat in her turn."

These counsels of our fathers are valuable, but they are far
from indicating that the woman is inferior to the man. They recommend,

173; Deydier--14 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

The Laotian Bonze--The Monastic Rules. 792

As in Ceylon, Cambodia and the other Buddhist countries, the 785
Laotian who enters religious life does not make a perpetual vow. To become a bonze, all that is necessary is to be twenty years old, not to have killed, nor stolen, nor have any skin disease. When he is ordained, the young man agrees to observe the Buddhist rules which are: not to take life, not to steal, not to sin against virtue, not to lie, not to drink intoxicating liquors, not to eat outside of the prescribed hours, not to attend entertainments which excite the senses, not to touch gold, nor silver, etc.

The bonze's head, chin and eyebrows are completely shaved. 301
In principle he must shave twice a month. The garments of the bonze 292
must not be made of one piece and their color must be yellow ochre or yellow. These two traditions have their origin in the history of the life of the Buddha. When he left the palace of his father, the Buddha cut his hair and exchanged his princely garments for those of a hunter. Now, the hunter was a poor man dressed in rags covered with the yellow ochre dust of the fields. Therefore, since that day, in memory of the first religious garments of the Buddha, tradition demands that all bonzes wear this costome. Texts are not agreed as [795]
to the color, the Saddharma-smrtyupasthana sutra giving a whole list of colors for the dyeing of religious garments. We will not delay over the discussions which have arisen amongst the various Buddhist schools over [25] this problem. We will limit ourselves to stating that in central Asia and in Tibet the bonzes wear brownish-red garments instead of the beautiful yellow color of the Laotian and Cambodian togas.

Bonzes get up very early in the morning. Having made their toilet and said their prayers, they leave about seven o'clock in single file to beg for their food. To be precise, we should add that the containers for the alms are usually carried by student bonzes [bonzillons]. After returning to the pagoda they have a brief meal, then they teach [871]
the student bonzes [bonzillons] to read and write, while others perform the manual tasks necessary to the upkeep of the monastery. About noon, the bonze has another meal which is the last of the day. He [264]
does not eat any food till the following morning. After the meal he must wash his fingers (he eats only with his right hand), and rinse out his mouth. Then he has a siesta, and at the close of the afternoon he works at his tasks as in the morning. In principle he must never go out alone; he is always accompanied by a brother monk to protect him from any temptation.

-69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

road; but as all the men were thoroughly tired this operation would 494
be postponed till early next morning. Dupont was determined not 725
to stay in Vang Vieng, but even he seemed to think twice about 669
deliberately disobeying the convoy-commander's orders, and when he finally did so it was done in gentle stages, rather than in one flagrant act of insubordination. The excuse given for this phobia about Vang Vieng was that all the sleeping space would be taken up and we should find nowhere to stretch out comfortably.

We were still filthy from our travels; sweat-soaked and covered 494
in bright yellow dust, through which the perspiration trickled down regular courses. As part of his campaign Dupont suggested that we should have a meal first and after that get permission from the convoy-commander to go for a bathe in a river, twelve kilometres down the road, where we should still be three kilometres short of the village with the Viet-Minh. Dupont described this river as if it had magical curative properties. It came out of a cave not far away, he said, and the water was icy cold. This course being agreed 251
upon, we went to the usual Chinese eating-house run by one Sour 265
Hak. Taken by surprise by our invasion, Sour Hak found himself short of food. However, as these villages are completely cut off during the six months' rainy season, there are always standbys for emergency. Reaching to the top of the cupboard he found a hunk of venison *boucané*, dusted it off and set it before us. This meat, prepared in a manner similar to that employed by the Argentine gauchos, was black, fine grained in texture as cheese, odourless and tasted slightly of liquorice. According to the usages of life in the bush, strips were cut off it with one's clasp knife. Fortunately, Sour Hak was found, quite mysteriously, to have a stock of first-rate Burgundy; doubtlessly bought in the belief that it was Algerian. Dupont's sudden optimism was only lowered by Sour Hak's refusal 000
at any price to sell a green parakeet, which had flown in one day and attached itself to the house. Since tasting civilization nothing could persuade this bird to use its wings again, although like a true Laotian it enjoyed being taken for a ride on a bicycle. Dupont's

23: Franck--339 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 271

"We crossed many streams; and--who says 'wild' men do not know enough to invent speedy measures?--found on either side of them several of the two or three section pieces of bamboo which the people of this region use as water-pails. The men caught them up on one side of the stream, scooped them full of water as they crossed, drank as they walked, and threw them away again, to be picked up once more by the next comer from the opposite direction."

149: Reinach--136 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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who work gold mines--and by the inhabitants of several regions, whose state of fortune would nevertheless enable them to use a more precious metal. [563]

Jewelry and examples of the goldsmith's art are found in different forms and types which vary greatly with the region and race, as will be seen by the nomenclature given in Chapter IX.

Food. The Laotian scorns the pleasures of the table, and is generally a moderate eater and drinker. Steam-cooked glutinous rice forms the basis of his food supply. To this he adds salt, peppers, various other spices, fresh or preserved fish, etc. Besides these, but less frequently, his day-to-day diet may be varied with poultry, eggs, buffalo meat, beef and pork, as well as venison. To be sure, it is mainly on the occasion of public or private festivals, which are fairly numerous in the course of the year, that the Laotian improves on his usual rather frugal fare in this way. 262

The customary beverage is water which may be taken directly from the rivers or first be hastily decanted into jars or water-coolers of porous earthenware. In general, Laotians prefer water taken directly from the river to that which has been filtered. Finally, the people of Laos consume rice brandy which is obtained by distillation, and a kind of beer made by cold fermentation of rice mixed with paddy husks. 271 273

The use of these drinks, aside from rare exceptions, is reserved for holidays. [527]

Physical appearance, character, occupations. The Laotian's character is, in general, mild, friendly and happy. His physiognomy is [181] open and smiling. Not quarrelsome by nature, he even shrinks from coming to blows in extreme cases and prefers to end a dispute with an outburst of laughter rather than with blows. 152

Since, all in all, it has few needs and inhabits a land with luxuriant vegetation which is abundantly favored with products to be had for the scavenging, this happy people can easily satisfy its needs and be content with its fate. [Illustration alongside text here.]

It is assuredly lazy, but out of indifference much rather than out of any deliberate intent. It cannot grasp the advantage or utility of a regular and prolonged effort beyond what is strictly necessary to provide it with a living and a few distractions to which, in reality, its own joyous disposition makes the greatest contribution. 461

To the men are reserved the chief tasks, which have a more virile and noble character than those which are the women's lot. 462 241

25: Brodrick--101 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 262, 272, 342, 352

"[HD: The Laotian's] bamboo house on stumpy piles costs nothing to make. He has no furniture, no chairs, no tables. He sleeps on a mat. There may be a few bowls in his hut, but most of the meal is served on palm-leaves. His food is simple--rice, salt fish in brine, raw pork chopped up and smothered in a pungent, aromatic sauce, cakes of rice and bananas (and delicious they are), and he eats iguanas, alligator's eggs and red ants.

When he is not swigging lao, or rice-alcohol, he drinks water and uses tea--Laotian tea is poor stuff--as we did until a few generations ago, as medicine."

149: Reinach--188 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

101 [261] [Illustration] [262] [Blank page] [263] As far as marriages, deaths, etc. go, we find practically the same customs among the Kha tribes of southern Laos as among their fellows in northern Laos.

231 It should be noted that the Rades breed a variety of small horses which are highly prized in Annam, Laos and Siam.

439 "These Khas love music and dancing. Their favorite instruments [533] are gongs and bells.

"A set of gongs consists of seven, nine or twelve single ones. 534 Made of copper and often very beautiful, these gongs take the shape of a cylinder from forty to eighty centimeters in diameter, only one end of which is closed by a vibrating plate. The cap worn by our judges and professors, although on a smaller scale, gives a fairly clear idea of the shape of these instruments. A few of the instruments are artfully cast and ornamented with much elegance. There is a solid ring about a third of the way along the gong's length which is part and parcel with the rest of the gong and makes it possible to hang it up on a side of the house, at about the height of a man's head, by means of a rattan thong fastened to the frame.

"The performers stand facing the battery and pummel it with their fists, taking care to strike the vibrating plate in the center so that it will emit a true tone. This procedure produces perfect musical notes, which are accompanied by the dull resonances of the tom-toms and the sharp sonorities of the bells made of a copper and tin alloy. The gongs bring a high price, and when it is a fine one a complete series is worth from 1,200 to 1,500 francs.

"In some villages the performers each take an instrument and hold it in a sling fastened to their shoulder, then form a column in single file. This Indian-style procession marches from the center of the house towards one of its extremities, striking more and more gently as it moves away from its point of departure. Then it returns to the center, unleashing a compensating crescendo. The maneuver begins again towards the other end of the house, and the musical promenade continues until the musicians are exhausted.

535 "When the Khas begin to play and perform the Kimlang (a very stirring war dance) and the warriors grow excited from dancing and • 272 from drinking rice wine, it is wise to make them stop as soon as they 579 begin to pick up their weapons, for when drunk with alcohol and enflamed with ardor they are no longer masters of themselves.

714 "War dress includes feathers in the hair and a sort of cross of Saint Andrew formed of cloth rolled and crossed on the chest. Weapons, quivers, arrows, crossbows, bucklers, spears and swords complete their equipment.

396 is also cut out with a hatchet so as to decrease the thickness of the walls and render them more elastic.

When the pirogue is as wide as is desired, or else as wide as the wood being used will allow without any danger of splitting or bursting, strong rectangular crossbraces are set at regular intervals and tailed into the sides of the pirogues a few centimeters below the gunwales. When it has reached this state the pirogue is virtually finished. It has its final shape, and looks like the elongated half of a fish which has been split lengthwise.

All that remains is to finish the work by giving the bottom and sides the requisite thickness, by polishing the wood, smoothing the curves, etc.

Finally comes the moment of launching. It must be said, to the honor of the builders' sure eye and skill, that it is always successful and that once put into water the pirogue behaves well in its element, with a light and graceful balance.

396 The price of pirogues varies depending on their dimensions and
[466] the region, and can therefore not be fixed in any absolute
439 fashion. A new pirogue, in fact, costs from 50 to 300 francs. In
435 Cambodia a pirogue from Laos costs twice what it cost in its land of origin. Thus it may readily be imagined that pirogues are exported from Lower Laos in fairly large numbers. The statistics for 1899 show exports of 552 pirogues of various dimensions, with a [Illustration here] total value of 55,195 francs, or an average purchase price of 100 francs apiece.

398 Cartwrights. The construction of carts, wagons, pack-saddles for oxen and elephant palanquins is a specialized industry only on the right bank and in Siam. In French Laos carts are little used because of the nature of the terrain, and there are no cartwrights. Pack-saddles for oxen and elephant palanquins are made by nearly everyone, particularly by drovers and carnacs.

317 Lime. Lime is made in Laos, primarily for inclusion in betel masticatories.
276 [467] The kilns are dug in the clay on banks of watercourses, near calcareous masses from which limestone is taken.

272 Alcohol. The distillation of grain--rice, maize and hemp-seed--is not an industry in the strict sense, for every village and every family makes alcohol on occasion.

272 The distillation methods used are good ones, but the equipment used leaves much to be desired and does not make it possible to obtain rectified alcohol of a high degree. By taking 25 or 28 proof native alcohol and distilling it for a second time with European equipment, a fairly good-tasting alcohol can be obtained which is 68 to 72 proof.

389 Powder-making. The inhabitants of Laos make the powder themselves which they use for hunting and for fireworks. They know how to proportion and triturate the ingredients--charcoal, saltpeter (1)

[317] (1) The saltpeter which is collected in grottoes containing calcareous rocks is chiefly made up of masses of droppings from birds and bats. The bat is called "Kiea" and saltpeter "Khi-Kiea," or, literally, Droppings of bats.

and sulphur--in order to make either explosive powder or fusing powder.

792 The bonzes are the fireworks-makers par excellence who make
527 the many and varied fireworks without which no celebration is really
389 complete. Bombs, firecrackers, Roman candles, serpents, pinwheels, etc. and, in a word, almost all the usual fireworks are made using rudimentary processes and local products.

389 The rockets (Bang-Fai) deserve special mention. They consist of a body containing fusing powder, to which is attached a wick several meters long and made of spun cotton or sometimes even of paper. The latter is smeared with mealed gunpowder mixed with gum, and the whole is fastened to a directing shaft. If the rocket is an Aeolian one, its rear is provided with a kind of Pan's pipe made of bamboo tubes which gives forth a harmonious sound as it describes its trajectory in the air.

The rockets vary greatly in size. In some the powder weighs only a few decagrams, and [468] the guide shaft is from two to three meters long. Other larger ones carry a "Mune" of powder (about 12 kilograms) and sometimes more, and the guide shaft is a whole stalk of bamboo some 15 meters long and from 12 to 15 centimeters in base diameter.

Rockets are generally decorated with gilded or colored paper. With the application of rice paste motifs, some of them manage to look very like a dragon with threatening jaws and terrifying eyes, and in these the body envelops the shaft and the head contains the Aeolian harp as well as the powder cylinder. The stands used for launching

149: Reinach--452 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

The following table gives the composition of each of these blends:

●272

Quality	White points	Delicate green leaves	Large leaves
1st quality	10%	30%	60%
2nd quality	5	15	80
3rd quality	2	5	93

Preparation. After harvesting the leaves are placed on mats in the sun, where they wither and become soft. They are then slightly torrefied in a copper or cast-iron basin placed over a hot fire. This operation, which lasts only a few moments and during which the leaves are constantly stirred and sifted, is designed to remove all the natural moisture which they contain and thus make sure that they will not spoil later on.

Molding and wrapping. Blends are made when the tea is molded, for the tea of these regions is sold in the form of cakes .25 meter in diameter or of cylinders six or seven centimeters in diameter. The different qualities of leaves are placed within easy reach and the different weights of each kind [154] which will be mixed together to make up a cake or cylinder are measured out. Then the mixing itself is done in marble, cast-iron or wooden molds after the leaves have been exposed to steam for a few seconds. The tea is compressed in the molds, the latter are heated, and when they are opened their contents are dry, hard and homogeneous. The cakes or cylinders are then wrapped in bamboo leaves or leaflets and tied with rattan. A package of tea in the form of cakes includes seven of the latter and weighs 1.2 kilograms.

[157]

APPENDIX XXVIII
REPORT AND REGULATIONS ON SLAVERY

567 The problem of slavery for debt is one of the most difficult ones to solve.

177 That of slavery resulting from capture has been solved very easily. The Siamese had already given orders for it to be stopped, and although it still existed in certain provinces, principally in those of Lower Laos, this was due to the fact that the Siamese high mandarins voluntarily closed their eyes, thanks to large sums which were paid to secure their cooperation and which constituted one of their largest sources of income.

As soon as we assumed the administrations of the country the Laotians sounded us out on this subject. They soon realized that our

25: Brodrick--100 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 273, 527, 534, 541

"In May is the Feast of Fireworks, that begins with a decorous temple service and then, after nightfall, the big drums start to throb. All night long men hammer at the buffalo-hide tambours, breaking off only to make the rounds of the village where, at each house, they drink rice-alcohol, and so the Firework Festival goes on, with rockets whizzing in the sky and the bass drums rumbling, a holiday of drunkenness and gaiety prolonged for three whole days.

The Festival of the Great Waters, in July, is not unlike that in Cambodia, but more spontaneous and fairy-like. Then there is the Cake Feast in October and then at the Hunter's Moon, the Festival of the Great Oath.

These are some of the official court festivals in the realm of Luang-Prabang, but the local, village feasts are more revealing of the Laotian as he is. The Courts of Love, singing all night long, and the funerals..."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

we sneaked past we could see a bonfire with a group silhouetted round it. Our passing appeared to go quite unnoticed.

We reached Muong Kassy about two hours later and slept in a large, barn-like Laotian building of thatch and bamboo, which served as the officers' mess. Insects had been at the bamboo and the slightest movement filled the air with a powder which had the effect of snuff. The building swayed slightly with each step, but no more when there were twenty occupants, as there were next day, than when there were only two.

489
712 Muong Kassy was the headquarters of a company of Engineers whose job was the upkeep of the bridges. They were uncomfortably isolated here on top of a small hill rising only partially free of the forests, with magnificent views in all directions, which nobody noticed any longer. There was no doctor, so that casualties of any kind might have to wait several weeks for a convoy going in any direction. In the rainy season, when roads and bridges disappeared, the garrison was confined to barracks for five or six months. Outside the stockades the usual straggling collection of Laotian and [273] Chinese huts had formed, with saloons selling 'shoum', a fire-water made from maize. Everything was brought by convoy and was in short supply, except the shoum which was a local speciality. The store-keepers also had a stock of what was described in English on the label as 'fruit tonic'. The fruit tonic was made in Siam and was probably an industrial by-product; but the garrison had found out that shoum plus fruit tonic was more effective than either separately, and that stunned by a good stiff early morning dose of this, the day's boredoms could be better supported. A shoum-and-fruit-tonic relaxed the nerves too. It was after we had been introduced to this Muong Kassy custom that Dupont changed his plans, and quite forgetting about his pregnant wife, and the bicycle she might succeed in putting together, he said we would stay the day, and leave next morning.

Taking a guide from the camp, we went for a dip in the river.

149: Reinach--136 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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It is assuredly lazy, but out of indifference much rather than 461
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To the men are reserved the chief tasks, which have a more 462
virile and noble character than those which are the women's lot. 241

149: Reinach--146 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Then comes the feast. A suckling pig, a hen, a cock, two bowls of cooked rice, two hardboiled eggs, two small jars containing brandy, a handful of cotton threads and lighted wax candles are placed on a copper platter before a kind of altar erected in the middle of the house. In certain parts of Laos cakes and flowers take the place of these offerings, except for the rice, eggs, candles and cotton thread. These latter are obligatory, according to Laotian custom.

[193] The bride and groom kneel down before the altar, and the marriage ceremony begins. An elderly man, a sorcerer, or the man who has been the go-between in the marriage recites prayers and performs certain ritual practices. Then he attaches cotton threads to the wrists of the bride and groom so as to form bracelets. These are supposed to be "fetishes of happiness." Finally the newlyweds pour out a libation of brandy and all those present drink from the same cup after them, passing it from hand to hand.

In families of notables the bride's parents give back part of the dowry to their son-in-law after he has given it to them, as a mark of esteem and great confidence.

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If the son-in-law is to live with the bride's parents then the dowry is decreased in accordance with custom, in compensation for the labor which he will furnish to the community (1).

(1) A custom which is quite widely observed decrees that the groom shall live with his in-laws and help them with their work like a son until the time when he has a child. He is then free to go elsewhere and found a new family home. This custom is extremely ancient in origin and contributes greatly to strengthening the bonds of kinship between the groom and his in-laws.

There are cases, however, where the groom already has a house and takes his wife to live there after the marriage ceremony. The newlyweds are then accompanied by their friends. The young men take along noisy instruments with which they make a great racket, while the young women carry the bride's clothes and bedclothes to her new home.

When they reach their home a celebration takes place in which there is no shortage of brandy and during which the bride runs and shuts herself in her room so as to escape the extremely licentious remarks made by those present, who are somewhat drunk after their many libations.

[522 273]

boxers pummeled one another with their fists. Their hands were smeared with a mixture of oil and soot so that they would leave a mark wherever they hit. The tilters were hot and eager, but did not greatly hurt one another, for their chief effort was to attract attention by means of gestures and plastic attitudes which would impress the girls and women with their supple, nervous and muscular bodies, shining like bronze under the sun because of the sweat which the effort of fighting brought on. 764 526 527

Combats between buffaloes followed these amusements, then cocks were brought on and the whole audience crowded around. Passions rose to a fever pitch in the whole mass of spectators, who had been imbibing brandy freely. Ironic clamors rained down on the men who had let themselves be beaten and whose faces were smeared with black on their return, while enthusiastic shouts greeted the victors. In spite of all the excitement, the sun, the heat and the brandy, the whole mass of people remained quite moderate and the festivities [209] [Illustration] [210] [Blank page] [211] always kept a gay and gracious air. The enthusiasm for the fighters, the shouts and the bravos only lasted for a moment, and all of them, both lucky and unlucky, were sponged, given drink and cherished with equal solicitude so that they soon forgot their momentary rivalry. 764 527 273

Children of both sexes then approached the pyre. They had all fastened their sampots and skirts in view of what was to happen next. Sacks were brought which were full of copper coins, to which a few silver coins had been added. Members of the family of the deceased then climbed up on the pyre and threw this small change broadcast into the horde of children. An indescribable tumult followed, accompanied by sharp cries. There was quarreling and fighting, and many little pairs of hands could be seen grabbing for the same copper coins. All of them would have liked to get the few white coins. 764 851

The parents and older people watched the coin hunt, which reminded them of the time when they were children and at the same time reminded them of the name of a dead man whose family had been generous to them once in similar circumstances.

Now all the ritual ceremonies had been accomplished and it remained only to proceed to the last one: setting fire to the pyre. 764

Stiff lengths of rattan were attached to the four corners of the catafalque and fastened to the ground with stakes. Rockets slid along the lengths of rattan, and when the time came they would shoot up and supposedly light the pyre. In reality this is only a

village and those of ancestors. Prayers for the dead are said, and 782
when they are over the head and feet of a goat, crude clay statuettes 769
representing two men, two buffalo and two oxen, and numeroux wax
candles are placed on a raft made of banana trees. The raft is
launched full into the current of a river while men collect on the
banks and fire salvos of shots and shoot off fireworks.

The musical instruments of the Thais are the "Kene" and [240] 534
a kind of clarinet with two tubes, reinforced by gongs and tom-toms.

Their songs are not at all noisy and are much more like mono- 538
tonous chants.

The Thais have a very characteristic game, and this is the game 524
of the "inexhaustible jar." A jar of rice beer is placed on the floor
of a house and five bamboo tubes stuck in it to serve as straws. Five 273
men take positions around the jar, and each of them puts a tube in
his mouth. Into each of the jars, and above a kind of porous stopper
made of pressed paddy husks, water is poured by means of an ox
horn with a hole in the end. At a given signal both men and women
begin to suck conscientiously while the contents of the ox horn are
poured into each jar three times in succession. The ones who empty
their jar first win, and the losers have to drink the contents of ten
horns of water poured over what is left of the beer in their jar.

The Thai beer does not have a bad taste, and its alcoholic
strength is equivalent to that of hard cider, which it closely resembles
in flavor. Although the additions of water decrease the beverage's
percentage of alcohol it nevertheless produces a slight intoxication,
due primarily to the speed with which it is sucked through the straw.
But the inebriety never degenerates into a quarrel, and provokes
nothing but laughter, songs and unadulterated merriment.

Who would believe that the Thais have the custom of throwing 527
"confetti"? Nothing is more true, however, for in the celebrations
at the end of harvest, which take place in December or January,
the merrymakers throw cotton seeds mixed with paddy, with husks,
and sometimes also with ashes.

149: Reinach--220 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

137

The trees also support incomparable wild orchids with strange flowers, and climbing or twining plants of every possible shape and color which are as graceful as they are delicate, which cross, intertwine and with their lianas form an inextricable jungle, a curtain of flowers, stems and foliage which moves at the whim of the winds and is so thick in certain spots that it casts an almost perpetual shadow (1).

(1) The exact nomenclature of these floral species is almost impossible to establish. We shall content ourselves with noting, among many others which are still unknown: the acacia, and principally the farnèse acacia; various kinds of lilacs; the double and single hibiscus, the African marigold and the zinnias, the lotus, the cockscomb, the marvel of Peru, the sunflower, several kinds of magnolias, syringa, camellias, etc.

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Various plants used for food, medicine and dye also grow in the forests, such as yams, taros, ginger, cardamom, annatto, curcuma, catechu (sisièt), Campeachy wood, wild indigo, etc., as well as trees and lianas which produce resins, oil lac, black and red lacquer, damarine (huile de bois), benzoin, wax, gums and rubber.

243

Rice and maize are cultivated on the plateaus, low hills, mountainsides and in the valleys, as well as on the alluvial deposits of the Mekong. These form the basis of the natives' food supply and are essential elements in the manufacture of alcohol.

273

241

The banks of the watercourses, which are covered by inundations every year and constantly fertilized by alluvial deposits, are [305] used for the cultivation of cotton, tobacco, indigo, castor oil plants, batatas, peanuts, manioc and vegetables and fruits such as onions, garlic, tomatoes, squash, melons, fennel, mustard, edible convolvuluses, sensitive d'eau, etc. In the gardens which are cultivated near the banks one also finds sugar cane, coconut palms, sugar palms, betel palms, latania palms, the poivrier bétel, the arborescent mulberry, peppers, coriander, mint, the citronella and [Illustration here] purslane. Here also are a large variety of fruit trees: banana trees (more than twenty-four varieties), cinnamon trees, fig trees, orange trees, tangerine trees, grapefruit trees, lemon trees, lime trees, pineapple trees, pomegranate trees, guava trees, mango trees, papaw trees, ebony trees (Diospyros ebenum), mangosteen trees, jack trees, durian trees, custard-apple trees, avocado trees, litchi trees, sapodilla trees (red balata), fayolliers (légumineuses), silk-cotton trees

245

Dry rice may be grown in the plains, but is generally cultivated in mountain rais, for the peoples who consume it are settled in the highlands. Indeed, the Khas are the ones who mainly practice its cultivation. The ratio of total dry rice production to that of glutinous rice is about one to four. 243

It is difficult to give any official figures, even approximate ones --for the reasons given above--regarding the total quantity of rice, whether the year be a good or bad one, which Laos produces. It differs, moreover, from one year to the next because of meteorological variations and also because of the damaging epizootic diseases which recur periodically, decimating the farming animals and forcing the inhabitants to reduce the area of their plantings. [231]

[355] One can, however, given the amount necessary for the subsistence of a family of five, deduce the approximate weight of rice which is indispensable for feeding any given group of people. 262 146

It is estimated that the average yearly consumption by a family of five is 28 piculs of paddy (1,700 kilograms), which yield about 17 piculs of threshed rice (1,026 kilograms). 243

Now the total population of Laos, which is estimated at 470,000, will normally contain 94,000 families of five, or groupings of five individuals of all ages and both sexes. On this basis it is easy to calculate that the amount of paddy needed to feed these 94,000 groups will be 2,632,000 piculs (159,800,000 kilograms) of paddy and 1,598,000 piculs (96,440,000 kilograms) of threshed rice.

In addition to this indispensable minimum merely for feeding the inhabitants, other quantities of rice are also necessary: 1) For fodder for certain animals and for making alcohol, pastry, etc., a consumption figure which we estimate at one-fifth of the above figure, or 526,400 piculs of paddy (31,794,560 kilograms) or 319,600 piculs of threshed rice (19,308,840 kilograms); 2) For seed and emergency reserves. These latter may be calculated at the rate of 5 piculs of paddy per house or per family of five, and require about 600,000 piculs of paddy (36,240,000 kilograms). 243 262 273

In recapitulation, it is clear that the amount of paddy which Laos ought to produce for food for its inhabitants, fodder for certain animals, the manufacture of alcohol, miscellaneous uses, seed and reserves is some 3,758,000 to 3,800,000 piculs or 226,983 to 229,520 tons, giving an average ratio of 1) 485 kilograms or 8 piculs of paddy per inhabitant; or 2) 2,425 kilograms or 40 piculs per family.

316 begun at judiciously chosen points [Illustration here] they can be
accommodated to the existing means of communication and transport
313 if necessary. As for the sums needed to engage in a commercial,
mining or forest enterprise, it is difficult to determine these in any
185 precise fashion for, depending on the region and the special conditions
of the terrain, such matters may require more or less capital.

[518] For dealing in teak wood (1), for example, the sums needed

(1) A rigorous investigation made by a chief guardsman of the Laotian militia of the region of Xieng-Khong, on the left bank of the Mekong, has shown that the number of teak trees ready for cutting in the province of Muong-Sing is 4,975 in all, 2,000 of which are of exceptional size for the region, that is to say that their diameter varies between 0.3 and 0.6 meter. Counting the young shoots and young trees, the total number of teaks which we possess in Muong-Sing may be estimated at about 20,000.

Another group is situated on the right bank of the Mekong, in the vicinity of Pak-Lay and in the basin of the Nam-Poun. It includes from 10,000 to 12,000 teak trees ready for cutting, concessions for about half of which have been granted. (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900.)

for purchase and transport would depend on the quantity which it was desired to export. As an average indication, the sum of 40,000 francs might be given for operations on 1,000 teak trees.

From the point of view of mineral resources, certain deposits require capital in the millions for their exploitation, while others might be worked profitably with sums varying between 250,000 to 500,000 francs.

433 In the way of industries which may be started at the present time,
we may cite only the establishment of rice distilleries in southern
185 Laos and of a mechanical sawmill at Khone.

[273 A distillery could be set up without any great expense at the
243] mouth of the Mekong and the Sedone, for example. Thanks to the
price of glutinous rice which is five or six times less expensive in
this region than at Pnom-Penh, the alcohol from such a distillery
would find a certain market in Cambodia.

185 For several years now there has been talk of establishing a
mechanical sawmill on the island of Khone which would obtain its
313 motive power from the nearby waterfalls. Besides teak wood (2),

439 (2) Teak is generally regarded, although wrongly, as the wood

775 According to the normal cycle of rebirths, when they have ended their stay in Heaven and are on the point of returning to earth, they themselves choose their future parents.

All the thirty-two souls go and haunt the water jar of the adopted household. After the third night, at the moment when the future father comes for a drink, they insinuate themselves into the folds of the belt of his sarong. After remaining there for three nights they will enter the maternal womb by the natural passages at the time of conjugal intercourse.

755 782 When one of these wandering souls leaves the body in order to divert himself, the man becomes ill. In order to [49] cure him, the soul must be called back, and then the Sou Khouan is performed.

When the Sou Khouan is considered necessary, the master of the house goes and consults an achar (pronounced: atiar ≈k. acarya), an aged bonze, for the choice of the ceremonial days and hours, where this achar will officiate.

When the prescribed moment arrives, the pha khouan (tray containing offerings) must be ready. In the center of the tray is a goblet artistically decorated with small flowering branches on which are attached tiny candles and white cotton threads about twenty centimeters long. Around this goblet are arranged a boiled hen's egg called khay khouan (egg offered to the spirits), some pellets of glutinous rice, cakes, and ripe bananas.

The tray and goblet may be of wood, copper or silver, the richest appearing at weddings. Instead of a single goblet, several of different sizes can be placed one on top of the other to form a pyramid, and be decorated with flowers, candles and cotton threads.

In addition to the eatables already mentioned, one can also place on the tray a ngeun fac (ancient silver coin in the shape of a parallelepiped weighing 225 grams) or some other precious object.

Next to this tray is placed a small one on which is set a yellow-clawed cock which has been plucked, drawn and boiled. This is the khay khouan (the cock offered to souls). In addition one can add the head and viscera of a boiled pig.

[273] The whole is completed with a bottle of [rice] alcohol and some glasses. In the olden days, the alcohol was contained in a small natural gourd, and the cups [50] were made of bamboo or wood. But rich people had porcelain utensils imported from China. The alcohol can be replaced by a jar of fermented glutinous rice, the liquid extract of which is drunk by sucking it through bamboo tubes dipped into the bottom of the jar.

10: d'Orleans--339 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 274, 438, 491

"Going up the stream as far as the point where the two rivers meet, we came to the movable bridge built upon piles, which leads to the village of Pan Luong and beyond that, quite at the south of the village, the manufactory of tchoum-tchoum. This liquor is obtained by putting water and rice into earthenware jars, and letting it ferment for a fortnight; at the end of that time the contents of the jars are placed, together with a little yeast, into wooden casks surmounted by a large vat full of water. By a somewhat complicated process, the liquor known as tchoum-tchoum is obtained and sold at the rate of two ticals per gallon."

7: Thompson--185-186 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 276, 655

"Laos's opium Régie [JUM: government agency charged with administering an indirect tax] was always directly administered because it presented the unique feature of a soil suitable to poppy growing. The natives had always grown enough for their own needs, so the government subsidized local efforts for a large-scale production. The result was not without charm. Two colonists in different regions were given seed and piastres. After two years, officially given to ruthless labour, an Inspector was sent to report. One of the colonists claimed that the seed [186] he had sown never came up. The other was more cynical: 'I am a remarkable man,' he told the Inspector. 'Potatoes grow where I sowed poppy seed.' (1)

1. Salé, G., Histoires Coloniales (Paris, 1931), p. 84."

10: d'Orleans--263-264 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 276, 301, 563, 777 Ethnic subgroups

"The boatmen [LSS: Kha from Laos] replace the waterpipe used on the Black River by the cigarette, which they put behind the ear after a few whiffs. They also chew betel. I remark that the majority of them wear a bracelet, made of two threads, on the right wrist. They tell us that it is a talisman--a kind of [264] luck charm, which is given to them when they leave their village to navigate or trade."

10: d'Orleans--277-278 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 276, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Our men [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] smoke a wooden pipe, with a small bamboo stem, like those of our countries. [278] They light it with a steel and a wick made of fibres taken from the bark of a tree. They also smoke opium; Chinese caravans bring it to them raw, and they pay about a rupee for nearly three quarters of an ounce (twenty grammes), they cook it over the fire in a small copper cup. Three Laotians from Luang Prabang, who are also in the sala, devote themselves to the same work; they are merchants, who have come to buy rice. The apparatus ready and the lamps lighted, each man lies down and we go to bed."

10: d'Orleans--362-363 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 276, 439, 655, 177.27 Siam
636.27

"... The opium monopoly has been set up in Luang Prabang by the Siamese. Not content with having, during the past century, ruined and depopulated the valley of the Mekong, and with weighing it down with taxation, they now seem anxious to crush its trade and arrest its growth. From our point of view, it is a matter of indifference to us if the relations between Luang Prabang and China become less close and friendly, and we may even turn this change to our profit, for the caravans which were wont to bring opium down the routes parallel with the Mekong, will find it answer [sic] their purpose to branch off in the direction of the Black River, and to effect their exchanges with Upper Tonkin.

I can answer for the fact that during the past year only one caravan reached Luang Prabang from the north, this consisting of sixty mules from Xieng [363] Hong, which took a month upon the journey by short stages, eight being loaded with iron, four with tea, and the rest with Chinese groceries, sugar, opium and a little silk."

23: Franck--271 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 276, 411, 482, 492 Ethnic subgroup

"The men, [EJ: of the 'Black Miao'] and sometimes the women, carry crude daggers in home-made sheaths; some had a long slender rifle, a few of them crossbows of a simple form, and most of them smoked or carried in their sashes pipes of sometimes elaborately tortured shapes. They use pack-oxen as well as little horses, but most of them, of both sexes, carry in a basket on their backs, though Chinese influence perhaps has led some to fasten two baskets at the ends of a short, stiff whole bamboo over a shoulder, thereby losing all the advantage of the long and supple shoulder-pole of China and Annam."

23: Franck--279-280 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 276, 304

"The Laosians [280] do not enamel their teeth, but most of them chew betel-nut."

25: Brodrick--101 [3] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 181, 224, 276

"The men and the women both smoke and often they smoke pan, a sort of hemp, not unlike the Moroccan kif, but the Laotians mix their pan with tobacco. And everyone chews betel.

The Laotians' ideal in life is to chew betel, to drink rice-alcohol, to make love and to sleep--they are very good sleepers. Their economy is still half pre-agricultural, hunting and fishing afford food and amusement, and amusement, of course, because men are not wholly dependent upon the product of the chase."

25: Brodrick--106 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 276, 293

"There stroll by the Laotian girls, lazily self-possessed and free-seeming, and, if it is a feast day, gaudy with satin and velvet and gold and silver thread and innumerable bangles and necklaces. Slung over their shoulders is not only the yellow scarf but the black and gold lacquer nécessaire containing the betel-chewing outfit--scissors, lime-pot, nuts and tube for the wax you smear on your lips so they may not be seared with the astringent juice."

68: Mouhot--95 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians

116, 855, 276

"[HD: Among the Laotians at Khao-Khoc, Siam. See category 116, p. 90] All the children of the neighbourhood, most of whom are still kept at the breast, come frequently to bring me insects, in exchange for a button or cigarette, for it is a common thing for them to leave their mother's breast to smoke. Were they not so dirty, they would be nice-looking; but I am afraid of touching them, lest I should again catch the itch."

68: Mouhot--269 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 276, 609

"I am overwhelmed with presents of all kinds in return for the slightest favour shown to these unfortunate people. [HD: i.e. the Laotians in the city of Luang Prabang] They seem to me some of the most to be pitied that I have seen; even the women and children are opium-eaters: they might really be called a nation of crétins."

149: Reinach--139 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

357

Houses are generally situated in the middle of an enclosure which serves as a garden, and where coconut palms, betel palms and other fruit trees are planted.

276

Use of tobacco and betel. The Laotians use tobacco, which they grow and prepare quite skilfully, in the form of conical cigarettes which are rolled in dried banana leaves. They also mix it with their betel quids. Everybody smokes--men, women and children. It is not unusual to see children four years old, completely naked, puffing clouds of smoke from a cigarette which is enormous in comparison to their little fingers.

Like a great many other peoples of Asia, Laotians chew "betel." As we know this type of quid is composed of a leaf of "piper betel" which is smeared with slaked lime and on which is placed tobacco, a piece of betel nut or some "sisiet" bark (or [185] the extract from this bark, called catechu). It is then rolled and placed in the mouth between the cheek and the gums.

Chewing betel causes abundant salivation, blood red in color, which makes quite an impression at first sight but to which one gradually becomes accustomed.

It is claimed that chewing betel is not a mere habit, but that it has several useful effects on the organism. It is supposed to keep one from being thirsty and to be an astringent and tonic, somewhat like cola or coca.

302
751

Teeth lacquer. So as to preserv. the enamel of their teeth from the corrosive action of the lime and from other acidulous elements contained in the betel nut, the Laotians have the custom of lacquering their teeth black. To accomplish this they rub them with the sap of certain hardwood trees, which they obtain through partial combustion of the wood and condensation of the smoke on an iron spatula. A kind of sticky black coating is thereby produced, which dries rapidly and is made to adhere to the teeth by means of alum.

276

Opium. The use of opium is quite widespread in Laos, and unfortunately its effects do not help to diminish the natural apathy of the race.

304

Tattoos. It is customary for men to be tattooed from beneath the knee to the upper part of the thigh. For this reason the Laotians of the left bank of the Mekong are called "white bellies" in opposition to the Youns of the other bank, whose tattoos cover the stomach and abdomen and who are known as "black bellies." The tattoos are

Tribal Tai

291 the Deng-Thais, is applied to the edges of the gown. It is further
563 ornamented [233] on the outside edge opposite the buttonholes with colored silk embroidery which does not go down below the waist.

This garment is also folded in half lengthwise and worn rolled around the body with the sleeves left hanging.

The women wear their hair parted down the middle in front
302 and rolled into a sort of long tassel behind which is contained within
301 the folds of a little turban. The latter is wound above the forehead and the free end inserted under the first turn, on the nape of the neck. This headdress is quite similar to that of the Annamite women in Tonkin.

In certain regions of Laos, Thai women wind their hair into a sort of coil which girls wear loosely down their neck and betrothed or married women wear on top of the head. Thai jewelry is made of heavy silver and is of the same type as Laotian jewelry. The men wear bracelets on their wrists.

Food. The Thai diet is like that of the Laotians, but they prefer
262 non-glutinous white rice and use chopsticks like the Chinese and
264 Annamites.

The use of betel is quite widespread among the Thais, but in
276 contrast to the Laotians they keep their teeth white. The Thais smoke the oily, opiated tobacco of Tonkin and China in bamboo waterpipes whose tiny bowls only contain a small pinch of tobacco. They also smoke a local variety of tobacco, either in cigarettes or in pipes with a highly worked clay bowl into which a long stem ending in a glass or jade mouthpiece is inserted.

Character. Although serious and reflective, the Thais have a
156 vivacious and friendly character. They are somewhat cold in appearance, but are sound friends and highly affable when one gets to know them better.

[701] Gentler and more timid than the Laotians, they have no taste for the art of war and it is difficult to get them to stay in the native militia.

They are very self-seeking and much more miserly than the Lao-
433 tians. [234] It should be noted, moreover, that since they produce
438 everything themselves and are a people of farmers and livestock breeders, they do not have, by virtue of their ever sedentary occupations,
156 the opportunities which these latter have to enjoy fairly high profits resulting from commercial transactions, nor the special habits which contact with different races gives.

181 The Thais love pleasure and celebrations. Guaranteed their daily
461

Tribal Tai

619 The Neua-Thais. The Neua-Thais differ very little, in all
361 respects, from their fellows. They generally live on higher ground than the other Thais, but they change the location of their village quite frequently. [241] [Illustration] [242] [Blank page] [243]

291 The women knot their skirts under their armpits, above their breasts, and always wear a very short jacket made of cotton, silk or velvet, depending on the season.

231 They engage in sericulture, and with the silk spin and weave brocaded cloth with harmonious colors.

779 At the same time as ancestor worship, the Neu-Thais practice an attenuated form of Buddhism. Pagodas are rare and the bonzes, few in number, serve several centers in turn.

461 Their character is docile. They do not have a very marked taste for trade and are content to be excellent farmers and livestock breeders.
276 Unfortunately, they are inclined to be opium smokers. This is doubtless due to the proximity of the Meos and Yaos who are the producers of the drug.

619 The Phou-Eunes. This branch of the Thai family is very close to
101 the Laotians in mores and customs.

There are only a few modifications in costume and language, modifications due to the age-old proximity of the Annamites and the continuous relations which have existed between the two peoples.
[438] These latter may be explained by the fact that the territory long inhabited by the Phou-Eunes in the east and southeast of Tran-Ninh is situated on the Tonkin Gulf side, and that their produce naturally flows towards the ports on the Annamite coast (1).

(1) To be sure, there are several groupings of Phou-Eunes in the Mekong basin, in Tran-Ninh, to the northeast of Vien-Tiane and in Camkeut-Cammon.

361 The Phou-Eunes prefer to live in high valleys and on high plateaus where the climate is quite severe during the winter. They are more reserved in character than the Laotians, more industrious and less inclined to celebrations and festivities of all kinds.

779 Their religion is Buddhism, but the bonzes are less numerous than elsewhere. It is probable that the little taste which Phou-Eunes have for the religious life is due to the influence of nearby Annam, where the bonzes are a long way from being venerated and coddled as they are in Laos.

Tyibal Tai
Kha

291 The men's costume is like that of the Laotians. A few, however, have adopted the Burmese costume, turban and all, in which case they let their hair grow and roll it in a coil instead of having a brush cut.

The women wear a very long skirt with broad stripes running across it which is fastened beneath the breasts. The bust is covered by a closed jacket or bodice which is cut straight and made of cotton or silk of varied colors. Their hair is rolled in a coil on the nape of the neck or is held in place around the head by a narrow band of cloth and allowed to fall freely down the back. Both sexes wear metal cylinders in their ears, like the Lus, and silver jewelry.

[302] [301]

The Youns are more robust than their fellows, and also more industrious. The women are perhaps less pretty than the Laotian women, but they are just as friendly and merry.

[142]

[251] Both men and women chew betel, and also "Mieng" (green tea, fermented and salted). They smoke tobacco in enormous cigarettes rolled in dried banana leaves. [Illustration alongside text here]

276

The Youns are primarily farmers and livestock breeders. They excel in breeding and training oxen as draft animals.

We have seen that the Youns, although they speak the same language as the Laotians, have their own form of writing which is generally used for religious writings. Their bonzes, who are highly learned for the most part, are renowned for their expert knowledge of the rites of the Buddhist religion.

212 292

Marriage, divorce, polygamy, births, funerals, celebrations and festivities are all the same among the Youns as among the Laotians, except for a few minor differences in detail which we need not mention here.

101

THE KHAS

Before entering into detail about the mores and customs of the main Kha families, we shall again have recourse to the learned work by the Superior Resident in Laos in order to give a general sketch of this race which represents at least a third of the population.

619 181

[252] "They are to be found throughout the territory, and are divided into more than sixty families. As much as those who inhabit northern Laos are docile, manageable and respectful, so are those who inhabit the southern part of Laos proud, independent and warlike, particularly the tribes inhabiting the mountains which separate [illegible] from Annam.

Kha

caught even on the other side of the watershed and then delivered as 567
slaves to the Burmese, Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian merchants of the low country. The barbarity of their mores has been greatly lessened since our arrival in Laos, but traces of it still exist and manifest themselves in rivalries and attacks between tribes. The police force which [260] we have organized in the land in the form of a native militia, the influence of the missionaries who have settled among the turbulent Khas, and also the help and example of the tribes which have submitted to our tutelary authority will soon cause this abnormal state of things to disappear. Finally, our increasingly effective occupation of the land, which has been completed by the organization of the province of Darlac, and the strict protectorate which we exercise over Cambodia, the chief purchaser of slaves, have begun to bring order in an effective fashion to this shameful traffic in human flesh (1).

(1) See § I of Chapter XI.

It should be noted that the Djarais and the Rades are the only 197
Khas who speak Cham, that is to say a greatly corrupted Malay tongue which they have preserved for centuries.

The men's clothing consists of a loin-cloth, and that of the 291
women consists only of a short skirt knotted around the waist or under the armpits, the torso left bare.

Both men and women have long hair wound in a coil. Both 301
sexes, but mainly the men, wear jewels of a crude shape, made of tin or brass, in the form of bracelets, neckbands, ear pendants or cylinders and hairpins. They are also very fond of glass bead necklaces.

These Khas smoke tobacco, either dried or green, as well as 276
bamboo shavings impregnated with nicotine. They make terra cotta pipes with highly worked bowls and also use imported brass pipes. They do not blacken their teeth.

From the point of view of diet and housing, practically the same 511
conditions obtain as we have seen above except that the houses are built with greater care and arranged in the form of a circular camp.

In the middle of Cedang and Rognao villages there is a large 342
house some twenty to thirty meters long by twelve to fifteen meters 883
wide, with a high pointed roof. This is the common house where all the boys of the locality live from the age of nine or ten until the day of their marriage.

149: Reinach--192 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Finally, the Ao-Tchaine Yaos owe their name (bearing sapeks) 291
to the fact that the men's jacket, which is shorter than that of the other Yaos, is ornamented in front with several rows of flat copper or silver buttons which resemble sapeks (Annamite and Chinese coins).

The women fasten a pad of compact, gummed hair on their coil 302
by means of sticks made of ivory, of bone or simply of wood.

Like the Meos, the Yaos inhabit the peaks of mountains in 364
northern Laos where they grow poppies. They are confirmed opium [276]
smokers.

[270] [Blank page] [271] [Illustration at top]

CHAPTER V

1. ORGANIZATION

Consulate and Commercial Agencies. Before 439
the treaty of October 3, 1893, we already had a consul at Luang-Prabang in the Mekong basin, on the right bank of the river. In 1892 175
the vice-consulate was closed and commercial agencies were set up at Luang-Prabang, Outhene and Bassac on the right bank, and then 648
at Stung-Treng on the left bank. The first three agencies were directed by representatives of the French Syndicate of Laos, and the last by a clerk of Posts and Telegraphs. The commercial agents performed the functions of consular agents. Later on in 1894 and 1895 when we actually took possession of Laos, that is to say of the territory on the left bank of the Mekong, two additional agencies were established at Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen. [272] Then in 1895 the agencies of Pak-Lay, Xieng-Khan, Nong-Khay, Lakhone, Ban-Mouk-Dahan and Kemmarat were created on the right bank, bringing the total number to ten, for those of Stung-Treng and Luang-Prabang had been raised to the status of commissionerships.

These new agencies were directed by "commercial agents" specially appointed for the purpose. In addition to the delegates of the French Syndicate of Laos who continued to hold office, these agents included a few inspectors of the Tonkin native guard.

The duties of these officials were poorly defined, and their chief role was to assert our presence. They were mere information agents. For this reason official circles soon decided to abolish these posts, an action made possible chiefly by the establishment of two new vice-consulates in Siam, one at Oubone and one at Ban-Dua-Makeng.

Its price varies between 12 and 15 francs per hundred kilograms. 000

6. Catechu (Sisiet). 824

Catechu is produced from a decoction of the bark of two varieties of trees, the catechu acacia and the leafy butée. 314

This product, which is used in making the national masticatory together with betel, betel nuts and lime, is consumed, in the large centers of Upper Laos, in the form of a dry residue obtained from a decoction of the bark. Generally, however, it is the bark itself which is consumed after it has been broken up into small pieces. 276

Natural sisiet takes the form of shreds of bark about a cubit (.45 meter) long by four centimeters wide and one centimeter thick. The shreds are tied together in packs of twenty-five or fifty, depending on the region.

The whole production is consumed locally. The natives [334] go into the forest at points where suitable trees are to be found, bundle up the pieces and load thm on great rafts which go down from Pak-Lay and Vien-Tiane to Bassac and even to Khong. [438]

At Pak-Lay sisiet is worth only 7 francs and 50 centimes per hundred pieces, but it naturally costs more the further away one goes from the centers of production. [435]

7. Curcuma (Khi-Mine). 824

This plant, of the Zingiberaceae family, has a rhizome which contains an orange-yellow coloring matter used for dyeing silk and cotton. 314 386

Sometimes the inhabitants (chiefly the women and children) rub their whole body with curcuma scrapings after a bath. The application of curcuma to the wet skin, which acquires a light yellow color, is said by the natives to ward off mosquitoes and keep the skin fresh. 302

Up to the present time this product has not formed the basis of any foreign trade. It is sold in small amounts on the markets of Laos. [438]

8. Ginger. 263

The ginger which is called "Mak-Khing" in Laotian is the Zingiber officinale or gray ginger. Used as a condiment by the entire population, this product does not enter into trade. Its price varies between 12 francs and fifty centimes and 16 francs and fifty centimes per hundred kilograms. 824 314 [435]

9. Roucou. 824

The roucou, or fruit of the Roucouyer Bixia, is called "Kene-Mak-Soum-Phou" in Laotian. Literally, this means Seed of an acidulous mountain fruit. It is used to make red and orange dyes 314 386

249 is that grown in the regions which we have just mentioned. Because of its origin and the name of the two main distribution markets of the trade, it is called Nong-Khay or Vien-Tiane tobacco.

We do not have exact data on the annual production of tobacco in Laos, because of the excessive fragmentation of the plantings and the absence of a crop registry. But information gained from commercial statistics enables us to say that in 1898 exports from the Paklay-Pone-Pissay region reached more than 42 tons. Also, if we attribute to each [276] inhabitant two grams of tobacco per day (this is not an excessive figure) or ten grams per family of five, we find that total consumption in Laos would be from 340 to 345 tons annually, or a total production of about four hundred tons (1).

(1) See Appendix XXIII.

[435 439] The export sale price varies from fifty to a hundred francs per hundred kilograms, depending on the quality.

248 439 COTTON. Cotton, a herbaceous and annual plant, is cultivated almost everywhere in Laos for local consumption, and particularly in northern Laos for export to Yunnan. In fact, this product is almost the only return cargo for the mule and horse caravans which come in each year from Yunnan-Fou, Tali, S'semao, etc. with tea, furs, iron and copper pots, knick-knacks, etc.

248 The farming methods in northern Laos are as follows. Seeds are placed in pairs in holes which are about ten centimeters deep and spaced at varying distances depending on the region. Stony ground is preferred, on which the brush has been burned away both to clear the land and also [362] to fertilize the soil. No other fertilizer is used except the ashes of the vegetation which covered it.

The seeds are sowed in April or May and usually germinate a few days later. The plantings are harrowed and weeded twice each season, and harvesting is usually finished in November. The cotton is of a mediocre quality, with short staples, but despite this defect it is highly sought-after, as we have seen above, by the Chinese caravans which buy all of the available supply each year at the chief local markets. The height of the plant at full yield does not exceed sixty centimeters, and the yield per kilogram of bolls averages thirty percent or about 300 grams.

248 311 In southern Laos the cotton fields are small in extent, widely scattered and formed chiefly of narrow strips of alluvial terrain on the

249 either in the natural state or in the form of black, pasty, molasses-laden sugar.

There are several varieties, the chief of which are the heavy, green cane which is highly cellulated, and the small violet-colored cane with joints closer together, which is fuller than the first.

Farming methods do not differ from those used in other countries. Cuttings are planted, and the plants are topped if they show a marked propensity to excessive leafy growth.

257 To manufacture sugar, the cane is crushed between two vertical cylinders driven by two wooden gears of a most ingenious construction.
407 A buffalo turns the whole by means of a crossbar or shaft, the end of which is attached to its neck and constitutes a whim. Sometimes the cane is crushed between two pieces of stone or hardwood, one of which rests on the ground while the other [364] is applied on top of it by means of a wooden lever. One or several persons work the other end of the lever with all their weight and move it up and down in a series of jerky motions. The juice extracted from the cane is placed in large cast iron cauldrons shaped like cupels, which are imported by Chinese merchants. Condensation takes place over an open fire laid in primitive hearths which are cut into the ground itself, if it is clayey. When the syrup reaches the desired degree of thickness the whole mass is poured into rectangular or circular molds made of wood or bamboo. After cooling the loaves of sugar which come from the molds, and which are from three to six centimeters thick, are wrapped in dry leaves. They are transported and sold in this form. The cane itself is called "Oi" and the sugar "Nam-Oi" or, literally, water of cane.

[439] [415]

[276] The Laotians do not refine alcohol from the juice of sugar cane, and are even ignorant of the initial refining stage which the Annamites use and which produces brown sugar.
[101]

[435] The price of sugar on the markets of Laos varies from one point to another, and transactions involve small quantities only. Statistics do give evidence, however, from which market prices of 35 to 50 francs per hundred kilograms can be deduced.

249 INDIGO. We have seen above that the Laotians use the indigo-bearing properties of certain plants which grow wild in the forests in order to dye cloth goods blue. They also produce a variety of indigo, the Indigofera tinctoria, which is similar to the variety found in Bengal. The plant itself is called "Kok-Kame" and the extract or dye "Nam-Kame

149; Reinach--270 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

GROUND NUTS. Only the subterranean varieties of ground nuts, or peanuts, are found in Laos. The inhabitants call this plant "Mak-Thoua-Dine," which means, literally, Fruit of the ground bean. Peanuts are not used for their oil, but are eaten boiled, roasted or with certain pastries in which they are incorporated. They are fed to convalescents as a tonic and restorative, doubtless because of their high nitrogen content. 244

COCONUT AND SUGAR PALMS. The former is called "Kok-Mak-Phao" and its fruit is called "Mak-Phao." The second is called "Kok-Mak-Tane" and its fruit the "Mak-Tane." The sugar extracted from the "Mak-Tane" is called "Nam-Tane." 245

These two trees are cultivated almost everywhere in the environs of villages.

Coconuts are consumed on the spot, either fresh or dried. In the latter case their meat is used to make an edible oil which is quite good when newly made, or else it is shredded and then used to make a kind of sugar cream. Coconut meat is one of the constituents of carry.

The number of coconut palms in Laos is not great enough [368] to provide for local needs and still leave any over for export of their pulp, which is known commercially as copra. Sugar palms are used only for the needs of the local population. The sugar which they yield is whiter than cane sugar as extracted by the Laotians, and so the natives give the name of "Nam-Tane" to the crystallized European and Chinese sugar, because of its color, and never apply to it the name "Nam-Oi," which designates their black cane sugar.

BETEL PALMS. Betel palms are grown wherever the altitude permits, and are even found at heights greater than eight hundred meters. [Illustration alongside text here] The betel palm, which is called "Kok-Mak," produces the "Mak" nut with the veined meat which enters into the composition of the national masticatory together with betel, lime, etc. 249 276

When it reaches maturity the betel nut is picked and prepared in two different ways in order to be either consumed on the spot or transported to parts of the country which have none. There is even a small export trade, but so slight that we need only mention it. [348]

It may be preserved whole after the floss envelope from which it is extracted has been dried, or else it may be cut up into [369] thin

249 segments, together with its envelope, while still green. The segments
• 276 are threaded in groups of sixteen on plant thongs and then gathered in packets of fifty or a hundred thongs. The packets are hung up at home near the hearth, and the smoke gives them a brownish color, dries out the nut completely and soon makes it insect-proof.

438 Since every Laotian, with only a few exceptions, has betel palms around his house, trade in betel nuts takes place only in the large mar-
276 kets, where there are packets of dried nuts which a few small merchants have collected. Within the country these packets are sold according to their number of nuts, and yet statistics give sale prices by weight, at figures varying between twenty and forty francs per hundred kilograms. It is probable that the latter figure applies to whole nuts, and the former to packets of nut segments.

249 BETEL. The betel leaf, which gives its name to the well-known masticatory, is a product of the Piper Betel which is grown everywhere in Laos and for which the trunks of betel palms generally serve as a support. It is to the cultivation of this plant that the Laotians devote the most attention. The soil is manured and weeded, the foot of the plant is surrounded by an earth mound, and the plant itself is protected against animals by a wooden enclosure. The betel palms around which the betel plants climb and twine profit from the care given the latter and generally produce a better harvest than trees which have been left alone. In order to water the betel plants, which often reach a height of seven or eight meters, the natives have devised a bamboo syringe, one end of which has a rounded nozzle pierced by small holes.

245 LAC. The tree on which the insects which secrete sticklac grow is called "Kok-Mak-Thoua-He." It is a biennial of the leguminous family and Acacia genus. Its fruit is a small edible bean, rounded and veined, which is contained [370]in groups of five or six in a soft, semi-parchmented pod. During its two years of life each shrub produces more than a million beans or seeds. A few of these are kept for seed, and the rest are consumed on the spot.

The cultivation of the shrub and of sticklac comprises two operations: seeding the "Kok-Mak-Thoua-He" and inducing colonies of coccus lacca to settle on its branches. The aphids of this insect produce the tinctorial matter called "Khang-Deng" or, literally, Red wax.

near their silkworm breeding houses, but it is unfortunate that the new 249
conditions in which the trees are placed should have an adverse effect 231
on silk production. On the plateaus and in the high valleys, in the
vicinity of land once occupied by villages, there are many mulberry
trees which have continued to survive. They send out new leaves
again even after the annual burnings of the forest clearings, and bear
leaves which are vigorous and have a more pithy appearance than
those of their fellows in the low, humid parts of the country. They
are also said to be preferable for feeding silkworms (2).

(2) See Appendix XXIV.

Local consumption absorbs the greater part of the silk production, 231
for the majority of Laotians, both men and women, use it in making 286
the garments which they wear.

We do not possess exact data on the total production of silk in Laos. It has been estimated at about twenty tons annually. The price varies from 400 to 500 francs per hundred kilograms.

OPIUM POPPIES. The opium poppy is cultivated by the Yaos and 276
the Meos, in northern Laos. Towards the end of the rainy season, [376] 249
in September, the poppy seeds are sowed broadcast on land from which 314
maize has just been harvested. Germination is activated by the last
rains of the season and the plant flowers at the beginning of December.
Harvesting is done shortly after the petals have fallen.

Closely spaced lengthwise incisions are made all along the surface of the capsule, allowing the plant juice to escape. It coagulates upon contact with the air and is collected daily until the plant has been completely exhausted (1).

(1) See Appendix XXV, report of M. Lussan, Cochinchina customs agent. The latter was sent on a mission to Upper Laos to experiment with growing opium poppies by less rudimentary methods than the ones in use among the Meos and the Yaos. [654]

PAPER TREES. There are several trees in Laos whose bark is used 249
to make paper. They seem to be of the mulberry type and are called 289
"Kok-Sa."

The paper is made by hand on forms, by extremely rudimentary methods. Its manufacture occupies several villages of northern Laos.

incorporate into the teas which they send abroad. But they appeal to 245
the Chinese and other Orientals, and part of the crop is even set aside [648]
and sent as tribute to the court of the Emperor in Peking.

The Shans, the Lus and the Youns use a masticatory called [276]
"Mieng" which is composed solely of tea leaves which have been preserved in brine.

PIMENTOS. Since pimento is a much sought-after condiment, [244
and one which is even indispensable to the people of Laos, as to 263]
those of neighboring countries, the cultivation of this product is quite widespread.

This pimento is of the large, red variety. It is prepared by [378] drying and smoking it, thereby guaranteeing that it will keep. Its name in Laotian is "Mak-Phik." The price of dry pimento varies from 25 to 37 francs per hundred kilograms.

FARMING IMPLEMENTS AND TOOLS USED IN LAOS. We shall 412
conclude this rapid listing of the chief crops grown in Laos by giving
a list of the farming implements used in the country. These latter 241
are just as primitive and just as rudimentary as the farming methods, and the Laotians do not make any more effort to improve the ones than to improve the others.

The plow (Thai). The plow is extremely simple and is the primitive swing-plow formed of a single piece of bent wood. A share or "Mak-Sob-Thai" is fitted to its front end. Sometimes the share is even supplanted by cutting the stick of wood diagonally and hardening it in a fire. Drawn by a buffalo, this tiny plow cannot break the soil to any great depth, and so is used in ricefields only when the soil has been sufficiently softened by the annual inundations.

The harrow (Khat). The harrow is a sort of wooden rake .9 meter long, the teeth of which are made of ironwood or any other very hard wood, "Mai-Lek" or "Mai-Khen-Hine." This rake forms one of the sides of a triangle, the peak of which is harnessed to a buffalo.

The roller (Ham). The roller is the trunk of some hardwood tree, "Mai-Khen-Hine" for example. It has pins over which two shafts fit, leaving space to harness a buffalo.

The sickle. There are sickles of several sizes, which are called either "Kio" or "Lek Kio" without distinction. Sickles are used to cut grasses and rice.

249 Chinese and Laotian middlemen and even the few European merchants--
263 have found that it brings in rewarding profits. Indeed, by exporting
438 this product the latter are assured of an almost certain gain of 20 to 30 percent.

248 [387] Ramie. There is also much to be gained from increasing
439 the production of ramie or Chinese nettle. It is assured of an outlet in Cambodia, where it sells for as much as 80 francs per hundred kilograms.

249 Cinnamon. The extension of the plantations and gardens of
185 cinnamon trees already in existence in the province of Vien-Tiane deserves serious encouragement. The bark of these trees is a valuable product which is much sought-after in China and in Europe.

276 Opium poppies. The Government of Indo-China, which is
656 both the preparer and seller of chandoo or opium for smoking, is the party which would gain most from obtaining the raw drug on French territory. It is, indeed, still dependent on British India for this product, and can acquire it only on extremely disadvantageous terms.

Since much time must still pass, however, before the Meos and the Yaos give up their age-old methods, it would be essential for the intensive cultivation of the opium poppy to be undertaken by Europeans on behalf of the administration. This would be possible if there were a guaranteed labor supply in the form of Chinese coolies, who would be enlisted primarily for the greater part of the work, and of native specialists who would deal only with scarification of the capsules, harvesting the opium and the first stage of its preparation.

These delicate operations are the ones which the Meos and the Yaos like best, but they dislike plowing, fertilizing, weeding and irrigation, all of which tasks are indispensable for obtaining a high yield of capsules and consequently of the raw drug. It would therefore be best to entrust this heavy work to foreign coolies, and it is probable that after a certain time they too would be capable of extracting the opium. Impelled by their example, the natives would doubtless then be seen to break with their prejudices and devote themselves also to intensive cultivation so as to reap its full benefits.

The role of the administration would then be at an end, and it would gradually diminish its intervention as free cultivation of the poppies increased.

[435 Raw opium which is produced locally or which comes from [388] neighboring countries is worth 22 francs, 50 centimes to 32 francs, 25 centimes per kilogram, depending on quality, in northern Laos.

396 is also cut out with a hatchet so as to decrease the thickness of the walls and render them more elastic.

When the pirogue is as wide as is desired, or else as wide as the wood being used will allow without any danger of splitting or bursting, strong rectangular crossbraces are set at regular intervals and tailed into the sides of the pirogues a few centimeters below the gunwales. When it has reached this state the pirogue is virtually finished. It has its final shape, and looks like the elongated half of a fish which has been split lengthwise.

All that remains is to finish the work by giving the bottom and sides the requisite thickness, by polishing the wood, smoothing the curves, etc.

Finally comes the moment of launching. It must be said, to the honor of the builders' sure eye and skill, that it is always successful and that once put into water the pirogue behaves well in its element, with a light and graceful balance.

396 The price of pirogues varies depending on their dimensions and
439 [466] the region, and can therefore not be fixed in any absolute
435 fashion. A new pirogue, in fact, costs from 50 to 300 francs. In Cambodia a pirogue from Laos costs twice what it cost in its land of origin. Thus it may readily be imagined that pirogues are exported from Lower Laos in fairly large numbers. The statistics for 1899 show exports of 552 pirogues of various dimensions, with a [Illustration here] total value of 55,195 francs, or an average purchase price of 100 francs apiece.

398 Cartwrights. The construction of carts, wagons, pack-saddles for oxen and elephant palanquins is a specialized industry only on the right bank and in Siam. In French Laos carts are little used because of the nature of the terrain, and there are no cartwrights. Pack-saddles for oxen and elephant palanquins are made by nearly everyone, particularly by drovers and carnacs.

317 Lime. Lime is made in Laos, primarily for inclusion in betel
276 masticatories.

[467] The kilns are dug in the clay on banks of watercourses, near calcareous masses from which limestone is taken.

272 Alcohol. The distillation of grain--rice, maize and hemp-seed--is not an industry in the strict sense, for every village and every family makes alcohol on occasion.

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Tax on rice, paddy, horns, hides, etc.

	Per picul (francs)	Per hundred kilograms (francs)
Paddy	0.25	0.416
Rice	0.50	0.832
Gum lac	2.50	4.16
Chinese nettle	2.50	4.16
Buffalo horns and hides	2.50	4.16
Buck horns and hides	3.75	6.25
Anteater scales	3.75	6.25
Cardamom	5.00	8.32
Elephant and tiger bones	3.75	6.25
Benzoin	12.50	20.82
Rubber	12.50	20.82
Wax	12.50	20.82
Ivory	50.00	83.20
Pirogues	ten percent ad valorem.	

Also to be added are certain incidental receipts, such as those arising from chancery fees or those collected by the native tribunals in conformity with the rates scheduled by the code of Vien-Tiane.

701 557 658 The royal treasury of Luang-Prabang subsidizes certain expenses, such as the upkeep of the kingdom's militia, of the native hospital in Luang-Prabang, of the Franco-Laotian school in Luang-Prabang, etc. [504]

652 Finally, the general budget of Indo-China pays out a variable sum annually for the purpose of balancing the receipts and expenditures of Laos.

C. Opium

651 276 655 One of the most important sources of Laotian revenue is provided by the sale of opium. The administration is responsible for the sale of this substance, which it manufactures itself and which is marketed by licensed merchants acting as middlemen.

Before 1900, Laos sold on its own behalf the opium which was allotted to it by the Cochinchina Customs and Excise Office (1).

(1) This was true only for Lower Laos. The opium sold in Upper Laos came from the Luang-Prabang distillery, which is no longer in operation today.

657 paid for these allotments in cash, and took in as receipts the difference between the allotment price and the sale price. Today, as a con-
•276 sequence of the establishment of a general budget for Indo-China,
655 Laos sells directly on behalf of the Customs and Excise Office and pays this office the entire sum resulting from sales made.

The following are the sale prices, per kilogram, of the Customs and Excise opium in the various provinces of Laos in 1900 and 1901:

	1900 (francs)	1901 (francs)
Hua-Pahn	90.00	100.00
Tran-Ninh	75.00	100.00
Luang-Prabang	100.00	100.00
Vien-Tiane	92.50	112.50
Song-Khone and Cammon	100.00	112.50
Ban-Mouang and Saravane	107.50	125.00
Khong and Attopeu	112.50	125.00
Stung-Treng	125.00	137.50

276 In 1898, total opium sales were 150,450 francs. If the total population of Laos is estimated at 500,000, then each inhabitant would consume an average of 0.3009 franc's worth of opium per [505] year. This is a negligible amount, if we compare it with that in neighboring countries, as demonstrated by the following table:

Country	Total Population	Total opium sales in francs	Average share per inhabitant in francs
French Laos	500,000	150,450	0.3009
Siamese Laos	700,000	440,000	0.6282
Siam	6,700,000	7,758,500	1.155

It does not follow, however, that the inhabitants of Laos smoke less opium than their neighbors, but rather that fraud is more rampant there than elsewhere.

It is estimated that the minimum opium consumption in Laos must be 3.50 francs' worth per registered person and per year. Now, since registered persons represent an average of 22 to 24 percent of the total population, opium sales must bring in receipts of about 400,000 francs and the share per inhabitant must be 0.8 franc, a figure approaching the norm between the average figures for Siamese Laos and for Siam.

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Opium sales are constantly on the increase in Laos, moreover, and it is probable that receipts for 1900 have reached nearly 350,000 francs.

5. BUDGET

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The budget of Laos was created by a decree of the governor general dated September 30, 1895. The first budget was that of 1896. It varies little from one year to another, and amounts to about two million francs. The following are the exact figures:

	francs
1896	1,819,245
1897	1,918,207
1898	2,008,806
1899	1,988,700
1900	1,847,500
1901	1,896,650

[506] Local receipts taken in in 1898 amounted to 356,925 francs. In 1900 they had risen to 516,250 francs, an increase of 159,325 francs. On the other hand, levies on the other parts of Indo-China which were necessary to balance the budget of Laos decreased by the same amount. In fact, since local resources are insufficient to cover expenses, it has been necessary to have recourses to subsidies provided by the other countries of the Indo-Chinese union. Thus Cochinchina provided 6/13 of the subsidy, Tonkin 5/13 and Cambodia 2/13. Since the creation of a general budget for Indo-China, the sum of these subsidies is entered there annually.

Each year a projected budget is prepared by the superior resident. It is presented to the Superior Council of Indo-China, which studies and approves it. Before it can become official, it must also be approved by the President of the Republic.

Here, as a sample, is the budget as established for the fiscal year 1900:

A. Receipts

	francs
Direct taxes.....	316,250
Miscellaneous taxes.....	200,000
Subsidy from general budget....	1,331,250
Total receipts....	1,847,500

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Mai-mok	.2 to .25			Forest glades	Lower Laos	Slightly yellowish wood, light, with fine grain; dwarf tree, bears large yellow flowers which are very odoriferous.
Mai-seng-kham	.5 to .6	Bark used by the Laotians for chewing with betel.		Forest glades	Upper Laos Lower Laos	Yellowish wood with quite fine grain; well-grown tree; not very plentiful.
Mai-si	.3 to .4			Forest glades	Lower Laos	Slightly grayish wood, quite close-fibered; well-grown tree; not very plentiful.
Mai-lieng	.6 to .7	Used only for making plowshares.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Hard, knotty, red, rather dark wood; difficult to work with an ax, does not grow straight; not very plentiful; unlimited life.
Mai-souek	.6 to .7		No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Very hard wood, very dark reddish-gray in color, well-veined, difficult to work; very well-grown tree.
[120-121] Mai-lam-sing	1 to 1.2		No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Hardwood, dark red, close-grained, difficult to work; well-grown tree; quite plentiful.

[table continued over]

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Mai-podoung		20 to 25	.8 to 1	Paneling.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Beautiful wood, purplish-red heartwood, blackens upon exposure to air.
Mai-ka-sam		25	1	Building wood.	No		Lower Laos	Hard and resistant wood, resembles the Mai-tabeng; plentiful; unlimited life.
Mai-bi-smi		18 to 20	.6 to .8	Framing.	Yes		Lower Laos	Wood of inferior quality, hard but not very resistant, red in color; lasts from 6 to 10 years.
Mai-khai-so		18 to 20	.6 to .8	Framing.	Yes		Lower Laos	Wood of inferior quality, hard but not very resistant, red in color; lasts for seven years.
Mai-nga-lai		15 to 18	.5 to .6	Interior woodwork.	Yes		Lower Laos	White wood, of inferior quality; lasts for 5 to 6 years.
Mai-sisiet	Catechu Acacia catechu	30	1.3	The bark alone, which forms catechu, is used for chewing with betel.	Yes	Valleys and low slopes	Upper Laos	The wood is good only for burning.
[122-123] Mai-kok-sa		8	.25 to .35	The bark alone is used in making a very resistant paper.	Yes	Valleys	Upper Laos	
Mai-so		30	1.5	Framing and mediocre woodwork.	No	Low mountains and valleys	Upper Laos	Hard wood, fairly good, very light; not very plentiful.

[table continued over]

249 plants. Then the soil is given a second dressing.

Up to the time when the stalk reaches a height of twenty centimeters, the poppy is often attacked by a worm which eats it either at ground level or a little below. It can easily be discovered buried in the soil near the stricken plant, and it is essential that the worm be destroyed. Whenever the surface of the soil is dry around the plants, it will be well to water the ground and thereby prevent these worms from hatching. At flowering time, that is to say three months after sowing the seed, the leaves are devoured by caterpillars. Sometimes also a small toadstool forms at the foot of the plant. These parasites are caused by soil that is too damp. It is then best to uproot the contaminated plants and drain the field, for although the poppy is fond of water it does not like to remain in it, and if forced to do so may suddenly wither away.

249 When the petals will come off easily and almost by themselves, they should be removed, sorted into packs, and dried by exposing
276 them in a well-aerated and very dry place. From time to time care should be taken to turn them over and remove those which are mouldy. These petals will be used to wrap balls of opium.

276 A few days later when the capsules have become somewhat harder, they are [150] scarified with a knife which has a rectangular blade and is placed so as to make four shallow incisions at the same time on the capsule walls, but affecting only the epidermis. The opium is at once exuded in the form of small drops which remain glued to the skin until the following day. In the morning after the dew the opium is collected with a scraper, then placed in a container and taken to the drying room. This operation is repeated each day until the end of the harvest.

If scarification is done in rainy or misty weather, it sometimes happens that after the opium is collected a blackish liquid forms which is rather like very strong coffee. This has to be carefully removed, or the quality of the opium will suffer. But since it is easy to recognize in advance, for the opium is laden with water, it is better then to convert it into chandoo which will be used as paste in wrapping the balls. When the west wind blows, as very frequently happens in Laos, this phenomenon does not occur.

The natives do not by any means take all these precautions, however, and so the opium which they produce is of inferior quality.

Each day the opium is stirred, either in the open sun or in a spot which is under cover but well aerated and very dry. It is worked in this manner until it reaches the desired consistency, then it is

276 reduced to balls of equal weight.

In order to accomplish this latter operation, petals are carefully spread over the inside of a copper vase, and on the petals so arranged is placed a ball of opium which has first been smeared with paste (chandoo opium). The petals adhere to the ball, and its surface is kneaded lightly while it is covered with still more petals until no air can reach it.

The natives use paper from China or paper which they make themselves, and claim that petals give a taste to the opium. Experiments could be made to see whether they are correct, but it is certain that their method of wrapping is very quick.

Besides, even if they do not take the precautions necessary to obtain a sufficient yield and a high quality, they recoup their losses through fraud, which is just as inevitable in Laos as it is in India or Burma.

When the balls of opium are finished they are placed on racks and turned from time to time. They may even be exposed to direct sunlight, for the main thing is to prevent the formation of mold. Finally they are placed in chests which are divided into small compartments, each compartment designed to hold one ball, together with poppy leaves and capsules, so as to drive out humidity.

The seeds chosen for next year's crop are harvested when the capsules are ripe. The best ones are selected and exposed to the sun, then crushed and the seeds thus obtained passed through a sieve so that only the best ones can be saved for reproduction.

It is a good idea to bring in seeds of different origin each year, so that the plants will not degenerate.

[151] The yield from one hectare planted in poppies depends on the amount of money spent and the way in which it has been worked and fertilized.

It is best to choose a plateau situated at an altitude of at least 500 meters. The expense occasioned by a plantation on wooded land may be estimated at about 250 $.

In consequence of the land which is wasted (space occupied by tree trunks and irrigation canals), an average of no more than 50,000 poppy plants can be reckoned per hectare. Since each plant will produce from three to five capsules, which will yield one gram of opium, the total yield will be fifty kilograms per hectare.

These figures are for the first year's production, but costs will decrease in subsequent years and as many as 100,000 plants per hectare may be attained when all stumps have been burned and when their roots

276 have decayed in the ground. To be sure, it should never be forgotten that opium cultivation is a very delicate matter and requires much care and intelligent laborers who are difficult to find in the beginning.

In résumé, this product which is obtained by cultivating poppies brings a high price and is not at all cumbersome, so that even with the present means of transport it can support competition to advantage. The great quantity of opium consumed each year in Indo-China will provide sizeable revenues for Laos, and instead of continuing to buy the drug from the British the colony will sell it at a much more remunerative price.

The quality of Laotian opium is just as good as that of Indian opium. This is a proven fact, and we may therefore forge ahead with complete confidence.

New trials will be made at Khin-Mouak near Luang-Prabang. This is a well-chosen terrain at an altitude of 800 meters where water is plentiful in all seasons of the year and is sufficient to irrigate 200 hectares of poppies. I have had seven lime kilns established there so as to manufacture fertilizer on the spot.

(Report by M. Lussan. Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine.)

[152]

APPENDIX XXVI
THE CULTIVATION OF TEA

245 In the regions of production, the altitudes best-suited to the tea plants vary from 1,000 to 1,800 meters, and the terrain most favorable to them is the side of a mountain.

The tea plant is called "Kok-Tsa" in Laotian and its leaf "Tsa." This is obviously a corruption of the word "Tcha," which has the same meaning in Yunnanese.

Abandoned to itself and not given any care, the plant grows in complete freedom and reaches a height of six to seven meters. The leaves which it produces are hard, and the infusion which it yields has a bad taste and would seem to produce stomach trouble in those who drink it.

The cultivation of these plants consists principally in reducing their size to two meters at the most by encouraging the growth of lateral branches in a horizontal direction. The main objective of this method is to enable a man to reach all parts of the plant and to stimulate the development of leaves by frequent prunings of those branches which are becoming too voluminous. This operation is facilitated by the reduced height of the plant.

149: Reinach--90 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

This preventive measure is recommended by Laveran, who discovered the haematozoon of paludism, and is followed by a great many persons. It has always yielded excellent results, even among the natives who are also subject to the fever (1). 164 757

(1) According to a report by the Superior Resident in Laos, in which mention is made of a note by M. Morin, the government commissioner in Vien-Tiane, there is a kind of liana in this province which is quite common in the region and which the Laotians call Khua-Khao-hô. 278

This liana, which the Siamese call Bora-phet, is no other, according to the dictionary by Pallegoix, than the Cocculus verrucosus of the Menispermaceae family.

The taste of the sap which it contains, when newly cut, is particularly bitter. When dried the liana itself retains a very pronounced taste of quinine.

Native doctors use it in various preparations for treating obstinate fevers and jaundice in its various forms.

At the same time as the Khao-hô, pieces of heartwood from two hardwood trees are generally used. We have been unable to discover their exact names, but the active medicinal agent, according to the natives, is primarily Cocculus verrucosus (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, August 1, 1900). [113]

[121] The daily ingestion of a small quantity of quinine keeps the blood in a toxic state for fever-bearing microbes, and it must be constantly saturated if one wishes to prevent their invasion and growth. 757

Some persons also get along very well on a treatment which consists in taking a purgation of sodium or magnesium sulphate, or else an emetic of ipecacuanha, every three months (April, July, October and January).

Whenever a feeling of torpor, stiffness in the nape of the neck or the shivers which are the forerunners of fever manifest themselves, one and a half to two grams of ipeca and one gram of quinine, after vomiting has stopped, will overcome the illness and reduce the attack to its most benign form.

In sum, one can keep in excellent health in Laos, by following these few recommendations, if one has a good stomach, solid insides and an intact liver. A stay in this country can therefore not be 000

824
314 when mixed with curcuma. The trees are found in the forest, and
386 sometimes in gardens.

10. Yams.

The yam is an edible tubercle of the Dioscorea family. It is
262 represented by two varieties, the white and the black, which are called
241 "Mane-Phuek-Khao" and "Mane-Phuek-Dam" in Laotian. These tubercles are the main standby when there is a scarcity of rice and [335] maize, but in ordinary times they are used only to supplement the usual diet.

11. Taro or cush-cush (Mane-Pa).

Taro is also a food plant of the Aroïdées caladiées genus (Caladium esculentum). Like the yam, it is one of the most useful edible tubercles in times of famine.

12. Medicinal plants.

824 Designated by the generic name "Ya" in Laotian, these plants
278 are represented by special types of orchids, roots, bark, berries, leaves and even pieces of wood of different kinds, the whole forming an assortment of medicaments.

[438] The Khas are the ones who collect these various products from the depths of the forests, and they trade them either to Chinese or to Laotians for money or other goods.

[435] Certain of these plants and barks are used by the Laotians while others, such as the leaves from orchid plants, for example, are purchased by Chinese merchants at prices which vary between 33 and 62 francs per hundred kilograms.

13. Cloves.

The clove tree (Caryophyllus aromaticus. Kane-Phou in Laotian) is quite scarce in Laos. Cloves are mixed with various ingredients in masticatories or are taken as medicine.

Cultivation of the clove tree ought to be developed in Laos because of the high value of its flowers which, when dried on the tree, constitute the cloves of commerce.

14. Beeswax (Phung).

222 Beeswax is much sought-after in Laos, where a great deal of it is
[231] consumed. It is a scavenging product par excellence since, except in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na, the inhabitants do not practice apiculture and
314 are content to go into the forest and look for honeycombs in order to extract the wax. The latter is used for domestic needs and for worship
[438] ceremonies. It also forms the basis of quite an important trade.

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Mai-seng	Dom-khleng-cong (Cambodian) Strychnos nux-vomica		.5 to .6	Its wood, roots and leaves, with the exception of the pulp of its fruit, are used as a remedy against fever and snake bite.	No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Very hard wood, slightly whitish, difficult to work; well-grown tree, its seed is the nux vomica; not very plentiful.
Mai-som-hong		20 to 25	.9 to 1		No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Slightly grayish wood, difficult to work, cannot withstand rain; well-grown tree; not very plentiful.
Mai-lek	Vap (Annamite) Mesua ferrea (?)	20 to 25	.6 to .9	Railway ties. Piles for wharfs.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Ironwood, very hard, mahogany in color.
Mai-than-da		20 to 25	.6 to .8		No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Very tall tree with blond heartwood. It is sought-after by the bonzes, who use it to make statues.
Mai-khao		18 to 20	.5 to .6	Boards, framing.	Yes	Thick forest	Lower Laos	White wood of inferior quality; lasts about five years.
Mai-nieo	Cai-gon (Annamite) Dom-cor (Cambodian) Bombax and Callotropis Mock cotton	15 to 20	.6 to .8	Not used as wood.	Yes	Banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Quite unresistant wood. The tree yields cotton of excellent quality. It grows rapidly, and is very common.

[table continued over]

23: Franck--295 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 283

"Kapok falling from huge vegetable-cotton trees whitened the ground in large patches. Some of the tribes of Indo-China weave it into cloth."

23: Franck--343 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 248, 283, 286

"These Laosian villagers grow their own cotton, and the women spin this and the kapok of their great tropical trees on a crude wheel without a felly, then weave it on handlooms into the garment they wear as skirt or wrapper. Beneath many a house, or under the projecting porch roof at the end of it, may be seen the lady of the family, in the usual comfortable and economical upper garment of nothing at all, leisurely engaged at her household tasks, while others, some of them far from ugly, sit in the shade beneath their pile-raised dwellings weaving their simple wardrobes, in rather striking patterns and of excellent wearing qualities, on the crudest of looms, with a stick shuttle that is thrown back and forth by hand."

433 word, as regards everything connected with housing, furnishings,
clothing, household articles, etc. Everyone--men, women and even
472 children-- [454] is able to make the ordinary necessary articles by
463 means of very simple methods and rudimentary tools. Thus it may
be said that each house and each family represents a village in miniature.

The only industries really worthy of the name are embroidering on cloth, jewelry-making and working with gold and silver, ironmongery, brass-founding, pottery, basketry, the manufacture of certain lacquered articles, paper-making, wood and ivory carving, fresco painting, gold-washing and especially the making of pirogues, in which the natives show remarkable skill.

286 Weaving. The weaving of certain kinds of silk goods with
various shaded effects and often spangled with gold, as well as em-
386 broidering on cloth, is practiced by a certain number of women in
every locality which is of any importance.

The looms used for weaving are extremely simple, and yet brocaded stuffs are made in which the designs are obtained, as before the invention of the Jacquard loom, by isolating or alternatively raising certain woof threads by means of thin strips of bamboo.

Vegetable dyes are used, that is to say that they are produced by trees or plants which grow in the country. Dyeing methods are simple, yet despite this fact the colors last for a long time thanks to a mordant composed of alum or lemon juice. The fundamental colors are blue (indigo), red, yellow and black. With the aid of these dyes the women are able, either by suitably proportioned mixtures or by various juxtapositions on the threads or on the cloth, to obtain a great variety of shades.

For some fifteen years now tinctorial powders have also been used which have an aniline base and are of German origin. But these dyes fall far short of being as colorfast and long-lasting as the local dyes. Their colors do not merge as well, and with them it is impossible to obtain the harmonious shades which the tinctorial products of Laos give to cloth and to thread.

283 [456] For spangled cloth goods and embroidery, the gold thread
in most widespread use is the one made by the Chinese. It consists
286 of a strand of cotton on which a strip of paper gilded with fine gold
a few tenths of a millimeter thick is wound in a spiral. Attempts
have been made to introduce gold thread of European manufacture, but it has not met with favor on the part of the specialists, who have preferred the Chinese thread.

231 square of cotton.

Incubation. Each square of cotton containing silkworm eggs is hung up with its corners gathered together in the silkworm rearing-house. Here the surrounding temperature prevails in summer, and the house is slightly heated in winter. Great care is taken to protect the eggs from attacks by ants. Hatching occurs seven or eight days later, depending on the season, and the number of eggs hatched amount to about ten percent of the eggs placed in incubation, as we have just noted.

Rearing. From the time when incubation is over until the cocoons are spun, 34 or 35 days are reckoned, as follows:

1. From hatching to the end of the fourth mutation or age, four periods of six days each, or 24 days in all.

2. From the fourth mutation to the "rising," 8 to 10 days, at the end of which time each worm spins its cocoon within a space of one day.

Food is administered in the following proportions:

1. From hatching to the fourth mutation, three meals per day of finely chopped mulberry leaves.

2. From the fourth mutation to the rising, four meals per day of mulberry leaves which have been cut into four pieces if they are excessively large, or into two if they are of the usual size.

The transformation of the chrysalis into a moth takes place ten days after the cocoon is sealed. During the first three days of this period a selection is made of the finest cocoons, the insects in which will be used for reproduction. The other cocoons are then unwound.

At the present time and with the existing varieties of worms, about 800 raw cocoons empty of their insects are required to make up a weight of 100 grams. The cocoons may be either yellow or cream-colored, and their color can be predicted by examining the abdomen and rear legs of the worms. The yellow cocoons are the most numerous and represent about 75 percent of the total.

During the rearing period, silkworm losses due to disease generally amount to fifty percent.

• 283 231 Reeling off the cocoons and spinning the thread. These operations are carried out during the nine days which follow the formation of the cocoon, and before the moth has broken through. The methods employed are quite rudimentary, and consist in throwing some fifty cocoons into an earthenware pot containing boiling water. The pot is surmounted by a reel fastened to its rim. Nine or ten strands of silk coming from the same number of cocoons are wound

283 together with the aid of a slotted thread gauge to produce one thread
231 of raw silk. Tension on the strands is provided by hand as they are wound, and the thread is wound on the drum of the reel. From this process there results an uneven thread with many nodosities, especially in the case of the third-grade thread which comes from the cocoon floss.

[147] **Production.** Fifty cocoons usually produce 2.25 grams of raw silk. This includes three different grades, in the following proportions:

1. First grade, glossy, fine and regular silk: 25 centigrams;
2. Second grade, less glossy silk, semi-fine and fairly regular: 50 centigrams;
3. Third grade, dull, coarse and irregular silk, 1.5 grams.

It is reckoned that 2,000 to 2,500 cocoons are required on the average to produce one kilogram of silk.

In summary, 800 raw and empty cocoons weigh 100 grams. When reeled off these 800 cocoons yield only 36 grams of silk. Thus there is a loss of 64 grams, representing 64 percent of the weight of the cocoons and thereby constituting a waste product composed of unwindable fragments, whereas the amount which can be utilized is only 36 percent (1).

(1) Report by P. Macey.

[148]

APPENDIX XXV
NOTE ON THE CULTIVATION OF OPIUM POPPIES

249 Poppies are grown in all the high regions inhabited by the Meos and especially in the north of Upper Laos. But the latter scarcely grow any but the amount which they themselves need each year, and are content merely with selling their surplus, if there is any.

Their method of cultivation is extremely primitive. They begin by burning the trees and brush in order to clear the soil, then spade up the ground to a depth of about five centimeters and sow the seed in the first two weeks of September. They try to choose hillsides which are exposed to the rising sun, and do not irrigate the land.

If rain is plentiful they obtain one or two capsules per plant by this manner, on the average. If rain is scarce, then the yield is nil. They do not use any kind of fertilizer.

Poppies thrive especially in clay soil with a substantial, sound

A DRAGON APPARENT

000 There was a recognized place about a mile up the river, which was free from weed and rock, and once again, because the water was deep and swiftly running, it was very cold and refreshing. We had
515 been swimming round for an hour or so when we noticed a number of Laotian girls hanging about. They were not watching us, but sauntering backwards and forwards in twos and threes, chatting to each other. By the time there were twelve of them, Dupont, keeping well in the water called to them and asked if we were disturbing them in any way. One of the girls came to the edge of the bank, bowed, and looking down at her feet said that it was their usual bathing time, but that there was no hurry, of course. Dupont asked the girls if they would retire for a moment, and they walked a short distance away and stood in a preoccupied circle while we got out of the water. We then dressed quickly and walked on down the path leading to their village. After about a hundred yards we looked back. All the girls, quite naked, were in the water. At that moment two bonzes were strolling slowly along the bank past them; but the girls paid no attention. The bonzes were wrapped in the mantle of holy invisibility.

622 When we reached the village, Dupont asked punctiliously for
304 the headman, making the excuse that he wanted to visit the pagoda. It was quite evident that this headman was in the good graces of the garrison, and probably supplied them with labour. He was very dignified and had a fine house, with European furniture. Although barefooted, he wore a French suit. On the suggestions of the soldier from the camp he took down his trousers and showed us his legs, which from ankles to thighs were tattooed, in the local manner, so
796 closely that he seemed to be wearing stockings. The annual *boun* 1
782 had just been celebrated at the local pagoda and a bonze was in the
532 act of sweeping into a heap the votive offerings with which the floor
285 of the courtyard was littered. There was a great collection of elephants, buffaloes, peacocks and tigers, all woven in basket-work. The kind of thing that Picasso produces when he is not painting, but perhaps rather better. They seemed to me to be of

1 [i.e., religious festival.-- Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

the greatest artistic interest. I asked the headman if it would be 796
possible to take any, as the bonze was crumpling and smashing them 782
vigorously with his broom. But the chief shook his head regretfully. 532
Buddhism had degenerated in these remote provinces and was 285
swamped with re-emergent spirit cults. These objects had been dedicated to the *phi*[1] and would have to be burnt in a ritual fire. The *phi* would also receive the burnt essence, I noticed, of a large, very obscene, and no doubt magically valuable picture.

At about this time when the bonze was treading underfoot the 669
village's artistic output of several months, a party of Issarak or Viet- 726
Minh, timing their action to coincide with the convoy's arrival at 731
Moung Kassy, had set fire to the forest just south of the post. A steady breeze was blowing from that quarter, and the fire, started over a width of about a mile and fanning out as it advanced, moved slowly towards the fort.

Coming up over the river bank it took us some time to realize what was happening. There was a haze; but then there was always a haze in Laos, although by this time of day it should have been clearing and not thickening. And then we heard the crackling, punctuated with the sharp pops, which might have been distant rifle fire, but which were the explosions of thick stems of bamboo. Looking up then we saw the curtain of smoke hanging over Muong Kassy, white at the top, and black at its base and streaked occasionally by lance-points of flame, which were still two miles away.

We ran to where the car was parked, started it and tried to drive down the road towards the fire. Dupont was as pleased with it as July 14th. In about fifty yards we got tangled up with the convoy and had to leave the car on the side of the road and run on. The fire was advancing on a ragged front and was as irresistible as a volcano. Black smoke was being blown before it so that at first the flames were out of sight; but when they came through they were two hundred feet high — twice the height of the tallest tree. It went forward in zigzagging rushes; eating its way quickly through the bamboo

[1] [i.e., spirits. — Analyst]

115: Le Boulanger--81 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

"The wooden panels which formed the walls, the corbels, and 341
the beams were all carved with great delicacy. This pagoda was 346
as pretty in the fineness of its details as it was elegant in its gen- 172
eral lines.

"But nothing is left of it" (1).

1. Cf. G. Maspero, L'Indochine /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930/, p. 186.

Sculpture. For these sanctuaries, the Laotians made hordes of 532
statues out of stone, brick, and especially bronze, which were 175
wholly or partly covered with gold. Of the latter, which were al-
ways molded from wax models, some attained gigantic size. /127/
All of them strike the various attitudes of the Buddhist liturgy. The
bodies are sketchily draped and may be seated, standing, walking
or lying down, their arms outspread. The faces are surmounted by
a sort of tiara and are frozen in a hieratic smile which is not very
expressive and seldom varies.

Painting. As for the fresco paintings which brighten the walls
of certain pagodas, they are not of any special interest. Most of /177/
them were "primarily the work of Burmese, Cambodians or Chinese
of whom the native artists (were only) the pupils" (1).

1. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 342.

The art of the gold and silver smith. On the other hand, the 326
Laotian jewelers and silversmiths knew and still know, with only
the most meager of tools, how to work gold and silver admirably--
primarily silver--and how to chase and engrave it. Their motifs
show an attractive decorative invention, and it is chiefly in this
"minor art" which borders on small-scale industry that we find the
most original manifestations of old-time Laotian life /128/ --
betel services, vases, cups, sword and dagger hilts; bracelets,
necklaces, rings, headpins, earrings, etc.

Basketwork and weaving. Finally, "like all the peoples of the 285
Far East, the Laotians are skilled in all kinds of basketwork. A 531
very pretty object which seems to be peculiar to this land is the
small basket for women in which the basketwork is covered with

285 lacquer -- red on the inside and black on the outside -- and deco-
532 rated with a fine gilt design which makes a border, like a galloon" (1).
175*

1. Cf. G. Maspero, ibid. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930/, pp. 190-191.

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286 Even today weaving remains women's work, and is done solely in
462 the home. The materials, which may be silk or cotton, striped or
532 splashed with colors, embroidered or spangled with gold and silver thread, nevertheless acquire, under the action of light and carefree hands, chatoyant, harmonious or dazzling tones, and yet the looms which are used are simple in the extreme. Patterns "are obtained, as before the invention of the Jacquard loom, by alternately isolating or raising certain woof threads by means of thin bamboo splints" (2).

2. Cf. L. de Reinach, ibid. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 333.

181 Thus did the Laotian of the seventeenth century live in peace, respecting the law of the least effort with an amiable perserverance amidst his laughter and his games. . . . The princes were perhaps the
/565/ only ones in the whole kingdom to know any of the worries which power and its exigencies bring, and it was for not having wished to compromise with his authoritarian principles that King Souligna, towards the end of his reign, compromised the destinies of his people forever.

643* Condemnation of the heir apparent to death. He had three chil-
175* dren, a son Tiao Ratsabout and two daughters. His son married Nang-
648* Tian-Koumali, who gave birth in her turn to two children, King-Kitsarath and Intha-Som. Nang-Tian-Koumali was the sister of a prince of the Sip-Song-Panas who had been driven out of his country by a Chinese invasion and whom the king of Lan-Xang had welcomed in Vientiane together with his family. Tiao Ratsabout, however, committed the imprudence of seducing the wife of the chief palace page. In accordance with his edict which punished the crime of
/684/ adultery by death, Souligna pitilessly referred the deceived husband's complaint to the royal tribunal and allowed his son to be sentenced to capital punishment

The result was that at the king's death, which occurred /130/ in 1694, the direct heirs to the crown were his grandsons King-Kitsarath

314 The wax is not of uniform quality in Laos, but varies in color and texture depending on the region, the type of bees [336] which produce it, and also on the flowers on which the latter feed.

In this land there are hive hunters who have a rare skill and an extraordinary flair. They are able to find wild hives in the confusion of the forest foliage, in hollow trunks and in rocky crags where no one else could. The methods used to capture the swarms of bees and their hives differ little from those in use in Europe, and include noise, music and smoke.

[789] The Laotians claim that some bee hunters are able to get rid of the swarms of bees by attracting their queen by means of the sound of a kind of flageolet and by pronouncing certain cabalistic words.

435 The price of wax is quite high. A hundred kilograms cost 250 francs in Luang-Prabang, 219 francs in Nong-Khay, 290 francs in Cammon, 300 francs in Song-Khone and Saravane, 333 francs in Bassac, 208 francs in Attopeu, 312 francs in Stung-Treng, 500 francs in Korat, 250 francs in Pnom-Penh, and 300 francs in Cholen.

15. Rattan (Vai).

314 The rattan is a palm tree of the genus Calamus rudentum and Calamus petracus. There are several types in Laos, which are used
285 in accordance with their particular qualities.

The rattan industry is still in its early stages. A few Kha tribes of southern Laos traffic in rattan and supply the needs of local consumption, either in the form of crude rattan delivered in bundles, or in the form of mats and baskets, at a price of five francs per thousand or about sixty kilograms. It is present in great abundance throughout the whole land, and in northern Laos is even used for trade with Siam, which produces little rattan.

It is to be hoped that among the samples sent from Laos to France there will be some good ones which can be used abroad in the manufacture of all the wickerwork and esparto articles whose consumption is constantly increasing. This would provide an appreciable source of revenue for the land.

16. Bamboo.

313 There are some twenty varieties of bamboo. All [337] [Illustration] [338] [Blank page] [339] except one of these grow wild, the exception being the golden bamboo (Mai-So-Kham), which is chiefly cultivated in the enclosures of pagodas.

The following description of the many uses of bamboo is taken from the interesting work by Mme. Massieu:

149: Reinach--247 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"What makes everything easy and is used for everything is this hollow wood, at once so solid and so light, the incomparable bamboo. In France we see it only in the form of pleasant but useless little articles of furniture. Here bamboo is sufficient to every task. It provides the whole house, frame as well as walls. The inner walls and floors are made of matted bamboo lathwork. Yet such a house, with its furniture, bed, tables, various accessories and its luxury objects, if you are a person of refinement, can be improvised for you in a space of two hours wherever you want. 313 341 352

"Has a bridge been washed out? In two hours, thanks to this wood which is easy to manage and to work, men will have made a new bridge. One is especially struck, at the beginning of this life which is so free and, more than any other, independent of men and things, by the great simplicity and ingenuity of all the procedures. Objects are rudimentary but practical, easy to make, soon ready and simple to repair. Everyone knows how to build ordinary furnishings, and no interruptions are caused here as they are when even the slightest damage occurs to one of our highly developed utensils, which only a specialist knows how to repair.

"A bamboo tube is a safe place for your maps and papers. It is a drinking glass, and it is also a pipe for smokers. On a larger scale, it is a bucket for carrying water, and the receptacle for all liquid and solid provisions. When provided with a handle it serves as a pot for the Laotians to cook their rice in, or to prepare syrup from the sugar palm. When torn into thongs it is used as rope and string. Ligatures of sapeks are threaded on kelates, or bamboo filaments, and this is what makes our new Indo-Chinese sou, with its round hole in the middle, so impractical. Those who preside over the striking of our coins are unaware that the kelate is square, a fact which the first comer from the interior could have told them. Baskets of all kinds are made with these same kelates for holding and transporting material. Hats are also made of them to provide shelter from the sun and rain. At night, when the stage of your journey is too long and you have to continue after nightfall even at the risk of meeting a tiger, setting fire to a bamboo branch is enough to frighten any off and to light your way. And not only is bamboo used to make torches, hats, string, dishes, furniture, houses and bridges, but it also serves as animal fodder and even as food for the natives, who eat the tenderest shoots as we would eat asparagus. 313 415 436 285 313 291 [372] [262] 231

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When thus prepared the mold and the crucible, which form a single block, are placed on the furnace with the crucible undermost, amidst the charcoal which is given a forced draft with an alternating bellows. What happens then cannot be imagined. The wax melts with the first heat and falls into the crucible, leaving a void between the two walls of the mold which the metal will fill. As soon as the latter is ready, as can be seen by the color of the flames which come out through the lateral openings, the founder seizes the block with a pair of tongs and turns it upside down suddenly so as to pour the contents of the crucible automatically into the cavity of the mold. After the metal has cooled the clay envelope is broken like an egg shell, and the object appears with the shape and relief or chased ornaments which the wax model possessed.

The founders use various alloys, depending on whether the objects which they are making are statues, common utensils or bells. Some are made of brass, zinc and tin, others of red copper, silver and bronze from old gongs, etc. Sometimes, when the statue is a religious one, the faithful are impelled by their ardor to throw gold and silver jewelry and coins into the crucible.

[718]

The principal pieces of equipment of the founder are the bellows, crucibles, tongs, a series of sculptor's boasters, an alternating turn-bench, graving tools, scrapers, hammers, etc.

285

Basketry. The inhabitants of Laos, especially the Khas, are past masters in the art of basketry, and the objects which come from their hands have a finish, a delicacy, a seal of elegance and a purity of form which are surprising at first sight.

Rattan, certain kinds of bark and thin skins and strips of bamboo are the materials used in basketry.

The main articles produced by this industry include floor mats, bed mats, calibrated baskets for measuring grain, buckets for drawing water, large baskets, baskets for holding cooked rice, platter covers, trays with feet, boxes for betel necessities, baskets to carry on the back, bird cages, hats, etc.

[463] Most basketwork articles are delivered unfinished, although some are smoked or else lacquered black or red. Except for a few articles which find a market outside of the region of manufacture, but always within the limits of Laos, it may be said that the basketwork industry is an entirely local one.

The Khas, moreover, do not have a monopoly in this industry, and all the inhabitants of Laos are basket makers to a greater or less degree.

10: d'Orleans--271-272 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 248, 286, 402, 462

[LSS: in the village of Ban Sop Huan] "Under the houses the women are busy in various employments, and the young girls are separating the cotton from its grain. They use an ingenious machine for this purpose: a tray is placed upon a support about the level of the waist; above it, two rollers, one of iron and one of wood, turn in contrary directions, as the cotton passes between them it is freed from its impurities, which drop on one side, while the textile fabric falls on the other. One of the rollers is moved with one hand by a simple crank while the other is worked by the foot and a pedal [272] which corresponds with an eccentric, it is also furnished with a flywheel (the machine is made entirely of wood). After the cotton is cleaned it is placed in baskets, about twenty-four inches high and ten wide. When full they are sold for one rupee each.

Elsewhere the spun cotton is being dyed, while other women are making a blue stuff, crossed with yellow threads. They are seated, and use a weaving loom with two pedals, two shuttles, and three small boards. They throw one shuttle after the movement of the two small boards, and the other after the third. Tobacco is being dried on some bamboos and further away another group is winding silk."

10: d'Orleans--287 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 286, 301, 462, 534

"As soon as we are fairly in Mekong, we stop on the left bank for luncheon, near a small village hidden among the cocoa-trees. A good road traverses it, and leads to the pagoda; the women are working at the cotton, carding it with a sort of small bow, spinning and weaving it; the children impress me by the fairness of their skin; a great many wear bracelets on their feet. Hanging in the courtyard of the pagoda, I notice a bell at least two yards long, made from the hollow trunk of a tree, it is struck every morning and evening."

"The women were usually the first to see us, for they were constantly bathing themselves and their naked urchins in the stream, and they were clever at getting into or out of their barrel-like single garment without unduly exposing themselves. I saw more bathing on that journey down the Nam-khan than during my two years in China, and less uncleanliness in all Laos thăn in the smallest Chinese village. The women of Luang Prabang, especially along the rivers, are no burden to their fathers and husbands so far as clothing is concerned. In every village we visited they were naked to the waist, and did not know it; at least [290] they did not seem to be conscious that in other, often less modest lands, such a costume might be frowned upon. They wore a single piece of cloth, spun from cotton grown on the spot, and woven on hand-looms under their long-legged houses. Colored in the thread with dyes made from nuts and vegetable growths of the region, this strip is simply wrapped about the waist. Or, in the case of a few of the youngest, which in that backward land still means the more modest women, the unmarried perhaps, or at least those who had not yet borne a child, it is wrapped about the lower two thirds of the breasts, with correspondingly more of the legs showing. Thus one recognized the girls of flapper age by their shapely brown legs and the matrons by their resemblance in costume to the Venus of Milo. Once a child has arrived, the exposure incident to suckling it seems to overcome virginal modesty, or in the absence of offspring pride no doubt soon joins carelessness in casting

23: Franck--289-290 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-2
116, 291, 286, 314, 515

out the habits of maidenhood, so that there were displayed the scrawny pendent udders of the sterile as well as the withered rags of old age. The sight of a white man appeared to move some of the women to cover their breasts, a mere matter of deftly raising the garment. Whether this gesture was a recognition of the susceptibility of the French--who surely could not have issued non-exposure decrees!--or a mere matter of politeness, like the male squat, there was no means of knowing."

23: Franck--343 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 248, 283, 286

"These Laosian villagers grow their own cotton, and the women spin this and the kapok of their great tropical trees on a crude wheel without a felly, then weave it on handlooms into the garment they wear as skirt or wrapper. Beneath many a house, or under the projecting porch roof at the end of it, may be seen the lady of the family, in the usual comfortable and economical upper garment of nothing at all, leisurely engaged at her household tasks, while others, some of them far from ugly, sit in the shade beneath their pile-raised dwellings weaving their simple wardrobes, in rather striking patterns and of excellent wearing qualities, on the crudest of looms, with a stick shuttle that is thrown back and forth by hand."

285 lacquer -- red on the inside and black on the outside -- and deco-
532 rated with a fine gilt design which makes a border, like a galloon" (1).
175*

1. Cf. G. Maspero, ibid. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930/, pp. 190-191.

286 Even today weaving remains women's work, and is done solely in
462 the home. The materials, which may be silk or cotton, striped or
532 splashed with colors, embroidered or spangled with gold and silver thread, nevertheless acquire, under the action of light and carefree hands, chatoyant, harmonious or dazzling tones, and yet the looms which are used are simple in the extreme. Patterns "are obtained, as before the invention of the Jacquard loom, by alternately isolating or raising certain woof threads by means of thin bamboo splints" (2).

2. Cf. L. de Reinach, ibid. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 333.

181 Thus did the Laotian of the seventeenth century live in peace, respecting the law of the least effort with an amiable perserverance amidst his laughter and his games. . . . The princes were perhaps the
/565/ only ones in the whole kingdom to know any of the worries which power and its exigencies bring, and it was for not having wished to compromise with his authoritarian principles that King Souligna, towards the end of his reign, compromised the destinies of his people forever.

643* Condemnation of the heir apparent to death. He had three chil-
175* dren, a son Tiao Ratsabout and two daughters. His son married Nang-
648* Tian-Koumali, who gave birth in her turn to two children, King-Kitsarath and Intha-Som. Nang-Tian-Koumali was the sister of a prince of the Sip-Song-Panas who had been driven out of his country by a Chinese invasion and whom the king of Lan-Xang had welcomed in Vientiane together with his family. Tiao Ratsabout, however, committed the imprudence of seducing the wife of the chief palace page. In accordance with his edict which punished the crime of
/684/ adultery by death, Souligna pitilessly referred the deceived husband's complaint to the royal tribunal and allowed his son to be sentenced to capital punishment

The result was that at the king's death, which occurred /130/ in 1694, the direct heirs to the crown were his grandsons King-Kitsarath

149: Reinach--134 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"Costume. The Laotian costume is the langouti or Siamese sampot. This is a long band of cloth without any seams, and between one and 1.2 meters wide by 2.5 to three meters long. The cloth is placed around the waist to make a skirt, with the opening in front. To keep the skirt in place a knot is made in front with part of the surplus cloth, and the loose ends of the cloth left hanging in front are rolled, passed between the legs and attached to the belt in the middle of the back. The skirt then takes the form of a pair of baggy trousers covering the front of the legs down to the knees and leaving the lower part of the thighs bare in back. The chest is left bare, and a sash is tied around the waist. This is the ordinary garment, and that worn by all the common people. The sash is often worn on the shoulder or around the chest, but it has to be removed and wound around the loins whenever one speaks to anyone who has a right to one's respect. Dandies wear shoes, stockings or socks, quite frequently a short-sleeved or sleeveless knitted vest, a jacket made of white cotton or flannel, depending on the season, and a hat of any type whatever, or even a cap. But these are imported European styles which have not become widespread. Umbrellas enjoy great favor." (Le Laos Français.)

291 [177] [293]

"This costume is a relatively recent import, for two hundred years or so ago the Laotians on the banks of the river, as those of the interior still do today, wore a fairly long jacket [178] made of cotton cloth woven in the land. The jacket was caught in at the waist by a sash and came down over a broad pair of trousers made of the same material. The whole garment was dark blue or almost black in color. On the head they wore a kind of turban made of silk or cotton of the same color.

291 177

The abandonment of this purely Thai costume was due to the influence of the Siamese and Cambodians during their incursions into Laos. It was also at this time that the Laotians formed the habit of cutting their hair, which they had previously worn rolled in a coil on the back of the head.

[302]

"Laotian women wear a skirt which covers them from the hips to the ankles and is made of silk interwoven with gold threads. These skirts are rather dark in color, and the pattern is made up of vertical stripes which are close together and difficult to see. In Luang-Prabang the lower part of the garment is decorated with a flat trimming formed of two or three closely spaced gold galloons. At the top of the skirt a sash made of red cloth and embroidered to a greater

291 [286]

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342

which form the private home of the house's inhabitants.

A sort of stairway without railings or a ladder gives access to the veranda from one of the short sides of the rectangle. Often a second ladder leads to a small uncovered platform [183] situated at the other end of the house. This, so to speak, is the service stairway, for the platform serves as a kitchen or storeroom and for various private uses.

Inside the house is divided into two parts by a longitudinal partition pierced by openings which give access to compartments used as bedrooms. The corridor [Illustration here] left free between the partition and the opposite wall constitutes the common room, and is provided with one or several rectangular hearths. The floor of the verandas, the bedrooms and the common room is covered with mats.

[352]

Furnishings are generally scanty, and consist of mattresses, pillows, cushions, footstools, low stools, blankets, chests, etc.

[343]

The space under the house serves as a stable or barn for horses and livestock, a poultry house and a pigsty. The animals are shut up there each night.

[286]

[184] Looms for weaving may be found either under the verandas or underneath the house.

[343]

The storehouse for paddy is found nearby. It is also mounted on piles and may be built in a rectangular or circular shape. The "hand" or "foot" mortars used to decorticate paddy may either be near the storehouse under an addition, or else under the house.

342

The dimensions of houses are reckoned in Hon or units as long as the span of the arms (1.8 to two meters). Houses may be anywhere from two to eight or nine hons (4 to 20 meters) in length. Their width varies from two to three spans of the arms on the average (four to six meters), not including verandas.

[804]

Strictly speaking, the piles are columns which rise from the ground to the tie-beams of the roof trusses. Mortises are cut in them a meter of two above the ground, and the floor joists fitted into the mortises.

Even as they are, these houses resist high winds. They provide good shelter from the sun, rain, etc. and are sufficiently comfortable, even for Europeans. The latter often have to be contented with such houses and can find little fault with them except the instability of the floor and the narrowness of the windows, which makes the inside somewhat dark.

619 they bear come, as in the case of the Khao-Thais, from peculiarities
[291] of costume. In fact, whereas the Dam-Thais, both men and women,
563 only wear clothing which is dark blue and almost black, with no colored ornamentation, the Deng-Thais, although they wear the same kind of clothing, always add a few ornaments such as embroidery, galloons or red turbans.

Physical appearance. Costume. The Thais have strongly marked
142 features and stern faces. Their complexion is clear and rather swarthy,
461 and they are quite tall. They are more hardy and above all more industrious than the Laotians.

Like the Annamites, the men let their hair grow. They bind it
302 up in a coil on the top of the head and cover it with a vast turban,
291 the ends of which fall onto their shoulders on either side of the face. Men's clothing consists of a broad pair of trousers with a very low seat and a straight tunic buttoned along the side which comes down to the knees. A sort of sash made of the same kind of cloth hugs the
[286] waist over the tunic, as a belt would do. The material used by the Thais for clothing are made of cotton which is generally grown locally and which the [232] women spin, weave and dye themselves. Their garments, made with very coarse, irregular thread, have a rough appearance but are very solid.

The women's figures are thick-set but not fleshy. Their faces,
142 which are more rounded than elongated, are pleasant and their eyes are beautiful. But childbearing and the work of the fields soon destroy their gracefulness, and after the age of twenty-five their figures thicken, their wrists and ankles become heavy and their faces begin to harden and wrinkle. [Illustration alongside text here]

[286] The Thai woman wears a skirt which is quite similar to the Laotian skirt, but made of coarser cloth and dyed the same color as the men's
291 clothing. Over this she wears a very short jacket made of the same cloth which is buttoned down the front and sometimes embellished
563 with chased silver work. The height of elegance is for the jacket to be cut in such a way that when the woman moves in a certain way it lets a little skin be seen above the skirt waist. Outside the home and for ceremonies the women put on a sort of dressing gown which covers their other clothing and comes down to the ankle. Its sleeves are very close-fitting, and the garment buttons straight down the front to a point below the waist. A strip of dark violet cloth, for the Dam-Thais, and red for

149: Reinach--275 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

near their silkworm breeding houses, but it is unfortunate that the new 249
conditions in which the trees are placed should have an adverse effect 231
on silk production. On the plateaus and in the high valleys, in the vicinity of land once occupied by villages, there are many mulberry trees which have continued to survive. They send out new leaves again even after the annual burnings of the forest clearings, and bear leaves which are vigorous and have a more pithy appearance than those of their fellows in the low, humid parts of the country. They are also said to be preferable for feeding silkworms (2).

(2) See Appendix XXIV.

Local consumption absorbs the greater part of the silk production, 231
for the majority of Laotians, both men and women, use it in making 286
the garments which they wear.

We do not possess exact data on the total production of silk in Laos. It has been estimated at about twenty tons annually. The price varies from 400 to 500 francs per hundred kilograms.

OPIUM POPPIES. The opium poppy is cultivated by the Yaos and 276
the Meos, in northern Laos. Towards the end of the rainy season, [376] 249
in September, the poppy seeds are sowed broadcast on land from which 314
maize has just been harvested. Germination is activated by the last rains of the season and the plant flowers at the beginning of December. Harvesting is done shortly after the petals have fallen.

Closely spaced lengthwise incisions are made all along the surface of the capsule, allowing the plant juice to escape. It coagulates upon contact with the air and is collected daily until the plant has been completely exhausted (1).

(1) See Appendix XXV, report of M. Lussan, Cochinchina [654]
customs agent. The latter was sent on a mission to Upper Laos to experiment with growing opium poppies by less rudimentary methods than the ones in use among the Meos and the Yaos.

PAPER TREES. There are several trees in Laos whose bark is used 249
to make paper. They seem to be of the mulberry type and are called 289
"Kok-Sa."

The paper is made by hand on forms, by extremely rudimentary methods. Its manufacture occupies several villages of northern Laos.

433 word, as regards everything connected with housing, furnishings,
clothing, household articles, etc. Everyone--men, women and even
472 children-- [454] is able to make the ordinary necessary articles by
463 means of very simple methods and rudimentary tools. Thus it may
be said that each house and each family represents a village in miniature.

The only industries really worthy of the name are embroidering on cloth, jewelry-making and working with gold and silver, ironmongery, brass-founding, pottery, basketry, the manufacture of certain lacquered articles, paper-making, wood and ivory carving, fresco painting, gold-washing and especially the making of pirogues, in which the natives show remarkable skill.

286 Weaving. The weaving of certain kinds of silk goods with
various shaded effects and often spangled with gold, as well as em-
386 broidering on cloth, is practiced by a certain number of women in
every locality which is of any importance.

The looms used for weaving are extremely simple, and yet brocaded stuffs are made in which the designs are obtained, as before the invention of the Jacquard loom, by isolating or alternatively raising certain woof threads by means of thin strips of bamboo.

Vegetable dyes are used, that is to say that they are produced by trees or plants which grow in the country. Dyeing methods are simple, yet despite this fact the colors last for a long time thanks to a mordant composed of alum or lemon juice. The fundamental colors are blue (indigo), red, yellow and black. With the aid of these dyes the women are able, either by suitably proportioned mixtures or by various juxtapositions on the threads or on the cloth, to obtain a great variety of shades.

For some fifteen years now tinctorial powders have also been used which have an aniline base and are of German origin. But these dyes fall far short of being as colorfast and long-lasting as the local dyes. Their colors do not merge as well, and with them it is impossible to obtain the harmonious shades which the tinctorial products of Laos give to cloth and to thread.

[455] For spangled cloth goods and embroidery, the gold thread
283 in most widespread use is the one made by the Chinese. It consists
28 of a strand of cotton on which a strip of paper gilded with fine gold
a few tenths of a millimeter thick is wound in a spiral. Attempts
have been made to introduce gold thread of European manufacture,
but it has not met with favor on the part of the specialists, who have
preferred the Chinese thread.

149; Reinach--349a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AMB

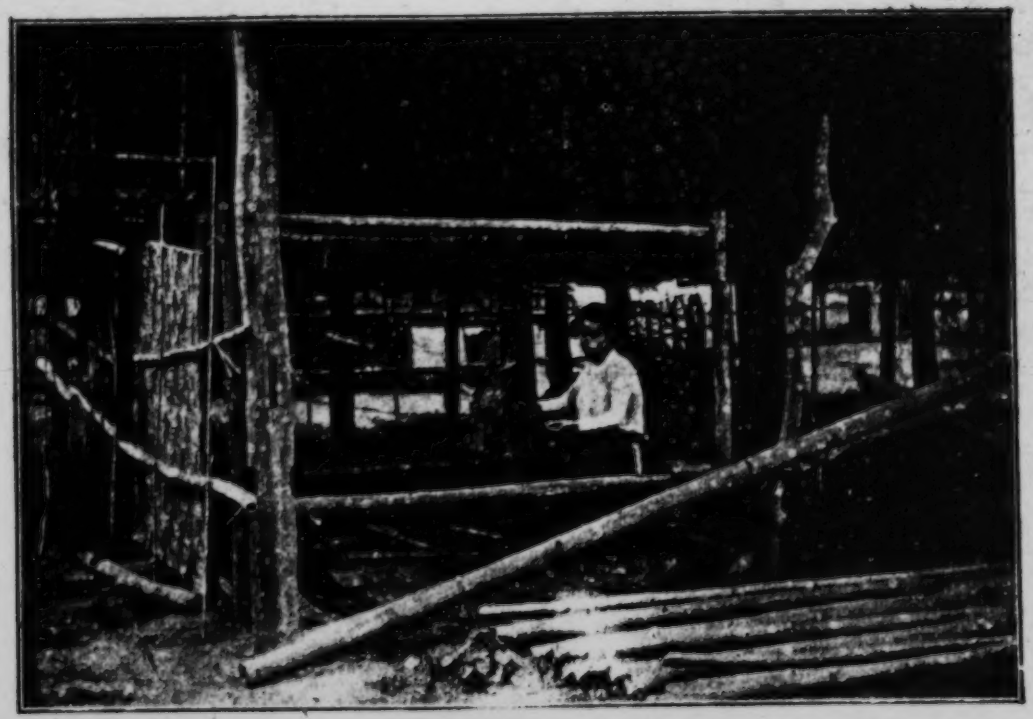

Fig. 109 /p.459/ A young woman weaving, at Muong-Son. (Courtesy of M. Besson.)

10: d'Orleans--321 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 288, 531, 548

"The scarves which are celebrated in Indo-China, embroidered by hand with a great variety of design, and in very harmonious colours, denote great taste. After the saleswomen have folded their goods and packed them up to take away, some of them lag behind and tell us that they are themselves for sale at twenty-five or thirty rupees."

near their silkworm breeding houses, but it is unfortunate that the new 249
conditions in which the trees are placed should have an adverse effect
on silk production. On the plateaus and in the high valleys, in the 231
vicinity of land once occupied by villages, there are many mulberry trees which have continued to survive. They send out new leaves again even after the annual burnings of the forest clearings, and bear leaves which are vigorous and have a more pithy appearance than those of their fellows in the low, humid parts of the country. They are also said to be preferable for feeding silkworms (2).

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"Kok-Sa." 289

The paper is made by hand on forms, by extremely rudimentary methods. Its manufacture occupies several villages of northern Laos.

249 The amount of paper produced is hardly significant, and is limited to
289 local needs.

245 TEA. Tea is the most important crop of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na
311 and the Burmo-Shan States on both banks of the Mekong. The regions of production are included between 21° 30' and 22° 30' N. latitude and between 97° 30' and 99° 40' E. longitude.

175 The greater part of these regions, that is to say those situated on
648 the left bank of the Mekong, belonged to us by the terms of the 1887 Franco-Chinese treaty of Tien-Tsin. But because of our slowness to occupy these territories England inherited the rights of Upper Burma and ceded them to China, and finally only the two Muong-Hou remained in our possession.

563 Unfortunately, the small tea-growing region left to us is not only the least productive, but also the one in which tea-growing has degenerated and is no longer practiced except by the Khas.

[377] Yet the climate of the Muong-Hou is similar to that of Man-La, which is located thirty kilometers to the west and whose tea has the same reputation as those of I-Hou, I-Bang, Muong-Hing, Muong-Pang and Muong-Yang, all of which are known as "S'semao and Pou-Eurl Teas." Furthermore, the altitude and configuration of the soil, the nature of the terrain and the varieties of tea plants are all similar in our territory of Muong-Hou and in that of Man-La. But as a consequence of various circumstances and especially of a long interruption in cultivation between 1884 and 1893, most of the tea plants have not been pruned. They have reached a height of more than six meters and the tea which they produce is almost valueless (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVI.

The average production of the whole tea-growing region has been estimated at from 600 to 660 tons. This tea is exported to China, to Burma, to Laos, to Tonkin and to Siam. In 1891 and 1892 France imported a trial shipment of 6,000 kilograms, but the transaction was not repeated because of a rise in transport costs and customs duties which did not leave a large enough profit for the importer.

435 In the regions of production prices vary, depending on quality, between 75 and 150 francs per hundred kilograms.

The teas which come from this region meet with little approval in Europe, because they lack the various aromas which the Chinese

degree.

289 **Paper.** The manufacture of paper using the bark of a tree called "Kok-Sa" (1) is limited to a single region of northern Laos.

(1) See Chapter VII.

It is not of any great importance, since it does not even suffice for local consumption.

The manufacturing processes are those familiar to everyone as being used in China, in Japan, in Annamite lands and in Burma.

321 531 **Wood and ivory carving.** Here we no longer have to deal with an industry, but with an art. The men who practice it are few in number, are highly paid, work slowly and are generally inveterate opium smokers.

Like the goldsmiths and jewelers, the wood and ivory carvers of Laos reproduce, ad infinitum, immutable models which their predecessors have handed down. They are, however, able to execute motifs from any given design. To be sure, they are inferior to their Burmese, Annamite, Malay, Chinese and especially Japanese colleagues as regards the movement, harmony, purity of form and finish of their work.

532 **Fresco painting.** The pagodas of Laos, which have been left untended for many long years, contain curious fresco paintings set off with gold, but lack of care and exposure to the weather have partly destroyed them. This art has very few practitioners in Laos, and it should be added that most of the existing frescoes are mainly the work of Burmese, Cambodians and Chinese of whom the native artists are only the pupils.

396 [438] **Pirogue carpenters.** Nearly all the inhabitants who [464] live on the banks of the big river or its principal tributaries are able to carve out a pirogue. Certain villages, however, have a monopoly in this industry.

When it is a matter merely of hewing out a pirogue which is to be used only for crossing the river, fishing or agricultural service, everyone does a fairly good job. But for the large pirogues which are reserved for regattas, voyages and commercial transports, recourse must be had to specialists. Only they know how to give their products

10: d'Orleans--261 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 291, 302

"I remark some differences between the inhabitants [LSS of Sop Nao] and the Thaïs whom we have just left. Here the men shave the head, leaving only a small circle of short hair on the top. The women wear only one garment, which is fastened round the waist. At first sight the type seems to me distinct from that of Thaï; I think it is rather more European, there is a look of Indo-Caucasian relationship. The face is paler and longer, the cheekbones less prominent, the eyes less oblique than those of their Eastern brothers. However, I am only stating a first impression, which requires confirmation."

10: d'Orleans--261-262 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 304,

"The boatmen [LSS: Kha from Laos] wear a sampot, a kind of petticoat folded between the legs so that it forms puffed breeches; one of them has his legs tattooed up to the knees; the designs, half circles surrounding dragons, [262] are so close together that at a distance they look like drawers."

10: d'Orleans--278-279 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 302, 304, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Here [LSS: in a village between Muong Ngoi and Luang Prabang in Laos] also we meet some Kas; the men have a piece of wood or a bouquet of flowers in the lobe [279] of the ear, which forms a large fleshy ring, and their legs are tattooed. The women wear a small embroidered jacket; a deep blue turban with embroidered fringes surrounds a chignon ornamented by two round silver plates, joined by a small chain; chaplets of transparent glass beads are wound round them. The natives allow us to photograph them."

10: d'Orleans--302 -305 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 291, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"For the most part of small stature, (1) the Kas are very dark in complexion and of

1. Those whom we measured averaged about five feet two inches; the women being smaller.

the same colour all over the body. Their legs are as a rule thin and their stomachs protuberant; the nose broad and flat; the eyes rather elongated; the lips thick and the jaw prominent, while the forehead is narrow and receding. The facial angle seems to indicate that they belong to an inferior race, and, as a matter of fact, they look like savages by the side of the Laotians. These Kas have long, straight hair falling over the forehead, in some cases tied together by a strip of cloth, or else plastered on the top of the head and fastened at the back in a chignon. The men wear a large ring in the lobe of the ear and fill up the interstice with a piece of wood, [pages 303 and 304 contain illustration] [305] or a bunch of flowers. Their dress, as a rule, consists only of a sheet, that is to say of a piece of blue cloth passing between the legs and fastened round the waist, the women wearing a turban, a loose vest, and a short petticoat."

10: d'Orleans--303 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

KHAMOUKS, (FULL AND SIDE FACE), LUANG PRABANG.

CONTINUED
FROM
PRECEDING
FICHE

10: d'Orleans--306 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 291, 301

"Compared to the Kas, the Laotians, as I have said, represent the dominant race. Taller than the former, and of a lighter complexion, the men have not in the shoulders and chest the purity of lines which one sees in the savages, and they generally go about bareheaded, with their hair cut close and clothed only in a tunic. The women wear merely a small petticoat, though some of them have a scarf of red or yellow silk over their breasts. Their bust is, as a rule, of good shape, and their hair, combed back, is worn in a small chignon. Despite their slightly flattened nose and the size of their mouth, some of the young girls strike one as pretty, but, as is always the case in the south and in the east, they soon show signs of age. They are very fond of jewellery, and generally wear earrings in the shape of a long nail of red gold, and bracelets of the same material."

10: d'Orleans--309 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 301

A LAOS FLOWER GIRL, LUANG PRABANG.

10: d'Orleans--316 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Their clothing [LSS: the Lu of Luang Prabang] is very poor compared with that of the latter, [LSS: the Laotians] the men wearing short blue trousers and the women, striped petticoats, the latter having their hair drawn up in a chignon at the top of the head, covered in many cases with a dark blue scarf, while both sexes wear a loose blue vest."

10: d'Orleans--317
116, 291

T-3 (1891-92) 1894

Laos
Ethnic subgroups

MÉO OF TRANINH (FULL AND SIDE FACE) AT LUANG PRABANG.

10: d'Orleans--320 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 437, 443, 551

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "... We were overrun by a troop of female hawkers, who settled themselves down in our quarters and spread out their wares for sale. These women all wear the same sort of dress, namely a silk petticoat with a scarf to match, some of them having their hair cropped close after the Siamese fashion, which is a very ugly one. After a few days we get quite familiar and call these young ladies by their proper names. They either have some name which indicates their sex, followed by the qualification of small, pretty, or what not; or else they bear the name of some good quality, such as peace, happiness, prosperity, jewel. The same saleswomen came back every day, asking an exorbitant price for every article and not showing any inclination to rebate it. However, they are very good-natured in the bargaining which follows, and seem as well pleased if they do not effect a sale as when, after a long discussion, we end by making a purchase."

23: Franck--270-271 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 101, 291, 301, 481 Ethnic subgroup

"I had known the Miao, or, as the French call them, the Méo, in southwestern China, though there my acquaintance had been mainly with the 'Flowery Miao' in their extravagantly colorful dress. These were 'Black Miao', a much more independent tribe, and with almost no color in their black or dark-blue garments, sometimes set off by a dull red or purplish wine-colored scarf about the waist. Both men and women, often riding on horses, were a wilder tawnier type than their flowery relatives, their sturdy independence as plainly to be seen as their bare feet; for none of them, of either sex, had ever tortured their feet with shoes. Their sunburned hair and eyes were more nearly brown than black, and both sexes wore the hair long. Most of the men had carelessly wound turbans of dark cloth, a few of them wore Chinese skullcaps and dressed their hair Chinese fashion, old Chinese fashion, more exactly, for the majority still had queues, often hanging unbraided loosely about their shoulders. Another custom among these sturdy mountaineers is the wearing about their necks of heavy silver rings of all shapes. These are evidently concerned with their tribal superstitions as well as being their idea of combining adornment with safe banking. All silver money that falls into their hands is turned into rings; men, women, even the children, all wear them, large and small, from mere twisted silver wire to veritable horse-collars, some with open ends, some fastened with silver padlocks. Sometimes there are as many as half a dozen on a single neck, even of men on their way to work in the jungle. The richest

of them clanked like perambulating pawnshops whenever they moved.

A critical observer might have wondered why they do not spend for shirting some of the silver dollars they turn into neck-rings. For the men wear a shirt or jacket that covers [271] everything except what a shirt is most expected to cover, leaving bare a foot or more of the waist, with the navel as its central point of departure. But to every race its own ideas. The girls are not prudish, yet not at all forward. For their jackets, open almost to the navel and giving frequent half-glimpses of the breasts, were plainly designed for comfort rather than coquetry, as were their plaid skirts reaching hardly to their bare knees. The women walk with a powerful yet not ungraceful swing of the hips and a saucy flirting of their short pleated skirts, of which they are perhaps quite unconscious. Some of the men wear the tatooed blue panties ending in ruffles just below the knees that are common in Laos and the Shan States, but this is evidently due to extratribal influence, just as are the flowered silk gowns a few of the well-to-do among them wear after the fashion of the Chinese."

23: Franck--279 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 291, 302

"It was market day, and well fed, almost haughty women, with many brilliant reds and yellows in their dress, were squatted in the shade over their semi-tropical vegetables, and pottering homeward again in long broken files. They had almost nothing in common with the Annamese women, except their sex and the protection of the French. Their lustrous hair piled in great black glossy heaps on the top of the head in an intricate fashion, usually with a saffron, rose-yellow, or red cloth about it, and most of them with stomachers of similar gay colors, they were striking examples of the unrestricted portion of the human race. In complexion they were much like ourselves plus many layers of tan, but were noticeable for bad teeth."

23: Franck--287-288 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 501

"We were off down the small river about seven next morning. To have started earlier, with a heavy fog filling the whole valley of a stream bristling with rocks and rapids, would have been dangerous. The king's son-in-law and I each had a boat, though I should have liked better to have had him with me, for the sake of information as well as companionship. The craft were what the French call pirogues, long and narrow, as slim and long in proportion as a lead-pencil, sharpened at both ends, and just about as easily turned over. They were frailly made of boards barely an inch thick, tied together with vines, with a prairie-schooner top of banana-leaves held in shape by a network of bamboo splints, and movable back and forth as sun, wind, rain, or lack thereof suggested; and mine had a raised platform with a mat in honor of my super-princely rank. It was of about the size, and the comfort, of its [288] antithesis, of the mule-litter of northern China, which it strangely resembled in its jerky overbalanced gait, teetering so incessantly that I could not even write rough notes in it. I had four boatmen, two at each of the slightly raised, distant, pencil-like ends of the craft, all wearing tattooed breeches but not much else. Sitting cross-legged and half pretending to paddle, these typical piroguiers of Luang Prabang seemed the personification of laziness, until one saw them in the rapids, the rock gorges, the genuine waterfalls they dare to shoot."

23: Franck--288-289 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 361, 576

"Every few [289] hours a cluster of jungle houses stood out in a tiny half-clearing on the high bank of the river, and most of these we visited. At each village the chief and the other men of importance, usually including several yellow-robed priests, came to pay their respects. Instead of snatching off hats or head-cloths, and performing an antic between a courtesy and an exaggerated bow, the form of salute in Luang Prabang is to come to a complete squat. Obsequious as this looked, it was evidently merely a gesture of politeness, for even the men of highest rank who had any intercourse with the prince, representative of the king in person, dropped to their haunches, and rose to human stature again only when the interview ended. In making any request of him, or in receiving anything from him, even the boatmen squatted, holding both hands, palms together, above the head. The village notables wore sampots of many colors--purple, pink, grass-green--topped by khaki coats of uniform cut, which they evidently donned in our honor. Always they brought us leaf-wrapped cones of flowers, usually on banana-leaf platters. A supply of these bouquets of greeting, one concluded, must be kept on hand for emergencies."

23: Franck--289-290 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 291, 286, 314, 515

"The women were usually the first to see us, for they were constantly bathing themselves and their naked urchins in the stream, and they were clever at getting into or out of their barrel-like single garment without unduly exposing themselves. I saw more bathing on that journey down the Nam-khan than during my two years in China, and less uncleanliness in all Laos than in the smallest Chinese village. The women of Luang Prabang, especially along the rivers, are no burden to their fathers and husbands so far as clothing is concerned. In every village we visited they were naked to the waist, and did not know it; at least [290] they did not seem to be conscious that in other, often less modest lands, such a costume might be frowned upon. They wore a single piece of cloth, spun from cotton grown on the spot, and woven on hand-looms under their long-legged houses. Colored in the thread with dyes made from nuts and vegetable growths of the region, this strip is simply wrapped about the waist. Or, in the case of a few of the youngest, which in that backward land still means the more modest women, the unmarried perhaps, or at least those who had not yet borne a child, it is wrapped about the lower two thirds of the breasts, with correspondingly more of the legs showing. Thus one recognized the girls of flapper age by their shapely brown legs and the matrons by their resemblance in costume to the Venus of Milo. Once a child has arrived, the exposure incident to suckling it seems to overcome virginal modesty, or in the absence of offspring pride no doubt soon joins carelessness in casting

23: Franck--289-290 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-2
116, 291, 286, 314, 515

out the habits of maidenhood, so that there were displayed the scrawny pendent udders of the sterile as well as the withered rags of old age. The sight of a white man appeared to move some of the women to cover their breasts, a mere matter of deftly raising the garment. Whether this gesture was a recognition of the susceptibility of the French--who surely could not have issued non-exposure decrees!--or a mere matter of politeness, like the male squat, there was no means of knowing."

23; Franck--292-293 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 301, 304 Ethnic subgroup

"It was in one of these villages of the upper Nam-khan that I saw the first of still another race, the Kha, which some consider the real aborigines of these forested mountains of the ancient kingdom, as they are indubitably the oldest remaining inhabitants. They were wild but harmless-looking men, wearing earrings, their women adorned with still larger ones. A Kha woman down from the mountains--for like the Miao they are a highland people--had tattooed arms and, at least while the prince and I were [293] there, was completely clothed from neck to calves, in decided contrast to the river-village women."

23: Franck--298-299 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 832

"The gay garments, especially of the female branch of the population, make doubly picturesque the market and the long lanes of greenery that represent streets. The women of Luang Prabang capital, unlike their country sisters in the rest of the kingdom, usually wear a thin silk or cotton scarf of bright color over their bare breasts, half covering them, and slipping coquettishly off when they wish to make an impression on one of the opposite sex. The Laosian women of the bush think no more of their uncovered breasts than they do of their bare feet; these sophisticated girls of the silken scarf in the capital recognize them as an asset. There was something about their every gesture that recalled our own flappers--with betel-nut taking the place of gum and of lip-stick. Yet their coquetry may be largely innocent, for the French assured me, in some cases rather regretfully, I [299] thought, that in Laos there are few of the congaie facilities so common in Annam."

23: Franck--306-308 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-3
116, 291, 643

"He [EJ: the king] wore a white cork helmet, a black bow-tie about a standing white collar on a stiff white shirt with the round cuffs of a decade or more ago, and a snow-white three button coat which, in so far as my meager knowledge in sartorial matters is trustworthy, was of the latest model. The fact that the middle buttonhole was attached to the upper button may have meant either a dreadful ignorance of Western ways or merely unseemly haste in leaving his harem; or it may have had no significance whatever. His feet were quite properly incased in low black shoes of faultless last and luster, but--let the spinster reader blushingly turn the page [307] here--he wore no trousers! His rank and calling, it seems, forbade him these final touches to an otherwise perfectly European costume. Instead, his thighs were inclosed in the pha or sampot, such as is worn by both sexes in Siam and adjoining countries under Siamese influence. It was a kind of short skirt, evidently of silk and of colors verging on the gaudy, drawn between the legs and tucked into the belt at the back, reaching to just below the knees in front and 'rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind.' Naturally a full-fledged king could not leave the hiatus uncovered and keep his self-respect. Therefore between sampot and shoes the royal legs were clad in silk stockings of which the most regal young lady of our own land might have been proud--except that in her case they would no doubt have been of a color to deceive the uninformed observer into thinking she wore no stockings whatever, whereas in backward barbarian Luang Prabang this would have

been bad form. These were jet-black and reached so far up the back as to suggest that they were held by a band about the waist. Indeed, it was immediately evident that the king had missed a splendid chance for extra decoration by not wearing a pair of red garters just below the knees.

A goodly proportion of the royal income must be spent on stockings. For I was assured, not merely by common rumor but by all the Frenchwomen in Luang Prabang--of whom there are three or four--that his Majesty will under no circumstances wear anything but silk about his shapely legs, and that a stocking with the slightest hole in it is immediately discarded. It would be easy to imagine his wives, of whom he fortunately has fifteen, scrambling for these discards of the royal wardrobe, and racing for their darning needles, were it not that in Laos even the wives of kings do not wear stockings. [308]

But do not for a moment gather from all this that Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah had the slightest hint of the barbarian in his appearance. Except for the sacred sampot in place of trousers, and the proof of a king's income between that and the shoes, his Majesty would have attracted no attention whatever in a Palm Beach crowd, unless it were by his athletic build and his agreeable undissipated smile, and, at close range, the light touch as of fresh blood on his lips beneath the thin well clipped moustache. In fact of all the kings with whom I have hobnobbed he was the most pleasing to look

upon, and to all outward appearances a gentleman not even given to bullying his wives. His lapel was adorned with the little red button of a French decoration--the Legion of Honor, I fancy, though I confess to a deplorable ignorance of these important matters--and a gold watch-chain hanging from this drew attention to what was evidently not the thinnest of watches in the outside breast-pocket. A signet-ring not unlike those of our West Point and Annapolis graduates encircled his wedding finger, and he wore a cord of what looked like ordinary string about each wrist."

23: Franck--326-327 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 206, 291, 411

"It looked strange to see men [327] wearing only a loin-cloth, and a dagger in a scabbard woven like a basket and held by a fiber band across the chest, putting up telegraph-poles; but the French insist on being able to talk to one another anywhere in Indo-China, and government ownership of telegraph lines has at least one advantage over the high-cost private system of the United States and China."

23: Franck--330[2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 301, 567 Ethnic subgroup

"Daylight showed the dense vegetation deeply green, a land as far from China as if we were on another continent, and disclosed our dozen carriers to be Kha wild from the mountains, picturesque figures even in a land as out of the ordinary as Laos.

Instead of tattooed pants of cloth sampots these primitive fellows wore short cloth breeches like running-pants, and some of them had more or less of an upper garment also. They showed no tattooing, or at least very little, but rattled with bracelets of glass and other cheap materials, and had large earrings of all shapes, preferably not mates and if possible utterly unlike on the two sides of the same head. The few who did not have earrings put flowers or vine strings or leaves in the holes in their ears to keep them ready for more prosperous times. They had the eyes and the ways of the real wild man; yet, being former slaves, they were more docile than the Laosians or Pwun."

23: Franck--332-333 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 304, 342, 855 Ethnic subgroup

"In most of the [EJ: Kha] huts grandmother and even skinnier grandfather were tending the third generation while the intermediate one was out in the hills in quest of a livelihood. Some of the villages had their basket-like thatched-top huts raised above the ground, like those of the other people of Laos; the commoner custom was to squat on the ground itself in a thatch structure like a flat wigwam. The women, and for that matter the men, were all naked to the waist, a disgusting custom [333] in the case of the old women, whose breasts were as shrunken as if they were about to dry up and drop off. They gave one an unhappy reminder of how brief is the span of human existence. Old men and women alike had holes in their ears large enough to hold a cigar."

23: Franck--337-338 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 177, 291, 304, 644 Ethnic subgroup

"The prince had only to order the village chief, or the inhabitants themselves, to furnish new carriers, however, and they were soon there, though from then on we changed as often as we came to a village, sometimes two or three times a day. The coolies still seemed to be Kha, but they were men who had come into more contact with the outside world than those who had been with me all that strenuous Sunday, and they had lost some of the ornaments, simplicity, and politeness. Perhaps they were [338] not Kha at all, for they had all sorts of tattooing, and some of them had raised welts, like the bush negroes of Dutch Guiana. Each man according to his fancy wore a kind of kilt that was really a mere strip of cloth wound about him from waist to knees. Now and then we passed a woman on a journey, in a costume in which she would not have been unnoticed on Broadway, wearing earrings, neck-rings, two bracelets on each arm, and a barrel-shaped strip of cloth from nipples to knees, and carrying her bed and belongings, consisting of a sack hanging down from her forehead and on her back a rolled-up grass or reed mat on which to spend her virtuous nights."

23: Franck--341 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 164, 291

"Women were bathing children and themselves here also, especially now toward sunset, but no one came to stare at me, though in China there would have been a regular circus audience. Nor was this for lack of energy, for on the whole these were a well built, muscular, and very healthy-looking people, with few if any signs of a social disease so common in Annam and China and with almost none of the filth diseases. Though the women all showed their breasts and thought nothing of it, one never saw even a bathing man completely naked. So-called barbarian peoples, though they commonly wear only a loin-cloth or its feminine equivalent, are usually as exacting about having that in place as we are with our own clothing."

25: Brodrick--91 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 142, 162, 291, 361

"The Laotians who, in their land, keep to the river valleys and avoid the hills and plateaux, are fairly easy to recognize, since there is no confusing them with the strangely garbed men and women of the northern hills or with the semi-savage 'Khas' of the mountains. The Laotians are, as a rule, of more sturdy build than any Annamese, and compared with the stolid and serious-looking Cambodians, the men of the Laos are gay and smiling, Their dress is quite unlike that of the Cambodians. Only the saffron-clad monks will be familiar if you come up from the south. The girls, especially, love bright colours. The usual costume is a skirt reaching to the ankles and often, if not generally, of light tint, puce, mauve, yellow or red. At the waist and the hem is a band of polychrome embroidery, green and white, purple and yellow or green, red and yellow. The women wear usually a white shift, sleeveless and cut rather low back and front, but all are girt about with a long, generally, yellow scarf, draped either as a bandolier with a long end hanging down one side or slung as a gigantic necklace like an Hawaian garland."

68: Mouhot--134 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 291, 302, 164, 826

"The Laotians [HD: in the territory between Loeui and Pak Lai] much resemble the Siamese: a different pronunciation and slow manner of speech being all that distinguishes their language. The women wear petticoats, and keep their hair long, which, when combed, gives the younger ones a more interesting appearance than those have who live on the banks of the Menam; but, at an advanced age, with their unkempt locks thrown negligently over one temple, and their immense goîtres, which they admire, they are repulsively ugly."

149: Reinach--92a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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516

Fig. 34 /p. 123/ A celebration at Khong. --Group of Laotians.

149: Reinach--101a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 36 /p. 135/ Typical Khas of the province of Stung-Treng.

149: Reinach--102a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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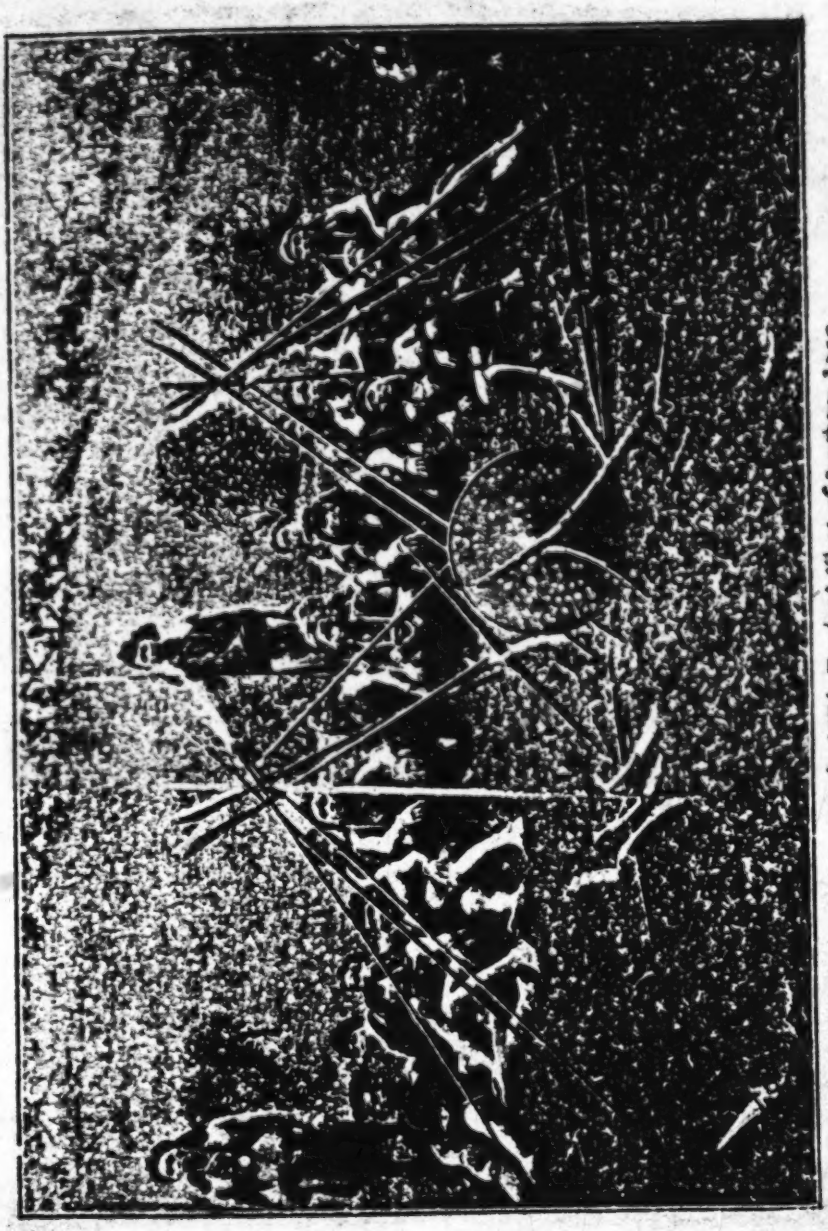

Fig. 37 /p.137/ Typical Khas of Southern Laos.

149: Reinach--133a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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149: Reinach--134 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"Costume. The Laotian costume is the langouti or Siamese 291
sampot. This is a long band of cloth without any seams, and between one and 1.2 meters wide by 2.5 to three meters long. The cloth is placed around the waist to make a skirt, with the opening in front. To keep the skirt in place a knot is made in front with part of the surplus cloth, and the loose ends of the cloth left hanging in front are rolled, passed between the legs and attached to the belt in the middle of the back. The skirt then takes the form of a pair of baggy trousers covering the front of the legs down to the knees and leaving the lower part of the thighs bare in back. The chest is left bare, and a sash is tied around the waist. This is the ordinary garment, and that worn by all the common people. The sash is often worn on the shoulder or around the chest, but it has to be removed and wound around the loins whenever one speaks to anyone who has a right to one's respect. Dandies wear shoes, stockings or socks, quite [177] frequently a short-sleeved or sleeveless knitted vest, a jacket made of white cotton or flannel, depending on the season, and a hat of any type whatever, or even a cap. But these are imported European [293] styles which have not become widespread. Umbrellas enjoy great favor." (Le Laos Français.)

This costume is a relatively recent import, for two hundred years 291
or so ago the Laotians on the banks of the river, as those of the interior still do today, wore a fairly long jacket [178] made of cotton 177
cloth woven in the land. The jacket was caught in at the waist by a sash and came down over a broad pair of trousers made of the same material. The whole garment was dark blue or almost black in color. On the head they wore a kind of turban made of silk or cotton of the same color.

The abandonment of this purely Thai costume was due to the influence of the Siamese and Cambodians during their incursions into Laos. It was also at this time that the Laotians formed the habit of [302] cutting their hair, which they had previously worn rolled in a coil on the back of the head.

"Laotian women wear a skirt which covers them from the hips 291
to the ankles and is made of silk interwoven with gold threads. These [286] skirts are rather dark in color, and the pattern is made up of vertical stripes which are close together and difficult to see. In Luang-Prabang the lower part of the garment is decorated with a flat trimming formed of two or three closely spaced gold galloons. At the top of the skirt a sash made of red cloth and embroidered to a greater

291 or less degree lightens its rather dark color. The skirt is a true cylinder, with the same diameter all along its length. A woman raises the skirt in a mass like a crown above her head, lets it slide down along her body and fastens it to her waist, without any hooks or fasteners, by tucking it in along her stomach, which is largely left bare. A brightly colored sash of cotton or silk is thrown over one shoulder, sometimes covering the breasts, to complete the costume.

"During the cold season, where there is a winter, a few women cover their trunks with a short jacket. This garment finds favor mainly outside the larger centers.

302 "A certain number of women wear their hair cut in Bressant style, in accordance with the style imported by the Siamese. The greater number wear their long hair rolled into a coil on the top or side of the head. Women's coiffures vary, moreover, depending on the region and on whether they are married or single.

292 "For great ceremonies, wealthy women wear skirts made of cloth spangled with gold or silver, and sashes of the same type.

"In Luang-Prabang they add a silk or velvet jacket decorated with embroidery on the neck, front and cuffs. Merchants can be found in this city who rent out costumes of this type, as well as gold jewelry, for great ceremonies to women who do not have any." (Le Laos français.)

301 Jewelry. Jewels find great favor among the [179] Laotians and
556 are used to complete and enrich their costume. They are not only ornaments, but also the most widespread method for realizing and preserving the liquid part of their fortune. In fact, the inhabitants transform the greater part of [Illustration here] their savings and profits into jewelry, and since they wear them on their body they are spared the use of strongboxes.

[583] The women and children are the ones who wear jewels most. They go into the trousseau of the young bride, and parents give them to their children as the latter grow up, thus putting together a sort of dowry for the time when they reach the age of marriage.

301 [180] Gold and silver are used in making jewelry, and precious
306 stones such as rubies, sapphires and various genuine or imitation gems are sometimes added as ornaments.

Gold is not used in all parts of Laos, but is mainly limited to the large centers located near regularly worked gold-bearing deposits.

[563] Doubtless because of the application of ancient sumptuary laws, silver is the only metal used by certain races--even by the Khas,

149: Reinach--136a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 46 /p.181/ A Laotian Tasseng of Upper Laos.
(Courtesy of M. Besson.)

149: Reinach--138a G-3 (no date)1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 47 /p.183/ Group of Laotians of Lower Laos.

149: Reinach--149a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 50 /p.197/ Typical children of Muong-Son (Hua-Pahn). (Courtesy of M. Besson.)

149: Reinach--17/a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

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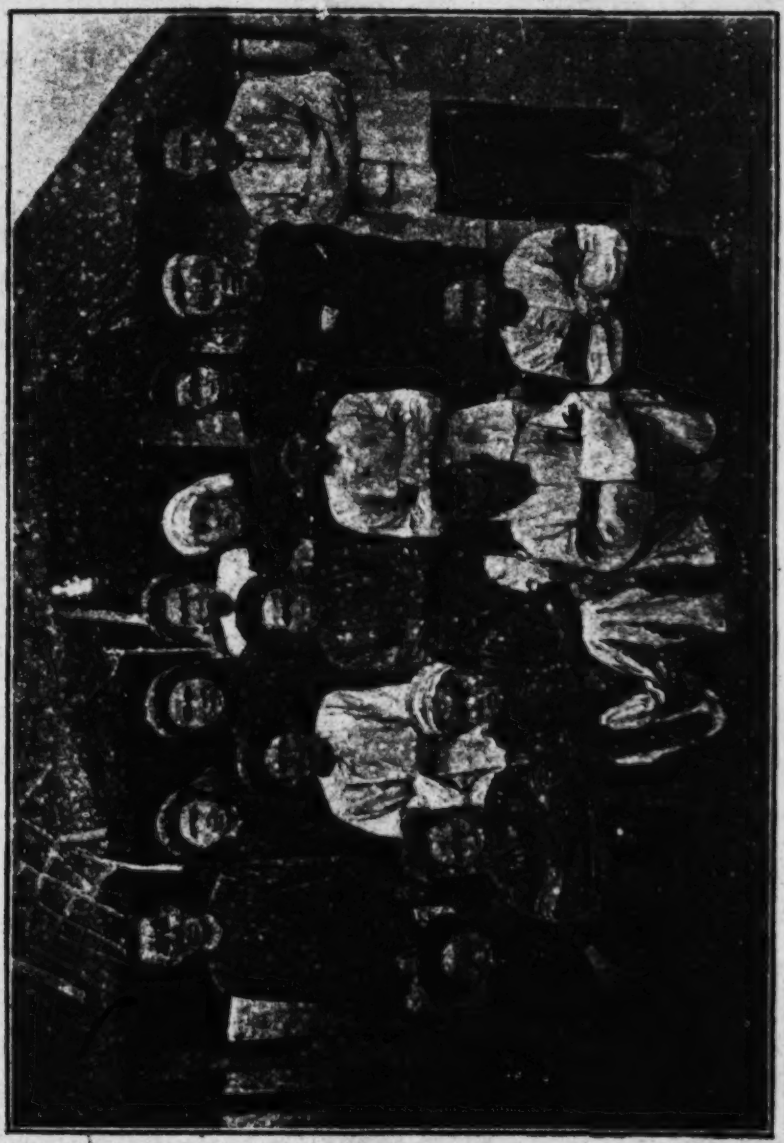

Fig. 57 /p.229/ Group of Phou-Thais (Lib-Sang-Chau-Thais).

51

619 they bear come, as in the case of the Khao-Thais, from peculiarities
[291] of costume. In fact, whereas the Dam-Thais, both men and women,
only wear clothing which is dark blue and almost black, with no
563 colored ornamentation, the Deng-Thais, although they wear the
same kind of clothing, always add a few ornaments such as embroidery,
galloons or red turbans.

Physical appearance. Costume. The Thais have strongly marked
142 features and stern faces. Their complexion is clear and rather swarthy,
461 and they are quite tall. They are more hardy and above all more
industrious than the Laotians.

Like the Annamites, the men let their hair grow. They bind it
302 up in a coil on the top of the head and cover it with a vast turban,
291 the ends of which fall onto their shoulders on either side of the face.
Men's clothing consists of a broad pair of trousers with a very low
seat and a straight tunic buttoned along the side which comes down
to the knees. A sort of sash made of the same kind of cloth hugs the
[286] waist over the tunic, as a belt would do. The material used by the
Thais for clothing are made of cotton which is generally grown locally
and which the [232] women spin, weave and dye themselves. Their
garments, made with very coarse, irregular thread, have a rough ap-
pearance but are very solid.

The women's figures are thick-set but not fleshy. Their faces,
142 which are more rounded than elongated, are pleasant and their eyes
are beautiful. But childbearing and the work of the fields soon destroy
their gracefulness, and after the age of twenty-five their figures thicken,
their wrists and ankles become heavy and their faces begin to harden
and wrinkle. [Illustration alongside text here]

[286] The Thai woman wears a skirt which is quite similar to the Laotian
skirt, but made of coarser cloth and dyed the same color as the men's
291 clothing. Over this she wears a very short jacket made of the same
cloth which is buttoned down the front and sometimes embellished
563 with chased silver work. The height of elegance is for the jacket to
be cut in such a way that when the woman moves in a certain way it
lets a little skin be seen above the skirt waist. Outside the home and for
ceremonies the women put on a sort of dressing gown which covers their
other clothing and comes down to the ankle. Its sleeves are very close-
fitting, and the garment buttons straight down the front to a point below
the waist. A strip of dark violet cloth, for the Dam-Thais, and red for

Tribal Tai

291 the Deng-Thais, is applied to the edges of the gown. It is further
563 ornamented [233] on the outside edge opposite the buttonholes with colored silk embroidery which does not go down below the waist.

This garment is also folded in half lengthwise and worn rolled around the body with the sleeves left hanging.

302 The women wear their hair parted down the middle in front and rolled into a sort of long tassel behind which is contained within
301 the folds of a little turban. The latter is wound above the forehead and the free end inserted under the first turn, on the nape of the neck. This headdress is quite similar to that of the Annamite women in Tonkin.

In certain regions of Laos, Thai women wind their hair into a sort of coil which girls wear loosely down their neck and betrothed or married women wear on top of the head. Thai jewelry is made of heavy silver and is of the same type as Laotian jewelry. The men wear bracelets on their wrists.

262 Food. The Thai diet is like that of the Laotians, but they prefer non-glutinous white rice and use chopsticks like the Chinese and
264 Annamites.

The use of betel is quite widespread among the Thais, but in
276 contrast to the Laotians they keep their teeth white. The Thais smoke the oily, opiated tobacco of Tonkin and China in bamboo waterpipes whose tiny bowls only contain a small pinch of tobacco. They also smoke a local variety of tobacco, either in cigarettes or in pipes with a highly worked clay bowl into which a long stem ending in a glass or jade mouthpiece is inserted.

156 Character. Although serious and reflective, the Thais have a vivacious and friendly character. They are somewhat cold in appearance, but are sound friends and highly affable when one gets to know them better.

[70] Gentler and more timid than the Laotians, they have no taste for the art of war and it is difficult to get them to stay in the native militia.

433 They are very self-seeking and much more miserly than the Lao-
438 tians. [234] It should be noted, moreover, that since they produce everything themselves and are a people of farmers and livestock
156 breeders, they do not have, by virtue of their ever sedentary occupations, the opportunities which these latter have to enjoy fairly high profits resulting from commercial transactions, nor the special habits which contact with different races gives.

181 The Thais love pleasure and celebrations. Guaranteed their daily
461

149: Reinach--176a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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149: Reinach--178 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai

619 The Neua-Thais. The Neua-Thais differ very little, in all
361 respects, from their fellows. They generally live on higher ground than the other Thais, but they change the location of their village quite frequently. [241] [Illustration] [242] [Blank page] [243]

291 The women knot their skirts under their armpits, above their breasts, and always wear a very short jacket made of cotton, silk or velvet, depending on the season.

231 They engage in sericulture, and with the silk spin and weave brocaded cloth with harmonious colors.

779 At the same time as ancestor worship, the Neu-Thais practice an attenuated form of Buddhism. Pagodas are rare and the bonzes, few in number, serve several centers in turn.

461 Their character is docile. They do not have a very marked taste for trade and are content to be excellent farmers and livestock breeders.
276 Unfortunately, they are inclined to be opium smokers. This is doubtless due to the proximity of the Meos and Yaos who are the producers of the drug.

619 The Phou-Eunes. This branch of the Thai family is very close to
101 the Laotians in mores and customs.

There are only a few modifications in costume and language, modifications due to the age-old proximity of the Annamites and the continuous relations which have existed between the two peoples.
[438] These latter may be explained by the fact that the territory long inhabited by the Phou-Eunes in the east and southeast of Tran-Ninh is situated on the Tonkin Gulf side, and that their produce naturally flows towards the ports on the Annamite coast (1).

(1) To be sure, there are several groupings of Phou-Eunes in the Mekong basin, in Tran-Ninh, to the northeast of Vien-Tiane and in Camkeut-Cammon.

361 The Phou-Eunes prefer to live in high valleys and on high plateaus where the climate is quite severe during the winter. They are more reserved in character than the Laotians, more industrious and less inclined to celebrations and festivities of all kinds.

779 Their religion is Buddhism, but the bonzes are less numerous than elsewhere. It is probable that the little taste which Phou-Eunes have for the religious life is due to the influence of nearby Annam, where the bonzes are a long way from being venerated and coddled as they are in Laos.

149: Reinach--179 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Tribal Tai

Men's and women's clothing varies little in [244] form from that of the Thais. Under their jacket, however, the women wear a breast-cloth attached to the neck and waist by cords, like the Annamite and Tonkinese women. 291

The Lus. Two centuries or so ago the Lus, who also belong to the Thai race, used to live in the "Shan states" between the Salouen and the Nam-Hon, where they were surrounded by a drifting population composed of Burmese, Kunes, Ngieous, etc. [Illustration alongside text here.] 619 175

Following emigrations, they came to Laos and formed two distinct agglomerations.

Some Lu families have settled in the course of this century on the territory of Luang-Prabang. Today these Lus form villages composed exclusively of people of their race, but live on good terms with the Laotians, whose language and customs they have adopted. [563]

In the old Lu kingdom of Muong-Sing, on the other hand, this people has retained its habits, that is to say its character and temperament are like those of the Burmese. 101

There the Lu is boastful, full of arrogance, a braggart and insolent, but a little firmness is enough to humble his pride. [105]

Lus have a clear complexion, delicate features, keen eyes and a swinging stride. The men are generally tattooed from the calf of the leg to above the navel, and they also have tattoos on their chest, [245] neck, shoulders and arms which are generally red and in the shape of squares with rounded corners. They have long hair rolled in a coil on top or slightly to one side of the head. This coil is wrapped in an enormous turban which they wear tilted over one ear. Many of them have a moustache. This they train upwards, a trait which gives them a conquering air, and to keep it up they smear it with wax. [Illustration alongside text here] 142 304 302

The men's costume consists of a pair of full trousers and a short jacket buttoned along the side. It is made of cotton and is dark blue, almost black, in color. The bottoms of the trousers, the edges of the jacket, the cuffs of the sleeves and the armholes are ornamented with three galloons (blue, white and red) which are quite narrow. Their holiday clothes are often made of silk in varied colors. 291

The women wind their hair into a heavy coil on top of the head, and on the side of the coil they place a broad circular plaque of chased silver. They wear skirts like the Laotian women, but the stripes are very broad, run crosswise and are in bright colors. They [302] [301]

291 cover their bust with a small short jacket which is very close-fitting and bright in color. It has a heart-shaped opening on the chest and, like the men's jacket, is ornamented with galloons and passementerie. For celebrations and ceremonies Lu women wear a heavy turban on their head which is folded flat or pleated, shaped like a mitre and generally made of black silk spangled with gold.

301 Both men and women pierce the lobes of their ears [246] with a broad opening, into which they introduce hollow gold or silver cylinders which are sometimes as large as three centimeters in diameter.

306 Great lovers of jewelry, the Lus number skilled jewelers and goldsmiths among them who make hair coil plaques, ear cylinders, flat braided metal belts with wide chased and checkered buckles, bracelets, rings, hilts and sheaths for daggers and swords, etc. [Illustration alongside text here]

411 293 The Lus almost always wear daggers and swords. Each of them, so to speak, possesses a rifle, generally flintlock, which by the shape of the stock, the length of the barrel and the many bands which adorn it greatly resembles the long Moukhala so dear to our Arabs in Algeria.

[361] Lu villages are clean, and the houses are arranged in a checkerboard pattern.

[231] The Lus have a high reputation as breeders of oxen and horses.

527 A great lover of celebrations and parades, this boisterous people sets off gunpowder at every opportunity, and there is no festival, private or public, so small that it is not accompanied by salvos and fireworks.

[77] 535 From their contact with the Burmese the men have retained a [247] [Illustration] [248] [Blank page] [249] taste for dancing and for sword fights mingled with dance steps in which they manifest a real grace and elegance.

"Among other forms of amusement, the men execute, with a truly remarkable suppleness and skill, sword dances which are perfectly elegant. Naked to the waist, with their trousers rolled up and bunched and a wooden sword in each hand whose cutting edge has been dipped in dye so that the thrusts will leave a mark, the two champions confront one another. Moulinets, parries and returns follow one another without apparent effort, and the movements are undulating and rapid but without any abruptness. The men seem to be caressing one another, not fighting, and yet the slashes leave their colored traces on the skin of the vanquished. Direct thrusts are forbidden, but the entire body from head to foot is fair game for the opponent. Thus during the

149: Reinach--180b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Fig. 64 /p.247/ Typical Lu women, at Muong-Hou.
(Courtesy of M. Besson.)

Tyibal Tai
Kha

291 The men's costume is like that of the Laotians. A few, however, have adopted the Burmese costume, turban and all, in which case they let their hair grow and roll it in a coil instead of having a brush cut.

The women wear a very long skirt with broad stripes running across it which is fastened beneath the breasts. The bust is covered by a closed jacket or bodice which is cut straight and made of cotton or silk of varied colors. Their hair is rolled in a coil on the nape of the neck or is held in place around the head by a narrow band of cloth and allowed to fall freely down the back. Both sexes wear metal cylinders in their ears, like the Lus, and silver jewelry.

[302] [301]

The Youns are more robust than their fellows, and also more industrious. The women are perhaps less pretty than the Laotian women, but they are just as friendly and merry.

[142]

276 [251] Both men and women chew betel, and also "Mieng" (green tea, fermented and salted). They smoke tobacco in enormous cigarettes rolled in dried banana leaves. [Illustration alongside text here]

The Youns are primarily farmers and livestock breeders. They excel in breeding and training oxen as draft animals.

212 We have seen that the Youns, although they speak the same language as the Laotians, have their own form of writing which is generally
292 used for religious writings. Their bonzes, who are highly learned for the most part, are renowned for their expert knowledge of the rites of the Buddhist religion.

101 Marriage, divorce, polygamy, births, funerals, celebrations and festivities are all the same among the Youns as among the Laotians, except for a few minor differences in detail which we need not mention here.

THE KHAS

619 Before entering into detail about the mores and customs of the main Kha families, we shall again have recourse to the learned work
181 by the Superior Resident in Laos in order to give a general sketch of this race which represents at least a third of the population.

[252] "They are to be found throughout the territory, and are divided into more than sixty families. As much as those who inhabit northern Laos are docile, manageable and respectful, so are those who inhabit the southern part of Laos proud, independent and warlike, particularly the tribes inhabiting the mountains which separate us from Annam.

149: Reinach--182a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 66 /p. 251/ Typical Lus.
(Courtesy of M. Besson)

149: Reinach--183 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Kha

"The most varied types are to be found among the Khas. Some are just like the American 'Redskins,' others have a heavier and more bestial appearance, and still others are small and puny. Certain of them are veritable savages who have never heard of clothing and live in shapeless huts, taking to the trees or fleeing into the forest at the slightest alarm, with monkey-like habits and the instincts of wild animals. 142 291

"Others, on the other hand, wear clothing quite like that of the Lus, build proper houses and enjoy a comparative degree of civilization. But they all carry a bag of dark blue cloth which never leaves them.

"It is a long way between the primitives which some of them are and the half-civilized beings which the better policed among them are. Thus the greater part of these poor folk have long been in servitude, especially in the northern and central part, and have become the humble servants of more highly refined races which exploit them. 563

"In the south, however, some tribes of particular origin have been able to resist all outer authority and are still free and independent today." [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

The Khas of northern Laos. All the Khas of northern Laos have been brought under control, and even emancipated, and live grouped in villages or hamlets which are distributed over the mountainsides, generally near some watercourse. 361

Houses. Kha houses, which are built on piles and in the same style as those of the Laotians although in less careful fashion, are set down without any care for symmetry or alignment. They are generally much smaller and built for a single family. The houses are extremely dirty. 242

The Khas have very little in the way of large livestock, and so the under part of the houses shelter only pigs and poultry. 231

A few Kha tribes, such as the Khouenes (white and black), Khmous and Lemets, which are the most civilized have quite fine villages with well built and carefully aligned houses. A pagoda will sometimes be found in these. 361

Costume. Khas of both sexes wear their hair long and wound in a coil on the nape of the neck or top of the head. The [253] Lemets comb part of their hair down over their forehead and cut it off straight at the eyebrow level. 291

149: Reinach--184 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

291 Men's clothing consists of a jacket and pair of trousers which have the same shape as those of the Lus and are made of coarse cotton cloth manufactured locally. Their headgear is a turban cut from a piece of Turkey-red cotton.

For work, clothing is generally reduced to a narrow strip of cloth forming a belt, one of the ends of which is passed between the legs and fastened in the middle of the back.

During the cold season a jacket is added to this loin-cloth.

The women wear a skirt of the Laotian type which is fastened under the armpits so that it does not come down below the calves of the legs. A short jacket completes their costume. On their head they wear a turban which is generally dark in color. [Illustration alongside text here]

301 Jewelry. Both sexes have silver or copper jewelry such as wide stiff neckbands, bracelets, rings, buttons, clasps, etc. Like the Lus and the Youns, the Khas pierce the lobes of their ears. Often the holes are of such dimensions that a roll of leaves or a bouquet of flowers can be inserted in them.

262 Food. Their diet is very like that of the Laotians and Thais. When there is a shortage of rice its place is taken, until the following harvest, by yams, taros, bamboo sprouts, banana flowers, etc.

462 Occupations. Women and children are given the hardest tasks imaginable, and it is unusual to meet them without baskets on their backs. The men carry only their bag, their sword, their rifle and their pipe.

595 Marriage. Divorce. Adultery. Polygamy is widespread among the Khas, and the number of wives a man possesses is the sign of his wealth. For, regarded as they are rather like beasts of burden and working constantly, the more numerous these wives are the more they will produce.

584 [254] The rules for marriage preliminaries closely resemble the Laotian customs and the ceremony itself, although much less splendid, comprises the same rites. To be sure, the role of the bonzes is filled here by "Pho-Tao," that is to say elders or sorcerers.

586 Divorce may be requested by the wife, or one of the wives, for personal reasons. It may also take place by mutual consent. Finally,
684 it is compulsory in the case of adultery, since the guilty woman must marry her accomplice.

Contrary to what is the case elsewhere, adultery on the part of the husband is punished by a double fine awarded to his wife's family

149: Reinach--187 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

caught even on the other side of the watershed and then delivered as 567
slaves to the Burmese, Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian merchants of the low country. The barbarity of their mores has been greatly lessened since our arrival in Laos, but traces of it still exist and manifest themselves in rivalries and attacks between tribes. The police force which [260] we have organized in the land in the form of a native militia, the influence of the missionaries who have settled among the turbulent Khas, and also the help and example of the tribes which have submitted to our tutelary authority will soon cause this abnormal state of things to disappear. Finally, our increasingly effective occupation of the land, which has been completed by the organization of the province of Darlac, and the strict protectorate which we exercise over Cambodia, the chief purchaser of slaves, have begun to bring order in an effective fashion to this shameful traffic in human flesh (1).

(1) See § I of Chapter XI.

It should be noted that the Djarais and the Rades are the only 197
Khas who speak Cham, that is to say a greatly corrupted Malay tongue which they have preserved for centuries.

The men's clothing consists of a loin-cloth, and that of the 291
women consists only of a short skirt knotted around the waist or under the armpits, the torso left bare.

Both men and women have long hair wound in a coil. Both 301
sexes, but mainly the men, wear jewels of a crude shape, made of tin or brass, in the form of bracelets, neckbands, ear pendants or cylinders and hairpins. They are also very fond of glass bead necklaces.

These Khas smoke tobacco, either dried or green, as well as 276
bamboo shavings impregnated with nicotine. They make terra cotta pipes with highly worked bowls and also use imported brass pipes. They do not blacken their teeth.

From the point of view of diet and housing, practically the same 511
conditions obtain as we have seen above except that the houses are built with greater care and arranged in the form of a circular camp.

In the middle of Cedang and Rognao villages there is a large 342
house some twenty to thirty meters long by twelve to fifteen meters 883
wide, with a high pointed roof. This is the common house where all the boys of the locality live from the age of nine or ten until the day of their marriage.

149: Reinach--188a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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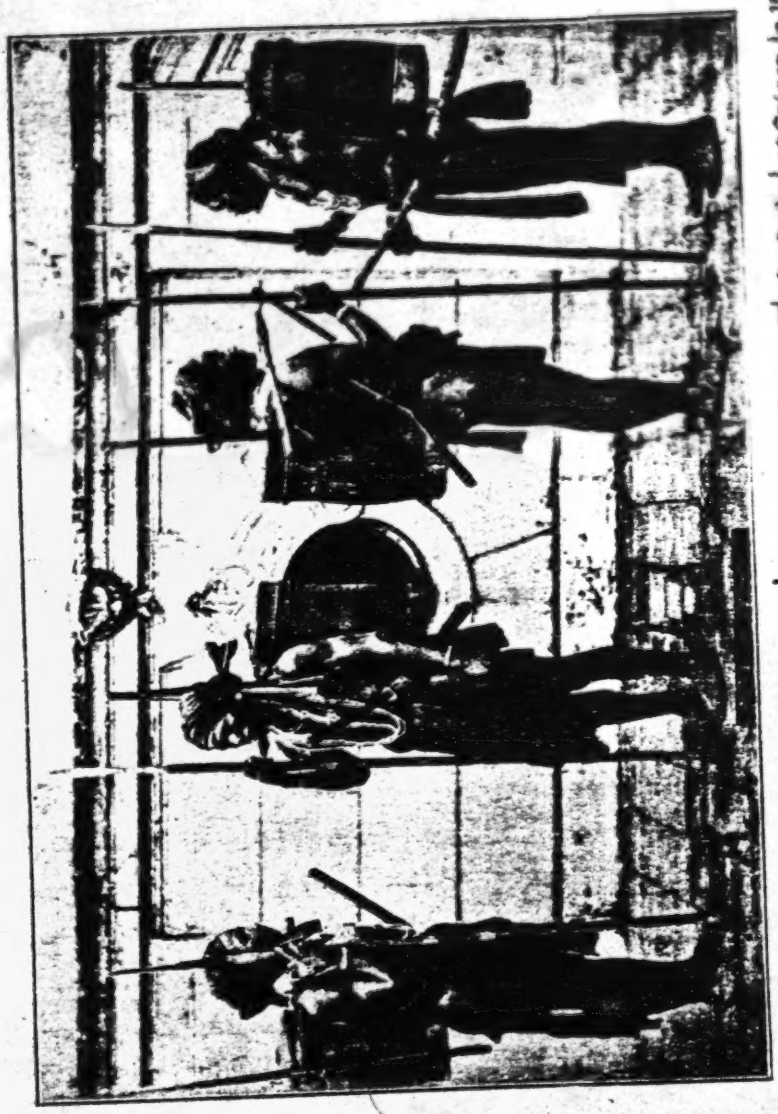

Fig. 71/p.261/ Typical Khas of the province of St ung-treng. (Photographed at Saigon in 1868.)

149: Reinach--189a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

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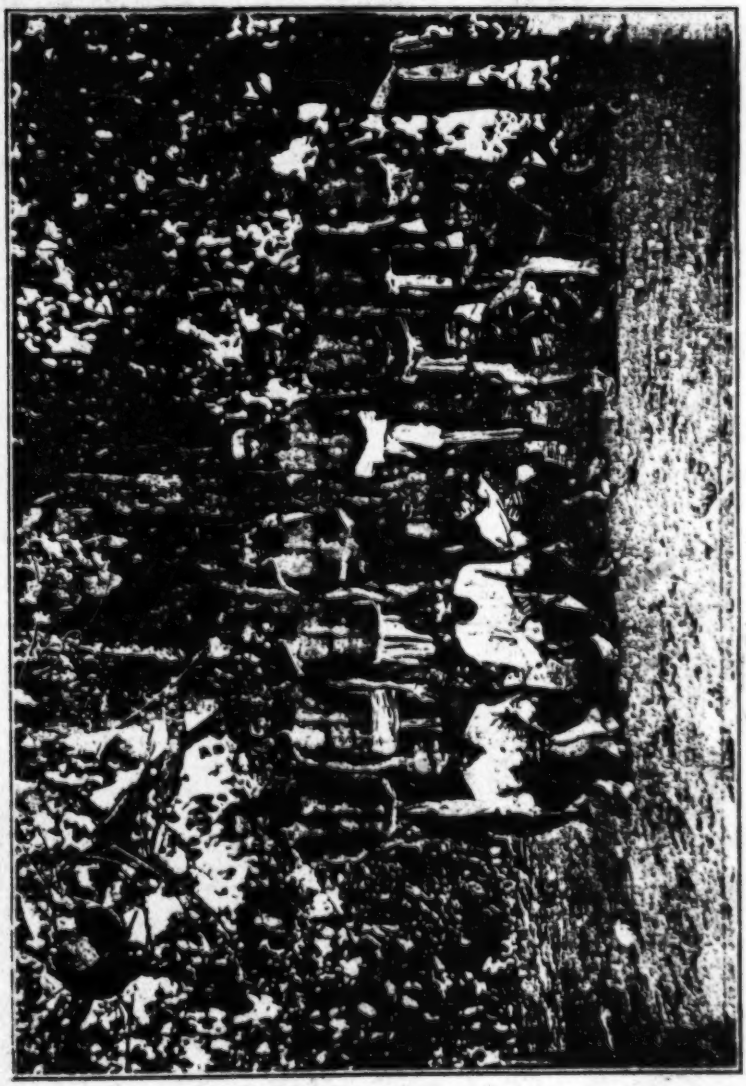

Fig. 72/p. 265/ Khas of the region of Siampang (Lower Laos).

Hill Tribes

Almost all are of low birth and are crude and illiterate. They have married Thai or Kha women and thereby founded a stock of halfbreeds. This race is destined to merge with the mass of the Laotians or Thai population and through successive crossings lose all distinctive characteristics. 619 563

The Meos. The Meos are also Yunnanese who have retained a degree of independence and have not been marked with the Chinese imprint like the Hos or adopted baggy clothes and the custom of wearing their hair only in a braid.

They are distributed in groups of a few families each of which live on the peaks of the mountains in northern Laos and the Sib-Song Chau-Thais. They can be divided into three great families--the blacks, the whites and the reds--which owe their names to the color of certain parts of the women's costume. Thus among the black and red Meos skirts or jackets are light blue in color, but the latter have a wide collar ornamented with black or red embroidery. Finally, a small turban with black and white checks or of red material, depending on the case, completes their garb. Among the white Meos, the women wear a skirt and jacket of unbleached cloth, with a white and blue embroidered collar. [361] 391

The men's clothing is light blue in all cases. It is composed of a broad pair of trousers which come down somewhat below the calf, where the legs are drawn tight, and of a short, tight-sleeved jacket which buttons down one side.

A turban winds around the head and covers their long hair, which may be rolled or braided. 301

The women's hair is parted and wound on the upper part of the nape of the neck in a coil. (1)

(1) See Appendix XIX.

The Meos practice ancestor worship primarily, like many Asian peoples. They have no pagodas or bonzes, but elders perform the office of priests and also administer justice. 769

[268] The Meos bury their dead, and make animal sacrifices on the occasion of births, marriages and deaths so as to gain the favor of the "Phis" or multiple and varied genii in whose existence and influence they believe.

Marriage is as simple as among the other peoples of Laos. [581]

Divorce may occur either through mutual consent or in the case of adultery. [586]

Hill Tribes

595 There is polygamy among the Meos, and the Meo women do not enjoy any higher regard than the Kha women.

[101] The Yaos. The Yaos have the same origin as the Meos, and are strikingly like them in many respects. Their mores, their beliefs and their habits are identical.

619 As we have seen above, the Yaos are divided into three varieties, these being the Lantenes, the Khao and the Ao-Tchaine.

291 The Lantenes (blacks) wear broad trousers, a long smock buttoning at the side and a turban, all made of black cottonstuff. They wear 302 their hair long and either wound under a turban or braided in Chinese style.

[342] Their houses are like those of the Meos and shelter several families, each of which has its own quarters. They are generally clean and well kept-up.

593 The mores of the Lantene Yaos are patriarchal, and these folk are monogamous. The women are very reserved and do not let them- 562 selves be seen much by strangers. They enjoy a certain respect and are treated with consideration by their husbands.

231 The Lantenes are great livestock breeders, and cultivate the opium 241 poppy in addition to rice and maize. They are skilled hunters of wild animals, and each man owns a rifle from which he is rarely separated.

224 Besides a dialect peculiar to them, they speak Quoan-hoa (a [212] Cantonese idiom), and many of them can write Chinese characters.

[198] The Khao Yaos are less outgoing than their fellows and do not 101 greet strangers with as much good will.

The men's clothing is like that of the Lantenes, [269] but the 271 women are garbed in a different manner and wear their hair in a special way which has earned their tribe the name "Khao" (horns).

Over a pair of black trousers ornamented with colored embroidery and held in place by leggings, Khao Yao women wear a tunic which comes down to the knees but the flaps of which are fastened to the belt. This tunic also has colored embroidery on the chest, back, neck and cuffs, and is held shut with wide silver hooks.

302 Their hairdress consists of a coil which is smeared with wax and lacquer to hold it in place and in which a wooden socket is imbedded. A light bamboo framework is inserted into the socket, and over this is spread a red cloth or a black cloth embroidered in red. The women thus appear to have two horns on their head.

301 Silver jewelry, neckbands, bracelets and ear-pendants are worn by the Khao Yaos.

Finally, the Ao-Tchaine Yaos owe their name (bearing sapeks) 291 to the fact that the men's jacket, which is shorter than that of the other Yaos, is ornamented in front with several rows of flat copper or silver buttons which resemble sapeks (Annamite and Chinese coins).

The women fasten a pad of compact, gummed hair on their coil 302 by means of sticks made of ivory, of bone or simply of wood.

Like the Meos, the Yaos inhabit the peaks of mountains in 364 northern Laos where they grow poppies. They are confirmed opium [276] smokers.

[270] [Blank page] [271] [Illustration at top]

CHAPTER V

1. ORGANIZATION

Consulate and Commercial Agencies. Before 439 the treaty of October 3, 1893, we already had a consul at Luang-Prabang in the Mekong basin, on the right bank of the river. In 1892 175 the vice-consulate was closed and commercial agencies were set up at Luang-Prabang, Outhene and Bassac on the right bank, and then 648 at Stung-Treng on the left bank. The first three agencies were directed by representatives of the French Syndicate of Laos, and the last by a clerk of Posts and Telegraphs. The commercial agents performed the functions of consular agents. Later on in 1894 and 1895 when we actually took possession of Laos, that is to say of the territory on the left bank of the Mekong, two additional agencies were established at Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen. [272] Then in 1895 the agencies of Pak-Lay, Xieng-Khan, Nong-Khay, Lakhone, Ban-Mouk-Dahan and Kemmarat were created on the right bank, bringing the total number to ten, for those of Stung-Treng and Luang-Prabang had been raised to the status of commissionerships.

These new agencies were directed by "commercial agents" specially appointed for the purpose. In addition to the delegates of the French Syndicate of Laos who continued to hold office, these agents included a few inspectors of the Tonkin native guard.

The duties of these officials were poorly defined, and their chief role was to assert our presence. They were mere information agents. For this reason official circles soon decided to abolish these posts, an action made possible chiefly by the establishment of two new vice-consulates in Siam, one at Oubone and one at Ban-Dua-Makeng.

149: Reinach--247 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"What makes everything easy and is used for everything is this hollow wood, at once so solid and so light, the incomparable bamboo. In France we see it only in the form of pleasant but useless little articles of furniture. Here bamboo is sufficient to every task. It provides the whole house, frame as well as walls. The inner walls and floors are made of matted bamboo lathwork. Yet such a house, with its furniture, bed, tables, various accessories and its luxury objects, if you are a person of refinement, can be improvised for you in a space of two hours wherever you want. 313 341 352

"Has a bridge been washed out? In two hours, thanks to this wood which is easy to manage and to work, men will have made a new bridge. One is especially struck, at the beginning of this life which is so free and, more than any other, independent of men and things, by the great simplicity and ingenuity of all the procedures. Objects are rudimentary but practical, easy to make, soon ready and simple to repair. Everyone knows how to build ordinary furnishings, and no interruptions are caused here as they are when even the slightest damage occurs to one of our highly developed utensils, which only a specialist knows how to repair.

"A bamboo tube is a safe place for your maps and papers. It is a drinking glass, and it is also a pipe for smokers. On a larger scale, it is a bucket for carrying water, and the receptacle for all liquid and solid provisions. When provided with a handle it serves as a pot for the Laotians to cook their rice in, or to prepare syrup from the sugar palm. When torn into thongs it is used as rope and string. Ligatures of sapeks are threaded on kelates, or bamboo filaments, and this is what makes our new Indo-Chinese sou, with its round hole in the middle, so impractical. Those who preside over the striking of our coins are unaware that the kelate is square, a fact which the first comer from the interior could have told them. Baskets of all kinds are made with these same kelates for holding and transporting material. Hats are also made of them to provide shelter from the sun and rain. At night, when the stage of your journey is too long and you have to continue after nightfall even at the risk of meeting a tiger, setting fire to a bamboo branch is enough to frighten any off and to light your way. And not only is bamboo used to make torches, hats, string, dishes, furniture, houses and bridges, but it also serves as animal fodder and even as food for the natives, who eat the tenderest shoots as we would eat asparagus. 313 415 436 285 313 291 [372] [262] [231]

149; Reinach--376a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
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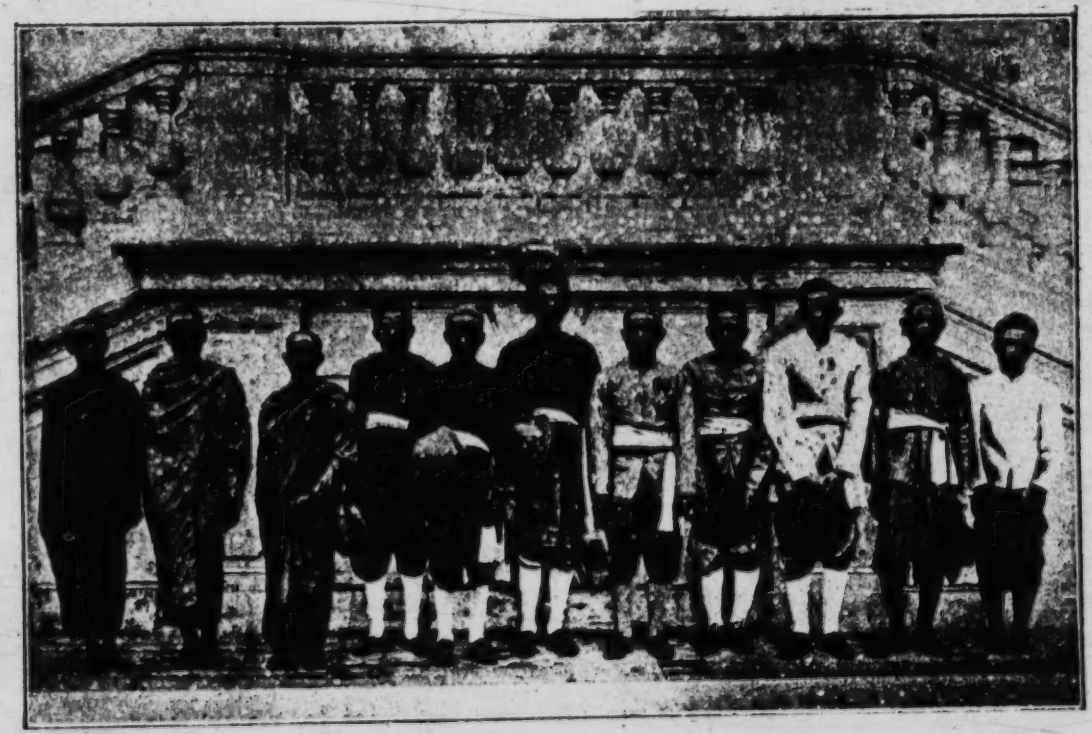

Fig. 118 /p.495/ A group of Laotian mandarins and bonzes.
(After a photograph made in Saigon in 1898.)

149: Reinach--401 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

China and Indo-China (1).

[113] (1) E. Picanon, Le Laos français. 1901, Challamel. [Paris.]

II

173 Laos, Thais and Khas. Although the Laotian legends
563 attribute the same origin to all of these (Mueng-Theng or Dien-Bien-
144 Phu) and say that they all came from the same "gourd" (Nam-Tao-Phoun), it is hardly likely that the Laotians and the Khas have a common origin. Indeed, the characteristics which serve to distinguish the two races are too numerous and too marked, both from the point of view of the racial types themselves and as regards language, mores and religious beliefs.

144 Nor can it be affirmed that the Khas are the representatives of
174 the aboriginal population, for before any of their people had mounted the throne of Luang-Prabang, six kings foreign to their race had already occupied it--if we may regard the list of the first kings of the land which is preserved in the Phong-Sa Va-Dan (annals of the kingdom) as correct--and of these conquering princes the first is said to have come from India, and the second from Cambodia.

In any case, the Khas are said to have preceded the Laotians in the land, and it was not until the reign of their fourth and last king that they are supposed to have been conquered and driven out or enslaved by the Laotians, who had come down from Dien-Bien-
[609] Phu. Since that time, and despite many revolts of which the last is almost recent, the Khas have never ceased being "a folk taillable and liable to forced labor at pleasure" for their vanquishers, and their name has become a synonym for a low person or slave in the current
[56] idiom. Not until 1895 were the Khas once and for all freed--freed is perhaps not the word, for in the strict sense they were never slaves--or at least summoned to enjoy a system of rule similar to that of the other natives and which left no margin for arbitrariness and vexations.

173 In designating Dien-Bien-Phu as the cradle of the Laotian people, or at least in attributing to the Laotians and the Thais a common origin, legend seems to be in agreement with reality. There are indeed many points of resemblance and contact between the two peoples. The type is invariably the same, although finer in the native of Luang-
175 Prabang than in the native of Lai-Chau or Dien-Bien-Phu. Not more than two hundred years ago the Laotians still wore, like the black
291 Thais, the Annamite costume and their hair wound in a coil. It
177 was doubtless after contact with the Siamese--who had themselves

175 [104] taken after the Cambodians in this respect--that they later
•291 adopted the "sampot" and formed the habit of cutting their hair very
177 short, just as the Thais of Lai-Chau today dress like their Chinese neighbors and wear their hair in a long pigtail. The same reasons may also explain modifications in language and writing, which must have been identical in the beginning.

563 Of the Phou-Thais who are settled today in the territory of
144 Luang-Prabang, some--and these make up the greater number--are black Thais (aborigines) from Dien-Bien-Phu, with a darker coloration than the inhabitants of Lai-Chau, who are called white Thais for this reason. The others belong to this second variety.

The ones who sacked Luang-Prabang in 1887 under the leadership of Deo-Van-Tri were white Thais.

Youns. The Laotians living on the right bank of the Mekong at Xieng-Mai, Xieng-Sen, Muong-Nan, etc. are called Youns.
[304] The only feature which distinguishes them from their fellows on the left bank is that they generally tattoo their stomachs, whereas the others tattoo the thighs and upper part of the legs, whence the names "Lao-Phoung-Khao" (white-bellied Laotians) and Lao-Phoung-Dam (black-bellied Laotians) which are used in designating the ones and the others.

Phais. Neither do the Phais constitute a separate racial group. They are Khas who are in the process of being transformed, Khas crossed with either Lus or Laotians according as their neighbors have been representatives of the first or the second of these races. Although after this contact they have begun to police themselves and to bring their way of life into conformity with that of the Lus or Laotians, they are nonetheless subject to the same regime as the Khas in respect to taxes and other matters.

Lus. The Lus, who are natives of the Sip-Song Pan-Nas, did
563 not come and settle in any great numbers in the territory of Luang-
175 Prabang until long after the Laotians, and then only in order to flee the war which was desolating their own land, or simply because they hoped to find better living conditions in this territory. The immigration took place in an entirely peaceful manner, and since that time the Lus have not ceased to live on good terms with the Laotians, whose mores and dress they have generally adopted and by whom they will soon be completely assimilated.

563 Khos, Meos, Yaos. These various names designate natives whose racial type, dress and hairdo ending in a queue unquestionably denote a Chinese origin, and who do not differ from one another except

536 There is no scenery. The costumes and headdresses vary according to the characters represented. The masks of colored lacquer worn by the actors, their accessories (weapons, scarves, etc.) being traditional and invariable enable the fictitious characters on the stage to be identified.

/178 The theatre of animated shadows, similar to the shadow theatre
101/ of China and Java, tends to disappear little by little.

Laotian Decoration.

Laotian decoration is characterized by a somewhat mannered
531 elegance which can be noticed in the motifs of the pagoda doors and
178 windows. The Laotian artisan is, however, endowed with an extremely well developed artistic sense, but the present day demands do not enable him any longer to live by his handiwork, and the importation of manufactured articles tends to make the artist disappear. /89/ He can only survive by royal patronage. The royal palace for this reason shelters sculptors on wood and ivory as well as goldsmiths, but
/644/ their produce is not sold and the tourist will hardly be able to bring back with him typical Laotian objects.

However, the weaving of silk materials of divers shades, often laminated with gold or silver, is still done on a sufficient scale to
/236/ satisfy the passing tourist.

The Sin

This is a skirt reaching from the hips to the ankles. It is of a
291 rather somber color with a design of vertical stripes very close together and not very evident. This skirt is decorated on its lower edge with a flat trimming of two or three rows of gold or silver braid. At the top of the skirt a belt of red cloth, more or less embroidered, relieves the rather dark tone. This garment is a regular cylinder having the same width on its entire length. When the woman emerges from her bath she lifts her skirt, gathered into the shape of a crown, above her head and lets it slide down the length of her body. She fixes it without hooks or fasteners to her belt by means of a turned in pleat tied in front leaving most of her belly exposed. A bright colored scarf of cotton or silk thrown over one shoulder and completely covering the breasts completes the costume. The most beautiful scarves come from Samneua, Luang Prabang and Khong. The jewelry most frequently seen consists of
301 silver bracelets, necklaces and buttons, rings, long crossed over chains /chaînes-sautoirs/, flat clasps, and belts usually of silver but sometimes of gold.

/Pages 90 to 135 not translated/ /136 blank/

10: d'Orleans--312 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 292, 793

"Luang Prabang and its suburbs have about eighty pagodas, distributed over four parishes, at the head of each being a bishop, who is to be distinguished from the other priests by a short skirt of violet-coloured silk. The ordinary priests are invariably attired in yellow, with a long skirt and with drapery thrown back over the shoulder like the Lamas of Thibet, while they all have shaved heads."

10: d'Orleans--354 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 292, 492, 493, 644

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"Every one kneels in the dust as the monarch passes by, behind him being four bearers of parasols, two white and two green. The cortége is a lengthy one, being headed by a group of horsemen, bare legged, and with their toes resting upon the edge of very broad stirrups; their dress consisting of a small white jacket and a broad brimmed felt hat. Then comes a mandarin in a wooden palanquin, upon each side of him being a man who carries a bamboo mat to protect him from the mud which the young girls endeavour to throw at him. A troop of children who come along clapping their hands are succeeded by two broad-wheeled waggons,[sic] one of which is drawn by a horse, and the other by men, and by three elephants conveying in a howdah, made of osier to protect them from the sun, officers of a lower grade."

10: d'Orleans--354-355 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 292, 534, 644

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"With the Laos soldiers, preceded by six trumpeters, comes the guard dressed in yellow tick and wearing round caps, striped blue and white. The [355] standard of Luang Prabang is white, with a particoloured dragon like that of China, while a second white flag with a red border, upon which can be traced the outlines of an elephant, must be Siamese.

The soldiers are followed by the musicians and certain instruments, such as the drums and the cymbals, are placed upon a wooden square which is suspended by ropes from the shoulders of several bearers, the player marching in the centre. Then come more soldiers, naked to the waist, sword-bearers, lance-bearers, and cane-bearers, the canes being tied up with some red material in bundles.

Last of all comes the king, seated upon a very small gilt throne with no dome to it and borne by eight men, facing the king being two children on their knees. He is wearing a small white jacket, a silken langoufi and a rather dirty old gray helmet, with an European sunshade in his hand; the rear guard is formed by young Laotians, intoxicated with tchoum-tchoum, many of them bearing upon their faces marks of the mud thrown by the young girls."

"At a mere suggestion from my companion, and as if it were a relief from a tense situation, his Majesty graciously stepped to the main doorway of the palace, an excellent jet-black background for a blazing tropical sunshine that outdid anything Hollywood can devise in lighting-effects, and posed for his photograph. Another merest hint from the commissaire and Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah went off at once like a small boy to dress up for his picture, and came back in a surprisingly short time in his most regal robes, a radiant royal costume quite beyond my power to describe. All the medals on the breast of bronze near-by were now in place on the living model; he was again in women's silk stockings, quite evidently brand new, and this time held up by round-the-leg garters of brilliant hue. A green and saffron flowered-silk sampot--but how foolish for a man who cannot even describe a ball-dress well enough to give his wife any conception of it to attempt so impossible a job as this!

Never have I found a king more docile in meeting my [311] every suggestion. Barely a whisper from me and he ordered his throne-room decked out in its coronation best, had his royal attendants summoned. Cringing flunkies brought in swords of state, big golden bowls, a marvelous hat of half cowboy half women-of-the-plume-days style, studded with jewels, and with a Burmese-pagoda top. Ascending his throne, the king assumed his most regal aspect, his white gloves flashing like those of a traffic policeman during a Catholic procession. The master of ceremonies of the palace himself

brought tables and other regal paraphernalia to offset my lack of a tripod; two men in green, each holding a great sword, knelt fearfully at the foot of the throne, and--and I muffed the picture. No doubt the nervous tension of photographing kings on their thrones in their coronation-robes would be enough to cause an even calmer and more experienced photographer to misjudge tropical light conditions; at any rate I so under-exposed that strip of film that only those with keen eyesight can make out more than the general lay-out of the throne, and the king's white-gloved hands on his richly sampotted knees.

Lesser catastrophes have left broken hearts, but it did not so much matter about that throne-room picture after all, for, again at the merest suggestion of the commissaire and as promptly as a circus seal obeys its trainer, the king once more stepped to the spotlighted doorway of the palace, hat, robes, medals, and all, to give my camera another trial, finally posing with his French boss at his side. The commissaire was also in all his glory. Three great medals that proved he had done this, that, or some other brave deed--for he was not a man to have successfully bootlicked this, that, or the other high authority--blazed over his heart. His white uniform coat and black trousers had fancy neck, waist, wrist, and trouser-seam bands; he wore a sword, [312] with rich belt-tassels, and carried white gloves, though the white casque on his head

and the black shoes on the blistering pavement had nothing unusual about them. In short his dress was as out of keeping with his plebeian name of Mill--were names translated--as it was with the simple backwoods life about us. Finally his Majesty, of his own volition unless my eyes were momentarily off their guard, was graciously moved to insist that I also stand beside him in the doorway spotlight and let the camera again do its worst. In vain did I plead my unworthiness to be thus immortalized, like one of the boon companions of his Majesty, particularly in my vagabondish incongruities of rumpled semi-whites, once-tan shoes still half decided to be black, a necktie that insisted on the right to be temperamental in a tropical climate, a pocket bulging full of--how should I know what? The king, I long afterward noticed, wore quite a different face in these pictures in true royal garb than that of the genial boulevardier he presented in mufti, something like his own elder brother, with all the cares of state upon his shoulders."

23: Franck--335 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 292 Ethnic subgroup

"...the Kha coolies were not afraid of the rain--or at least they were less afraid of it than of the prince. They slashed down banana-leaves as umbrellas and kept right on going."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AMB
535
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Laotian Dancers

[facing title page]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

following a crowd. It was about two miles from the town's centre 527
and I passed several pagodas on the way, where carpenters were
working by lamplight in preparation for a future festival.

An enclosure had been built round the pagoda in which every 354
kind of light, from hurricane lamps to fluorescent tubes, had been 527
concentrated in an anarchic glare. The pagoda had hired a generator 545
for the occasion. There was no entrance fee, but young ladies with
demurely lowered eyes waited just inside to accept donations, in
return for which you received a candle, a posy of Japanese lilac and
two joss-sticks in a bamboo container. Among the many attractions
was a free theatre show, lasting for many hours, indistinguishable,
except to an expert, from the theatre of Siam. Actors remained on
the stage for what seemed interminable periods, occasionally advancing or retreating a few steps. Meanwhile their babies played
happily round their feet, and quite frequently a stage-hand would
walk across and interrupt a scene for a few seconds to pump up the
pressure in the hurricane lamps.

On a nearby platform the *lap ton* was being danced. Once again 292
it was the major attraction, but as it was still incorrect for Laotian 301
girls to dance in public, religious enterprise had arranged for 535
hostesses to be brought over from Siam, just across the river. The 562
pagoda hired the girls for the three nights and lodged them in a 527
nearby building. It cost a piastre to cavort round the stage for
about fifteen minutes with one of them. They were dressed in
hideous knee-length frocks, and some seemed to have permanent
waves. The backward Laotian girls in their dowdy finery, their
silk scarves, their skirts woven at the hem and waist-band with silver
and gold thread, and their abundant jewel-decked chignons, could
only look on wistfully. As I arrived the organizers were having 403
trouble with the microphone – indispensable adjunct to any social 527
occasion in the new Far East. A young man chanted a soft, nasal
melody which could only be heard within the *boum* enclosure itself.
But suddenly the electricians were successful with their tinkerings
and all Vientiane was flooded with a great, ogrish baying. The

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

slaughterers are obliged to work by flares, which is responsible, the 253
French think, for an unusually picturesque effect. It is 'not done' to 825
go along while the actual killing is in progress, but shortly after, when the carcasses are suspended from hooks to be cut up, and the workers, stripped to their loincloths, and garishly splashed, paddle about in a vermilion sea. Cars are stationed just beyond the reach of the steaming odours, and one is recommended to see the thing as one views a nude in a picture gallery — that is, divorced from all but a disinterested abstraction, in this case the colour.

The possibilities of Vientiane, it was clear, would be quickly 292
exhausted. Thao Nhouy, the Laotian Minister of Education, lent 301
me his jeep to see some of the surrounding villages, but the roads 535
were so appalling that it broke down after being driven for about five miles. He then suggested that I might like to see the local schoolgirls dancing, and when I said that I would be delighted, and asked for permission to take photographs, the girls were sent off home, on their bicycles, to get their best clothes. An hour or two later they began to trickle back, wearing their mothers' jewellery as well as their own and with their silk finery done up in paper parcels. When they had dressed and were ready they made a glittering sight. One girl wore a scarf ornamented with real gold thread said to be worth about £50 in English money. They danced under the supervision of a teacher whom I recognized as a professional actor, from the *boun*,[1] and who occasionally intervened when a girl failed in some minor feat, such as bending her fingers back at an expressive ninety degrees from the palm.

All these girls, dressed as they were like princesses, came from 493
shacks in the forest. Each one had a bicycle — infallibly fitted with 511
dynamo lighting, and sometimes 3-speed gears. It seems that a bicycle for his daughter is one of the essentials for which a Laotian will work. It is considered ill-bred and irreligious in Laos to work 241
more than is necessary. The father of a family cultivates an amount 461
of land, estimated, by a bonze who is expert in such matters, to be 511
792

1 [i.e., Laotian religious festival. -- Analyst] 255

149: Reinach-121a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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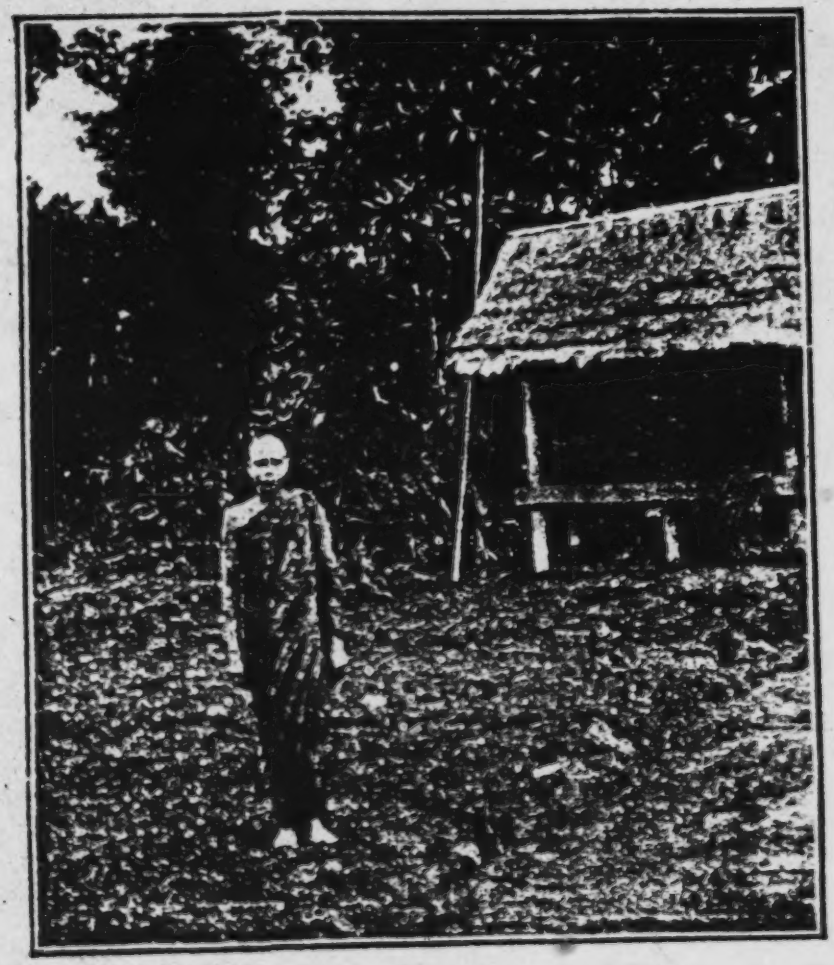

Fig. 42 /p. 161/ A young bonze.

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To dream of a woman and be awakened by the dream.
To covet the property of others.
To speak profanely of earth, wind, fire, water or anything whatsoever.

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Ordained bonzes, like novices and students, shave their heads, eyebrows and beards carefully and repeat this operation every two weeks. Their clothing, which is the same for all and is of a uniform yellow color obtained by means of a jackwood dye, consists of a sarong, a kind of very full skirt which is worn folded in pleats and extends from the waist to the ground, and which is held in at the waist by a narrow sash. A half-tunic passing under one arm is attached to the opposite shoulder, and is split on one side. The whole garment is kept in place by a sash worn crosswise, and is covered with a kind of toga in the antique manner which is severely draped.

Ordained bonzes wear in addition a piece of pleated cloth on the left shoulder on which sacred characters and various formulas are inscribed.

Bonzes obey a code which was brought to them from India together with the sacred books, and a part of which has been quoted above.

The code requires that their clothing should not be made of one piece of cloth which is whole and of full width, but that it be made of unmatched pieces sewn together. Since the code does not in any way specify the nature of the cloth, one sees bonzes' garments [164] of silk and velvet as well as of cotton and flannel, depending on the generosity of the donors.

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Failure to keep the vow of chastity is very severely punished. The guilty person is marched through the village or city and seated backwards on a horse or carried on a wattle while a minor functionary proclaims the fault committed aloud and beats on a gong. Children and even adults utter hoots and throw filth at the guilty party and his female accomplice, who follows a few steps behind him. When he gets back to the pagoda the bonze is degraded from his rank and then handed over to the civil authorities if there are any grounds for so doing (1).

[101
178]

(1) This custom has fallen into disuse. Faults committed by bonzes are treated much more indulgently in Laos than in Cambodia.

291 or less degree lightens its rather dark color. The skirt is a true cylinder, with the same diameter all along its length. A woman raises the skirt in a mass like a crown above her head, lets it slide down along her body and fastens it to her waist, without any hooks or fasteners, by tucking it in along her stomach, which is largely left bare. A brightly colored sash of cotton or silk is thrown over one shoulder, sometimes covering the breasts, to complete the costume.

"During the cold season, where there is a winter, a few women cover their trunks with a short jacket. This garment finds favor mainly outside the larger centers.

302 "A certain number of women wear their hair cut in Bressant style, in accordance with the style imported by the Siamese. The greater number wear their long hair rolled into a coil on the top or side of the head. Women's coiffures vary, moreover, depending on the region and on whether they are married or single.

292 "For great ceremonies, wealthy women wear skirts made of cloth spangled with gold or silver, and sashes of the same type.

"In Luang-Prabang they add a silk or velvet jacket decorated with embroidery on the neck, front and cuffs. Merchants can be found in this city who rent out costumes of this type, as well as gold jewelry, for great ceremonies to women who do not have any." (Le Laos français.)

301 Jewelry. Jewels find great favor among the [179] Laotians and
556 are used to complete and enrich their costume. They are not only ornaments, but also the most widespread method for realizing and preserving the liquid part of their fortune. In fact, the inhabitants transform the greater part of [Illustration here] their savings and profits into jewelry, and since they wear them on their body they are spared the use of strongboxes.

[583] The women and children are the ones who wear jewels most. They go into the trousseau of the young bride, and parents give them to their children as the latter grow up, thus putting together a sort of dowry for the time when they reach the age of marriage.

301 [180] Gold and silver are used in making jewelry, and precious
306 stones such as rubies, sapphires and various genuine or imitation gems are sometimes added as ornaments.

Gold is not used in all parts of Laos, but is mainly limited to the large centers located near regularly worked gold-bearing deposits.

[563] Doubtless because of the application of ancient sumptuary laws, silver is the only metal used by certain races—even by the Khas,

149: Reinach--135a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 45 /p.179/ Laotian princesses and their children, in Luang-Prabang

149: Reinach--156 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Ever since the death, singers and improvisers of both sexes accompanied by volunteer musicians had recounted the merits, qualities and exploits of the deceased at great length and with emphasis before a numerous audience which remained attentive and never grew tired. They boasted of his good deeds, listed his particular habits and tastes and enumerated his many children and grandchildren.

They dwelled with great satisfaction on the intimacies which he had taken with the fair sex up to quite an advanced age, and in support of their remarks showed brightly illuminated drawings painted on long streamers of glazed calico. These drawings, as much by the truth of the attitudes shown as by their outrageous realism, were the joy of the spectators. Both children and adults roared with laughter as they listened to the highly spicy commentary of the improvisers.

A curious fact was that this exhibition did not occasion any obscene or even suggestive gesture on the part of the audience.

[532]
[792]

The bonzes, who are the only art students in this country, are the ones who color these pictures. If published in our own land, the latter would certainly call down all the rigor of the law on their author.

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The day of cremation finally came, and the funeral proper began.

One of the sons of the deceased first set free two pairs of partridges and turtledoves, pet birds which he had had. The poor creatures were unaccustomed to flight and refused to leave their cage, but then beat their wings and clumsily escaped to a perch a few meters above ground on one of the trees [207] in the garden. A trail of ashes was spread all around the fence surrounding the house of the deceased in order, as popular belief has it, to prevent his spirit from escaping into the nearby region and tormenting the living.

[175]

A solid bamboo stretcher which twelve hardy men would carry on their shoulders was placed on the ground to await the catafalque. Attendance was heavy, and people of all ages came from a distance. They wore their holiday clothes with vivid, light and iridescent colors. They wore flowers in their ears and hair and carried multicolored streamers, wax candles and sticks of incense in their hands.

[292]

The members of the family, the officials of the Muong and the bonzes were also there in force.

The catafalque was carried from the house by hand and put down on the stretcher, which the porters then raised to their shoulders. At its base, near the feet of the deceased, was fastened a strip of calico

Tyibal Tai
Kha

291 The men's costume is like that of the Laotians. A few, however, have adopted the Burmese costume, turban and all, in which case they let their hair grow and roll it in a coil instead of having a brush cut.

The women wear a very long skirt with broad stripes running across it which is fastened beneath the breasts. The bust is covered by a closed jacket or bodice which is cut straight and made of cotton or silk [302] of varied colors. Their hair is rolled in a coil on the nape of the neck [301] or is held in place around the head by a narrow band of cloth and allowed to fall freely down the back. Both sexes wear metal cylinders in their ears, like the Lus, and silver jewelry.

[142] The Youns are more robust than their fellows, and also more industrious. The women are perhaps less pretty than the Laotian women, but they are just as friendly and merry.

276 [251] Both men and women chew betel, and also "Mieng" (green tea, fermented and salted). They smoke tobacco in enormous cigarettes rolled in dried banana leaves. [Illustration alongside text here]

The Youns are primarily farmers and livestock breeders. They excel in breeding and training oxen as draft animals.

212 We have seen that the Youns, although they speak the same lan-
292 guage as the Laotians, have their own form of writing which is generally used for religious writings. Their bonzes, who are highly learned for the most part, are renowned for their expert knowledge of the rites of the Buddhist religion.

101 Marriage, divorce, polygamy, births, funerals, celebrations and festivities are all the same among the Youns as among the Laotians, except for a few minor differences in detail which we need not mention here.

THE KHAS

619 Before entering into detail about the mores and customs of the
181 main Kha families, we shall again have recourse to the learned work by the Superior Resident in Laos in order to give a general sketch of this race which represents at least a third of the population.

[252] "They are to be found throughout the territory, and are divided into more than sixty families. As much as those who inhabit northern Laos are docile, manageable and respectful, so are those who inhabit the southern part of Laos proud, independent and warlike, particularly the tribes inhabiting the mountains which separate us from Annam.

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Fig. 68 /p.255/ Typical Kha dancers, at Muong-Son.
(Courtesy of M. Besson.)

349: Reinach--197a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochine
Laotiens AM8

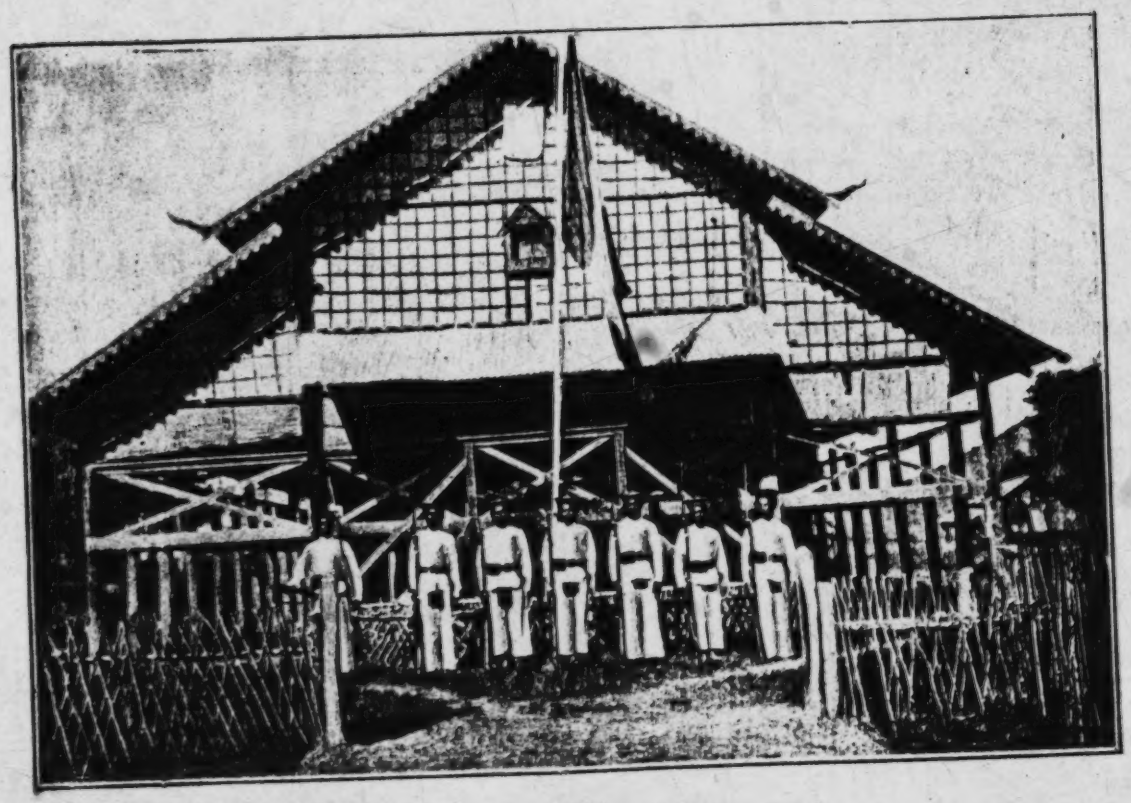

Fig. 75 /p.279/ Barrack of the militia at Khong.

149: Reinach--384a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

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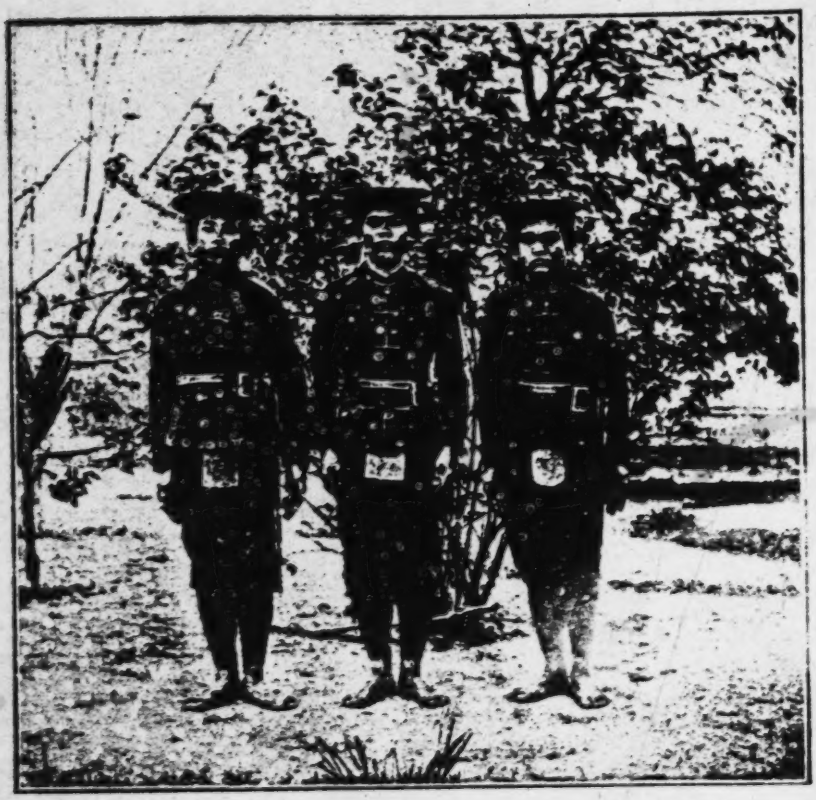

Fig. 120 /p. 507/ Militiamen at Muong-Son. (Courtesy of M. Besson

173: Deydier--14 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

The Laotian Bonze--The Monastic Rules.

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As in Ceylon, Cambodia and the other Buddhist countries, the Laotian who enters religious life does not make a perpetual vow. To become a bonze, all that is necessary is to be twenty years old, not to have killed, nor stolen, nor have any skin disease. When he is ordained, the young man agrees to observe the Buddhist rules which are: not to take life, not to steal, not to sin against virtue, not to lie, not to drink intoxicating liquors, not to eat outside of the prescribed hours, not to attend entertainments which excite the senses, not to touch gold, nor silver, etc.

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292

The bonze's head, chin and eyebrows are completely shaved. In principle he must shave twice a month. The garments of the bonze must not be made of one piece and their color must be yellow ochre or yellow. These two traditions have their origin in the history of the life of the Buddha. When he left the palace of his father, the Buddha cut his hair and exchanged his princely garments for those of a hunter. Now, the hunter was a poor man dressed in rags covered with the yellow ochre dust of the fields. Therefore, since that day, in memory of the first religious garments of the Buddha, tradition demands that all bonzes wear this costome. Texts are not agreed as to the color, the Saddharma-smrtyupasthana sutra giving a whole list of colors for the dyeing of religious garments. We will not delay over the discussions which have arisen amongst the various Buddhist schools over [25] this problem. We will limit ourselves to stating that in central Asia and in Tibet the bonzes wear brownish-red garments instead of the beautiful yellow color of the Laotian and Cambodian togas.

[795]

Bonzes get up very early in the morning. Having made their toilet and said their prayers, they leave about seven o'clock in single file to beg for their food. To be precise, we should add that the containers for the alms are usually carried by student bonzes [bonzillons]. After returning to the pagoda they have a brief meal, then they teach the student bonzes [bonzillons] to read and write, while others perform the manual tasks necessary to the upkeep of the monastery. About noon, the bonze has another meal which is the last of the day. He does not eat any food till the following morning. After the meal he must wash his fingers (he eats only with his right hand), and rinse out his mouth. Then he has a siesta, and at the close of the afternoon he works at his tasks as in the morning. In principle he must never go out alone; he is always accompanied by a brother monk to protect him from any temptation.

[871]

[264]

226 village. At the foot of the tree which is supposed to contain the
[182] dwelling of the genie, there is an altar about two meters high. Here, the Chao Muong, surrounded by all the fishermen, places five roasted chickens, two bottles of [73] rice alcohol, six coconuts, some betel
527 leaves, some areca nuts, some cakes, some small sticks of incense, some beeswax candles. These he offers to the genie, asking him to intervene in his favor so that the fishing this year be fruitful.

787 The genie is addressed by the intermediary of one of the village sorceresses. As soon as she is "possessed" by the genie, she goes into
527 a trance. She is then unconscious of what is happening around her and the genie answers through her mouth to the questions asked of her
226 by the fishermen. Invariably the genie's answer is the same: the catch will be fruitful if traditions peculiar to the fishing of the pa beuk are followed. The possessed woman, surrounded by a circle of fishermen, is at first standing up and is holding a cup in which are flowers, small sticks of incense, and ten beeswax candles. Her hands begin to
[242] tremble when the genie enters into her; she then sets the cup down at her feet, and, on top of her own clothes, puts on those of the fishermen who present her with them on a tray for the sacrifice: an ordinary sin, a cotton shirt dyed red, a belt and a turban also of cotton dyed red to which are added a metallic piaster, and two yards [brasse] of white cotton cloth for her personal use. After turning all around, she squats down, her bust moving in a gyrating motion, and from this moment she speaks in the name of the genie.

On the 10th day of the crescent moon the Chao Muong and the preachers arrive at Kao Lieu, "the nine windings" of the Mekong where there is a very famous genie who is much more powerful than that of Ban Si Khay. Forming a large procession, they fetch the village sorceress with parasols, lances, swords and gongs. Piled high on an offering tray are nine bars of silver, two kilograms of beeswax, ten candles, four coconuts, some betel leaves, some areca nuts, [74] a metal piaster, two yards [brasse] of white cloth, a raw hen's egg, a bottle of rice alcohol. The procession returns with the sorceress to the front of the altars which are regular houses, and everyone settles down in them. The entrance is to the west, that is, opposite
[182] the town. The offerings for the genie are four times greater than at Ban Si Khay as each altar receives nine roast chickens, nine bars of silver, four coconuts, some areca, some betel, candles, small sticks of incense. In addition, every three years, a buffalo is sacrificed, and in the years between, a pig. There are the same questions and the same answers as at Ban Si Khay.

23: Franck--299 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 293, 301, 644

"The king's wives, and the girls of the royal family and of the wealthier class, wear a kind of swimming-vest, usually white, in addition to the brilliant scarf. Perhaps his Majesty does not wish charms meant for his own eyes alone to become even visually common property. Yet the royal wives themselves on the way to market had about them a hint of coquetry, even toward a foreigner, which seemed to be totally lacking among their sisters of the bush. Many of the girls of Luang Prabang wear enormous silver or pewter anklets, some of them weighing twenty piastres or more. Others wore chains of ten-cent pieces. So many French silver piastres have been turned into these anklets, bracelets, the metal collars of the Miao, and other forms of adornment that it is little wonder Indo-China now uses almost exclusively paper money."

25: Brodrick--106 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 276, 293

"There stroll by the Laotian girls, lazily self-possessed and free-seeming, and, if it is a feast day, gaudy with satin and velvet and gold and silver thread and innumerable bangles and necklaces. Slung over their shoulders is not only the yellow scarf but the black and gold lacquer nécessaire containing the betel-chewing outfit--scissors, lime-pot, nuts and tube for the wax you smear on your lips so they may not be seared with the astringent juice."

149: Reinach--134 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"Costume. The Laotian costume is the langouti or Siamese 291
sampot. This is a long band of cloth without any seams, and between one and 1.2 meters wide by 2.5 to three meters long. The cloth is placed around the waist to make a skirt, with the opening in front. To keep the skirt in place a knot is made in front with part of the surplus cloth, and the loose ends of the cloth left hanging in front are rolled, passed between the legs and attached to the belt in the middle of the back. The skirt then takes the form of a pair of baggy trousers covering the front of the legs down to the knees and leaving the lower part of the thighs bare in back. The chest is left bare, and a sash is tied around the waist. This is the ordinary garment, and that worn by all the common people. The sash is often worn on the shoulder or around the chest, but it has to be removed and wound around the loins whenever one speaks to anyone who has a right to one's respect. Dandies wear shoes, stockings or socks, quite [177] frequently a short-sleeved or sleeveless knitted vest, a jacket made of white cotton or flannel, depending on the season, and a hat of any type whatever, or even a cap. But these are imported European [293] styles which have not become widespread. Umbrellas enjoy great favor." (Le Laos Français.)

This costume is a relatively recent import, for two hundred years 291
or so ago the Laotians on the banks of the river, as those of the interior still do today, wore a fairly long jacket [178] made of cotton 177
cloth woven in the land. The jacket was caught in at the waist by a sash and came down over a broad pair of trousers made of the same material. The whole garment was dark blue or almost black in color. On the head they wore a kind of turban made of silk or cotton of the same color.

The abandonment of this purely Thai costume was due to the influence of the Siamese and Cambodians during their incursions into Laos. It was also at this time that the Laotians formed the habit of [302] cutting their hair, which they had previously worn rolled in a coil on the back of the head.

"Laotian women wear a skirt which covers them from the hips 291
to the ankles and is made of silk interwoven with gold threads. These [286] skirts are rather dark in color, and the pattern is made up of vertical stripes which are close together and difficult to see. In Luang-Prabang the lower part of the garment is decorated with a flat trimming formed of two or three closely spaced gold galloons. At the top of the skirt a sash made of red cloth and embroidered to a greater

291 cover their bust with a small short jacket which is very close-fitting and bright in color. It has a heart-shaped opening on the chest and, like the men's jacket, is ornamented with galloons and passementerie. For celebrations and ceremonies Lu women wear a heavy turban on their head which is folded flat or pleated, shaped like a mitre and generally made of black silk spangled with gold.

301 Both men and women pierce the lobes of their ears [246] with a broad opening, into which they introduce hollow gold or silver cylinders which are sometimes as large as three centimeters in diameter.

306 Great lovers of jewelry, the Lus number skilled jewelers and goldsmiths among them who make hair coil plaques, ear cylinders, flat braided metal belts with wide chased and checkered buckles, bracelets, rings, hilts and sheaths for daggers and swords, etc. [Illustration alongside text here]

411 The Lus almost always wear daggers and swords. Each of them, so to speak, possesses a rifle, generally flintlock, which by the shape of
343 the stock, the length of the barrel and the many bands which adorn it greatly resembles the long Moukhala so dear to our Arabs in Algeria.

[361] Lu villages are clean, and the houses are arranged in a checkerboard pattern.

[33] The Lus have a high reputation as breeders of oxen and horses.

527 A great lover of celebrations and parades, this boisterous people sets off gunpowder at every opportunity, and there is no festival, private or public, so small that it is not accompanied by salvos and fireworks.

[77] From their contact with the Burmese the men have retained a [247] [Illustration] [248] [Blank page] [249] taste for dancing and for
535 sword fights mingled with dance steps in which they manifest a real grace and elegance.

"Among other forms of amusement, the men execute, with a truly remarkable suppleness and skill, sword dances which are perfectly elegant. Naked to the waist, with their trousers rolled up and bunched and a wooden sword in each hand whose cutting edge has been dipped in dye so that the thrusts will leave a mark, the two champions confront one another. Moulinets, parries and returns follow one another without apparent effort, and the movements are undulating and rapid but without any abruptness. The men seem to be caressing one another, not fighting, and yet the slashes leave their colored traces on the skin of the vanquished. Direct thrusts are forbidden, but the entire body from head to foot is fair game for the opponent. Thus during the

10: d'Orleans--263-264 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 276, ~~301,~~ 563, 777 Ethnic subgroups

"The boatmen [LSS: Kha from Laos] replace the waterpipe used on the Black River by the cigarette, which they put behind the ear after a few whiffs. They also chew betel. I remark that the majority of them wear a bracelet, made of two threads, on the right wrist. They tell us that it is a talisman--a kind of [264] luck charm, which is given to them when they leave their village to navigate or trade."

10: d'Orleans--287 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 286, 301, 462, 534

"As soon as we are fairly in Mekong, we stop on the left bank for luncheon, near a small village hidden among the cocoa-trees. A good road traverses it, and leads to the pagoda; the women are working at the cotton, carding it with a sort of small bow, spinning and weaving it; the children impress me by the fairness of their skin; a great many wear bracelets on their feet. Hanging in the courtyard of the pagoda, I notice a bell at least two yards long, made from the hollow trunk of a tree, it is struck every morning and evening."

10: d'Orleans--306 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 291, 301

"Compared to the Kas, the Laotians, as I have said, represent the dominant race. Taller than the former, and of a lighter complexion, the men have not in the shoulders and chest the purity of lines which one sees in the savages, and they generally go about bareheaded, with their hair cut close and clothed only in a tunic. The women wear merely a small petticoat, though some of them have a scarf of red or yellow silk over their breasts. Their bust is, as a rule, of good shape, and their hair, combed back, is worn in a small chignon. Despite their slightly flattened nose and the size of their mouth, some of the young girls strike one as pretty, but, as is always the case in the south and in the east, they soon show signs of age. They are very fond of jewellery, and generally wear earrings in the shape of a long nail of red gold, and bracelets of the same material."

10: d'Orleans--309 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 301

A LAOS FLOWER GIRL, LUANG PRABANG.

10: d'Orleans--325-326 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 301, 563, 697

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "It is a strange crowd, [326] and among the component parts of it are young girls bare to the waist, with a smile upon their lips, their arms encircled by several gold bracelets, and with a gardenia in their hair, while beside them, perchance looking much more frail and humble, is a Ka woman with a turban upon her head and a basket on her back, fastened by a piece of leather going round her forehead. Then there are groups of Kas, ten or twelve together, who walk about with a timid, startled look, and try to dodge my photographic apparatus. Following these, perhaps, is a convoy of prisoners, wearing black gaiters to avoid the friction of the rings in their chains, behind them being the Siamese soldiers, who have silk trousers, linen vest and felt hat. Their aspect and bearing denote the parvenu, and they display all the insolence of new masters, contrasting with the calm, dignified air of the portly bonzes, who, robed in yellow and escorted by their young pupils, proceed with measured and self-satisfied tread.

There is little sign of hurry in the crowd, and it is as much as they can do to move out of the way to let a royal elephant or the vehicle which is conveying a Minister to the Royal Council Chamber go by."

23: Franck--270-271 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians -1-2
116, 101, 291, 301, 481 Ethnic subgroup

"I had known the Miao, or, as the French call them, the Méo, in southwestern China, though there my acquaintance had been mainly with the 'Flowery Miao' in their extravagantly colorful dress. These were 'Black Miao', a much more independent tribe, and with almost no color in their black or dark-blue garments, sometimes set off by a dull red or purplish wine-colored scarf about the waist. Both men and women, often riding on horses, were a wilder tawnier type than their flowery relatives, their sturdy independence as plainly to be seen as their bare feet; for none of them, of either sex, had ever tortured their feet with shoes. Their sunburned hair and eyes were more nearly brown than black, and both sexes wore the hair long. Most of the men had carelessly wound turbans of dark cloth, a few of them wore Chinese skullcaps and dressed their hair Chinese fashion, old Chinese fashion, more exactly, for the majority still had queues, often hanging unbraided loosely about their shoulders. Another custom among these sturdy mountaineers is the wearing about their necks of heavy silver rings of all shapes. These are evidently concerned with their tribal superstitions as well as being their idea of combining adornment with safe banking. All silver money that falls into their hands is turned into rings; men, women, even the children, all wear them, large and small, from mere twisted silver wire to veritable horse-collars, some with open ends, some fastened with silver padlocks. Sometimes there are as many as half a dozen on a single neck, even of men on their way to work in the jungle. The richest

of them clanked like perambulating pawnshops whenever they moved.

A critical observer might have wondered why they do not spend for shirting some of the silver dollars they turn into neck-rings. For the men wear a shirt or jacket that covers [271] everything except what a shirt is most expected to cover, leaving bare a foot or more of the waist, with the navel as its central point of departure. But to every race its own ideas. The girls are not prudish, yet not at all forward. For their jackets, open almost to the navel and giving frequent half-glimpses of the breasts, were plainly designed for comfort rather than coquetry, as were their plaid skirts reaching hardly to their bare knees. The women walk with a powerful yet not ungraceful swing of the hips and a saucy flirting of their short pleated skirts, of which they are perhaps quite unconscious. Some of the men wear the tatooed blue panties ending in ruffles just below the knees that are common in Laos and the Shan States, but this is evidently due to extratribal influence, just as are the flowered silk gowns a few of the well-to-do among them wear after the fashion of the Chinese."

23: Franck--292-293 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 301, 304 Ethnic subgroup

"It was in one of these villages of the upper Nam-khan that I saw the first of still another race, the Kha, which some consider the real aborigines of these forested mountains of the ancient kingdom, as they are indubitably the oldest remaining inhabitants. They were wild but harmless-looking men, wearing earrings, their women adorned with still larger ones. A Kha woman down from the mountains--for like the Miao they are a highland people--had tattooed arms and, at least while the prince and I were [293] there, was completely clothed from neck to calves, in decided contrast to the river-village women."

23: Franck--299 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 293, 301, 644

"The king's wives, and the girls of the royal family and of the wealthier class, wear a kind of swimming-vest, usually white, in addition to the brilliant scarf. Perhaps his Majesty does not wish charms meant for his own eyes alone to become even visually common property. Yet the royal wives themselves on the way to market had about them a hint of coquetry, even toward a foreigner, which seemed to be totally lacking among their sisters of the bush. Many of the girls of Luang Prabang wear enormous silver or pewter anklets, some of them weighing twenty piastres or more. Others wore chains of ten-cent pieces. So many French silver piastres have been turned into these anklets, bracelets, the metal collars of the Miao, and other forms of adornment that it is little wonder Indo-China now uses almost exclusively paper money."

23: Franck--308 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 301, 751

"This cord decoration is something peculiar to Luang Prabang. The commissaire wore them also, as did his baby son; possibly his charming lady did too, though I am not sure that mere women are worthy of them. Cords are put about the wrists amid elaborate ceremonies and must be worn for at least seven days if they are to be effective in preserving the wearer from evil. The king himself had come to tie those about the wrists of the commissaire's newly born son and heir and thereby assure it constant good luck through all the menaces to health among European infants living in the tropics."

231 Franck--330[2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 301, 567 Ethnic subgroup

"Daylight showed the dense vegetation deeply green, a land as far from China as if we were on another continent, and disclosed our dozen carriers to be Kha wild from the mountains, picturesque figures even in a land as out of the ordinary as Laos.

Instead of tattooed pants of cloth sampots these primitive fellows wore short cloth breeches like running-pants, and some of them had more or less of an upper garment also. They showed no tattooing, or at least very little, but rattled with bracelets of glass and other cheap materials, and had large earrings of all shapes, preferably not mates and if possible utterly unlike on the two sides of the same head. The few who did not have earrings put flowers or vine strings or leaves in the holes in their ears to keep them ready for more prosperous times. They had the eyes and the ways of the real wild man; yet, being former slaves, they were more docile than the Laosians or Pwun."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

following a crowd. It was about two miles from the town's centre 527
and I passed several pagodas on the way, where carpenters were
working by lamplight in preparation for a future festival.

An enclosure had been built round the pagoda in which every 354
kind of light, from hurricane lamps to fluorescent tubes, had been 527
concentrated in an anarchic glare. The pagoda had hired a generator 545
for the occasion. There was no entrance fee, but young ladies with
demurely lowered eyes waited just inside to accept donations, in
return for which you received a candle, a posy of Japanese lilac and
two joss-sticks in a bamboo container. Among the many attractions
was a free theatre show, lasting for many hours, indistinguishable,
except to an expert, from the theatre of Siam. Actors remained on
the stage for what seemed interminable periods, occasionally ad-
vancing or retreating a few steps. Meanwhile their babies played
happily round their feet, and quite frequently a stage-hand would
walk across and interrupt a scene for a few seconds to pump up the
pressure in the hurricane lamps.

On a nearby platform the *lap ton* was being danced. Once again 292
it was the major attraction, but as it was still incorrect for Laotian 301
girls to dance in public, religious enterprise had arranged for 535
hostesses to be brought over from Siam, just across the river. The 562
pagoda hired the girls for the three nights and lodged them in a 527
nearby building. It cost a piastre to cavort round the stage for
about fifteen minutes with one of them. They were dressed in
hideous knee-length frocks, and some seemed to have permanent
waves. The backward Laotian girls in their dowdy finery, their
silk scarves, their skirts woven at the hem and waist-band with silver
and gold thread, and their abundant jewel-decked chignons, could
only look on wistfully. As I arrived the organizers were having 403
trouble with the microphone — indispensable adjunct to any social 527
occasion in the new Far East. A young man chanted a soft, nasal
melody which could only be heard within the *boun* enclosure itself.
But suddenly the electricians were successful with their tinkerings
and all Vientiane was flooded with a great, ogrish baying. The

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

slaughterers are obliged to work by flares, which is responsible, the 253
French think, for an unusually picturesque effect. It is 'not done' to 825
go along while the actual killing is in progress, but shortly after, when the carcasses are suspended from hooks to be cut up, and the workers, stripped to their loincloths, and garishly splashed, paddle about in a vermilion sea. Cars are stationed just beyond the reach of the steaming odours, and one is recommended to see the thing as one views a nude in a picture gallery – that is, divorced from all but a disinterested abstraction, in this case the colour.

The possibilities of Vientiane, it was clear, would be quickly 292
exhausted. Thao Nhouy, the Laotian Minister of Education, lent 301
me his jeep to see some of the surrounding villages, but the roads 535
were so appalling that it broke down after being driven for about five miles. He then suggested that I might like to see the local schoolgirls dancing, and when I said that I would be delighted, and asked for permission to take photographs, the girls were sent off home, on their bicycles, to get their best clothes. An hour or two later they began to trickle back, wearing their mothers' jewellery as well as their own and with their silk finery done up in paper parcels. When they had dressed and were ready they made a glittering sight. One girl wore a scarf ornamented with real gold thread said to be worth about £50 in English money. They danced under the supervision of a teacher whom I recognized as a professional actor, from the *boun*,[1] and who occasionally intervened when a girl failed in some minor feat, such as bending her fingers back at an expressive ninety degrees from the palm.

All these girls, dressed as they were like princesses, came from 493
shacks in the forest. Each one had a bicycle – infallibly fitted with 511
dynamo lighting, and sometimes 3-speed gears. It seems that a bicycle for his daughter is one of the essentials for which a Laotian will work. It is considered ill-bred and irreligious in Laos to work 241
more than is necessary. The father of a family cultivates an amount 461
of land, estimated, by a bonze who is expert in such matters, to be 511
792

1 [i.e., Laotian religious 255
festival. -- Analyst]

291 or less degree lightens its rather dark color. The skirt is a true cylinder, with the same diameter all along its length. A woman raises the skirt in a mass like a crown above her head, lets it slide down along her body and fastens it to her waist, without any hooks or fasteners, by tucking it in along her stomach, which is largely left bare. A brightly colored sash of cotton or silk is thrown over one shoulder, sometimes covering the breasts, to complete the costume.

"During the cold season, where there is a winter, a few women cover their trunks with a short jacket. This garment finds favor mainly outside the larger centers.

302 "A certain number of women wear their hair cut in Bressant style, in accordance with the style imported by the Siamese. The greater number wear their long hair rolled into a coil on the top or side of the head. Women's coiffures vary, moreover, depending on the region and on whether they are married or single.

292 "For great ceremonies, wealthy women wear skirts made of cloth spangled with gold or silver, and sashes of the same type.

"In Luang-Prabang they add a silk or velvet jacket decorated with embroidery on the neck, front and cuffs. Merchants can be found in this city who rent out costumes of this type, as well as gold jewelry, for great ceremonies to women who do not have any." (Le Laos français.)

301 556 Jewelry. Jewels find great favor among the [179] Laotians and are used to complete and enrich their costume. They are not only ornaments, but also the most widespread method for realizing and preserving the liquid part of their fortune. In fact, the inhabitants transform the greater part of [Illustration here] their savings and profits into jewelry, and since they wear them on their body they are spared the use of strongboxes.

[583] The women and children are the ones who wear jewels most. They go into the trousseau of the young bride, and parents give them to their children as the latter grow up, thus putting together a sort of dowry for the time when they reach the age of marriage.

301 306 [180] Gold and silver are used in making jewelry, and precious stones such as rubies, sapphires and various genuine or imitation gems are sometimes added as ornaments.

Gold is not used in all parts of Laos, but is mainly limited to the large centers located near regularly worked gold-bearing deposits.

[563] Doubtless because of the application of ancient sumptuary laws, silver is the only metal used by certain races—even by the Khas,

149: Reinach--136 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

who work gold mines--and by the inhabitants of several regions, whose state of fortune would nevertheless enable them to use a more precious metal.

Jewelry and examples of the goldsmith's art are found in different forms and types which vary greatly with the region and race, as will be seen by the nomenclature given in Chapter IX.

Food. The Laotian scorns the pleasures of the table, and is generally a moderate eater and drinker. Steam-cooked glutinous rice forms the basis of his food supply. To this he adds salt, peppers, various other spices, fresh or preserved fish, etc. Besides these, but less frequently, his day-to-day diet may be varied with poultry, eggs, buffalo meat, beef and pork, as well as venison. To be sure, it is mainly on the occasion of public or private festivals, which are fairly numerous in the course of the year, that the Laotian improves on his usual rather frugal fare in this way.

The customary beverage is water which may be taken directly from the rivers or first be hastily decanted into jars or water-coolers of porous earthenware. In general, Laotians prefer water taken directly from the river to that which has been filtered. Finally, the people of Laos consume rice brandy which is obtained by distillation, and a kind of beer made by cold fermentation of rice mixed with paddy husks.

The use of these drinks, aside from rare exceptions, is reserved for holidays.

Physical appearance, character, occupations. The Laotian's character is, in general, mild, friendly and happy. His physiognomy is [181] open and smiling. Not quarrelsome by nature, he even shrinks from coming to blows in extreme cases and prefers to end a dispute with an outburst of laughter rather than with blows.

Since, all in all, it has few needs and inhabits a land with luxuriant vegetation which is abundantly favored with products to be had for the scavenging, this happy people can easily satisfy its needs and be content with its fate. [Illustration alongside text here.]

It is assuredly lazy, but out of indifference much rather than out of any deliberate intent. It cannot grasp the advantage or utility of a regular and prolonged effort beyond what is strictly necessary to provide it with a living and a few distractions to which, in reality, its own joyous disposition makes the greatest contribution.

To the men are reserved the chief tasks, which have a more virile and noble character than those which are the women's lot.

304 produced with an implement bearing several fine points which are dipped in India ink or diluted cinnabar. Depending on the coloring matter used, the tattoos are dark blue or brick red in color. The tattoo artists give their taste and fancy free rein and produce the most varied designs which, for example, represent intertwined snakes, dragons, lions, tigers and imaginary animals. Oftentimes there is only one overall color which makes the tattooed person look like a man wearing a close-fitting blue bathing suit.

304 885 The practice of tattooing is a very old one and its origin is lost in [186] dark antiquity. It is at once a kind of coquetry and a proof of courage because of the suffering which the operation causes and the dangers it involves in a land where antisepsis is unknown to the natives and where the tools used are as dirty as the operators. [Illustration here]

In some localities a man who is not tattooed is regarded as lacking in virility, and as a sign of his inferiority he may not bathe upstream from women.

562 304 Laotian women are not tattooed. This custom is practiced only by the Youn and Kha women, where tattoos are usually limited to lines, stars or reptiles on the hands, imitations of rings on the fingers, etc.

• 301 [187] Personal adornment. In all seasons both men and women wear flowers on their ears or in a string around their coil of hair. This gracious custom, which flatters both the eye and the sense of smell, must be extremely ancient in origin. It is to be found in many parts of the globe which have no relation to Laos, and particularly in Polynesia. [Illustration here]

346 531 Pagodas. Laotian pagodas are as numerous as they are varied in respect to type of construction, architecture, dimensions and ornamentation. In sparsely populated villages and poor muongs the pagodas are built like the houses, either of wood, thatch or bamboo lattice, although with greater care and a few slight additional decorations. Elsewhere, in the larger centers, the pagodas are built of brick, roofed with tile, enhanced by many-colored and gilded ornaments of carved wood and embellished with pseudo-sculptured motifs made of staff. On the inside, the walls are covered with brightly colored frescoes [188] which often picture, against a gold background, religious or warlike scenes taken from the Ramayâna and other more realistic ones which often border on obscenity.

291 the Deng-Thais, is applied to the edges of the gown. It is further
563 ornamented [233] on the outside edge opposite the buttonholes with colored silk embroidery which does not go down below the waist.

This garment is also folded in half lengthwise and worn rolled around the body with the sleeves left hanging.

302 The women wear their hair parted down the middle in front and rolled into a sort of long tassel behind which is contained within
• 301 the folds of a little turban. The latter is wound above the forehead and the free end inserted under the first turn, on the nape of the neck. This headdress is quite similar to that of the Annamite women in Tonkin.

In certain regions of Laos, Thai women wind their hair into a sort of coil which girls wear loosely down their neck and betrothed or married women wear on top of the head. Thai jewelry is made of heavy silver and is of the same type as Laotian jewelry. The men wear bracelets on their wrists.

262 Food. The Thai diet is like that of the Laotians, but they prefer non-glutinous white rice and use chopsticks like the Chinese and
264 Annamites.

The use of betel is quite widespread among the Thais, but in
276 contrast to the Laotians they keep their teeth white. The Thais smoke the oily, opiated tobacco of Tonkin and China in bamboo waterpipes whose tiny bowls only contain a small pinch of tobacco. They also smoke a local variety of tobacco, either in cigarettes or in pipes with a highly worked clay bowl into which a long stem ending in a glass or jade mouthpiece is inserted.

156 Character. Although serious and reflective, the Thais have a vivacious and friendly character. They are somewhat cold in appearance, but are sound friends and highly affable when one gets to know them better.

[701] Gentler and more timid than the Laotians, they have no taste for the art of war and it is difficult to get them to stay in the native militia.

433 They are very self-seeking and much more miserly than the Lao-
438 tians. [234] It should be noted, moreover, that since they produce everything themselves and are a people of farmers and livestock
156 breeders, they do not have, by virtue of their ever sedentary occupations, the opportunities which these latter have to enjoy fairly high profits resulting from commercial transactions, nor the special habits which contact with different races gives.

181 The Thais love pleasure and celebrations. Guaranteed their daily
461

149: Reinach--179 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Tribal Tai

Men's and women's clothing varies little in [244] form from that of the Thais. Under their jacket, however, the women wear a breast-cloth attached to the neck and waist by cords, like the Annamite and Tonkinese women. 291

The Lus. Two centuries or so ago the Lus, who also belong to the Thai race, used to live in the "Shan states" between the Salouen and the Nam-Hon, where they were surrounded by a drifting population composed of Burmese, Kunes, Ngieous, etc. [Illustration alongside text here.] 619 175

Following emigrations, they came to Laos and formed two distinct agglomerations.

Some Lu families have settled in the course of this century on the territory of Luang-Prabang. Today these Lus form villages composed exclusively of people of their race, but live on good terms with the Laotians, whose language and customs they have adopted. [563]

In the old Lu kingdom of Muong-Sing, on the other hand, this people has retained its habits, that is to say its character and temperament are like those of the Burmese. 101

There the Lu is boastful, full of arrogance, a braggart and insolent, but a little firmness is enough to humble his pride. [105]

Lus have a clear complexion, delicate features, keen eyes and a swinging stride. The men are generally tattooed from the calf of the leg to above the navel, and they also have tattoos on their chest, [245] neck, shoulders and arms which are generally red and in the shape of squares with rounded corners. They have long hair rolled in a coil on top or slightly to one side of the head. This coil is wrapped in an enormous turban which they wear tilted over one ear. Many of them have a moustache. This they train upwards, a trait which gives them a conquering air, and to keep it up they smear it with wax. [Illustration alongside text here] 142 304 302

The men's costume consists of a pair of full trousers and a short jacket buttoned along the side. It is made of cotton and is dark blue, almost black, in color. The bottoms of the trousers, the edges of the jacket, the cuffs of the sleeves and the armholes are ornamented with three galloons (blue, white and red) which are quite narrow. Their holiday clothes are often made of silk in varied colors. 291

The women wind their hair into a heavy coil on top of the head and on the side of the coil they place a broad circular plaque of chased silver. They wear skirts like the Laotian women, but the stripes are very broad, run crosswise and are in bright colors. They [302] [301]

291 cover their bust with a small short jacket which is very close-fitting and bright in color. It has a heart-shaped opening on the chest and, like the men's jacket, is ornamented with galloons and passementerie. For celebrations and ceremonies Lu women wear a heavy turban on their head which is folded flat or pleated, shaped like a mitre and generally made of black silk spangled with gold.

301 Both men and women pierce the lobes of their ears [246] with a broad opening, into which they introduce hollow gold or silver cylinders which are sometimes as large as three centimeters in diameter.

306 Great lovers of jewelry, the Lus number skilled jewelers and goldsmiths among them who make hair coil plaques, ear cylinders, flat braided metal belts with wide chased and checkered buckles, bracelets, rings, hilts and sheaths for daggers and swords, etc. [Illustration alongside text here]

411 The Lus almost always wear daggers and swords. Each of them, so to speak, possesses a rifle, generally flintlock, which by the shape of
243 the stock, the length of the barrel and the many bands which adorn it greatly resembles the long Moukhala so dear to our Arabs in Algeria.

[361] Lu villages are clean, and the houses are arranged in a checkerboard pattern.

[33] The Lus have a high reputation as breeders of oxen and horses.

A great lover of celebrations and parades, this boisterous people
527 sets off gunpowder at every opportunity, and there is no festival, private or public, so small that it is not accompanied by salvos and fireworks.

[77] From their contact with the Burmese the men have retained a [247] [Illustration] [248] [Blank page] [249] taste for dancing and for
535 sword fights mingled with dance steps in which they manifest a real grace and elegance.

"Among other forms of amusement, the men execute, with a truly remarkable suppleness and skill, sword dances which are perfectly elegant. Naked to the waist, with their trousers rolled up and bunched and a wooden sword in each hand whose cutting edge has been dipped in dye so that the thrusts will leave a mark, the two champions confront one another. Moulinets, parries and returns follow one another without apparent effort, and the movements are undulating and rapid but without any abruptness. The men seem to be caressing one another, not fighting, and yet the slashes leave their colored traces on the skin of the vanquished. Direct thrusts are forbidden, but the entire body from head to foot is fair game for the opponent. Thus during the

Tribal Tai
Kha

291 The men's costume is like that of the Laotians. A few, however, have adopted the Burmese costume, turban and all, in which case they let their hair grow and roll it in a coil instead of having a brush cut.

The women wear a very long skirt with broad stripes running across it which is fastened beneath the breasts. The bust is covered by a closed jacket or bodice which is cut straight and made of cotton or silk of varied colors. Their hair is rolled in a coil on the nape of the neck or is held in place around the head by a narrow band of cloth and allowed to fall freely down the back. Both sexes wear metal cylinders in their ears, like the Lus, and silver jewelry.

[302] [301]

The Youns are more robust than their fellows, and also more industrious. The women are perhaps less pretty than the Laotian women, but they are just as friendly and merry.

[142]

276 [251] Both men and women chew betel, and also "Mieng" (green tea, fermented and salted). They smoke tobacco in enormous cigarettes rolled in dried banana leaves. [Illustration alongside text here]

The Youns are primarily farmers and livestock breeders. They excel in breeding and training oxen as draft animals.

212 We have seen that the Youns, although they speak the same language as the Laotians, have their own form of writing which is generally
292 used for religious writings. Their bonzes, who are highly learned for the most part, are renowned for their expert knowledge of the rites of the Buddhist religion.

101 Marriage, divorce, polygamy, births, funerals, celebrations and festivities are all the same among the Youns as among the Laotians, except for a few minor differences in detail which we need not mention here.

THE KHAS

619 Before entering into detail about the mores and customs of the main Kha families, we shall again have recourse to the learned work
181 by the Superior Resident in Laos in order to give a general sketch of this race which represents at least a third of the population.

[252] "They are to be found throughout the territory, and are divided into more than sixty families. As much as those who inhabit northern Laos are docile, manageable and respectful, so are those who inhabit the southern part of Laos proud, independent and warlike, particularly the tribes inhabiting the mountains which separate us from Annam.

149: Reinach--184 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

291 Men's clothing consists of a jacket and pair of trousers which have the same shape as those of the Lus and are made of coarse cotton cloth manufactured locally. Their headgear is a turban cut from a piece of Turkey-red cotton.

For work, clothing is generally reduced to a narrow strip of cloth forming a belt, one of the ends of which is passed between the legs and fastened in the middle of the back.

During the cold season a jacket is added to this loin-cloth.

The women wear a skirt of the Laotian type which is fastened under the armpits so that it does not come down below the calves of the legs. A short jacket completes their costume. On their head they wear a turban which is generally dark in color. [Illustration alongside text here]

301 Jewelry. Both sexes have silver or copper jewelry such as wide stiff neckbands, bracelets, rings, buttons, clasps, etc. Like the Lus and the Youns, the Khas pierce the lobes of their ears. Often the holes are of such dimensions that a roll of leaves or a bouquet of flowers can be inserted in them.

262 Food. Their diet is very like that of the Laotians and Thais. When there is a shortage of rice its place is taken, until the following harvest, by yams, taros, bamboo sprouts, banana flowers, etc.

462 Occupations. Women and children are given the hardest tasks imaginable, and it is unusual to meet them without baskets on their backs. The men carry only their bag, their sword, their rifle and their pipe.

595 Marriage. Divorce. Adultery. Polygamy is widespread among the Khas, and the number of wives a man possesses is the sign of his wealth. For, regarded as they are rather like beasts of burden and working constantly, the more numerous these wives are the more they will produce.

584 [254] The rules for marriage preliminaries closely resemble the Laotian customs and the ceremony itself, although much less splendid, comprises the same rites. To be sure, the role of the bonzes is filled here by "Pho-Tao," that is to say elders or sorcerers.

586 Divorce may be requested by the wife, or one of the wives, for personal reasons. It may also take place by mutual consent. Finally,
684 it is compulsory in the case of adultery, since the guilty woman must marry her accomplice.

Contrary to what is the case elsewhere, adultery on the part of the husband is punished by a double fine awarded to his wife's family

Kha

caught even on the other side of the watershed and then delivered as 567
slaves to the Burmese, Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian merchants of the low country. The barbarity of their mores has been greatly lessened since our arrival in Laos, but traces of it still exist and manifest themselves in rivalries and attacks between tribes. The police force which [260] we have organized in the land in the form of a native militia, the influence of the missionaries who have settled among the turbulent Khas, and also the help and example of the tribes which have submitted to our tutelary authority will soon cause this abnormal state of things to disappear. Finally, our increasingly effective occupation of the land, which has been completed by the organization of the province of Darlac, and the strict protectorate which we exercise over Cambodia, the chief purchaser of slaves, have begun to bring order in an effective fashion to this shameful traffic in human flesh (1).

(1) See § I of Chapter XI.

It should be noted that the Djarais and the Rades are the only 197
Khas who speak Cham, that is to say a greatly corrupted Malay tongue which they have preserved for centuries.

The men's clothing consists of a loin-cloth, and that of the 291
women consists only of a short skirt knotted around the waist or under the armpits, the torso left bare.

Both men and women have long hair wound in a coil. Both 301
sexes, but mainly the men, wear jewels of a crude shape, made of tin or brass, in the form of bracelets, neckbands, ear pendants or cylinders and hairpins. They are also very fond of glass bead necklaces.

These Khas smoke tobacco, either dried or green, as well as 276
bamboo shavings impregnated with nicotine. They make terra cotta pipes with highly worked bowls and also use imported brass pipes. They do not blacken their teeth.

From the point of view of diet and housing, practically the same 511
conditions obtain as we have seen above except that the houses are built with greater care and arranged in the form of a circular camp.

In the middle of Cedang and Rognao villages there is a large 342
house some twenty to thirty meters long by twelve to fifteen meters 883
wide, with a high pointed roof. This is the common house where all the boys of the locality live from the age of nine or ten until the day of their marriage.

149: Reinach--190 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Hill Tribes

Almost all are of low birth and are crude and illiterate. They have married Thai or Kha women and thereby founded a stock of halfbreeds. This race is destined to merge with the mass of the Laotians or Thai population and through successive crossings lose all distinctive characteristics. 619 563

The Meos. The Meos are also Yunnanese who have retained a degree of independence and have not been marked with the Chinese imprint like the Hos or adopted baggy clothes and the custom of wearing their hair only in a braid.

They are distributed in groups of a few families each of which live on the peaks of the mountains in northern Laos and the Sib-Song Chau-Thais. They can be divided into three great families--the blacks, the whites and the reds--which owe their names to the color of certain parts of the women's costume. Thus among the black and red Meos skirts or jackets are light blue in color, but the latter have a wide collar ornamented with black or red embroidery. Finally, a small turban with black and white checks or of red material, depending on the case, completes their garb. Among the white Meos, the women wear a skirt and jacket of unbleached cloth, with a white and blue embroidered collar. [361] 291

The men's clothing is light blue in all cases. It is composed of a broad pair of trousers which come down somewhat below the calf, where the legs are drawn tight, and of a short, tight-sleeved jacket which buttons down one side.

A turban winds around the head and covers their long hair, which may be rolled or braided. 301

The women's hair is parted and wound on the upper part of the nape of the neck in a coil. (1)

(1) See Appendix XIX.

The Meos practice ancestor worship primarily, like many Asian peoples. They have no pagodas or bonzes, but elders perform the office of priests and also administer justice. 769

[268] The Meos bury their dead, and make animal sacrifices on the occasion of births, marriages and deaths so as to gain the favor of the "Phis" or multiple and varied genii in whose existence and influence they believe.

Marriage is as simple as among the other peoples of Laos. [581]

Divorce may occur either through mutual consent or in the case of adultery. [586]

149: Reinach--191 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Hill Tribes

595 There is polygamy among the Meos, and the Meo women do not enjoy any higher regard than the Kha women.

[101] The Yaos. The Yaos have the same origin as the Meos, and are strikingly like them in many respects. Their mores, their beliefs and their habits are identical.

619 As we have seen above, the Yaos are divided into three varieties, these being the Lantenes, the Khao and the Ao-Tchaine.

291 The Lantenes (blacks) wear broad trousers, a long smock buttoning
302 at the side and a turban, all made of black cottonstuff. They wear their hair long and either wound under a turban or braided in Chinese style.

[342] Their houses are like those of the Meos and shelter several families, each of which has its own quarters. They are generally clean and well kept-up.

593 The mores of the Lantene Yaos are patriarchal, and these folk
562 are monogamous. The women are very reserved and do not let themselves be seen much by strangers. They enjoy a certain respect and are treated with consideration by their husbands.

231 The Lantenes are great livestock breeders, and cultivate the opium
241 poppy in addition to rice and maize. They are skilled hunters of wild
224 animals, and each man owns a rifle from which he is rarely separated.

[212] Besides a dialect peculiar to them, they speak Quoan-hoa (a
[198] Cantonese idiom), and many of them can write Chinese characters.

101 The Khao Yaos are less outgoing than their fellows and do not greet strangers with as much good will.

291 The men's clothing is like that of the Lantenes, [269] but the women are garbed in a different manner and wear their hair in a special way which has earned their tribe the name "Khao" (horns).

Over a pair of black trousers ornamented with colored embroidery and held in place by leggings, Khao Yao women wear a tunic which comes down to the knees but the flaps of which are fastened to the belt. This tunic also has colored embroidery on the chest, back, neck and cuffs, and is held shut with wide silver hooks.

302 Their hairdress consists of a coil which is smeared with wax and lacquer to hold it in place and in which a wooden socket is imbedded. A light bamboo framework is inserted into the socket, and over this is spread a red cloth or a black cloth embroidered in red. The women thus appear to have two horns on their head.

301 Silver jewelry, neckbands, bracelets and ear pendants are worn by the Khao Yaos.

149: Reinach--422 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[124]

APPENDIX XXI

NOTES ON GOLD-BEARING DEPOSITS

1. DEPOSITS OF NAM-BENG AND NAM-NGAO

(District of Pak-Ta--Luang-Prabang)

316 These deposits, which are situated in the principality of Luang-Prabang a hundred kilometers west of the capital, are made up of alluvial beds in the valleys formed by the left-bank tributaries of the Mekong (Nam-Beng, Nam-Ngao, Nam-Ta, etc.).

[643 556] Before our settlement in Laos, these deposits had long constituted part of the patrimony of the kings of Luang-Prabang. It was from here that they extracted all the gold needed not only to pay their tributes of vassaldom to the Chinese, Annamite and Siamese sovereigns, but also to make purchases in Bangkok and cast gold articles and massive pieces of jewelry for their family, as well as the insignia of officials.

Our own prospecting trips to these deposits in 1893 and 1894 yielded, merely by washing in a wash-trough and without amalgamation, "crude gold" which was clearly visible in the form of nuggets, grains and dust. Moreover, from natives who worked these deposits we acquired nuggets which were obtained by means of this same rudimentary process and which varied in weight from two to forty-five grams. We even saw nuggets of unrolled "or crespelé" weighing [301] 140 and 225 grams, which came from the same place. What is more, it is not unusual to meet children wearing nuggets hung around their neck like amulets--nuggets which vary in volume from the size of a hazelnut to that of a pressed fig.

The gentle slope and short length of the valleys where the deposits are found, and the proximity of the mountains from which the gold comes, are precious indications of the presence of outcropping lodes. Moreover, the appearance of the crespelé metal, as if it were spongy, [125] to which particles of quartz still adhere, is a confirmation of this hypothesis.

In 1895 a corporation called the "Mining and agricultural company of Laos" ["Société minière et agricole du Laos"], with a capital of 150,000 francs, was established in Paris through our efforts. It sent M. Isnard, a mining engineer, to the locality to study the deposits of gold and precious stones which we had prospected.

A corporation with a capital of several millions was later to take the place of the study group.

173: Deydier--14 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

The Laotian Bonze--The Monastic Rules. 792

As in Ceylon, Cambodia and the other Buddhist countries, the 785
Laotian who enters religious life does not make a perpetual vow. To become a bonze, all that is necessary is to be twenty years old, not to have killed, nor stolen, nor have any skin disease. When he is ordained, the young man agrees to observe the Buddhist rules which are: not to take life, not to steal, not to sin against virtue, not to lie, not to drink intoxicating liquors, not to eat outside of the prescribed hours, not to attend entertainments which excite the senses, not to touch gold, nor silver, etc.

The bonze's head, chin and eyebrows are completely shaved. 301
In principle he must shave twice a month. The garments of the bonze 292
must not be made of one piece and their color must be yellow ochre or yellow. These two traditions have their origin in the history of the life of the Buddha. When he left the palace of his father, the Buddha cut his hair and exchanged his princely garments for those of a hunter. Now, the hunter was a poor man dressed in rags covered with the yellow ochre dust of the fields. Therefore, since that day, in memory of the first religious garments of the Buddha, tradition demands that all bonzes wear this costome. Texts are not agreed as [795]
to the color, the Saddharma-smrtyupasthana sutra giving a whole list of colors for the dyeing of religious garments. We will not delay over the discussions which have arisen amongst the various Buddhist schools over [25] this problem. We will limit ourselves to stating that in central Asia and in Tibet the bonzes wear brownish-red garments instead of the beautiful yellow color of the Laotian and Cambodian togas.

Bonzes get up very early in the morning. Having made their toilet and said their prayers, they leave about seven o'clock in single file to beg for their food. To be precise, we should add that the containers for the alms are usually carried by student bonzes [bonzillons]. After returning to the pagoda they have a brief meal, then they teach [871]
the student bonzes [bonzillons] to read and write, while others perform the manual tasks necessary to the upkeep of the monastery. About noon, the bonze has another meal which is the last of the day. He does not eat any food till the following morning. After the meal he [264]
must wash his fingers (he eats only with his right hand), and rinse out his mouth. Then he has a siesta, and at the close of the afternoon he works at his tasks as in the morning. In principle he must never go out alone; he is always accompanied by a brother monk to protect him from any temptation.

342 bedrooms separated from each other by partitions or curtains, the
[178] other is the communal room. In the space between the inner and outer beam, and not limited by the longitudinal partition, is the altar on which there are always one or several buddhas. It is placed on the side of the bedrooms, on the "soung" side of the dwelling, that is on the side opposite the entrance. The dimensions of the dwellings vary between six and twenty-four meters long by four to nine meters wide.

342 The houses are most often open to the east or to the north. They may also overlook what is passing by in the streets or the paths and,
823 as the case may be, the whole length of the river. For there is a superstition which forbids building "across the current, " which is considered as unconquerable and invincible, and it would be dangerous to defy it.

343 The outhouses consist of an adjoining kitchen and a granary, a few meters removed from the principal dwelling. Near this granary
[252] is found the picturesque rice pestle (khok khao) which the women work with their feet.

343 [62] All the villagers participate in building the house. When the propitious day and moment have been determined, the owner feeds
476 everybody the whole time the house is being built.

Tattooing

301 Every self-respecting Laotian must be tattooed. The absence of
885 tattooing is a sign of mental and moral, therefore of social, inferiority.
562 As a general rule, however, the Laotian woman is not tattooed. This custom is found only among the women of Youan, Kha or Lu.

The Laotian is tattooed chiefly on his thighs, forearms and chest.
301 The tattooing on the thighs is so close together that from a distance a tattooed man looks as if he were wearing close-fitting blue shorts. The Laotians are called "white bellies" as opposed to those who are tattooed down to the navel and are then called black bellies. The colors used for tattooing are indigo blue, red, and black made from a mixture of lampblack diluted with buffalo gall.

Those who have been tattooed are convinced that the signs they
[751] wear give them certain supernatural powers, particularly making them invulnerable to bullets and snake bites. During the events of 1941 Siamese soldiers were found wearing white cotton vests covered with cabalistic signs closely related to tattooing. These are a kind of removable tattooing intended to protect those who are wearing them.

301 The use of these magic shirts is also known in Cambodia. The designs
262 usually consist of flowers, geometric figures, tools, flowers, vegetable
751 branches, and of animals. Sometimes pictures drawn from Buddhist iconography can be recognized.

[174] Apparently the origin of tattooing is to be found in totemism. By
301 analyzing the Laotian tattooing designs, [63] it has been possible to recognize traces of sun worship, as well as the mythological role of the dog. But at the present time Laotians seem only to value tattooing as an artistic ornament.

The Divining Rod.

787 Among the curios which the tourist looks for in Laos, the most
823 easily found is a carved bamboo cane. Immediately below the head, which is often of chased silver, there is a sort of checkered diagram
825 made up of twenty-five little squares. Below this divining diagram are found, in succession from top to bottom, a zebu, a horse, a rakshasha or ogre, a tiger, a buffalo, a deer, an elephant. These animals correspond respectively to the days of the week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

It should be noted that, except for the buffalo and the deer, the others are the symbolical animals of the zodiac and correspond to the different cardinal points.

The Laotians consult these figures at different actions of their lives: choice of a wedding day, the hour for burial, etc. The diagram is used to calculate the hour, and the animals indicate the cardinal point which should be followed.

This cane is also found among the Man.

[64] THE NEW YEAR AND THE FEASTS OF THE FIFTH MONTH

527 The Laotian New Year always takes place between the 6th day
805 of the crescent moon of the 5th month and the 5th day of the crescent moon of the 6th month. The very core of the feast includes three days: the last day of the past year, the intermediate day and the New Year's day, properly so-called. The most picturesque ceremonies are those of Luang Prabang, for there tradition has been best preserved.

527 The programme of the feasts begins with a procession of royal elephants. Their heads ornamented with red and black painted designs, their drivers dressed in red tunics with yellow lapels, on their backs, the fifteen elephants go to the pagodas of Xieng Tong, Vat

536 There is no scenery. The costumes and headdresses vary according to the characters represented. The masks of colored lacquer worn by the actors, their accessories (weapons, scarves, etc.) being traditional and invariable enable the fictitious characters on the stage to be identified.

/178 The theatre of animated shadows, similar to the shadow theatre
101/ of China and Java, tends to disappear little by little.

Laotian Decoration.

Laotian decoration is characterized by a somewhat mannered
531 elegance which can be noticed in the motifs of the pagoda doors and
178 windows. The Laotian artisan is, however, endowed with an extremely well developed artistic sense, but the present day demands do not enable him any longer to live by his handiwork, and the importation of manufactured articles tends to make the artist disappear. /89/ He can only survive by royal patronage. The royal palace for this reason shelters sculptors on wood and ivory as well as goldsmiths, but
/644/ their produce is not sold and the tourist will hardly be able to bring back with him typical Laotian objects.

However, the weaving of silk materials of divers shades, often laminated with gold or silver, is still done on a sufficient scale to
/236/ satisfy the passing tourist.

The Sin

This is a skirt reaching from the hips to the ankles. It is of a
291 rather somber color with a design of vertical stripes very close together and not very evident. This skirt is decorated on its lower edge with a flat trimming of two or three rows of gold or silver braid. At the top of the skirt a belt of red cloth, more or less embroidered, relieves the rather dark tone. This garment is a regular cylinder having the same width on its entire length. When the woman emerges from her bath she lifts her skirt, gathered into the shape of a crown, above her head and lets it slide down the length of her body. She fixes it without hooks or fasteners to her belt by means of a turned in pleat tied in front leaving most of her belly exposed. A bright colored scarf of cotton or silk thrown over one shoulder and completely covering the breasts completes the costume. The most beautiful scarves come from Samneua, Luang Prabang and Khong. The jewelry most frequently seen consists of
301 silver bracelets, necklaces and buttons, rings, long crossed over chains /chaînes-sautoirs/, flat clasps, and belts usually of silver but sometimes of gold.

/Pages 90 to 135 not translated/ /136 blank/

10: d'Orleans--261 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 291, 302

"I remark some differences between the inhabitants [LSS of Sop Nao] and the Thaï's whom we have just left. Here the men shave the head, leaving only a small circle of short hair on the top. The women wear only one garment, which is fastened round the waist. At first sight the type seems to me distinct from that of Thaï; I think it is rather more European, there is a look of Indo-Caucasian relationship. The face is paler and longer, the cheekbones less prominent, the eyes less oblique than those of their Eastern brothers. However, I am only stating a first impression, which requires confirmation."

10: d'Orleans--264 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 302, 832

"The women are not so shy here as in Upper Tonkin. They bathe in the river without troubling themselves about us. One young girl is coloured yellow with saffron, and we are told that this is done from coquetry. Most of them wear a small chignon, in which they often place flowers."

10: d'Orleans--275 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"... They [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] are of small size, with very dark complexions and narrow foreheads; their eyes are close together, but the cheek-bones are not prominent; they wear their hair very short like the bristles of a brush."

10: d'Orleans--278-279 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 302, 304, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Here [LSS: in a village between Muong Ngoi and Luang Prabang in Laos] also we meet some Kas; the men have a piece of wood or a bouquet of flowers in the lobe [279] of the ear, which forms a large fleshy ring, and their legs are tattooed. The women wear a small embroidered jacket; a deep blue turban with embroidered fringes surrounds a chignon ornamented by two round silver plates, joined by a small chain; chaplets of transparent glass beads are wound round them. The natives allow us to photograph them."

10: d'Orleans--302 -305 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 291, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"For the most part of small stature, (1) the Kas are very dark in complexion and of

1. Those whom we measured averaged about five feet two inches; the women being smaller.

the same colour all over the body. Their legs are as a rule thin and their stomachs protuberant; the nose broad and flat; the eyes rather elongated; the lips thick and the jaw prominent, while the forehead is narrow and receding. The facial angle seems to indicate that they belong to an inferior race, and, as a matter of fact, they look like savages by the side of the Laotians. These Kas have long, straight hair falling over the forehead, in some cases tied together by a strip of cloth, or else plastered on the top of the head and fastened at the back in a chignon. The men wear a large ring in the lobe of the ear and fill up the interstice with a piece of wood, [pages 303 and 304 contain illustration] [305] or a bunch of flowers. Their dress, as a rule, consists only of a sheet, that is to say of a piece of blue cloth passing between the legs and fastened round the waist, the women wearing a turban, a loose vest, and a short petticoat."

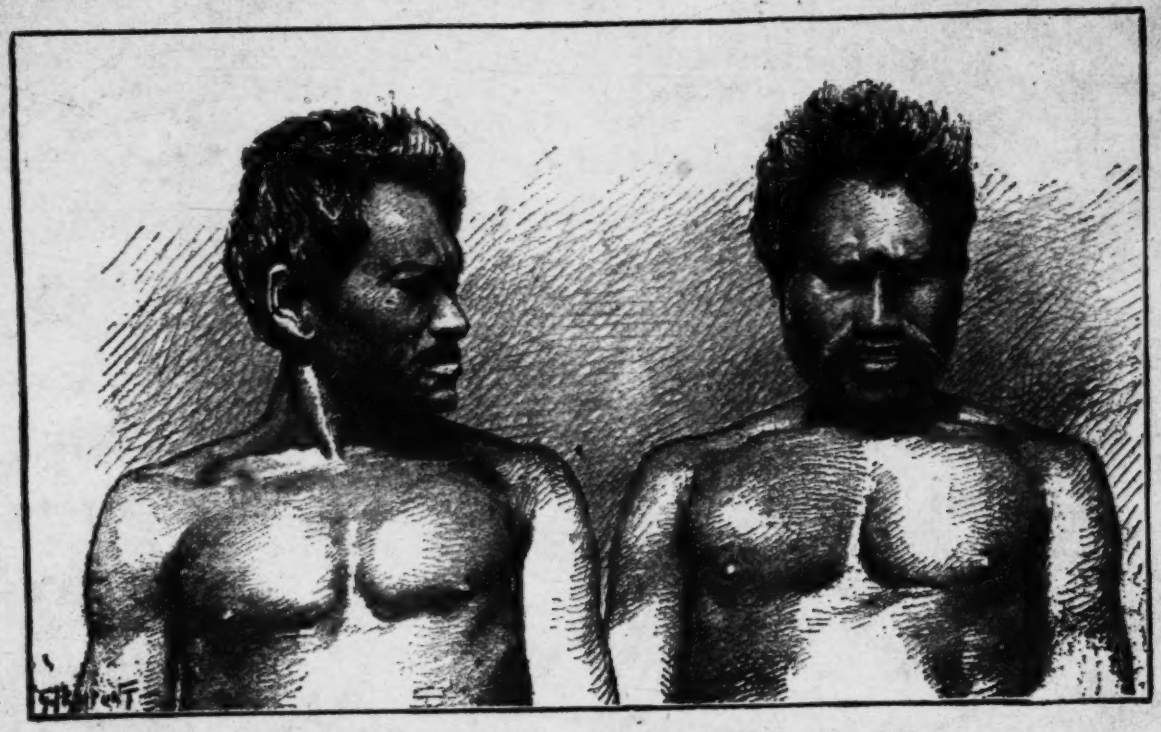
10: d'Orleans--303 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

KHAMOUKS, (FULL AND SIDE FACE), LUANG PRABANG.

10: d'Orleans--316 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Their clothing [LSS: the Lu of Luang Prabang] is very poor compared with that of the latter, [LSS: the Laotians] the men wearing short blue trousers and the women, striped petticoats, the latter having their hair drawn up in a chignon at the top of the head, covered in many cases with a dark blue scarf, while both sexes wear a loose blue vest."

10: d'Orleans--381 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 302



A LAOS MAN (FULL AND SIDE FACE) OUTARADIT, MAY 1ST, 1892.

23: Franck--279 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 291, 302

"It was market day, and well fed, almost haughty women, with many brilliant reds and yellows in their dress, were squatted in the shade over their semi-tropical vegetables, and pottering homeward again in long broken files. They had almost nothing in common with the Annamese women, except their sex and the protection of the French. Their lustrous hair piled in great black glossy heaps on the top of the head in an intricate fashion, usually with a saffron, rose-yellow, or red cloth about it, and most of them with stomachers of similar gay colors, they were striking examples of the unrestricted portion of the human race. In complexion they were much like ourselves plus many layers of tan, but were noticeable for bad teeth."

23: Franck--349[2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 302

"From Muongyu onward all the men had worn their hair pompadour; at about the place the last Ford picked me up even the women, no doubt influenced by their Siamese sisters across the river, rather than by any world-wide movement to do away with the chief glory of the sex, took to cutting their hair man-fashion. At Vientiane the women on both sides of the Mekong have these absurd Siamese hair-cuts, each hair standing on end as if the eyes beneath it had seen a whole flock of ghosts, and as they also chew betel-nut to make themselves still more repulsive it does not matter that one can rarely tell the two sexes apart."

68: Mouhot--134 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 291, 302, 164, 826

"The Laotians [HD: in the territory between Loeui and Pak Lai] much resemble the Siamese: a different pronunciation and slow manner of speech being all that distinguishes their language. The women wear petticoats, and keep their hair long, which, when combed, gives the younger ones a more interesting appearance than those have who live on the banks of the Menam; but, at an advanced age, with their unkempt locks thrown negligently over one temple, and their immense goîtres, which they admire, they are repulsively ugly."

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employ only a powder, or dye their teeth in just one application. Some content themselves with a layer of stick-lack that darkens with time.

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V. In other parts of Indochina

The Muongs, the Thaïs and the Mans of the upper region of Bac-ký use vegetable saps which they apply as a paste by means of a metal spatula.

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"The Laotians have an analogous method: they rub their teeth with the sap of certain trees with hard secretions which result from the partial combustion [813] of the wood and the condensation of the smoke on an iron spatula. In this way a sort of ointment is produced, sticky and black, which dries rapidly and is cemented to the teeth by means of alum" (de Reinach).

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Here is how the Muongs used to blacken their teeth (Béreni): "They cut a branch, preferably a straight one, strip it and heat it. When the sap begins to seep out, they collect it on a metal blade (generally a machete blade). Then they put this secretion on their index finger and rub their gums with it. This method is common to both groups: the Rhadés and the Muongs.

This blackening stops [obturates] the teeth quite adequately. But the result is much less durable than that obtained by the Vietnamese, whose technique is a great deal better.

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To dream of a woman and be awakened by the dream.
To covet the property of others.
To speak profanely of earth, wind, fire, water or anything whatsoever.

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Ordained bonzes, like novices and students, shave their heads, eyebrows and beards carefully and repeat this operation every two weeks. Their clothing, which is the same for all and is of a uniform yellow color obtained by means of a jackwood dye, consists of a sarong, a kind of very full skirt which is worn folded in pleats and extends from the waist to the ground, and which is held in at the waist by a narrow sash. A half-tunic passing under one arm is attached to the opposite shoulder, and is split on one side. The whole garment is kept in place by a sash worn crosswise, and is covered with a kind of toga in the antique manner which is severely draped.

Ordained bonzes wear in addition a piece of pleated cloth on the left shoulder on which sacred characters and various formulas are inscribed.

Bonzes obey a code which was brought to them from India together with the sacred books, and a part of which has been quoted above.

The code requires that their clothing should not be made of one piece of cloth which is whole and of full width, but that it be made of unmatched pieces sewn together. Since the code does not in any way specify the nature of the cloth, one sees bonzes' garments [164] of silk and velvet as well as of cotton and flannel, depending on the generosity of the donors.

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Failure to keep the vow of chastity is very severely punished. The guilty person is marched through the village or city and seated backwards on a horse or carried on a wattle while a minor functionary proclaims the fault committed aloud and beats on a gong. Children and even adults utter hoots and throw filth at the guilty party and his female accomplice, who follows a few steps behind him. When he gets back to the pagoda the bonze is degraded from his rank and then handed over to the civil authorities if there are any grounds for so doing (1).

[10]
[178]

(1) This custom has fallen into disuse. Faults committed by bonzes are treated much more indulgently in Laos than in Cambodia.

149: Reinach--134 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"Costume. The Laotian costume is the langouti or Siamese 291
sampot. This is a long band of cloth without any seams, and between one and 1.2 meters wide by 2.5 to three meters long. The cloth is placed around the waist to make a skirt, with the opening in front. To keep the skirt in place a knot is made in front with part of the surplus cloth, and the loose ends of the cloth left hanging in front are rolled, passed between the legs and attached to the belt in the middle of the back. The skirt then takes the form of a pair of baggy trousers covering the front of the legs down to the knees and leaving the lower part of the thighs bare in back. The chest is left bare, and a sash is tied around the waist. This is the ordinary garment, and that worn by all the common people. The sash is often worn on the shoulder or around the chest, but it has to be removed and wound around the loins whenever one speaks to anyone who has a right to one's respect. Dandies wear shoes, stockings or socks, quite [177] frequently a short-sleeved or sleeveless knitted vest, a jacket made of white cotton or flannel, depending on the season, and a hat of any type whatever, or even a cap. But these are imported European styles which have not become widespread. Umbrellas enjoy great [293] favor." (Le Laos Français.)

This costume is a relatively recent import, for two hundred years 291
or so ago the Laotians on the banks of the river, as those of the interior still do today, wore a fairly long jacket [178] made of cotton 177
cloth woven in the land. The jacket was caught in at the waist by a sash and came down over a broad pair of trousers made of the same material. The whole garment was dark blue or almost black in color. On the head they wore a kind of turban made of silk or cotton of the same color.

The abandonment of this purely Thai costume was due to the influence of the Siamese and Cambodians during their incursions into Laos. It was also at this time that the Laotians formed the habit of [302] cutting their hair, which they had previously worn rolled in a coil on the back of the head.

"Laotian women wear a skirt which covers them from the hips 291
to the ankles and is made of silk interwoven with gold threads. These [286] skirts are rather dark in color, and the pattern is made up of vertical stripes which are close together and difficult to see. In Luang-Prabang the lower part of the garment is decorated with a flat trimming formed of two or three closely spaced gold galloons. At the top of the skirt a sash made of red cloth and embroidered to a greater

291 or less degree lightens its rather dark color. The skirt is a true cylinder, with the same diameter all along its length. A woman raises the skirt in a mass like a crown above her head, lets it slide down along her body and fastens it to her waist, without any hooks or fasteners, by tucking it in along her stomach, which is largely left bare. A brightly colored sash of cotton or silk is thrown over one shoulder, sometimes covering the breasts, to complete the costume.

"During the cold season, where there is a winter, a few women cover their trunks with a short jacket. This garment finds favor mainly outside the larger centers.

302 "A certain number of women wear their hair cut in Bressant style, in accordance with the style imported by the Siamese. The greater number wear their long hair rolled into a coil on the top or side of the head. Women's coiffures vary, moreover, depending on the region and on whether they are married or single.

292 "For great ceremonies, wealthy women wear skirts made of cloth spangled with gold or silver, and sashes of the same type.

"In Luang-Prabang they add a silk or velvet jacket decorated with embroidery on the neck, front and cuffs. Merchants can be found in this city who rent out costumes of this type, as well as gold jewelry, for great ceremonies to women who do not have any." (Le Laos français.)

301 Jewelry. Jewels find great favor among the [179] Laotians and
556 are used to complete and enrich their costume. They are not only ornaments, but also the most widespread method for realizing and preserving the liquid part of their fortune. In fact, the inhabitants transform the greater part of [Illustration here] their savings and profits into jewelry, and since they wear them on their body they are spared the use of strongboxes.

[583] The women and children are the ones who wear jewels most. They go into the trousseau of the young bride, and parents give them to their children as the latter grow up, thus putting together a sort of dowry for the time when they reach the age of marriage.

301 [180] Gold and silver are used in making jewelry, and precious
306 stones such as rubies, sapphires and various genuine or imitation gems are sometimes added as ornaments.

Gold is not used in all parts of Laos, but is mainly limited to the large centers located near regularly worked gold-bearing deposits.

[563] Doubtless because of the application of ancient sumptuary laws, silver is the only metal used by certain races--even by the Khas,

149: Reinach--139 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Houses are generally situated in the middle of an enclosure which serves as a garden, and where coconut palms, betel palms and other fruit trees are planted.

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Use of tobacco and betel. The Laotians use tobacco, which they grow and prepare quite skilfully, in the form of conical cigarettes which are rolled in dried banana leaves. They also mix it with their betel quids. Everybody smokes--men, women and children. It is not unusual to see children four years old, completely naked, puffing clouds of smoke from a cigarette which is enormous in comparison to their little fingers.

Like a great many other peoples of Asia, Laotians chew "betel." As we know this type of quid is composed of a leaf of "piper betel" which is smeared with slaked lime and on which is placed tobacco, a piece of betel nut or some "sisiet" bark (or [185] the extract from this bark, called catechu). It is then rolled and placed in the mouth between the cheek and the gums.

Chewing betel causes abundant salivation, blood red in color, which makes quite an impression at first sight but to which one gradually becomes accustomed.

It is claimed that chewing betel is not a mere habit, but that it has several useful effects on the organism. It is supposed to keep one from being thirsty and to be an astringent and tonic, somewhat like cola or coca.

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Teeth lacquer. So as to preserve the enamel of their teeth from the corrosive action of the lime and from other acidulous elements contained in the betel nut, the Laotians have the custom of lacquering their teeth black. To accomplish this they rub them with the sap of certain hardwood trees, which they obtain through partial combustion of the wood and condensation of the smoke on an iron spatula. A kind of sticky black coating is thereby produced, which dries rapidly and is made to adhere to the teeth by means of alum.

276

Opium. The use of opium is quite widespread in Laos, and unfortunately its effects do not help to diminish the natural apathy of the race.

304

Tattoos. It is customary for men to be tattooed from beneath the knee to the upper part of the thigh. For this reason the Laotians of the left bank of the Mekong are called "white bellies" in opposition to the Youns of the other bank, whose tattoos cover the stomach and abdomen and who are known as "black bellies." The tattoos are

149: Reinach--172 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

619 they bear come, as in the case of the Khao-Thais, from peculiarities
[291] of costume. In fact, whereas the Dam-Thais, both men and women,
only wear clothing which is dark blue and almost black, with no
563 colored ornamentation, the Deng-Thais, although they wear the
same kind of clothing, always add a few ornaments such as embroidery,
galloons or red turbans.

Physical appearance. Costume. The Thais have strongly marked
142 features and stern faces. Their complexion is clear and rather swarthy,
461 and they are quite tall. They are more hardy and above all more
industrious than the Laotians.

Like the Annamites, the men let their hair grow. They bind it
• 302 up in a coil on the top of the head and cover it with a vast turban,
291 the ends of which fall onto their shoulders on either side of the face.
Men's clothing consists of a broad pair of trousers with a very low
seat and a straight tunic buttoned along the side which comes down
to the knees. A sort of sash made of the same kind of cloth hugs the
[286] waist over the tunic, as a belt would do. The material used by the
Thais for clothing are made of cotton which is generally grown locally
and which the [232] women spin, weave and dye themselves. Their
garments, made with very coarse, irregular thread, have a rough ap-
pearance but are very solid.

The women's figures are thick-set but not fleshy. Their faces,
142 which are more rounded than elongated, are pleasant and their eyes
are beautiful. But childbearing and the work of the fields soon destroy
their gracefulness, and after the age of twenty-five their figures thicken,
their wrists and ankles become heavy and their faces begin to harden
and wrinkle. [Illustration alongside text here]

[286] The Thai woman wears a skirt which is quite similar to the Laotian
skirt, but made of coarser cloth and dyed the same color as the men's
291 clothing. Over this she wears a very short jacket made of the same
cloth which is buttoned down the front and sometimes embellished
563 with chased silver work. The height of elegance is for the jacket to
be cut in such a way that when the woman moves in a certain way it
lets a little skin be seen above the skirt waist. Outside the home and for
ceremonies the women put on a sort of dressing gown which covers their
other clothing and comes down to the ankle. Its sleeves are very close-
fitting, and the garment buttons straight down the front to a point below
the waist. A strip of dark violet cloth, for the Dam-Thais, and red for

291 the Deng-Thais, is applied to the edges of the gown. It is further
563 ornamented [233] on the outside edge opposite the buttonholes with colored silk embroidery which does not go down below the waist.

This garment is also folded in half lengthwise and worn rolled around the body with the sleeves left hanging.

302 The women wear their hair parted down the middle in front
301 and rolled into a sort of long tassel behind which is contained within the folds of a little turban. The latter is wound above the forehead and the free end inserted under the first turn, on the nape of the neck. This headdress is quite similar to that of the Annamite women in Tonkin.

In certain regions of Laos, Thai women wind their hair into a sort of coil which girls wear loosely down their neck and betrothed or married women wear on top of the head. Thai jewelry is made of heavy silver and is of the same type as Laotian jewelry. The men wear bracelets on their wrists.

262 Food. The Thai diet is like that of the Laotians, but they prefer
264 non-glutinous white rice and use chopsticks like the Chinese and Annamites.

The use of betel is quite widespread among the Thais, but in
276 contrast to the Laotians they keep their teeth white. The Thais smoke the oily, opiated tobacco of Tonkin and China in bamboo waterpipes whose tiny bowls only contain a small pinch of tobacco. They also smoke a local variety of tobacco, either in cigarettes or in pipes with a highly worked clay bowl into which a long stem ending in a glass or jade mouthpiece is inserted.

156 Character. Although serious and reflective, the Thais have a vivacious and friendly character. They are somewhat cold in appearance, but are sound friends and highly affable when one gets to know them better.

[701] Gentler and more timid than the Laotians, they have no taste for the art of war and it is difficult to get them to stay in the native militia.

433 They are very self-seeking and much more miserly than the Lao-
438 tians. [234] It should be noted, moreover, that since they produce everything themselves and are a people of farmers and livestock
156 breeders, they do not have, by virtue of their ever sedentary occupations, the opportunities which these latter have to enjoy fairly high profits resulting from commercial transactions, nor the special habits which contact with different races gives.

181 The Thais love pleasure and celebrations. Guaranteed their daily
461

149: Reinach--179 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Tribal Tai

Men's and women's clothing varies little in [244] form from that 291
of the Thais. Under their jacket, however, the women wear a breast-
cloth attached to the neck and waist by cords, like the Annamite and
Tonkinese women.

The Lus. Two centuries or so ago the Lus, who also belong to 619
the Thai race, used to live in the "Shan states" between the Salouen
and the Nam-Hon, where they were surrounded by a drifting popula- 175
tion composed of Burmese, Kunes, Ngieous, etc. [Illustration
alongside text here.]

Following emigrations, they came to Laos and formed two dis-
tinct agglomerations.

Some Lu families have settled in the course of this century on [563]
the territory of Luang-Prabang. Today these Lus form villages com-
posed exclusively of people of their race, but live on good terms with
the Laotians, whose language and customs they have adopted.

In the old Lu kingdom of Muong-Sing, on the other hand, this 101
people has retained its habits, that is to say its character and temper-
ament are like those of the Burmese.

There the Lu is boastful, full of arrogance, a braggart and in- [105]
solent, but a little firmness is enough to humble his pride.

Lus have a clear complexion, delicate features, keen eyes and 142
a swinging stride. The men are generally tattooed from the calf of
the leg to above the navel, and they also have tattoos on their chest, 304
[245] neck, shoulders and arms which are generally red and in the 302
shape of squares with rounded corners. They have long hair rolled in
a coil on top or slightly to one side of the head. This coil is wrapped
in an enormous turban which they wear tilted over one ear. Many of
them have a moustache. This they train upwards, a trait which gives
them a conquering air, and to keep it up they smear it with wax.
[Illustration alongside text here]

The men's costume consists of a pair of full trousers and a short 291
jacket buttoned along the side. It is made of cotton and is dark blue,
almost black, in color. The bottoms of the trousers, the edges of the
jacket, the cuffs of the sleeves and the armholes are ornamented with
three galloons (blue, white and red) which are quite narrow. Their
holiday clothes are often made of silk in varied colors.

The women wind their hair into a heavy coil on top of the head [302]
and on the side of the coil they place a broad circular plaque of [301]
chased silver. They wear skirts like the Laotian women, but the
stripes are very broad, run crosswise and are in bright colors. They

Tyibal Tai
Kha

291 The men's costume is like that of the Laotians. A few, however, have adopted the Burmese costume, turban and all, in which case they let their hair grow and roll it in a coil instead of having a brush cut.

The women wear a very long skirt with broad stripes running across it which is fastened beneath the breasts. The bust is covered by a closed jacket or bodice which is cut straight and made of cotton or silk [302] of varied colors. Their hair is rolled in a coil on the nape of the neck [301] or is held in place around the head by a narrow band of cloth and allowed to fall freely down the back. Both sexes wear metal cylinders in their ears, like the Lus, and silver jewelry.

[142] The Youns are more robust than their fellows, and also more industrious. The women are perhaps less pretty than the Laotian women, but they are just as friendly and merry.

[251] Both men and women chew betel, and also "Mieng" (green 276 tea, fermented and salted). They smoke tobacco in enormous cigarettes rolled in dried banana leaves. [Illustration alongside text here]

The Youns are primarily farmers and livestock breeders. They excel in breeding and training oxen as draft animals.

We have seen that the Youns, although they speak the same lan- 212 guage as the Laotians, have their own form of writing which is generally 292 used for religious writings. Their bonzes, who are highly learned for the most part, are renowned for their expert knowledge of the rites of the Buddhist religion.

Marriage, divorce, polygamy, births, funerals, celebrations and 101 festivities are all the same among the Youns as among the Laotians, except for a few minor differences in detail which we need not mention here.

THE KHAS

619 Before entering into detail about the mores and customs of the main Kha families, we shall again have recourse to the learned work 181 by the Superior Resident in Laos in order to give a general sketch of this race which represents at least a third of the population.

[252] "They are to be found throughout the territory, and are divided into more than sixty families. As much as those who inhabit northern Laos are docile, manageable and respectful, so are those who inhabit the southern part of Laos proud, independent and warlike, particularly the tribes inhabiting the mountains which separate us from Annam.

Hill Tribes

595 There is polygamy among the Meos, and the Meo women do not enjoy any higher regard than the Kha women.

[101] The Yaos. The Yaos have the same origin as the Meos, and are strikingly like them in many respects. Their mores, their beliefs and their habits are identical.

619 As we have seen above, the Yaos are divided into three varieties, these being the Lantenes, the Khao and the Ao-Tchaine.

291 The Lantenes (blacks) wear broad trousers, a long smock buttoning
302 at the side and a turban, all made of black cottonstuff. They wear their hair long and either wound under a turban or braided in Chinese style.

[342] Their houses are like those of the Meos and shelter several families, each of which has its own quarters. They are generally clean and well kept-up.

593 The mores of the Lantene Yaos are patriarchal, and these folk
562 are monogamous. The women are very reserved and do not let themselves be seen much by strangers. They enjoy a certain respect and are treated with consideration by their husbands.

231 The Lantenes are great livestock breeders, and cultivate the opium
241 poppy in addition to rice and maize. They are skilled hunters of wild
224 animals, and each man owns a rifle from which he is rarely separated.

[212] Besides a dialect peculiar to them, they speak Quoan-hoa (a Cantonese idiom), and many of them can write Chinese characters.

[198] The Khao Yaos are less outgoing than their fellows and do not
101 greet strangers with as much good will.

291 The men's clothing is like that of the Lantenes, [269] but the women are garbed in a different manner and wear their hair in a special way which has earned their tribe the name "Khao" (horns).

Over a pair of black trousers ornamented with colored embroidery and held in place by leggings, Khao Yao women wear a tunic which comes down to the knees but the flaps of which are fastened to the belt. This tunic also has colored embroidery on the chest, back, neck and cuffs, and is held shut with wide silver hooks.

302 Their hairdress consists of a coil which is smeared with wax and lacquer to hold it in place and in which a wooden socket is imbedded. A light bamboo framework is inserted into the socket, and over this is spread a red cloth or a black cloth embroidered in red. The women thus appear to have two horns on their head.

301 Silver jewelry, neckbands, bracelets and ear pendants are worn by the Khao Yaos.

Finally, the Ao-Tchaine Yaos owe their name (bearing sapeks) 291
to the fact that the men's jacket, which is shorter than that of the other Yaos, is ornamented in front with several rows of flat copper or silver buttons which resemble sapeks (Annamite and Chinese coins).

The women fasten a pad of compact, gummed hair on their coil 302
by means of sticks made of ivory, of bone or simply of wood.

Like the Meos, the Yaos inhabit the peaks of mountains in 364
northern Laos where they grow poppies. They are confirmed opium [276]
smokers.

[270] [Blank page] [271] [Illustration at top]

CHAPTER V

1. ORGANIZATION

Consulate and Commercial Agencies. Before 439
the treaty of October 3, 1893, we already had a consul at Luang-Prabang in the Mekong basin, on the right bank of the river. In 1892 175
the vice-consulate was closed and commercial agencies were set up at Luang-Prabang, Outhene and Bassac on the right bank, and then 648
at Stung-Treng on the left bank. The first three agencies were directed by representatives of the French Syndicate of Laos, and the last by a clerk of Posts and Telegraphs. The commercial agents performed the functions of consular agents. Later on in 1894 and 1895 when we actually took possession of Laos, that is to say of the territory on the left bank of the Mekong, two additional agencies were established at Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen. [272] Then in 1895 the agencies of Pak-Lay, Xieng-Khan, Nong-Khay, Lakhone, Ban-Mouk-Dahan and Kemmarat were created on the right bank, bringing the total number to ten, for those of Stung-Treng and Luang-Prabang had been raised to the status of commissionerships.

These new agencies were directed by "commercial agents" specially appointed for the purpose. In addition to the delegates of the French Syndicate of Laos who continued to hold office, these agents included a few inspectors of the Tonkin native guard.

The duties of these officials were poorly defined, and their chief role was to assert our presence. They were mere information agents. For this reason official circles soon decided to abolish these posts, an action made possible chiefly by the establishment of two new vice-consulates in Siam, one at Oubone and one at Ban-Dua-Makeng.

Its price varies between 12 and 15 francs per hundred kilograms. 000

6. Catechu (Sisiet). 824

Catechu is produced from a decoction of the bark of two varieties 314
of trees, the catechu acacia and the leafy butée.

This product, which is used in making the national masticatory 276
together with betel, betel nuts and lime, is consumed, in the large centers of Upper Laos, in the form of a dry residue obtained from a decoction of the bark. Generally, however, it is the bark itself which is consumed after it has been broken up into small pieces.

Natural sisiet takes the form of shreds of bark about a cubit (.45 meter) long by four centimeters wide and one centimeter thick. The shreds are tied together in packs of twenty-five or fifty, depending on the region.

The whole production is consumed locally. The natives [334] [438]
go into the forest at points where suitable trees are to be found, bundle up the pieces and load them on great rafts which go down from Pak-Lay and Vien-Tiane to Bassac and even to Khong.

At Pak-Lay sisiet is worth only 7 francs and 50 centimes per [435]
hundred pieces, but it naturally costs more the further away one goes from the centers of production.

7. Curcuma (Khi-Mine). 824

This plant, of the Zingiberaceae family, has a rhizome which 314
contains an orange-yellow coloring matter used for dyeing silk and 386
cotton.

Sometimes the inhabitants (chiefly the women and children) 302
rub their whole body with curcuma scrapings after a bath. The application of curcuma to the wet skin, which acquires a light yellow color, is said by the natives to ward off mosquitoes and keep the skin fresh.

Up to the present time this product has not formed the basis of [438]
any foreign trade. It is sold in small amounts on the markets of Laos.

8. Ginger. 263

The ginger which is called "Mak-Khing" in Laotian is the Zingi- 824
ber officinale or gray ginger. Used as a condiment by the entire 314
population, this product does not enter into trade. Its price varies [435]
between 12 francs and fifty centimes and 16 francs and fifty centimes per hundred kilograms.

9. Roucou. 824

The roucou, or fruit of the Roucouyer Bixia, is called "Kano- 314
Mak-Soum-Phas" in Laotian. Literally, this means Seed of an 386
acidulous mountain fruit. It is used to make red and orange dyes

173: Deydier --65 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

302

Fig. VIII. The Laotian hair-knot (Cl. Bouton).

10: d'Orleans--261-262 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 304,

"The boatmen [LSS: Kha from Laos] wear a sampot, a kind of petticoat folded between the legs so that it forms puffed breeches; one of them has his legs tattooed up to the knees; the designs, half circles surrounding dragons, [262] are so close together that at a distance they look like drawers."

10: d'Orleans--272 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 304, 437, 855

[LSS: in the village of Ban Sop Huan] "The children often wear a silver collar round the neck, and sometimes a bracelet on the ankles. Some of them are tattooed yellow, and a horse is represented upon the leg of one child. Men, women and children come to visit us whilst we eat; they bring us some rather pretty stuff for sale, and prefer money to payments in kind. The women consider our stock very attractive, but they could not sell it again. They accept some pictures as a present (these are easily carried and very well received in these regions), but their husbands take most of them away again."

10: d'Orleans--278-279 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 302, 304, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Here [LSS: in a village between Muong Ngoi and Luang Prabang in Laos] also we meet some Kas; the men have a piece of wood or a bouquet of flowers in the lobe [279] of the ear, which forms a large fleshy ring, and their legs are tattooed. The women wear a small embroidered jacket; a deep blue turban with embroidered fringes surrounds a chignon ornamented by two round silver plates, joined by a small chain; chaplets of transparent glass beads are wound round them. The natives allow us to photograph them."

23: Franck--279-280 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 276, 304

"The Laosians [280] do not enamel their teeth, but most of them chew betel-nut."

23; Franck--292-293 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 301, 304 Ethnic subgroup

"It was in one of these villages of the upper Nam-khan that I saw the first of still another race, the Kha, which some consider the real aborigines of these forested mountains of the ancient kingdom, as they are indubitably the oldest remaining inhabitants. They were wild but harmless-looking men, wearing earrings, their women adorned with still larger ones. A Kha woman down from the mountains--for like the Miao they are a highland people--had tattooed arms and, at least while the prince and I were [293] there, was completely clothed from neck to calves, in decided contrast to the river-village women."

23: Franck--328-329 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 531, 304

"While prince, sergeant, and I looked in vain for the rushing stream to cast up the canteen, the coolies went bathing. They were all of the 'black paunch' tribe, as distinguished from the 'white paunch,' or untattooed ones, though it is not really the paunch that is decorated. The man of this branch of the Laosian or Tai race is never without his pants, even when he is stark naked. Nearly all of them are solidly tattooed in blue--invisible alas to the ordinary camera--from the waist to the knees, a wide tattooed belt with lacy ends about the floating ribs and a lacy effect like ruffles just below the bend of the knees. The design of this hip and thigh covering is always 'lions' within squares with rounded corners, all touching one another, either as a protection against or to give the wearer the bravery of the lion. With the figures are mingled sacred texts, said to be Pali in Laosian or Siamese script. The priests especially are covered with these sacred writings, it is said, but one can never really know what is under the yellow robe. Women seldom if ever wear these tattooed substitutes for the Scotchman's kilt, say [329] those who should know, perhaps because they are in no danger from evil spirits, or cannot be saved anyway. Some of the men also had red tattooing on the upper part of the body, red squares on the chest, all sorts of things on the back, though none of them obscene nor as crude as the tattooing on some of our sailors. One of my men was overrun with red lizards; some were whole picture-books or comic supplements or intricate

signs of the zodiac. There was one fellow whose whole back was covered with a lesson in arithmetic or geometry, even trigonometry for all I know, as if a small brother or a schoolmaster had used him as a slate. Others had only one leg tattooed, generally the left, or both of them only on the buttocks, or simply the fronts of the thighs, or merely spots here and there, all according to personal caprice , taste, swank, or an attack of cowardliness before the job was finished. Unlike most tribal decorations of the sort this tattooing may be put on at any age, whenever courage is ripe."

23: Franck--332-333 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 304, 342, 855 Ethnic subgroup

"In most of the [EJ: Kha] huts grandmother and even skinnier grandfather were tending the third generation while the intermediate one was out in the hills in quest of a livelihood. Some of the villages had their basket-like thatched-top huts raised above the ground, like those of the other people of Laos; the commoner custom was to squat on the ground itself in a thatch structure like a flat wigwam. The women, and for that matter the men, were all naked to the waist, a disgusting custom [333] in the case of the old women, whose breasts were as shrunken as if they were about to dry up and drop off. They gave one an unhappy reminder of how brief is the span of human existence. Old men and women alike had holes in their ears large enough to hold a cigar."

23: Franck--337-338 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 177, 291, 304, 644 Ethnic subgroup

"The prince had only to order the village chief, or the inhabitants themselves, to furnish new carriers, however, and they were soon there, though from then on we changed as often as we came to a village, sometimes two or three times a day. The coolies still seemed to be Kha, but they were men who had come into more contact with the outside world than those who had been with me all that strenuous Sunday, and they had lost some of the ornaments, simplicity, and politeness. Perhaps they were [338] not Kha at all, for they had all sorts of tattooing, and some of them had raised welts, like the bush negroes of Dutch Guiana. Each man according to his fancy wore a kind of kilt that was really a mere strip of cloth wound about him from waist to knees. Now and then we passed a woman on a journey, in a costume in which she would not have been unnoticed on Broadway, wearing earrings, neck-rings, two bracelets on each arm, and a barrel-shaped strip of cloth from nipples to knees, and carrying her bed and belongings, consisting of a sack hanging down from her forehead and on her back a rolled-up grass or reed mat on which to spend her virtuous nights."

25: Brodrick--94-95 S-3 (1939) 1949 Laotians
116, 101, 304

"It is said that of the Laotian-speakers more than half live in eastern Siam and not in the Laos, but the Siamese distinguish the two sorts of Laotians as Lao Pong Dam, or Black Belly Lao, and Lao Pong Kao, or White Belly Lao, that is to say, their own Lao who are tattooed and the Laotians of Laos who are not, at least not to the same extent. But even the Laotians of Laos are generally tattooed, though the tattooing is confined to the men. [95]

There are, here and there, traces of tattooing in several parts of Indo-China, but the Laotians are the only civilized people to have preserved the custom. It is clear that the Laotians are connected with the Thai-speaking peoples who extend still up into the Chinese provinces of Yünnan and Kwanghsi, and also probably with the non-Thai-speaking peoples known under a variety of names and making up the medley of population in northern Tongking and northern Laos--Yaos, Meos, Kaws, Lus and others. And nearly all these peoples share the same general characteristics of cheerful contentment, kind-heartedness and love of laughter and music. And they are all tattooed."

25: Brodrick--95 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 304, 881

"The professing Buddhists of the Laos are tattooed, and, moreover, they are tattooed when they are between thirteen and seventeen years of age, just as are South Sea islanders. The rite is therefore, clearly a rite de passage, as the French call it, or a puberty ceremony, performed as initiation and as protection, and partly, no doubt, originally as a form of social distinction. The rich man and the powerful man could get more magic protection than his less fortunate fellows, so that, as in ancient New Zealand, some tattooing was confined to chiefs."

25: Brodrick--96 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 304

"The designs on the Laotiáns' thighs (and sometimes on their breasts) stand out in dark purple against their bronzed skins. There are some arabesques, floral and stylized animal designs, and there are also figures which may be matched on the New Stone Age rock-paintings of Spain, on Bronze Age utensils, and on the thighs of Berber women in the Atlas mountains.

The Laotian tattooer crushes pig's or fish's gall into soot from sesame oil lamps. The mixture is left to dry and when needed is wetted with a little water. Then the tattooer gets to work and pricks the stuff in with a large needle. The operation is painful."

A DRAGON APPARENT

000 There was a recognized place about a mile up the river, which was free from weed and rock, and once again, because the water was deep and swiftly running, it was very cold and refreshing. We had
515 been swimming round for an hour or so when we noticed a number of Laotian girls hanging about. They were not watching us, but sauntering backwards and forwards in twos and threes, chatting to each other. By the time there were twelve of them, Dupont, keeping well in the water called to them and asked if we were disturbing them in any way. One of the girls came to the edge of the bank, bowed, and looking down at her feet said that it was their usual bathing time, but that there was no hurry, of course. Dupont asked the girls if they would retire for a moment, and they walked a short distance away and stood in a preoccupied circle while we got out of the water. We then dressed quickly and walked on down the path leading to their village. After about a hundred yards we looked back. All the girls, quite naked, were in the water. At that moment two bonzes were strolling slowly along the bank past them; but the girls paid no attention. The bonzes were wrapped in the mantle of holy invisibility.

622 When we reached the village, Dupont asked punctiliously for
304 the headman, making the excuse that he wanted to visit the pagoda. It was quite evident that this headman was in the good graces of the garrison, and probably supplied them with labour. He was very dignified and had a fine house, with European furniture. Although barefooted, he wore a French suit. On the suggestions of the soldier from the camp he took down his trousers and showed us his legs, which from ankles to thighs were tattooed, in the local manner, so
796 closely that he seemed to be wearing stockings. The annual *boun* 1
782 had just been celebrated at the local pagoda and a bonze was in the
532 act of sweeping into a heap the votive offerings with which the floor
285 of the courtyard was littered. There was a great collection of elephants, buffaloes, peacocks and tigers, all woven in basket-work. The kind of thing that Picasso produces when he is not painting, but perhaps rather better. They seemed to me to be of

1 [i.e., religious festival.-- Analyst]

149: Reinach--139 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

357

Houses are generally situated in the middle of an enclosure which serves as a garden, and where coconut palms, betel palms and other fruit trees are planted.

276

Use of tobacco and betel. The Laotians use tobacco, which they grow and prepare quite skilfully, in the form of conical cigarettes which are rolled in dried banana leaves. They also mix it with their betel quids. Everybody smokes--men, women and children. It is not unusual to see children four years old, completely naked, puffing clouds of smoke from a cigarette which is enormous in comparison to their little fingers.

Like a great many other peoples of Asia, Laotians chew "betel." As we know this type of quid is composed of a leaf of "piper betel" which is smeared with slaked lime and on which is placed tobacco, a piece of betel nut or some "sisiet" bark (or [185] the extract from this bark, called catechu). It is then rolled and placed in the mouth between the cheek and the gums.

Chewing betel causes abundant salivation, blood red in color, which makes quite an impression at first sight but to which one gradually becomes accustomed.

It is claimed that chewing betel is not a mere habit, but that it has several useful effects on the organism. It is supposed to keep one from being thirsty and to be an astringent and tonic, somewhat like cola or coca.

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Teeth lacquer. So as to preserve the enamel of their teeth from the corrosive action of the lime and from other acidulous elements contained in the betel nut, the Laotians have the custom of lacquering their teeth black. To accomplish this they rub them with the sap of certain hardwood trees, which they obtain through partial combustion of the wood and condensation of the smoke on an iron spatula. A kind of sticky black coating is thereby produced, which dries rapidly and is made to adhere to the teeth by means of alum.

276

Opium. The use of opium is quite widespread in Laos, and unfortunately its effects do not help to diminish the natural apathy of the race.

304

Tattoos. It is customary for men to be tattooed from beneath the knee to the upper part of the thigh. For this reason the Laotians of the left bank of the Mekong are called "white bellies" in opposition to the Youns of the other bank, whose tattoos cover the stomach and abdomen and who are known as "black bellies." The tattoos are

304 produced with an implement bearing several fine points which are dipped in India ink or diluted cinnabar. Depending on the coloring matter used, the tattoos are dark blue or brick red in color. The tattoo artists give their taste and fancy free rein and produce the most varied designs which, for example, represent intertwined snakes, dragons, lions, tigers and imaginary animals. Oftentimes there is only one overall color which makes the tattooed person look like a man wearing a close-fitting blue bathing suit.

304 885 The practice of tattooing is a very old one and its origin is lost in [186] dark antiquity. It is at once a kind of coquetry and a proof of courage because of the suffering which the operation causes and the dangers it involves in a land where antisepsis is unknown to the natives and where the tools used are as dirty as the operators. [Illustration here]

In some localities a man who is not tattooed is regarded as lacking in virility, and as a sign of his inferiority he may not bathe upstream from women.

562 304 Laotian women are not tattooed. This custom is practiced only by the Youn and Kha women, where tattoos are usually limited to lines, stars or reptiles on the hands, imitations of rings on the fingers, etc.

301 [187] Personal adornment. In all seasons both men and women wear flowers on their ears or in a string around their coil of hair. This gracious custom, which flatters both the eye and the sense of smell, must be extremely ancient in origin. It is to be found in many parts of the globe which have no relation to Laos, and particularly in Polynesia. [Illustration here]

346 531 Pagodas. Laotian pagodas are as numerous as they are varied in respect to type of construction, architecture, dimensions and ornamentation. In sparsely populated villages and poor muongs the pagodas are built like the houses, either of wood, thatch or bamboo lattice, although with greater care and a few slight additional decorations. Elsewhere, in the larger centers, the pagodas are built of brick, roofed with tile, enhanced by many-colored and gilded ornaments of carved wood and embellished with pseudo-sculptured motifs made of staff. On the inside, the walls are covered with brightly colored frescoes [188] which often picture, against a gold background, religious or warlike scenes taken from the Ramayâna and other more realistic ones which often border on obscenity.

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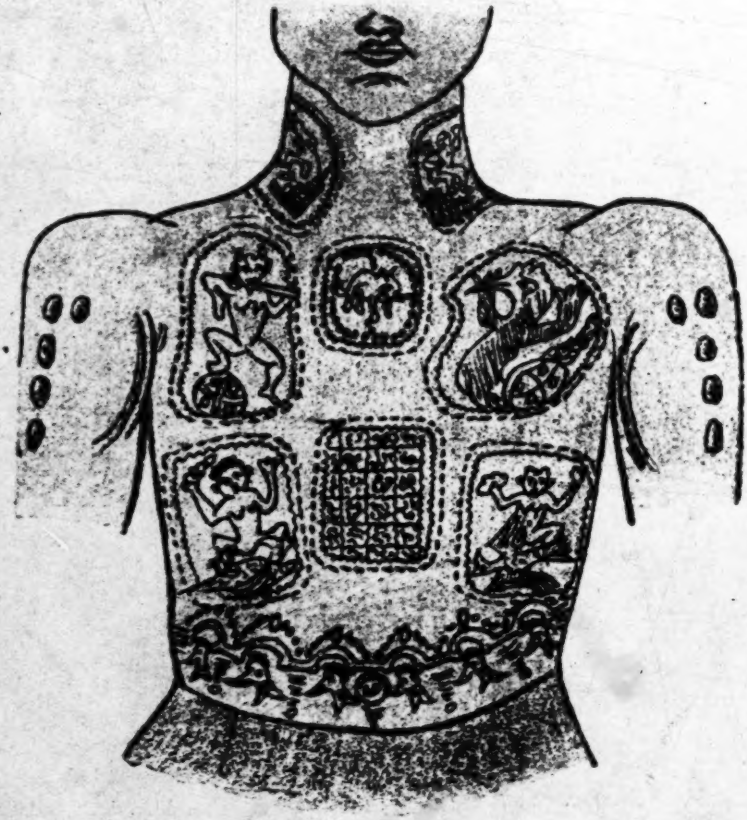

Fig. 48 /p.186/ Chest tattoos of a Burmese or Lu man (blue and red in color).

149: Reinach--140b G-3 (no date)1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 49 /p.187/ a, a', a" -- Tattoos of Youn women;
b -- Tattoos on the hands of Kha women (blue in color);
c, c' -- Tattoos of slaves.

149: Reinach--179 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai

Men's and women's clothing varies little in [244] form from that 291
of the Thais. Under their jacket, however, the women wear a breast-
cloth attached to the neck and waist by cords, like the Annamite and
Tonkinese women.

The Lus. Two centuries or so ago the Lus, who also belong to 619
the Thai race, used to live in the "Shan states" between the Salouen
and the Nam-Hon, where they were surrounded by a drifting popula- 175
tion composed of Burmese, Kunes, Ngieous, etc. [Illustration
alongside text here.]

Following emigrations, they came to Laos and formed two dis-
tinct agglomerations.

Some Lu families have settled in the course of this century on [563]
the territory of Luang-Prabang. Today these Lus form villages com-
posed exclusively of people of their race, but live on good terms with
the Laotians, whose language and customs they have adopted.

In the old Lu kingdom of Muong-Sing, on the other hand, this 101
people has retained its habits, that is to say its character and temper-
ament are like those of the Burmese.

There the Lu is boastful, full of arrogance, a braggart and in- [105]
solent, but a little firmness is enough to humble his pride.

Lus have a clear complexion, delicate features, keen eyes and 142
a swinging stride. The men are generally tattooed from the calf of
the leg to above the navel, and they also have tattoos on their chest, 304
[245] neck, shoulders and arms which are generally red and in the 302
shape of squares with rounded corners. They have long hair rolled in
a coil on top or slightly to one side of the head. This coil is wrapped
in an enormous turban which they wear tilted over one ear. Many of
them have a moustache. This they train upwards, a trait which gives
them a conquering air, and to keep it up they smear it with wax.
[Illustration alongside text here]

The men's costume consists of a pair of full trousers and a short 291
jacket buttoned along the side. It is made of cotton and is dark blue,
almost black, in color. The bottoms of the trousers, the edges of the
jacket, the cuffs of the sleeves and the armholes are ornamented with
three galloons (blue, white and red) which are quite narrow. Their
holiday clothes are often made of silk in varied colors.

The women wind their hair into a heavy coil on top of the head [302]
and on the side of the coil they place a broad circular plaque of [301]
chased silver. They wear skirts like the Laotian women, but the
stripes are very broad, run crosswise and are in bright colors. They

149: Reinach--179b G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

Fig. 62 /p. 245/ Thigh tattoos (Blue in color) of a Laotian (or White Belly).

Tribal Tai

whole match, instead of keeping their legs rigid and remaining on 535
the same line, the opponents turn constantly around a central point and raise each leg in turn, the knee bent. This exercise, in which all four limbs work at once and which requires a sure eye and rapid execution, is surely one of the most graceful in existence when it is performed with the facile ease and supreme elegance of the Lus.

"Lu dancing has that particular character of morbidness which one finds among most Mohammedan peoples and also in Spain. The men (for the men are the ones who dance) imprint on their feet only those movements which are indispensable for making the body pivot and facilitating slow, undulating movements by the hips, torso and arms. The dancers are accompanied by tom-toms and kettledrums, and they sigh out lingering, voluptuous chants which harmonize well with their movements. These are veritable harem dances, or such as dancing girls might perform." (Le Laos français.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

We have already seen what the religion of the Lus is like, and 771
need add only that their bonzes are highly respected and that the pagodas are much frequented by the children and young people. Thus 212
the number of scholars is higher among the Lus than among the Laotians. Many women even know how to read and write.

The Lus do not cremate their dead, but bury them, even at a 764
very shallow depth, after wrapping the bodies in a mat or a piece of cloth. The bonzes recite a few prayers over the grave when it has been filled, and in return for this service usually receive an object of some value which belonged to the deceased.

[256] The tombs are not kept up.

The Youns. The natives called Youns are Laotians who have 619
settled on the right bank of the Mekong, in the basin of the Upper Menam and in the territories of Xieng-Hai, Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen. There are, however, Youns living in French Laos where they have mixed with the other Laotians. [Illustration alongside text here] 304

The Youns may be distinguished from their fellow Laotians by the extent to which they are tattooed. Whereas a Laotian will only be tattooed from the bend of the knee to the waist, a Youn will be tattooed from the calf of the leg to the chest. This has caused the inhabitants of the right bank to be baptized "Black Bellies" (Lao-Phoung-Dam), while those of the left bank are called Lao-Phoung-Khao or "White Bellies."

Fig. 65 /p. 250/ Complete tattooing (blue in color) of a Youn (or Black Belly).

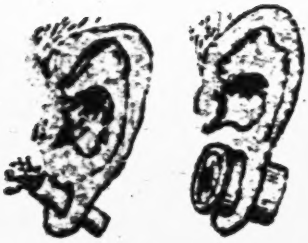

Fig. 67 /p. 253/ Ears of Youns, Lus and Khas.

175 [104] taken after the Cambodians in this respect--that they later
291 adopted the "sampot" and formed the habit of cutting their hair very
short, just as the Thais of Lai-Chau today dress like their Chinese
177 neighbors and wear their hair in a long pigtail. The same reasons
may also explain modifications in language and writing, which must
have been identical in the beginning.

563 Of the Phou-Thais who are settled today in the territory of
Luang-Prabang, some--and these make up the greater number--are
144 black Thais (aborigines) from Dien-Bien-Phu, with a darker coloration
than the inhabitants of Lai-Chau, who are called white Thais for this
reason. The others belong to this second variety.

The ones who sacked Luang-Prabang in 1887 under the leadership of Deo-Van-Tri were white Thais.

Youns. The Laotians living on the right bank of the Mekong at Xieng-Mai, Xieng-Sen, Muong-Nan, etc. are called Youns.
[304] The only feature which distinguishes them from their fellows on the left bank is that they generally tattoo their stomachs, whereas the others tattoo the thighs and upper part of the legs, whence the names "Lao-Phoung-Khao" (white-bellied Laotians) and Lao-Phóung-Dam (black-bellied Laotians) which are used in designating the ones and the others.

Phais. Neither do the Phais constitute a separate racial group. They are Khas who are in the process of being transformed, Khas crossed with either Lus or Laotians according as their neighbors have been representatives of the first or the second of these races. Although after this contact they have begun to police themselves and to bring their way of life into conformity with that of the Lus or Laotians, they are nonetheless subject to the same regime as the Khas in respect to taxes and other matters.

Lus. The Lus, who are natives of the Sip-Song Pan-Nas, did
563 not come and settle in any great numbers in the territory of Luang-
125 Prabang until long after the Laotians, and then only in order to flee
the war which was desolating their own land, or simply because they
hoped to find better living conditions in this territory. The immigration took place in an entirely peaceful manner, and since that time the Lus have not ceased to live on good terms with the Laotians, whose mores and dress they have generally adopted and by whom they will soon be completely assimilated.

563 Khos, Meos, Yaos. These various names designate natives
whose racial type, dress and hairdo ending in a queue unquestionably
denote a Chinese origin, and who do not differ from one another except

7: Thompson--374 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 306, 341, 532

"The seventeenth century was an era of peace that permitted the Laotian arts to flourish. The insouciance, which is a Laotian characteristic, explains the fragility of their innumerable monuments. In the South, Khmer influence predominates; in the North, Burmese. Under this double aegis temples, libraries, and reliquaries have been built by the Laotians without originality but always with grace and elegance. The pitiless tropical vegetation has strangled almost all of them: even the Vat Prakeo, which the French have tried to save, seems doomed to destruction. The wood sculpture is of gigantic proportions and fashioned in the expressionless attitude of the Buddhist liturgy. The painting, which consists of frescoes in the pagodas, was the work of foreign artists of whom the Laotians were only the pupils. It is in jewellery and the working of precious metals that the Laotians have shown their most inventive artistry. Like all Far Eastern peoples they are very clever at basketry and weaving."

291 or less degree lightens its rather dark color. The skirt is a true cylinder, with the same diameter all along its length. A woman raises the skirt in a mass like a crown above her head, lets it slide down along her body and fastens it to her waist, without any hooks or fasteners, by tucking it in along her stomach, which is largely left bare. A brightly colored sash of cotton or silk is thrown over one shoulder, sometimes covering the breasts, to complete the costume.

"During the cold season, where there is a winter, a few women cover their trunks with a short jacket. This garment finds favor mainly outside the larger centers.

302 "A certain number of women wear their hair cut in Bressant style, in accordance with the style imported by the Siamese. The greater number wear their long hair rolled into a coil on the top or side of the head. Women's coiffures vary, moreover, depending on the region and on whether they are married or single.

292 "For great ceremonies, wealthy women wear skirts made of cloth spangled with gold or silver, and sashes of the same type.

"In Luang-Prabang they add a silk or velvet jacket decorated with embroidery on the neck, front and cuffs. Merchants can be found in this city who rent out costumes of this type, as well as gold jewelry, for great ceremonies to women who do not have any." (Le Laos français.)

301 Jewelry. Jewels find great favor among the [179] Laotians and
556 are used to complete and enrich their costume. They are not only ornaments, but also the most widespread method for realizing and preserving the liquid part of their fortune. In fact, the inhabitants transform the greater part of [Illustration here] their savings and profits into jewelry, and since they wear them on their body they are spared the use of strongboxes.

[583] The women and children are the ones who wear jewels most. They go into the trousseau of the young bride, and parents give them to their children as the latter grow up, thus putting together a sort of dowry for the time when they reach the age of marriage.

301 [180] Gold and silver are used in making jewelry, and precious
306 stones such as rubies, sapphires and various genuine or imitation gems are sometimes added as ornaments.

Gold is not used in all parts of Laos, but is mainly limited to the large centers located near regularly worked gold-bearing deposits.

[563] Doubtless because of the application of ancient sumptuary laws, silver is the only metal used by certain races--even by the Khas,

149: Reinach--136 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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[563]

who work gold mines--and by the inhabitants of several regions, whose state of fortune would nevertheless enable them to use a more precious metal.

Jewelry and examples of the goldsmith's art are found in different forms and types which vary greatly with the region and race, as will be seen by the nomenclature given in Chapter IX.

262

Food. The Laotian scorns the pleasures of the table, and is generally a moderate eater and drinker. Steam-cooked glutinous rice forms the basis of his food supply. To this he adds salt, peppers, various other spices, fresh or preserved fish, etc. Besides these, but less frequently, his day-to-day diet may be varied with poultry, eggs, buffalo meat, beef and pork, as well as venison. To be sure, it is mainly on the occasion of public or private festivals, which are fairly numerous in the course of the year, that the Laotian improves on his usual rather frugal fare in this way.

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The customary beverage is water which may be taken directly from the rivers or first be hastily decanted into jars or water-coolers of porous earthenware. In general, Laotians prefer water taken directly from the river to that which has been filtered. Finally, the people of Laos consume rice brandy which is obtained by distillation, and a kind of beer made by cold fermentation of rice mixed with paddy husks.

[527]

The use of these drinks, aside from rare exceptions, is reserved for holidays.

152

Physical appearance, character, occupations. The Laotian's character is, in general, mild, friendly and happy. His physiognomy is [181] open and smiling. Not quarrelsome by nature, he even shrinks from coming to blows in extreme cases and prefers to end a dispute with an outburst of laughter rather than with blows.

Since, all in all, it has few needs and inhabits a land with luxuriant vegetation which is abundantly favored with products to be had for the scavenging, this happy people can easily satisfy its needs and be content with its fate. [Illustration alongside text here.]

461

It is assuredly lazy, but out of indifference much rather than out of any deliberate intent. It cannot grasp the advantage or utility of a regular and prolonged effort beyond what is strictly necessary to provide it with a living and a few distractions to which, in reality, its own joyous disposition makes the greatest contribution.

462

To the men are reserved the chief tasks, which have a more virile and noble character than those which are the women's lot.

241

291 cover their bust with a small short jacket which is very close-fitting and bright in color. It has a heart-shaped opening on the chest and, like the men's jacket, is ornamented with galloons and passementerie. For celebrations and ceremonies Lu women wear a heavy turban on their head which is folded flat or pleated, shaped like a mitre and generally made of black silk spangled with gold.

301 Both men and women pierce the lobes of their ears [246] with a broad opening, into which they introduce hollow gold or silver cylinders which are sometimes as large as three centimeters in diameter.

306 Great lovers of jewelry, the Lus number skilled jewelers and goldsmiths among them who make hair coil plaques, ear cylinders, flat braided metal belts with wide chased and checkered buckles, bracelets, rings, hilts and sheaths for daggers and swords, etc. [Illustration alongside text here]

411 The Lus almost always wear daggers and swords. Each of them, so to speak, possesses a rifle, generally flintlock, which by the shape of
293 the stock, the length of the barrel and the many bands which adorn it greatly resembles the long Moukhala so dear to our Arabs in Algeria.

[361] Lu villages are clean, and the houses are arranged in a checkerboard pattern.

[23] The Lus have a high reputation as breeders of oxen and horses.

527 A great lover of celebrations and parades, this boisterous people sets off gunpowder at every opportunity, and there is no festival, private or public, so small that it is not accompanied by salvos and fireworks.

[77] From their contact with the Burmese the men have retained a [247] [Illustration] [248] [Blank page] [249] taste for dancing and for
535 sword fights mingled with dance steps in which they manifest a real grace and elegance.

"Among other forms of amusement, the men execute, with a truly remarkable suppleness and skill, sword dances which are perfectly elegant. Naked to the waist, with their trousers rolled up and bunched and a wooden sword in each hand whose cutting edge has been dipped in dye so that the thrusts will leave a mark, the two champions confront one another. Moulinets, parries and returns follow one another without apparent effort, and the movements are undulating and rapid but without any abruptness. The men seem to be caressing one another, not fighting, and yet the slashes leave their colored traces on the skin of the vanquished. Direct thrusts are forbidden, but the entire body from head to foot is fair game for the opponent. Thus during the

326 306 **Gold and silver smiths and jewelry-making.** In nearly all the large centers there are gold and silver smiths who are also jewelry-makers. They work either on their own behalf manufacturing articles which they then sell, or else on order for individuals who wish to transform silver coins which they have saved over the years, or native gold which they have obtained by gold-washing or purchase, into gold and silver articles or jewelry.

The Laotian silversmiths and jewelers use very few tools. A bellows, a crucible, a few pairs of tongs, some drawplates, caulking chisels, graving tools and hammers are all they need to cast, forge, braze, draw, laminate, chase, and checker gold and silver.

The different phases of the work include casting the metal either with or without alloy (1), laminating it with a hammer and drawing

(1) The alloys are tin and copper for silver, and always silver for gold.

it partly with a hammer and partly with a drawplate, embossing it, chasing it, checkering it, brazing on filigree or globular ornaments, and giving a patina to and burnishing the finished product.

The patina is obtained on silver by dipping it in lemon juice and tempering it while hot in a strong alum solution.

Gold jewelry is usually covered with a reddish patina which has a very warm color. This is obtained by tempering it in boiling water containing, by weight:

2 parts of saltpeter.
3 parts of salt.
1 part of alum.
Sufficient quantities of sulphur.

[531] [456] All the artists work from uniform models. The decorative motifs are taken from Brahminic tradition, with a few modifications arising out of the introduction of certain elements which are derived from Chinese art.

Yet the Laotians are capable of producing work which is not based on their usual models. Thus a great many jeweler-goldsmiths can reproduce designs which are different in shape, appearance and style from the common types which are handed down from father to son or from master to pupil.

The usual gold and silver articles include betel services, vases, cups, boxes, knife handles and sword hilts. Generally these objects are made of silver, but sometimes also of gold. The jewelry includes

326 bracelets, necklaces, rings, long neck chains and chignon chains,
306 hairpins, buckles, buttons, earrings, etc., either of gold or of silver.

The purity of the metals used in this work varies widely, and is usually left to the choice of the person who commissions the work. In some cases gold is left free of any alloy, while often a fourth part of silver is used and sometimes even more.

Silver taken from coins is left as pure as it was originally, or else its purity is decreased by alloying it with copper and tin.

The precious stones used in jewelry include sapphires, rubies, quartz, crystal, onyx, glass and even basalts. Cutting facets on gems is unknown in Laos, and only cabochon cutting, which may be more or less regular, is practiced.

326 Ironmongery. The blacksmiths of Laos are quite skillful. Their extremely scant equipment includes a double-action bellows, one or two pairs of tongs, two or three hammers, a hot set and a small anvil. They use only wood charcoal.

By taking plenty of time they are nevertheless able, using bars of soft iron imported from Europe, deadheads, and "Duongs" which come from the high primitive furnaces [457] of the Koui region, to forge various tools and utensils such as machetes, swords, knives, scissors, spades, bits, elephant halters, carnac hooks, etc.

Each blacksmith has his own specialty. With the help of routinism and by virtue of constant repetition of the same forms, these artisans manage to acquire a real skill and to utilize every last scrap of iron. It should also be noted that iron is very expensive. It costs from 30 to 70 francs per hundred kilograms in Laos, and sometimes as much as 90 or even 110 francs.

A certain number of articles, such as plowshares, spade irons, axes, etc. are imported from China and Siam.

323 Pottery. The pottery industry is very active, and in spite
415 of the many imported pots made of wrought, enamel or cast iron or copper, the industry still makes a large number of pots and vases of every size and shape which are destined for various uses.

The potters of Laos produce glazed jars which serve as receptacles for alcohol and water, water coolers, flower vases, drinking mugs, oil lamps, cuspidors, smooth and rough mortars, tiles, brick, drains, ornamental modillions, etc. The products of this industry are mainly [439] destined for local consumption. Some of them, however, also find markets in nearby countries.

23: Franck--271-272 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 131, 241, 311 Ethnic subgroup

"Sturdy enough in their natural habitat, they [EJ: of the 'Black Miao.'] must live at least three thousand feet above sea-level to be either happy or healthy, just as the Annamese must stick [272] to their miasmic rice-plains; and they never descend below that altitude if there is any way out of it. Of all the races of Indo-China the Miao are probably the most self-sufficient. In common with some other mountain tribes of Laos they burn off steep hillsides, normally every nine years, for their cultivation. When they need new fields to plant, they fell the biggest trees and set afire great patches of the jungle-forest, destroying wood and lumber enough to supply a large city for years to come. This burning is partly to drive off the blackleg fever and partly to give room for grass for their cattle; and as cinders make good fertilizer for a few years, their crops are abundant until it comes time to burn off another mountain-side. As this burning by patches has probably been going on for centuries, much of the Laos is not so forested as one expected to be, but often covered with those half-grown forests which the French call brousse. Yet with all the uneven growth there are many magnificent panoramas of densely forested ranges."

23; Franck--333 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 241, 311 Ethnic subgroup

"Here and there patches of hillsides, even of mountain-sides, were being or had recently been cleared in this primitive way and were now more or less velvety-brown and strewn with fallen charred trees. For like the Miao the Kha still burn a new strip of forest whenever they wish to plant, cutting down mammoth trees just to clear the way, and leaving them to rot. What the coffin-makers of China would not have given for some of them! But I saw nothing planted, perhaps because the end of April is too early in these highlands, as in the grass-grown rice-fields we came upon lower down. Every now and then a tiny hut as bright as if it had been made of new straw stood forth in the middle of a recent clearing, the sleeping-place evidently of a pioneer husbandman too far from home to commute. Upland rice, needing no flooding, and other jungle products are grown by the Kha and the other hill people, and sometimes carried to Luang Prabang itself, though most of them merely grow enough to feed themselves."

25: Brodrick--110 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 311, 361

"The Laotians have pushed down the Mekong valley and up the shores of some of its tributaries. But even in the Mekong Valley the population is sparse. Thakhek, Savannakhet and Paksé are just over-grown villages strung along a stream whose navigation becomes increasingly difficult, until at Khong and the Cambodian frontier the cataracts bar all passage, since the range of the Dangrek Hills, which borders northern Cambodia as a line of cliffs, offers a wall over which the great river's waters pour and seethe...

Laotian settlements, it is true, stretch down as far as Stung-Treng right into Cambodia, where the thin forest is always the same, though bursting here and there into richer vegetation. But the Laotians keep close to the main stream, and Cambodian influence does not cease to grow at the expense of Laotian among the 'savage' peoples off the Mekong's highway."

35; Ennis--130 H-3 (no date) 1936 Laotians
116, 241, 311, 464, 496

"The colonization schemes sponsored by the Indochinese government in other parts of the peninsula have not touched Laos. The local administration, however, has been encouraging small-scale settlements. The Société de l'Houle Pakhout has placed 12,000 coffee plants upon the plateau of Boloven, and in the same region a group of natives has set out 100 hectares of kapotiers. The colonization of Laos cannot be initiated until the railroad from Tanap to Thaklek is completed, which will link up the interior to river nagivation [sic] upon the Mékong. Here, as elsewhere, one of the chief problems is inadequate labor supply. (58)

58. Rapports au grand conseil, pp. 85 ff."

36: Gourou--23 (no date) 1947 Laotians
116, 311, 361, 376, 503

"Problems of the Mekong and of Laos.

Above Kratié the mighty River Mekong is of very little use. True, it is easy to imagine a marvellous control program, a sort of grandiose Laotian T.V.A. Dams would divide the river into level reaches; locks would allow ships of large tonnage to sail as far as Luang Prabang; the dams would make possible a huge electricity production, and the irrigation of vast tracts. Rice, cotton, maize, would fill the holds of river vessels that would ply to the sea without transhipping their cargos. Pacific and profitable co-operation would be established between Indochina and Siam.... All of which are daydreams. Capital is lacking and, above all, manpower. Such works would be possible only if the lands drained by the Mekong were populous. But Laos should nevertheless not be neglected. It should draw great profit from a modernization of forest exploitation, and from the application of the measures we have outlined above. Nothing valuable, however, will be effected in Laos unless, at first, small, selected areas are developed. It is difficult to help sparse, shifting populations, who escape both health measures and education. Whereas, if the Laotians scientifically colonize their own territory, beginning with integral development of favored areas with health control, they will then be setting up centers of demographic expansion and of economic activity from which the development of the less favored regions can proceed. Only then can the Mekong's domestication be begun."

149: Reinach--92 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[123] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER IV

1. POPULATION

161

The population of Laos is extremely sparse. For an area of 267,000 square kilometers there are only about 470,000 inhabitants (1).

(1) Official figure, taken from a report by the Superior Resident in Laos.

or an overall average of 176 inhabitants per hundred square kilometers. Southern Laos or Lower Laos has 300,000 inhabitants for 112,000 square kilometers, or 270 inhabitants per hundred square kilometers. Northern or Upper Laos, with an area of 155,000 square kilometers (33,000 more than the above), has only 170,000 inhabitants, or 110 inhabitants per hundred square kilometers.

[124] At the beginning of our occupation, and before a complete census of the country had been taken, it was supposed that the population was much larger. Some travelers even spoke of a population exceeding two million. A scholarly dictionary which appeared two years ago gives Laos from one to two million inhabitants, and the notice on Indo-China which was published on the occasion of the Exposition of 1900 has the figure vary between 600,000 and 800,000.

The low population density can be attributed to two causes:

1. The nature of the terrain;
2. Political events.

161
311

Certain parts of Laos are poorly adapted to the cultivation of cereal grains, rice in particular, because of mountain peaks, thick forests or bare sandy spaces which are not at all favorable to the settlement of human groupings of any size.

The area of cultivable land is estimated at about 80,000 square kilometers, or about one-third of the total surface. These 80,000 square kilometers are not, moreover, evenly distributed. The southern part has a number of vast, low plains formed by the old alluvia of the Mékong. These are well irrigated or can easily be irrigated, and lend themselves particularly to farming. The northern part, on the other hand, is formed almost entirely of close-spaced mountain peaks with only comparatively narrow valleys between them

[312]

161 and a few plateaus of small extent which are the only spots suited to
•311 farming and, in consequence, suited to settlements by human groups.

The uneven disposition of the country is the first cause of the low population density. It is not the only one.

161 For more than a century the Hôs and the Siamese have taken
175 turns in sacking the country, especially the northern part. Their methods differed, but the final result was the same. The former massacred the inhabitants after burning the villages, and forced those
727 who had escaped famine and torture to go and settle in another region. The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical fashion, and
648 depopulated the [125] land by making the inhabitants, livestock and elephants cross over to the right bank of the Mékong and oftentimes then taking them as far as the valley of the Ménam.

Fortunately this state of affairs, which prevailed when we took possession of Laos, is far from being immutable and there is every hope that the causes which gave birth to this forced departure will never again occur. The French occupation has safeguarded the population against the return of the old invasions, and in the same way the equity and justice of our administration make it possible for the natives to count on interior tranquillity and on the products of their labor.

Great efforts have also been made by our consuls in Siam and our administrators in Laos towards repopulating the country, and appreciable results have already been achieved in this direction. Thus by virtue of the agreement appended to the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, two thousand families including a minimum of eight thousand individuals of both sexes and a great deal of livestock who had previously been taken to Siam were able to return and settle on the left bank of the Mékong, the land of their origin.

168 Nothing, moreover, would stand in the way of an appeal to the other parts of Indo-China to repopulate Laos. The deltas, for example, are overflowing with people and their industrious population is so dense that the part of the land which is cultivable is by far too limited for each individual.

By offering these people a few advantages, especially in the beginning, it would be easy to attract them to Laos. By dint of hard work they would doubtless find existence comparatively easy there instead of being reduced, as they are today in certain regions, to a difficult struggle for survival.

149: Reinach--94 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

At the present time labor is what is needed to place under cultivation the land which is still lying fallow. Indeed, scarcely 30,000 square kilometers are cultivated out of the 80,000 which could be used. Once placed under cultivation these 50,000 square kilometers (1) could support from [126] 500,000 to 600,000 new inhabitants, 168 311

(1) About 15,000 square kilometers in northern Laos and 35,000 in southern Laos.

at the rate of ten or twelve inhabitants per square kilometer.

2. RACES

The population of Laos can be divided into four large distinct categories. These are: 162 144

1. The Thais, that is to say, all the people who speak, write or understand the Thai language with a few slight differences either in pronunciation, the construction of words, orthography or writing. 197

This race is subdivided into several types or varieties which are:

The Laotians (or Lao or Phou-Lao) (1).

(1) We have created the word Laotian by derivation to designate the inhabitants of Laos in general, but in reality there is one variety of the Thai family, the most numerous one moreover, which bears the name Lao or Phou-Lao. The whole of the region included in the Mékong basin above Cambodia and in the basin of the Upper Ménam is called Muong-Lao, Xieng-Lao, or land inhabited by the Phou-Lao.

The Phou-Thais.
The Khao-Thais.
The Dam-Thais.
The Dèng-Thais.
The Neua-Thais.
The Phou-Eunes.
The Youns.
The Lus.

149: Reinach--258 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"Pa-Niang," formed of slices from a large fish which have been smoked. 226

"Pa-Heng," or a small dried fish. 262

"Pa-Khem" corresponds fairly closely to our salted and dried fish of the sardine type known as Nantes, which are left in salt for only a few days.

Finally, "Pa-Dek" is the form in which most of the large varieties of fish are preserved, and is an almost indispensable part of the native food supply. To prepare Pa-Dek the meat is cut into small pieces and ground in a mortar with salt and pepper so as to produce a kind of paste which is then put in jars with salt. The resulting brine helps to preserve the product (1). 263

(1) The price of Pa-Dek varies between 18 and 25 francs per hundred kilograms. This is the "Mam" of the Annamites.

The price of fish is subject to fluctuations, depending on the scarcity of it. The large fish of which we have just been speaking sell at prices between one and forty francs, depending on their weight and their abundance on the market. 226 435

Eels, shrimp of the prawn type and crabs are also found in the ponds and rivers of Laos during the rainy season, and in the water-courses there are various edible shellfish [353] such as the river mussel and small winkle. The ponds and swamps shelter several varieties of frogs, some of which reach an enormous size. All of them are edible, and are caught with a red ribbon on the end of a line fastened to a long bamboo pole. 226 [227]

II

PRESENT-DAY CROPS

Together with an enumeration of the crops grown in Laos we should like to be able to give the area which each occupies and the cultivable surfaces with the nature of the soil and the type of crops which would be suited to them, but as the Superior Resident states in his report for 1899: 241 311

"We have been in the colony for too short a time to have been able to set up a cadastral registry service. In view of the large area of the territory (267,000 square kilometers), the small and sparse population which inhabits it (2.7 inhabitants per square kilometer in

241 Lower Laos and 1.1 inhabitant in Upper Laos), the considerable expense
311 which the establishment of a registry would involve, and the slight interest attached to such a measure in a land where our advantage lies in exercising only an indirect administration, it is impossible for me to reply in any precise fashion.

"All that I can say is that the area of cultivable land is about 80,000 square kilometers, and that it is very unevenly distributed.
[312] The southern part of the possession does offer a certain number of vast plains which are well irrigated or can be irrigated and which are admirably suited to agriculture.

"The northern part, on the other hand, is almost exclusively made up of a series of juxtaposed mountain masses in a nearly unbroken line which leaves only an insignificant place for the rare valleys and plateaus satisfying the conditions required by agriculture.

"The area of cultivated land may be estimated arbitrarily at 30,000 square kilometers, distributed as follows:

Southern Laos, 20,000 square kilometers.
Northern Laos, 10,000 square kilometers.
} Giving about 15 inhabitants per cultivated square kilometer."

In the preceding chapter we gave a list of the plants which compose the flora of Laos. We shall supplement it here by studying those which are grown as regular crops.

243 RICE. Rice, being the basic food of the Laotians, occupies first place among the country's crops.

Two varieties of rice are grown in Laos, glutinous rice or "Nep" (in Annamite) which is called "Khao-Niaon" in Laotian, and dry rice or "Khao-Tiao" which is known in trade as Cochinchina white rice.

The first is more nourishing and contains a higher percentage of starchy matter. Because of its particular qualities, it is the type most widely cultivated for food and for the manufacture of alcohol.

Dry rice or "Khao-Tiao" is also cultivated, but in smaller quantities. It is primarily used for making pastry and for food by inhabitants of certain races which do not eat glutinous rice.

[554 262] Persons of a certain standing even go so far as to eat only "Khao-Tiao" out of ostentation.

Glutinous rice is grown in plains ricefields as well as in terraced ricefields on hillsides and in "Rais" or temporary clearings in the mountains.

243 262 In reality, this is neither always nor everywhere the case. There are bad years when, because of a shortage of water, production in the ricefields falls by 30 or 40 percent, and the natives are then obliged to turn for their food to the roots, yams and taros which they find in the forest.

[311] [356] It is the northern part of Laos which mainly suffers from this sad state of things, as a result of its hydrological régime, the particular disposition of its farming land, and the fragmentation of the latter into relatively small plots which are remote from one another.

312 In southern Laos the vaster plains and a more complete natural irrigation which can easily be increased as the need arises make it possible not only to satisfy local needs but also to provide paddy and threshed rice for export. Thus in 1898 900 tons of paddy were exported to Cambodia and Cochinchina (1). [439]

(1) These exports, which seem rather slight, will certainly increase provided that crops are good.

243 439 Here, by way of indication, are some current prices per hundred kilograms of paddy and decorticated rice:

Northern Laos	Paddy	4 francs 10 centimes to 9 francs
	Rice	8 francs 30 centimes to 10 francs 60 centimes
Southern Laos	Paddy	1 franc 65 centimes to 3 francs
	Rice	8 francs 30 centimes to 12 francs 50 centimes

243 In the figures given above as representing the amount of cereal grains needed to feed the population, we should include a certain quantity of maize. We do not have sufficient information to be able to show its importance with respect to the total production of cereals and consequently to say by how many tons the total figure for the paddy crop ought to be reduced in order for this difference to be applied to maize.

Nevertheless, if we take as a basis the total number of inhabitants who grow this crop, we may estimate that in northern Laos the ratio of maize production to that of paddy is about one to five. In southern Laos this crop is much less extensive.

249 is that grown in the regions which we have just mentioned. Because of its origin and the name of the two main distribution markets of the trade, it is called Nong-Khay or Vien-Tiane tobacco.

We do not have exact data on the annual production of tobacco in Laos, because of the excessive fragmentation of the plantings and the absence of a crop registry. But information gained from commercial statistics enables us to say that in 1898 exports from the Paklay-Pone-Pissay region reached more than 42 tons. Also, if we attribute to each [276] inhabitant two grams of tobacco per day (this is not an excessive figure) or ten grams per family of five, we find that total consumption in Laos would be from 340 to 345 tons annually, or a total production of about four hundred tons (1).

(1) See Appendix XXIII.

[435 439] The export sale price varies from fifty to a hundred francs per hundred kilograms, depending on the quality.

248 COTTON. Cotton, a herbaceous and annual plant, is cultivated almost everywhere in Laos for local consumption, and particularly in 439 northern Laos for export to Yunnan. In fact, this product is almost the only return cargo for the mule and horse caravans which come in each year from Yunnan-Fou, Tali, S'semao, etc. with tea, furs, iron and copper pots, knick-knacks, etc.

248 The farming methods in northern Laos are as follows. Seeds are placed in pairs in holes which are about ten centimeters deep and spaced at varying distances depending on the region. Stony ground is preferred, on which the brush has been burned away both to clear the land and also [362] to fertilize the soil. No other fertilizer is used except the ashes of the vegetation which covered it.

The seeds are sowed in April or May and usually germinate a few days later. The plantings are harrowed and weeded twice each season, and harvesting is usually finished in November. The cotton is of a mediocre quality, with short staples, but despite this defect it is highly sought-after, as we have seen above, by the Chinese caravans which buy all of the available supply each year at the chief local markets. The height of the plant at full yield does not exceed sixty centimeters, and the yield per kilogram of bolls averages thirty percent or about 300 grams.

248 In southern Laos the cotton fields are small in extent, widely 311 scattered and formed chiefly of narrow strips of alluvial terrain on the

banks of the Mekong and its larger tributaries. 248

It is also grown on former rais in the highlands of southern Laos. 311

The climate of the Mekong valley is essentially favorable to the production of cotton, but the extent of the plantings has so far been limited, because of the lack of outlets, to what is strictly necessary to satisfy current local consumption.

Farming methods, in the lowlands of Lower Laos as well as in the highlands, are extremely primitive. The brush is cleared from the piece of land chosen, then without either weeding or fertilization the seeds are sowed in holes made with a dibble. 248

Two varieties are grown:

1. The large-flowered variety (Fai-Dok-Niai), which is preferred as being more productive and having fewer seeds. It is sowed at the end of the rainy season, usually in October, and harvested in March. This variety is cultivated only on the banks of watercourses. Its average height is one meter.

2. The small-flowered variety (Fai-Dok-Noi). It is cultivated only on higher ground, on former rais or in mountainous regions and is similar to the variety found in northern Laos. [363] It is sowed and harvested at about the same times as the above, that is to say from May to July for sowing and November or December for harvesting. Its average height is .7 meter.

It is difficult to determine the yield per hectare, in view of the fact that the cotton fields are irregular and variable in shape and size. On the basis of results in a certain number of fields which were measured separately, however, we may hazard the approximate figure of 200 to 400 kilograms of raw cotton per hectare, depending on the type of soil and its disposition.

On-the-spot purchase prices vary appreciably between the two parts of Laos. In the northern part, for example, the second-grade cotton bought by the Chinese sells for 35 to 40 francs per hundred kilograms. [435]

This crop should be developed further, and in a later paragraph we shall outline the steps which might be taken (1).

(1) Based on the reports of the Superior Commandants of Upper and Lower Laos. [113]

SUGAR CANE. Sugar cane is cultivated everywhere, both in the hills and on the low prairies. It is used only for local consumption, 249

149: Reinach-274 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

245 Here, as a sample, is a table showing cardamom production on the
435 plateau of the Bolovens during the last few years, with purchase and sale prices:

Year	Production in kilograms	Price per hundred kilograms: On the plateau, Purchase	Price per hundred kilograms: At Pnom-Penh, Sale
		francs	francs
1895	120,000	37.50 to 50	66.20 to 85.60
1896	48,000 to 60,000	50 to 58.30	70 to 93
1897	96,000 to 108,000	50 to 62.50	77.80 to 97.30
1898	270,000	50 to 66.60	85.60 to 136.
1899	216,000	54.10 to 75	77.80 to 136

249 [375] MULBERRY TREES. There are two kinds of mulberry trees
for feeding silkworms in Laos: the annual mulberry and the shrub or
231 perennial mulberry (1). In Laotian the latter is called "Kok-Mone,"

(1) It is no doubt to be identified with the multicauline mulberry and the white or Chinese mulberry.

which may be translated literally as silkworm tree.

[311] The mulberry is grown near villages, on the banks of watercourses. Oftentimes the foot of an arborescent mulberry will even be inundated during the rainy season, and it has been noted that the worms which devour the leaves of these trees are more subject than other worms to the diseases of the species and produce less silk. It is therefore probabl that excess humidity is harmful to the mulberry. But if at the present time most of these shrubs are planted in humid regions, this is due to the fact that in many places the higher ground has been abandoned and the inhabitants have settled in the bottoms of valleys. It will be understood that the natives like to have the gardens of mulberry trees

249 The amount of paper produced is hardly significant, and is limited to
289 local needs.

245 TEA. Tea is the most important crop of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na
311 and the Burmo-Shan States on both banks of the Mekong. The regions of production are included between 21° 30' and 22° 30' N. latitude and between 97° 30' and 99° 40' E. longitude.

175 The greater part of these regions, that is to say those situated on the left bank of the Mekong, belonged to us by the terms of the 1887
648 Franco-Chinese treaty of Tien-Tsin. But because of our slowness to occupy these territories England inherited the rights of Upper Burma and ceded them to China, and finally only the two Muong-Hou remained in our possession.

563 Unfortunately, the small tea-growing region left to us is not only the least productive, but also the one in which tea-growing has degenerated and is no longer practiced except by the Khas.

[377] Yet the climate of the Muong-Hou is similar to that of Man-La, which is located thirty kilometers to the west and whose tea has the same reputation as those of I-Hou, I-Bang, Muong-Hing, Muong-Pang and Muong-Yang, all of which are known as "S'semao and Pou-Eurl Teas." Furthermore, the altitude and configuration of the soil, the nature of the terrain and the varieties of tea plants are all similar in our territory of Muong-Hou and in that of Man-La. But as a consequence of various circumstances and especially of a long interruption in cultivation between 1884 and 1893, most of the tea plants have not been pruned. They have reached a height of more than six meters and the tea which they produce is almost valueless (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVI.

The average production of the whole tea-growing region has been estimated at from 600 to 660 tons. This tea is exported to China, to Burma, to Laos, to Tonkin and to Siam. In 1891 and 1892 France imported a trial shipment of 6,000 kilograms, but the transaction was not repeated because of a rise in transport costs and customs duties which did not leave a large enough profit for the importer.

435 In the regions of production prices vary, depending on quality, between 75 and 150 francs per hundred kilograms.

The teas which come from this region meet with little approval in Europe, because they lack the various aromas which the Chinese

11: League of Nations--68 G-5 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 312, 364

"Lastly, in Laos, the centres of Vientiane and Luang-Prabang, which already have a supply of drinking-water obtained in the one case from wells and in the other form a spring, are extending and modernising their plant."

149: Reinach--92 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[123] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER IV

1. POPULATION

161

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[124] At the beginning of our occupation, and before a complete census of the country had been taken, it was supposed that the population was much larger. Some travelers even spoke of a population exceeding two million. A scholarly dictionary which appeared two years ago gives Laos from one to two million inhabitants, and the notice on Indo-China which was published on the occasion of the Exposition of 1900 has the figure vary between 600,000 and 800,000.

The low population density can be attributed to two causes:

1. The nature of the terrain;
2. Political events.

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Certain parts of Laos are poorly adapted to the cultivation of cereal grains, rice in particular, because of mountain peaks, thick forests or bare sandy spaces which are not at all favorable to the settlement of human groupings of any size.

The area of cultivable land is estimated at about 80,000 square kilometers, or about one-third of the total surface. These 80,000 square kilometers are not, moreover, evenly distributed. The southern part has a number of vast, low plains formed by the old alluvia of the Mékong. These are well irrigated or can easily be irrigated, and lend themselves particularly to farming. The northern part, on the other hand, is formed almost entirely of close-spaced mountain peaks with only comparatively narrow valleys between them

[312]

241 Lower Laos and 1.1 inhabitant in Upper Laos), the considerable expense
311 which the establishment of a registry would involve, and the slight interest attached to such a measure in a land where our advantage lies in exercising only an indirect administration, it is impossible for me to reply in any precise fashion.

"All that I can say is that the area of cultivable land is about 80,000 square kilometers, and that it is very unevenly distributed.
[312] The southern part of the possession does offer a certain number of vast plains which are well irrigated or can be irrigated and which are admirably suited to agriculture.

"The northern part, on the other hand, is almost exclusively made up of a series of juxtaposed mountain masses in a nearly unbroken line which leaves only an insignificant place for the rare valleys and plateaus satisfying the conditions required by agriculture.

"The area of cultivated land may be estimated arbitrarily at 30,000 square kilometers, distributed as follows:

Southern Laos, 20,000 square kilometers.
Northern Laos, 10,000 square kilometers.
} Giving about 15 inhabitants per cultivated square kilometer."

In the preceding chapter we gave a list of the plants which compose the flora of Laos. We shall supplement it here by studying those which are grown as regular crops.

243 RICE. Rice, being the basic food of the Laotians, occupies first place among the country's crops.

Two varieties of rice are grown in Laos, glutinous rice or "Nep" (in Annamite) which is called "Khao-Niaon" in Laotian, and dry rice or "Khao-Tiao" which is known in trade as Cochinchina white rice.

The first is more nourishing and contains a higher percentage of starchy matter. Because of its particular qualities, it is the type most widely cultivated for food and for the manufacture of alcohol.

Dry rice or "Khao-Tiao" is also cultivated, but in smaller quantities. It is primarily used for making pastry and for food by inhabitants of certain races which do not eat glutinous rice.

[554 262] Persons of a certain standing even go so far as to eat only "Khao-Tiao" out of ostentation.

Glutinous rice is grown in plains ricefields as well as in terraced ricefields on hillsides and in "Rais" or temporary clearings in the mountains.

243 262 In reality, this is neither always nor everywhere the case. There are bad years when, because of a shortage of water, production in the ricefields falls by 30 or 40 percent, and the natives are then obliged to turn for their food to the roots, yams and taros which they find in the forest.

[311] [356] It is the northern part of Laos which mainly suffers from this sad state of things, as a result of its hydrological régime, the particular disposition of its farming land, and the fragmentation of the latter into relatively small plots which are remote from one another.

[312] In southern Laos the vaster plains and a more complete natural irrigation which can easily be increased as the need arises make it possible not only to satisfy local needs but also to provide paddy and threshed rice for export. [439] Thus in 1898 900 tons of paddy were exported to Cambodia and Cochinchina (1).

(1) These exports, which seem rather slight, will certainly increase provided that crops are good.

243 439 Here, by way of indication, are some current prices per hundred kilograms of paddy and decorticated rice:

Northern Laos	Paddy	4 francs 10 centimes to 9 francs
	Rice	8 francs 30 centimes to 10 francs 60 centimes
Southern Laos	Paddy	1 franc 65 centimes to 3 francs
	Rice	8 francs 30 centimes to 12 francs 50 centimes

243 In the figures given above as representing the amount of cereal grains needed to feed the population, we should include a certain quantity of maize. We do not have sufficient information to be able to show its importance with respect to the total production of cereals and consequently to say by how many tons the total figure for the paddy crop ought to be reduced in order for this difference to be applied to maize.

Nevertheless, if we take as a basis the total number of inhabitants who grow this crop, we may estimate that in northern Laos the ratio of maize production to that of paddy is about one to five. In southern Laos this crop is much less extensive.

149: Reinach--262 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Rice is grown in two different ways in Laos: in inundated ricefields on plains or hills, and in rais or [357] temporary mountain clearings. Only one crop is harvested per year, from November to January, since the Laotians do not practice artificial irrigation and count only on the water supplied by rain. 243 [312]

Maize is always grown in rais or on the edge of terraced hillside ricefields. In southern Laos only the Khas have any in their fields. The Laotians produce maize only in their gardens, as a vegetable. [563]

Glutinous or aquatic rice grows well only on low, hot, swampy land where the soil is heavy. Dry rice, on the other hand, thrives only on ordinary soil which is moist and slightly sandy, and on heights up to an altitude of 1,800 meters where it can endure temperatures which are relatively low for tropical regions (5° and even lower).

Plains ricefields. The land in plains ricefields generally consists of soil containing a high percentage of vegetable matter. It is composed of alluvia worked by earthworms and containing organic vegetable matter in decomposition. The clayish and sandy soil is deep enough to permit growth and nourishment of the plant roots. It generally rests either on rock, or on a compact sediment or on an alluvial strata which has a higher clay content and has not been penetrated by worms. This bottom layer prevents the ground water which is indispensable to the growth of the grain from escaping.

Terraced ricefields. In the ricefields which are terraced or arranged in steps, and which are situated on hillsides or the lower slopes of the mountains which enclose high valleys, the layer of vegetable matter is fairly thin. This is due to the fact that rocky particles removed from the peaks by running water have been deposited on natural terraces where they form a kind of alluvial cone. Man's handiwork has extended and leveled them, and arranged them in such a way that the alluvia will not be carried lower. Dikes or levees of earth and stones limit the successive terraces which cover the slopes, like the steps of a gigantic stairway. They hold back the vegetable soil, and at the same time their inner faces [358] constitute the walls of irrigation canals which circulate from one step to another from the top of the hills to the bottom, diverting into the furrows, through slits which may be opened at will, the waters of a brook or torrent which has been captured at a higher level. 243 312

Rais. Rais take their name from a Siamese unit of area measurement which is applied to ricefields and which represents a square forty meters on a side, or 1,600 square meters. They are [804] 243

243 clearings made in the mountains in the midst of the wild forest. All the vegetation cut down is burned where it falls, and its ashes constitute a fertilizer added to the humus in the soil.

Rais can generally be seeded for two years only, sometimes three but never more. They are abandoned at the end of this period, for the roots of the fallen vegetation are no longer there to hold the soil in place and rainwater, which is no longer screened and partly absorbed by the foliage of the trees and plants, strikes the denuded soil with force and gradually wears it away. Running water thus carries off all the vegetable particles one by one to the valley bottoms, sometimes leaving nothing but bare rock.

243 Farming methods. 1) Plains ricefields.
312 The terrain is divided into more or less regular compartments which are nearly rectangular in shape and are 30, 40 or 60 meters on a side. They are separated from one another by earth dikes or levees which are .6 meter high and the same width at the base. Slits are pierced in the dikes to enable water to circulate and to permit the artificial swamps which each compartment or plains rai constitutes to be either inundated or drained. The canals which circulate through the ricefields are either diverted from a higher watercourse or else fed by various means which make it possible to raise water from a lower level.

243 Plowing is begun when the first rains have fallen and when the soil, which had acquired deep cracks under the action of the sun, has first soaked in water and then become sufficiently saturated.

This operation is carried out with the help of a rudimentary plow drawn by a buffalo and directed by a man. Furrows are thus [359] traced underwater in the semi-fluid, warm and nauseating mud of the ricefield. After this first operation the water is allowed to remain for a while, and then the ricefield is drained. It is harrowed and rolled, and water is again let in. Then the land is ready for transplanting the young rice plants.

The rice which is to supply plants for transplanting has been sowed in a chosen compartment which is sometimes [illustration here] fertilized (lime, buffalo and ox manure). When the young shoots reach a height of 15 to 20 centimeters in the seed-garden they are uprooted and replanted in clusters of three or five plants each in the ricefield which has been prepared as above. Transplanting is done in squares or in a staggered arrangement, with the plants 30 to 40 centimeters apart.

In some parts of northern Laos there are even two successive transplantings two weeks apart. When they come out of the seed-garden

the plants are replanted a few centimeters [360] apart in a second seed-garden for growth. This procedure increases the plant's productivity quite appreciably. 243

Since the nature of the terrain and the richness of the soil vary from one point to another, it follows that the yield from the ricefields is not uniform. By reason of these conditions and the varying amount of water which falls on the fields or is piped in, this yield varies from 40 to 90 parts for one part of seed, and from 15 to 25 piculs per hectare (1). The rice is harvested about four or five months after 243 312

(1) In Cochinchina the average yield is from 28 to 30 piculs, and in Tonkin 44 piculs. But one should not lose sight of the fact that Cochinchina and Tonkin are much better favored than Laos from the point of view of irrigation, and that the Annamites are past masters in the art of farming. [101]

transplanting.

2) Terraced ricefields. The soil is worked in the same way in these ricefields, except that in some cases the land is turned over with a spade instead of plowed. 243

3) Mountain rais. In the year following the one when the land was cleared, the soil of the rais is cleaned and weeded. Then in June the rice is sowed, either broadcast or else by dropping a few grains at a time into holes made with a kind of bamboo dibble.

The rais are harvested in October and even in September in some localities. In general the yield from rais is from 90 to 120 parts for one part of seed and from 10 to 20 piculs per hectare.

Maize is sowed directly in straight furrows about March or April, and is harvested in July.

TOBACCO. Tobacco (Ia-Doute) is widely consumed in Laos, where everyone smokes. It is also an excellent commodity for trade and export. It is cultivated on a large scale on the banks and islands of the Mekong from Pak-Lay to a point below Pone-Pissay. Production from the tobacco fields in these regions not only supplies local needs, but also those of all of Upper Laos and part of Lower Laos and provides tobacco for export to Siam and Cochinchina. 249 [43]

[361] In addition to the foregoing, almost the whole population along the banks of the Mekong and the lower reaches of its tributaries also grows tobacco for its own use and for the inhabitants of the interior. The tobacco which is most prized for its high quality, however,

Kha

result. But the Kha ideal is to possess a battery of gongs of different 533
sizes and timbres, and with these they manage to obtain quite perfect chords.

Industry. Withdrawn in their mountains where they live in small 433
isolated groups, the Khas use their leisure time to make many basket-work and hollow-ware products which have a mark of elegance and a great deal of delicacy. Other tribes make paper from wood pulp, weave mats from rattan and bamboo bark, etc. They use all these products in trade.

Finally, certain Khas exploit deposits of iron ore and transform 316
it into farming implements, while others wash gold-bearing sands.

In general, although the Khas are industrious they work only to 461
procure what is strictly indispensable. They cannot resign themselves to staying away from home for any length of time and dread any stay in the low country, which they say is unhealthy for them. Since they [313]
have particular aptitudes for woodcutting, however, they have been successfully employed to cut teak wood in the forests on the right bank of the Mekong which are situated in Siamese territory. But it must be admitted that there they are in mountainous country and in the midst of forests, as in their native region.

The Khas of southern Laos. In southern Laos Khas are found who differ very little from those of Upper Laos. We shall not concern ourselves with them, but shall deal briefly with the many more numerous ones who have particular mores and customs.

The Djarais, the Rades, the Bahnars, the Cedangs, the Peunongs, [619]
the Rognaos (1), etc. are the principal types of these Kha tribes,

(1) See Appendix XVIII.

which for the most part are still independent.

These people are proud, large and muscular, supple, trained in 181
all forms of bodily exercise, bold, warlike and brave.

These qualities, moreover, have been developed by their pe- 567
culiar way of [257] [Illustration] [258] [Blank page] [259] life.
Accustomed to hunting slaves from which they extracted large profits 721
by selling them on the banks of the Mekong, these Khas have had to resort to continual expeditions in order to obtain their human game.

For many long years, in fact, they could acquire [Illustration 567
here] the gongs, buffalo, metals, textiles, etc. which they needed only by selling captives, generally Annamites, whom they went and

as yet we can regard it only in the light of a reserve for the future and hope that this future is imminent. [Illustration alongside text here] 137

The establishment of sawmills near the points where trees are felled is not to be recommended, particularly in middle and upper Laos. Any industry of this type could not yet find sufficiently large local outlets, because of the difficulty of transportation. Moreover, the natives use only axes and machetes for felling and cutting up trees, and they would never be willing to underwrite the cost of sawmills. The only remaining recourse, therefore, is exploitation for the coastal markets or for export, and the future obviously lies herein. But as long as there are no railways leading from the Mekong to the Annam coast, or steamers capable of traversing the river from Luang-Prabang as far as the island of Khone without trans-shipping their cargo, there can be no thought of felling trees where they grow in order to export them in the form of wood ready for industry (planks, billets, beams) nor, in consequence, of establishing sawmills in the Laotian interior. 000

[308] The only method at present practical would be to float the undressed logs downriver, either by themselves if their density permits or else by means of bamboo floats. These logs could be floated down to North Khone and then cut up on the island itself by means of sawmills driven hydraulically by the waterfalls. They could then be transported to Pnom-Penh or Saigon by steamship. 313

The above considerations would apply to the majority of the hardwoods which do not float by themselves. In the case of teak, pine and mock mahogany (mai-niom-pha), for example, there would be no difficulty in floating the undressed logs down from Xieng-Khong or even Tang-Ho, if we are to rely on a conclusive experiment performed in 1899. M. Lussan succeeded in bringing 170 undressed teak logs all the way from Luang-Prabang to Saigon, coming through the valley of the Me-Khok by way of Xieng-Sen (1).

(1) "This year the teak logs which M. Lussan is bringing down from the same region are said to represent about 600 cubic meters. When last heard from, the billets had left Khone (the island was crossed via the Decauville railway so as to avoid the rapids). Losses of billets at this time amounted to only 2-1/2 to 3 percent of the total number.

"The Superior Resident in Laos notes that an ingenious system of floating was used this year. The logs were tied together in groups of only three or four and launched into the current.

313 M. Lussan merely had to see that they were followed at a distance by two light pirogues, the duty of the latter being to explore the banks and islands and push back into the current any of the small rafts which might have gone aground along the way.

"All the logs were then halted above the rapids by lookout posts judiciously located at narrow points in the river. They were again set free, but this time singly in order to traverse the rapids. Below the rapids the logs were collected by the same lookout system, the lookouts now being located at two points on the downstream reaches. The distance between the two points had been calculated so that the logs would pass by the first outpost at night and be collected at the second outpost twelve hours later, that is to say during the day." (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900.)

We shall study below, in Chapter VII, the methods of cultivating, extracting and exploiting the forest resources and the measures which the administration has taken for their conservation and development.

[309] 2. FAUNA. ANIMAL HIDES AND REMAINS

136 The fauna of Laos is scarcely different from that of India. It is just as varied and just as abundant, proportionately speaking.

Domesticated Fauna

231 Domesticated fauna includes the elephant, horse, buffalo, ox, pig, goat, poultry (chickens and peacocks), turtle-doves, dogs and cats (some with a straight or curved tail, others with a short tail curling in a ball, and still others without a tail, of Siamese origin). [Illustration alongside text here]

Wild Fauna

136 a) Mammals and rodents. These animals include the wild elephant and the rhinoceros (both Indian and Sumatran varieties, that is to say with one or two horns), the buffalo, the ox, the stag, the elk, the buck, the gazelle, the agouti, the wild boar, the otter, a great variety of monkeys (lemurs, paresseux, dormeurs, macaques, gibbons), the scaly anteater, the mongoose (ctenomis), the genet, the civet cat, the shrew-mouse, the polecat, the ordinary squirrel

314 The wax is not of uniform quality in Laos, but varies in color and texture depending on the region, the type of bees [336] which produce it, and also on the flowers on which the latter feed.

In this land there are hive hunters who have a rare skill and an extraordinary flair. They are able to find wild hives in the confusion of the forest foliage, in hollow trunks and in rocky crags where no one else could. The methods used to capture the swarms of bees and their hives differ little from those in use in Europe, and include noise, music and smoke.

[789] The Laotians claim that some bee hunters are able to get rid of the swarms of bees by attracting their queen by means of the sound of a kind of flageolet and by pronouncing certain cabalistic words.

435 The price of wax is quite high. A hundred kilograms cost 250 francs in Luang-Prabang, 219 francs in Nong-Khay, 290 francs in Cammon, 300 francs in Song-Khone and Saravane, 333 francs in Bassac, 208 francs in Attopeu, 312 francs in Stung-Treng, 500 francs in Korat, 250 francs in Pnom-Penh, and 300 francs in Cholen.

15. Rattan (Vai).

314 The rattan is a palm tree of the genus Calamus rudentum and Calamus petraeus. There are several types in Laos, which are used
285 in accordance with their particular qualities.

The rattan industry is still in its early stages. A few Kha tribes of southern Laos traffic in rattan and supply the needs of local consumption, either in the form of crude rattan delivered in bundles, or in the form of mats and baskets, at a price of five francs per thousand or about sixty kilograms. It is present in great abundance throughout the whole land, and in northern Laos is even used for trade with Siam, which produces little rattan.

It is to be hoped that among the samples sent from Laos to France there will be some good ones which can be used abroad in the manufacture of all the wickerwork and esparto articles whose consumption is constantly increasing. This would provide an appreciable source of revenue for the land.

16. Bamboo.

313 There are some twenty varieties of bamboo. All [337] [Illustration] [338] [Blank page] [339] except one of these grow wild, the exception being the golden bamboo (Mai-So-Kham), which is chiefly cultivated in the enclosures of pagodas.

The following description of the many uses of bamboo is taken from the interesting work by Mme. Massieu:

149; Reinach--247 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"What makes everything easy and is used for everything is this hollow wood, at once so solid and so light, the incomparable bamboo. In France we see it only in the form of pleasant but useless little articles of furniture. Here bamboo is sufficient to every task. It provides the whole house, frame as well as walls. The inner walls and floors are made of matted bamboo lathwork. Yet such a house, with its furniture, bed, tables, various accessories and its luxury objects, if you are a person of refinement, can be improvised for you in a space of two hours wherever you want. 313 341 352

"Has a bridge been washed out? In two hours, thanks to this wood which is easy to manage and to work, men will have made a new bridge. One is especially struck, at the beginning of this life which is so free and, more than any other, independent of men and things, by the great simplicity and ingenuity of all the procedures. Objects are rudimentary but practical, easy to make, soon ready and simple to repair. Everyone knows how to build ordinary furnishings, and no interruptions are caused here as they are when even the slightest damage occurs to one of our highly developed utensils, which only a specialist knows how to repair.

"A bamboo tube is a safe place for your maps and papers. It is a drinking glass, and it is also a pipe for smokers. On a larger scale, it is a bucket for carrying water, and the receptacle for all liquid and solid provisions. When provided with a handle it serves as a pot for the Laotians to cook their rice in, or to prepare syrup from the sugar palm. When torn into thongs it is used as rope and string. Ligatures of sapeks are threaded on kelates, or bamboo filaments, and this is what makes our new Indo-Chinese sou, with its round hole in the middle, so impractical. Those who preside over the striking of our coins are unaware that the kelate is square, a fact which the first comer from the interior could have told them. Baskets of all kinds are made with these same kelates for holding and transporting material. Hats are also made of them to provide shelter from the sun and rain. At night, when the stage of your journey is too long and you have to continue after nightfall even at the risk of meeting a tiger, setting fire to a bamboo branch is enough to frighten any off and to light your way. And not only is bamboo used to make torches, hats, string, dishes, furniture, houses and bridges, but it also serves as animal fodder and even as food for the natives, who eat the tenderest shoots as we would eat asparagus. 313 415 436 285 313 291 [372] [262] [231]

313 "There are several kinds of bamboo. The large bamboo which is used to make boxes and floats is called mai-bane. The mai-tot is the male bamboo, [340] strong and slender, with its joints closer together. When provided with an iron point it is used for poling boats along in the rivers. The mai-an is the female bamboo, hollower and lighter, from which raft coverings and partition mats are made. It is the kind used to make kelates" (1).

[113] (1) Revue des Deux Mondes. "A travers l'Indo-Chine. Le Haut Laos et le Mékong," by Mme Isabelle Massieu, August 1, 1900.

314 17. Rubber.

824 Rubber is called "Niang-Niut" in Laotian, which means, literally, elastic gum.

There are several plant varieties in Laos which supply a latex which becomes elastic after coagulation. Certain types of the ficus family, doubtless of the elastica genus, yield rubber of comparatively good quality. The plants which produce the most latex and that of the best quality, however, are lianas whose scientific nature has not yet been settled.

More than ten different kinds of rubber lianas are known. The Laotians call these "Khua-Mak-Niang, Khua-Hai, Khua-Niut-Niai, Khua-Mak-Som, Khua-Mak-Katong-Katiou, Khua-Khao-Pong, Khua-Lam-Sai, Khua-Tang-Tong, Khua-Som-Lam, Khua-Mak-Ka-Khay, Khua-Mak-Khao-Ngoua," etc.

It is quite certain that these diverse names do not refer to as many species which are dissimilar from the botanical point of view, but are merely different local terms used at widely separated points in order to designate the same lianas. Without any concern for their chief virtue, which is to supply latex rubber, the Laotians have named them for their appearance, the shape or type of their fruit, etc.

It seems likely that the varieties which we have just enumerated may be reduced to seven and perhaps less. We shall not be able to tell for sure until we have examined the stalks, leaves, flowers and fruits of the various species in a laboratory. The liana which is most widespread in Laos is the one bearing the name Khua-Mak-Khao-Ngoua or liana with fruits like buffalo horns. It is also called Khua-Mak-Som or liana with acid fruits. The latex is collected twice [341] each year, once in June or July (rainy season), and again in October or November (dry season). The first harvest yields only second grade rubber which is black and sticky. The second crop, which is less

224 this animal has been hunted to excess and because of [346] the value of ivory, it has disappeared from certain regions. It is scarcely ever found now except in the valleys of the Sesane, the Se-Ia-Drang and the Srepok and in the Muong of Maha-Say in Lower Laos, and in Vien-Tiane, Tran-Ninh, the Hua-Pahn, the Sib-Song-Chau-Thai, etc., in Upper Laos.

•313 For the last ten years or so the working of the teak forests in the Siamese and Shan territories of the basin of the Upper Menam (1) has

224 438 (1) Elephants are used in Siam to carry teak logs from the place where they are felled to nearby watercourses.

necessitated the use of an ever-increasing number of these pachyderms, among which overwork and accidents claim many victims. Thus to fill the gaps elephants have to be sought where there are still some left, and it is precisely in French Laos, on the left bank of the Mekong, that a few wild herds are still found.

Since there is no shortage of buyers, it is to the interest of the hunters to capture as many of these valuable animals each year as possible and to train them with a view towards selling them. Since demand even greatly exceeds supply, an inflationary tendency has resulted which has caused prices to rise by sixty to eighty percent. Besides the sum paid to the sellers, the purchasers have to pay an exit duty amounting to half of the purchase price. This tax, like other similar ones of which we shall speak later on, is levied to compensate for the real estate tax which Laos does not yet have.

224 231 The methods now used to capture wild elephants are identical, except for minor details, in all parts of Laos. In order to summarize them and to provide a description of an elephant hunt, we shall have recourse to the interesting account which Captain Gosselin (2) has given.

(2) Le Laos et le Protectorat français, op. cit. [Paris, 1900.]

"At the beginning of the dry season, the owners of tame elephants make ready for the great beats which take place in the mountains near the Annam frontier. They train their elephants to run, so that they will develop speed, and manufacture immense ropes forty to fifty meters long, made from strands of buffalo hide [347] and rattan and strengthened with copper wire. A collar is fitted at one end of each rope which is large enough to be put around an elephant's neck, while a ring about sixty centimeters in diameter is fitted to the other end.

149: Reinach--286 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Coffee. The coffee bushes which have been planted in Laos by way of experiment in different regions and at different altitudes, depending on the variety (Liberian or Arabian), seem to be thriving. A few small plantations, like those on the Black River (on the frontier of the Sib-Song-Chau-Thai) and at the mission of the Bahnars, are even said to be producing a full yield already. But these results are still too sketchy for us to be able to state that the cultivation of coffee in Laos is ready to leave the period of experimentation and be undertaken on a large scale.

If it is true, as some say, that planting coffee in Annam and Tonkin has been extremely disappointing, then this does not offer encouragement for trying this crop in Laos.

Jute. The fiber of this plant is in great demand for making grain sacks and cloth wrapping material known as gunny. Although some jute is grown in Annam and Tonkin, in Indo-China we are still dependent for this product on British India, which sends us large quantities of it. The cultivation of this plant might be tried in Laos, in the higher parts of the country.

III

FOREST PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION--REFORESTATION

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The administration of Laos has made an effort to remedy, insofar as possible, the indifference of the population as concerns conservation of forest resources. It has taken measures to facilitate the reforestation of hills and plateaus which have been cultivated as rais.

These measures were indispensable, if any attempt was to be made to prevent the hills and hillocks of Laos, as well as the mountainsides, from becoming bald and sterile over the years as has already occurred in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na and the northern regions. The heights do not have any trees or green foliage, the rock is bare on their [391] prominences, and only in the valleys which face to the north is there any soil containing vegetable matter.

[241]

This deforestation and denudation are due to the annual burnings which spread from one rai to another at the time when the inhabitants turn to new clearings. Out of indifference they allow the fires to consume the young vegetation which was beginning to cover the old rais and which, by holding back the soil containing vegetable matter, was attenuating the destructive effects of erosion.

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Furthermore, the oft-repeated clearings cannot fail to have a certain influence on the atmospheric state of the region and on the constitution of the soil. Deforestation, in fact, brings about the denudation of high points all the way down to the rock which has not yet become decomposed, and rainwater, by carrying sterile alluvia down to the valley bottoms, partly obstructs the beds of rivers and causes the latter to overflow and erode their banks.

Furthermore, since clouds are no longer stopped by the forests which used to cover the heights they carry their fecundating water elsewhere at the very time when it is the most needed.

The result, in the last place, is a diminution in the yield from plains ricefields, which suffer from this insufficiency of natural irrigation.

Finally these clearings, made in a brutal, arbitrary and irrational manner, were causing the disappearance of useful varieties of trees forever. A little soda and potash is the only benefit to be drawn from combustion of the forests, and even this fertilizer is carried off by water in the following rainy season.

Henceforth, in accordance with the instructions published throughout the whole country by the superior administration of Laos and by the province administrators, cultivation on rais will be subject to the following regulations.

1. Sites to be cleared shall be determined by the local authorities, who shall choose land sufficiently far from old rais which are in the process of being reforested so that fires may be kept from spreading.

2. Rais in the process of being reforested shall be surrounded by a ditch [392] and by felled trees and brush. The owners of the nearest rais shall keep a careful watch, despite these precautions, in order to prevent fires from spreading.

3. When trees of a fine growth or of a useful variety are found on land which has been selected for the purpose of making a new rai, these shall be felled according to custom. But instead of burning them on the spot the woodcutters must push them off the limits of the rai and into a place safe from fire, so that they may later be utilized.

4. Furthermore, the local authorities shall oblige the inhabitants to sow or plant rapid-growing trees with roots sufficiently powerful to hold back the soil containing vegetable matter, over the whole area of abandoned rais.

By following the above procedure on all abandoned rais, it is to be hoped that they will be restored within fifteen or twenty years and will have enough humus so that they will again lend themselves to cultivation.

149: Reinach--288 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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When restored in this manner, their vegetation will reestablish the hygrometric regime of the region and the rational distribution of ground water.

FOREST PLANTATIONS

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Starting from the principle that trees of hardwood or precious varieties will rapidly disappear as soon as the forest riches of Laos are regularly exploited, a few administrators have thought that it would be wise to begin now and plant selected varieties.

This precaution will not seem either excessive or premature if one considers the time it takes for any tree whatsoever to reach full growth and acquire commercial value.

Since no reliance can be placed either on the people's initiative or on their willingness to concern themselves with plantings, it has been proposed that action be taken by way of authority. The inhabitants of each village, and particularly the registered inhabitants, would be forced to plant each year, in suitable spots which are easily accessible and near inhabited centers and watercourses, a certain number of trees of the [393] [Illustration] [394] [Blank page] [395] most useful varieties, which were well suited to the climate and soil of the region, and then forced to supervise their growth.

An example has already been provided in the way of teak plantations, for higher authorities had seeds of this precious tree distributed to the natives through their administrators.

The Laotians are so carefree and have so little concern for the morrow that many of them allowed the seeds to spoil without sowing them. It was necessary to issue orders and even make threats before the seeds were finally sowed.

One day we may therefore hope to see a great many teak trees rising from the ground where today there grow only the dwarfed and inferior quality trees of the forest glades. They will provide a source of inestimable wealth for the land (1).

(1) In Siam, teak exports represent an annual value of six to seven million francs.

Colonel Tournier, the Superior Resident in Laos, recently took the following measures for the conservation and reforestation of the teaks in the region of Xieng-Khong:

1. Designation by the Administration to the concessionnaire of trees which must be notched;

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2. The obligation on the part of the concessionnaire to rid the young teaks of the lianas which choke them;

3. The obligation to replant ten young teak shoots for every tree which is felled;

4. The obligation on the part of villages near groups of teaks to open up roads leading to these groups; a prohibition against making rais and cutting down trees without permission; the obligation to plant from fifty to a hundred teaks per house each year, depending on the remoteness of the village.

In return, the inhabitants of these villages need not fulfill the twenty days of labor drafts due each year.

Besides teak, we may recommend the planting of certain other trees, such as the "Mai-Niom-Pha" (mock mahogany), the "Mai-Thon" (mock walnut), the "Mai-Kha-Nioung" (mock rosewood), the "Mai-Lang-Dam" (ebony), etc.

The eucalyptus would doubtless grow well in certain regions of Laos.

PROVINCE EXPERIMENTAL GARDENS

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For several years now there have been experimental gardens in each commissionership. They serve as trial fields for the cultivation of certain European and Asian plants which are unknown or rare in Laos.

[396] These gardens are also schools of practical agriculture for the natives. Seeds and plants are distributed to the latter, and they are given extremely summary bits of information about certain plants whose cultivation would be advantageous from the point of view of commercial transactions. These gardens are destined to render services to future colonists, and the trials which are made there deserve encouragement.

Although not all heads of provinces possess the same degree of agricultural and horticultural knowledge, they devote the utmost zeal to making the most of their gardens. Seconded by their staff and guided by the enlightened counsels of the Superior Residency, of the department of Agriculture and of the directors of the botanical gardens of Indo-China, most of them have already achieved satisfactory results.

[113] The special periodicals such as the Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, the Revue des cultures coloniales, etc. which are sent to each commissioner are of invaluable help in this connection (1).

(1) Some of the libraries in the commissionerships contain a book

396 the purity of line and elegance, joined with solidity, which go to make up the deserved renown of Laotian pirogues.

If it be noted that some of them are more than twenty meters long and can hold from forty to fifty paddlers, it will be agreed that a certain amount of effort is necessary to bring trees from which the pirogues are to be hewed from the forest to the workshop.

It is difficult, without the help of a drawing, to give a clear idea of how a pirogue is hewed to any who has not seen the process. We shall try to do so, however, referring the reader to the illustrations reproduced in this work for an idea of the general shape.

[313] After being selected in the forest, the tree destined to be made into a pirogue is felled and then taken to the nearest watercourse, where it is floated to the workshop. There it is divested of its bark and sap-wood, and the heartwood is laid bare. Depending on its kind and shape, one side or another of the log is chosen as the bottom of the pirogue.

Carpenters armed with hatchets begin to shape the piece, being careful not to harm the wood in the center of its length, where the main beam of the ship will be located. They hew out the prow and the stern, giving them the elegant, raised shape which the finished product will have. The piece of wood is then turned over. The thinned extremities are cut with a slight curve which is accentuated at the stern, and each end then has an outline shaped like a truncated fish tail.

Curved lines run from both ends to the more swollen part [465] which forms the center. A deep notch (1) as broad as a man's hand

(1) This notch is similar to that of a weaver's shuttle.

is cut vertically into the upper part of the still unfinished block, following the median line between the points of origin of the two ends, that is to say between the points where they join the body of the pirogue. This notch is cut deep enough to leave the requisite thickness of wood at the pirogue's bottom at the center of its length. It then decreases progressively, and disappears at the points where the ends join the body. Then levers are used to open up both edges of the notch gradually, while fire is also introduced into the hole and the bottom of the piece is kept wet. As the opening grows wooden cross-braces and chocks are placed between the sides of the trough which is gradually taking shape, like a pea pod being opened down the middle. Between each application of fire, and as the cavity grows larger, wood

who were disposed to follow them.

464 563 stitions and perhaps also the opposition of the mandarins who for centuries have tried [516] to prevent any exodus towards the lands situated beyond the mountains, have in the long run made him a stay-at-home.

000 This industrious, intelligent and prolific people prefers to struggle for life in agglomerations which are too dense, rather than emigrate in order to obtain a life of well-being and ease.

We should not, however, despair of ever seeing the Annamites spread into Laos and there provide a powerful force for repopulation and make the low plains which border the Mekong from Cammon to Cambodia bear fruit. It is up to us to destroy the legends, to reduce to nothingness the superstitions which have gained currency, and then to use our influence to bring an end to the ostracism in which Laos is held. Does it not belong today to the great Indo-Chinese family in which all the component peoples are French subjects in the same right?

On the day when the mandarins no longer sustain a fear of Laos and a dread of slavery among the Annamites, it will be possible to induc them to emigrate into the Mekong basin. The colonies already in existence, particularly at certain points in Cammon, will grow from that day on through the addition of newcomers. We must not deceive ourselves into thinking that such immigration will not take time, and so in order to meet our most pressing needs European colonies in Laos will have to appeal to laborers from the southern provinces of China and especially from the island of Hainan, that inexhaustible reservoir which has supplied coolies to several parts of the world for so many years.

But, it will be asked, is Laos ready to welcome colonists who want to work the mines and forests and to engage in trade, agriculture and livestock breeding? We believe that, in the present state of communications, some of these undertakings are possible at this moment and that others cannot hope to succeed until the country's economic equipment has developed.

316 313 185 As concerns commerce and the exploitation of forests and mines, we have noted that several attempts have already been made. These are valuable indications showing the [517] courses which isolated colonists or companies which would like to employ their capital in our new possession can follow as of the present time. Indeed, such undertakings yield profits almost from the very beginning, and if they are

316 begun at judiciously chosen points [Illustration here] they can be accommodated to the existing means of communication and transport
313 if necessary. As for the sums needed to engage in a commercial, mining or forest enterprise, it is difficult to determine these in any
185 precise fashion for, depending on the region and the special conditions of the terrain, such matters may require more or less capital.

[518] For dealing in teak wood (1), for example, the sums needed

(1) A rigorous investigation made by a chief guardsman of the Laotian militia of the region of Xieng-Khong, on the left bank of the Mekong, has shown that the number of teak trees ready for cutting in the province of Muong-Sing is 4,975 in all, 2,000 of which are of exceptional size for the region, that is to say that their diameter varies between 0.3 and 0.6 meter. Counting the young shoots and young trees, the total number of teaks which we possess in Muong-Sing may be estimated at about 20,000.

Another group is situated on the right bank of the Mekong, in the vicinity of Pak-Lay and in the basin of the Nam-Poun. It includes from 10,000 to 12,000 teak trees ready for cutting, concessions for about half of which have been granted. (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900.)

for purchase and transport would depend on the quantity which it was desired to export. As an average indication, the sum of 40,000 francs might be given for operations on 1,000 teak trees.

From the point of view of mineral resources, certain deposits require capital in the millions for their exploitation, while others might be worked profitably with sums varying between 250,000 to 500,000 francs.

433 In the way of industries which may be started at the present time,
185 we may cite only the establishment of rice distilleries in southern Laos and of a mechanical sawmill at Khone.

[273] A distillery could be set up without any great expense at the
[243] mouth of the Mekong and the Sedone, for example. Thanks to the price of glutinous rice which is five or six times less expensive in this region than at Pnom-Penh, the alcohol from such a distillery would find a certain market in Cambodia.

185 For several years now there has been talk of establishing a mechanical sawmill on the island of Khone which would obtain its
313 motive power from the nearby waterfalls. Besides teak wood (2),
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(2) Teak is generally regarded, although wrongly, as the wood

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with the greatest value on European markets, but woods which are very common in Indo-China are often just as highly esteemed. Among others we may cite the "Mai-Niang," the "Mai-Thon" (mock walnut), the "Mai-Deng" (rosewood), the "Mai-Dou" (thuja), the "Mai-Lang-Dam" (ebony), etc.

a great many other varieties of trees could be used to feed the sawmill and, like alcohol, find an easy outlet in Cambodia and Cochinchina.

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[519] Finally, one other enterprise might be attempted. This is livestock breeding and particularly the raising of oxen, which sell in Cambodia and Cochinchina for double their value in their country of origin. We have previously mentioned some of the points which would be particularly well-suited to undertakings of this nature. The greatest hazard to be feared is the appearance of epizootic epidemics such as the ones which occur almost periodically and against which there is no weapon. The Pasteur Institute of Nha-Trang does not send out [illustration here] anti-plague serum as is done with cowpox vaccine, for as yet its incoulation must be left in the hands of specialists.

We believe that the system of livestock leasing would perhaps yield good results with the Laotian peasants.

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Since no serious attempt has as yet been made in Laos, it is difficult to treat of agricultural enterprises which Europeans might undertake. Nor must we forget that affairs of this sort require comparatively large sums of capital and professional knowledge which takes a long time to acquire. It is, moreover, up to the administration to provide the initial impetus, for it has the necessary means, equipment and personnel. When plantations have succeeded it [520] will easily find colonists to continue the work which has been begun, and capital will then find its way into Laos.

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Speaking for ourselves, we are persuaded that this land will soon be open to colonization. Only the coast of Indo-China is well-known, and on the day when it has been demonstrated that the mountains as well are a source of wealth, the fortune of Laos will be made. There is a blank page on which it is up to us, by profiting from the gropings and errors of the past, to trace the principles of true colonization, which provides well-being for the population and creates outlets for our industry and our commerce.

A very high official of Laos recently wrote, speaking of the development of this land: "Once everything was for Tonkin and

10: d'Orleans--368-369 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 249, 314, 513

[LSS: in the village of Muong Liep (Diap)] "In front of the huts pods gathered from the trees are drying, full of seeds which are surrounded by a silky down like those of some of our poplars. It is known as nghioue, and it is used here for pillows and mattresses.

I note, also, on the dryers, tobacco in shreds. [369] This plant grows well here, and one sees it everywhere about the villages, rank as weeds."

23: Franck--289-290 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 291, 286, 314, 515

"The women were usually the first to see us, for they were constantly bathing themselves and their naked urchins in the stream, and they were clever at getting into or out of their barrel-like single garment without unduly exposing themselves. I saw more bathing on that journey down the Nam-khan than during my two years in China, and less uncleanliness in all Laos than in the smallest Chinese village. The women of Luang Prabang, especially along the rivers, are no burden to their fathers and husbands so far as clothing is concerned. In every village we visited they were naked to the waist, and did not know it; at least [290] they did not seem to be conscious that in other, often less modest lands, such a costume might be frowned upon. They wore a single piece of cloth, spun from cotton grown on the spot, and woven on hand-looms under their long-legged houses. Colored in the thread with dyes made from nuts and vegetable growths of the region, this strip is simply wrapped about the waist. Or, in the case of a few of the youngest, which in that backward land still means the more modest women, the unmarried perhaps, or at least those who had not yet borne a child, it is wrapped about the lower two thirds of the breasts, with correspondingly more of the legs showing. Thus one recognized the girls of flapper age by their shapely brown legs and the matrons by their resemblance in costume to the Venus of Milo. Once a child has arrived, the exposure incident to suckling it seems to overcome virginal modesty, or in the absence of offspring pride no doubt soon joins carelessness in casting

23: Franck--289-290 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-2
116, 291, 286, 314, 515

out the habits of maidenhood, so that there were displayed the scrawny pendent udders of the sterile as well as the withered rags of old age. The sight of a white man appeared to move some of the women to cover their breasts, a mere matter of deftly raising the garment. Whether this gesture was a recognition of the susceptibility of the French--who surely could not have issued non-exposure decrees!--or a mere matter of politeness, like the male squat, there was no means of knowing."

68: Mouhot--134-135 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 439, 314

"Little commerce is carried on in this part of Laos. [HD: i.e. in the territory between Loeui and Pak Lai] The Chinese inhabiting Siam do not come as far, owing to the enormous expense of transporting all their merchandise on elephants. Nearly every year a caravan arrives from Yunnan and Quangsee, composed of about [135] a hundred persons and several hundred mules. Some go to Kenne Thao, others to M. Nâne and Chieng Maï. They arrive in February, and leave in March or April.

The mulberry does not thrive in these mountains; but in some localities this tree is cultivated for the sake of furnishing food to a particular insect which lives upon its leaves, and from which is obtained the lague or Chinese varnish.

All the gum-benzoin which is sold at Bangkok comes from the northern extremity of the state of Louang Prabang, and from a district tributary both to Cochin China and Siam, and peopled rather by Tonquinites than Laotians."

Se-Bang-Fai. But studies are not yet sufficiently advanced for us to be able to give any useful information. 316

We have nevertheless felt that we should mention these deposits, in order to establish the importance of all this part of Laos from the point of view of mineral wealth.

[327] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER VII

I

SCAVENGING

We have seen that the inhabitants of Laos are apathetic and little inclined to work. They nevertheless find, although they go to scarcely any trouble, enough to supply their needs easily. 461 241

Indeed, with the exception of a few annual crops such as tobacco, cotton and indigo which are grown on the ever-renewed alluvia of the watercourses, the production of rice and of maize are the only occupations which require--and even then during a relatively short time--any degree of work or perseverance. We may mention the opium poppy, ramie, hemp and the mulberry tree merely as a reminder, for only a small part of the population devotes its time to these crops, which are still not at all extensive. [249]

Yet, it may be objected, the native has an easy life, dresses adequately, [328] lives in a house which is solid and comfortable from his point of view, has various tools and utensils, weapons, and sometimes even valuable cloth goods, jewels, etc. He spends money for celebrations and for offerings to the bonzes and pagodas. He pays taxes, he supports court costs which are often large with respect to the question at issue, and he is subject to the exactions of his mandarins to a greater or less degree. Finally, the commercial transactions of Laos involve quantities and sums which are quite high in comparison to the sparse population. 511 [438]

How are we to reconcile all these factors, and how is it that the Laotian, who produces so little with his labor, nevertheless has all he needs to get along on?

This is due to the fact that Laos is above all else a scavenging country. 314

314 Indeed scavenging, that is to say the gathering of forest products, hunting and fishing, is all that is needed besides rice and maize to supply the day to day needs of the native and even provide him with a comparatively important basis for trade.

Forest Products

1. Benzoin (Khab-Niane).

314 84 Benzoin is extracted from the tree called Styrax benzoin, by means of incisions made on the trunk. The benzoin trees (Kok-Khab-Niane) are localized in Upper Tran-Ninh, the south of the Hua-Pahn and the north of the province of Luang-Prabang. They are not cultivated in [563] any way. The resin or gum is harvested at certain times of the year, generally by the Khas, at the foot of the trees and along the trunk, where it coagulates in masses or tears.

Benzoin is collected in its natural state, that is to say in tears of various sizes and in breakages. In the production centers it is separated into three grades: large and medium tears, medium and small tears, and small pieces and breakages. In the transit markets these three grades are sorted and screened and once more divided into six kinds or types, which are: large tears, medium tears, small tears, mixed large, mixed medium, and finally tiny fragments and dust.

[43] A few years ago a chemical process was [329] discovered, it would seem, for extracting certain of the aromatic alkaloids contained in benzoin from coal, and the market value of this product suddenly [435] dropped by more than sixty percent. At the present time, depending on the grade, the market price in Luang-Prabang is from 90 to 115 francs per hundred kilograms (1), in Nong-Khay from 100 to 135

(1) We have deemed it preferable to give the price in francs and per hundred kilograms, since the reader may not be familiar with Laotian weights and currency.

188 francs, and in Korat from 120 to 160 francs.

314 459 Part of the benzoin production is consumed locally in the manufacture of sticks of incense for use in worship. All the rest is exported to Bangkok and from there to Europe. A very small proportion is sent to Tonkin by way of the Black River. Upon its arrival in Bangkok, benzoin from Laos is worth twice as much as in Luang-Prabang.

84 314 2. Crimson lake or stick-lac (Khang-Deng). This gum is produced by an insect of the "cochineal" type, the

Coccus lacca, which secretes the lac to envelop its larvae. 824

In trade it appears in the form of half-cylindrical fragments, in breakages (seed-lac), or else adhering to the branches of the tree on which it formed. The latter is lac on sticks, whence the English name stick-lac by which it is known in Far Eastern trading circles (2). 314

(2) Lac in its most widespread form--lac in shells (shellac)--is not found in Laos. It can easily be produced by boiling the preceding types in alkaline water.

This product is harvested by scavenging from trees which were seeded long ago and are scattered throughout the brush, and also by regular cultivation from a triennial tree, as will be seen below. The principal varieties of trees on which lac is found are the Ficus, the butées, the Croton, the Mimosa and the Acacia.

There are three kinds of lac: bright-colored lac (which colors a moistened finger) in whole pieces, lac on wood and brown cellular lac in more or less broken fragments. Throughout the country, however, it is sold mixed, and only at the transit markets are the three kinds separated. 314 824 438

[330] The price per hundred kilograms is from 35 to 42 francs at Luang-Prabang, from 45 to 48 francs at Pak-Lay, from 47 to 50 francs at Nong-Khay, 42 francs at Khong and Bassac, 62 francs at Pnom-Penh and Cholen, and from 72 to 85 francs at Korat. [435]

Crimson lake is used for dyeing as well as in the preparation of certain colors and varnishes with an alcohol base. A small proportion remains in the country, but the greater part is exported.

3. Cardamom (Mak-Neng).

Cardamom is the fruit of the plant Ellateria cardamomum which grows in the forests but which may be cultivated, as is the case on the plateau of the Bolovens in Laos and in the region of Pursat in Cambodia. The variety common to all parts of Laos is the great cardamom or bastard cardamom, while that cultivated in Cambodia is the true cardamom or small cardamom, much superior to the first in quality and value. 824 314 [245]

The plant grows best in the humid forests, and is harvested in August or September. The plant has vast numbers of light seeds, and it takes about eighty or a hundred thousand seeds to make up the weight of one "mune" (about twelve kilograms). The price per

[435] The price per hundred kilograms is from 50 to 54 francs in Luang-Prabang, 62 francs
824 in Pak-Lay, from 62 to 70 francs in Nong-Khay, 50 francs in Cammon, from 75 to 83 francs in Song-Khone, from 66 to 87 francs in Saravane,
● 314 from 70 to 83 francs in Bassac, from 88 to 95 francs in Khong, 58 francs in Attopeu, from 50 to 83 francs in Stung-Treng, 133 francs in Pnom-Penh, 140 francs in Cholen (1) and from 80 to 120 francs in

(1) At this market cardamom from Pursat brings from 625 to 830 francs per hundred kilograms.

Korat.

4. Cinnamon (Cinnamomum zeylanicum. Kai-Hom in Laotian).

The cinnamon tree must have been cultivated at one time in the territory of Vien-Tiane. Then the inhabitants were driven out as a result of foreign incursions and abandoned their gardens, which were
245 gradually invaded by brush. The harvesting of cinnamon has since become a scavenging operation without any form of cultivation. For several years now, doubtless in consequence of the many requests which were made when the Customs service tried to establish a monopoly of this product in Annam, [331] [Illustration] [332] [Blank page] [333] the inhabitants have once more begun to maintain the cinnamon trees and to give them some attention. Plantations have even been started, and this propitious initiative should be encouraged.

824 5. Indigo (Kok-Kam and Kok-Hom, depending on
314 whether the Indigofera tinctoria or the Indigofera anil is designated).
[245] These two plants are not always scavenging products, since the greater part of Laotian indigo comes from crops grown on the banks of the Mekong and its chief tributaries.

There is also an indigo-bearing liana which grows wild. The Laotians call this "Bouok-Khua".

386 In Laos the preparation of indigo is extremely simple. The fresh leaves and stalks of the different varieties of indigo plants are put to soak in wooden vats containing water and an acid element, usually the acid of lemons or limes. After a certain time the leaves are removed, then lime is precipitated in the water and the mixture is violently stirred. The lime fixes the dye and is deposited at the bottom of the vats, which are exposed to the air. When the clear water which rises to the surface has been completely evaporated, a hardened mass which is the indigo is left at the bottom of the vat. This product is not exported, but serves only for local consumption. Its price varies between 12 and 15 francs per hundred kilograms.

Its price varies between 12 and 15 francs per hundred kilograms. 000

6. Catechu (Sisiet). 824

Catechu is produced from a decoction of the bark of two varieties 314
of trees, the catechu acacia and the leafy butée.

This product, which is used in making the national masticatory 276
together with betel, betel nuts and lime, is consumed, in the large centers of Upper Laos, in the form of a dry residue obtained from a decoction of the bark. Generally, however, it is the bark itself which is consumed after it has been broken up into small pieces.

Natural sisiet takes the form of shreds of bark about a cubit (.45 meter) long by four centimeters wide and one centimeter thick. The shreds are tied together in packs of twenty-five or fifty, depending on the region.

The whole production is consumed locally. The natives [334] [438]
go into the forest at points where suitable trees are to be found, bundle up the pieces and load thm on great rafts which go down from Pak-Lay and Vien-Tiane to Bassac and even to Khong.

At Pak-Lay sisiet is worth only 7 francs and 50 centimes per [435]
hundred pieces, but it naturally costs more the further away one goes from the centers of production.

7. Curcuma (Khi-Mine). 824

This plant, of the Zingiberaceae family, has a rhizome which 314
contains an orange-yellow coloring matter used for dyeing silk and 386
cotton.

Sometimes the inhabitants (chiefly the women and children) 302
rub their whole body with curcuma scrapings after a bath. The application of curcuma to the wet skin, which acquires a light yellow color, is said by the natives to ward off mosquitoes and keep the skin fresh.

Up to the present time this product has not formed the basis of [438]
any foreign trade. It is sold in small amounts on the markets of Laos.

8. Ginger. 263

The ginger which is called "Mak-Khing" in Laotian is the Zingi- 824
ber officinale or gray ginger. Used as a condiment by the entire 314
population, this product does not enter into trade. Its price varies [435]
between 12 francs and fifty centimes and 16 francs and fifty centimes per hundred kilograms.

9. Roucou. 824

The roucou, or fruit of the Roucouyer Bixia, is called "Kene- 314
Mak-Soum-Phou" in Laotian. Literally, this means Seed of an 386
acidulous mountain fruit. It is used to make red and orange dyes

824
314 when mixed with curcuma. The trees are found in the forest, and
386 sometimes in gardens.

10. Yams.

The yam is an edible tubercle of the Dioscorea family. It is
262 represented by two varieties, the white and the black, which are called
241 "Mane-Phuek-Khao" and "Mane-Phuek-Dam" in Laotian. These tubercles are the main standby when there is a scarcity of rice and [335] maize, but in ordinary times they are used only to supplement the usual diet.

11. Taro or cush-cush (Mane-Pa).

Taro is also a food plant of the Aroïdées caladiées genus (Caladium esculentum). Like the yam, it is one of the most useful edible tubercles in times of famine.

12. Medicinal plants.

824 Designated by the generic name "Ya" in Laotian, these plants are represented by special types of orchids, roots, bark, berries,
278 leaves and even pieces of wood of different kinds, the whole forming an assortment of medicaments.

[438] The Khas are the ones who collect these various products from the depths of the forests, and they trade them either to Chinese or to Laotians for money or other goods.

[435] Certain of these plants and barks are used by the Laotians while others, such as the leaves from orchid plants, for example, are purchased by Chinese merchants at prices which vary between 33 and 62 francs per hundred kilograms.

13. Cloves.

The clove tree (Caryophyllus aromaticus. Kane-Phou in Laotian) is quite scarce in Laos. Cloves are mixed with various ingredients in masticatories or are taken as medicine.

Cultivation of the clove tree ought to be developed in Laos because of the high value of its flowers which, when dried on the tree, constitute the cloves of commerce.

14. Beeswax (Phung).

222 Beeswax is much sought-after in Laos, where a great deal of it is
[231] consumed. It is a scavenging product par excellence since, except in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na, the inhabitants do not practice apiculture and
314 are content to go into the forest and look for honeycombs in order to extract the wax. The latter is used for domestic needs and for worship
[438] ceremonies. It also forms the basis of quite an important trade.

314 The wax is not of uniform quality in Laos, but varies in color and texture depending on the region, the type of bees [336] which produce it, and also on the flowers on which the latter feed.

In this land there are hive hunters who have a rare skill and an extraordinary flair. They are able to find wild hives in the confusion of the forest foliage, in hollow trunks and in rocky crags where no one else could. The methods used to capture the swarms of bees and their hives differ little from those in use in Europe, and include noise, music and smoke.

[789] The Laotians claim that some bee hunters are able to get rid of the swarms of bees by attracting their queen by means of the sound of a kind of flageolet and by pronouncing certain cabalistic words.

435 The price of wax is quite high. A hundred kilograms cost 250 francs in Luang-Prabang, 219 francs in Nong-Khay, 290 francs in Cammon, 300 francs in Song-Khone and Saravane, 333 francs in Bassac, 208 francs in Attopeu, 312 francs in Stung-Treng, 500 francs in Korat, 250 francs in Pnom-Penh, and 300 francs in Cholen.

15. Rattan (Vai).

314 The rattan is a palm tree of the genus Calamus rudentum and Calamus petracus. There are several types in Laos, which are used
285 in accordance with their particular qualities.

The rattan industry is still in its early stages. A few Kha tribes of southern Laos traffic in rattan and supply the needs of local consumption, either in the form of crude rattan delivered in bundles, or in the form of mats and baskets, at a price of five francs per thousand or about sixty kilograms. It is present in great abundance throughout the whole land, and in northern Laos is even used for trade with Siam, which produces little rattan.

It is to be hoped that among the samples sent from Laos to France there will be some good ones which can be used abroad in the manufacture of all the wickerwork and esparto articles whose consumption is constantly increasing. This would provide an appreciable source of revenue for the land.

16. Bamboo.

313 There are some twenty varieties of bamboo. All [337] [Illustration] [338] [Blank page] [339] except one of these grow wild, the exception being the golden bamboo (Mai-So-Kham), which is chiefly cultivated in the enclosures of pagodas.

The following description of the many uses of bamboo is taken from the interesting work by Mme. Massieu:

313 "There are several kinds of bamboo. The large bamboo which is used to make boxes and floats is called mai-bane. The mai-tot is the male bamboo, [340] strong and slender, with its joints closer together. When provided with an iron point it is used for poling boats along in the rivers. The mai-an is the female bamboo, hollower and lighter, from which raft coverings and partition mats are made. It is the kind used to make kelates" (1).

[113] (1) Revue des Deux Mondes. "A travers l'Indo-Chine. Le Haut Laos et le Mékong," by Mme Isabelle Massieu, August 1, 1900.

17. Rubber.

•314 Rubber is called "Niang-Niut" in Laotian, which means, literally, elastic gum.

824 There are several plant varieties in Laos which supply a latex which becomes elastic after coagulation. Certain types of the ficus family, doubtless of the elastica genus, yield rubber of comparatively good quality. The plants which produce the most latex and that of the best quality, however, are lianas whose scientific nature has not yet been settled.

More than ten different kinds of rubber lianas are known. The Laotians call these "Khua-Mak-Niang, Khua-Hai, Khua-Niut-Niai, Khua-Mak-Som, Khua-Mak-Katong-Katiou, Khua-Khao-Pong, Khua-Lam-Sai, Khua-Tang-Tong, Khua-Som-Lam, Khua-Mak-Ka-Khay, Khua-Mak-Khao-Ngoua," etc.

It is quite certain that these diverse names do not refer to as many species which are dissimilar from the botanical point of view, but are merely different local terms used at widely separated points in order to designate the same lianas. Without any concern for their chief virtue, which is to supply latex rubber, the Laotians have named them for their appearance, the shape or type of their fruit, etc.

It seems likely that the varieties which we have just enumerated may be reduced to seven and perhaps less. We shall not be able to tell for sure until we have examined the stalks, leaves, flowers and fruits of the various species in a laboratory. The liana which is most widespread in Laos is the one bearing the name Khua-Mak-Khao-Ngoua or liana with fruits like buffalo horns. It is also called Khua-Mak-Som or liana with acid fruits. The latex is collected twice [341] each year, once in June or July (rainy season), and again in October or November (dry season). The first harvest yields only second grade rubber which is black and sticky. The second crop, which is less

314 plentiful by half than the first, yields a clear, sinewy, dry and elastic
824 rubber in threads and sheets.

Rubber from the second harvest has been submitted to competent individuals for examination, and it seems that it would bring a price of 8 to 10 francs per kilogram on the European market.

435 In April 1900 the purchase price of this product per hundred kilo-
314 grams was 137 francs in Vien-Tiane, from 166 to 208 francs in Muong-Son, 290 francs in Cho-Bo (Tonkin) and 550 francs in Vinh (Annam). Its resale price was 625 francs in Saigon, 700 francs in Singapore and from 800 to 1000 francs in Europe (1).

(1) This refers only to first grade rubber.

These figures suffice to show that Laotian rubber is a choice product in high demand, and a first-rate trade commodity holding the promise of sizeable profits.

439 The total amount of rubber exported from Laos in 1899 through
314 the ports of Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina is estimated at some fifty tons. For 1900 the figure would appear to be about eight times larger (2). This trade has only developed in Laos in the last two or

(2) See Appendix XXII.

three years, but now that the initial impulse has been given and the people are beginning to harvest the latex which they used to scorn because there were no outlets for it, the traffic will not cease to increase from one year to the next, since rubber finds an increasing demand on the European market.

Although the lianas are extremely plentiful in the Laotian forests, care should now be taken to spare them as they are exploited and to increase the number of plants so as to avoid any shortages in the future.

314 18. Pine resin (Khi-Kok-Phek or Niang-Phek).

Pine resin is used in Laos only when mixed with crimson lake. It is used for making a varnish and certain mastic compounds. It has a very low value, never more than 20 francs per hundred kilograms and [342] sometimes as low as 6 francs. None of this product is exported. It would be easy to introduce the regular cultivation of pines and the harvesting of their resin into the land, if sufficiently remunerative outlets were opened up.

149: Reinach--250 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8 314 385 501 322

19. Miscellaneous resins.

Several trees, such as the "Kok-Mai-Niang, Kok-Mai-Tabeng, [Illustration here] Kok-Mai-Sak" (1), etc., yield an oleo-resin which,

(1) See Appendix XX.

when mixed with paddy husks, is used to make torches and a siccative, shiny extract which is called "Nam-Mane-Niang," and again a kind of pitch (Khi-Si) which is used to caulk pirogues and to smear various basketwork receptacles so as to make them watertight. It is similar to damarine.

The production of these resins is limited to local needs. 314

20. Black lacquer. 501

The black lacquer of Laos is a natural black varnish, thick and 322
[343] solid, which is called "Nam-Kieng." It is secreted by the "Kok-Mai-Nam-Kieng."

Nam-Kieng is used to lacquer racing pirogues, elephant palanquins, pagoda columns and statues, frames, receptacles of different kinds, sword sheaths, etc. The lacquer producing trees grow only in certain localities, and the varnish is not exported. Its price varies throughout the land between 62 and 75 francs per hundred kilograms. 435

It would be of interest to identify this lacquer with that of Japan, and to study the question as to whether it might not be possible to increase the number of trees which produce it with a view towards making it the basis of an export trade, at least to the countries bordering on Laos.

21. Cunao (the mock gambier, Mak-Soua in Laotian).

The cunao is a brownish tubercle used instead of catechu, the 314
color of which it has, for dyeing cloth. It is found in Cammon, in 386
a part of the Hua-Pahn and on the right bank of the Nam-Hou. This product is bought mainly by Annamites and Chinese, who use it in Annam and Tonkin for dyeing the peasants' work clothes.

near their silkworm breeding houses, but it is unfortunate that the new 249
conditions in which the trees are placed should have an adverse effect 231
on silk production. On the plateaus and in the high valleys, in the
vicinity of land once occupied by villages, there are many mulberry
trees which have continued to survive. They send out new leaves
again even after the annual burnings of the forest clearings, and bear
leaves which are vigorous and have a more pithy appearance than
those of their fellows in the low, humid parts of the country. They
are also said to be preferable for feeding silkworms (2).

(2) See Appendix XXIV.

Local consumption absorbs the greater part of the silk production, 231
for the majority of Laotians, both men and women, use it in making 286
the garments which they wear.

We do not possess exact data on the total production of silk in Laos. It has been estimated at about twenty tons annually. The price varies from 400 to 500 francs per hundred kilograms.

OPIUM POPPIES. The opium poppy is cultivated by the Yaos and 276
the Meos, in northern Laos. Towards the end of the rainy season, [376] 249
in September, the poppy seeds are sowed broadcast on land from which 314
maize has just been harvested. Germination is activated by the last
rains of the season and the plant flowers at the beginning of December.
Harvesting is done shortly after the petals have fallen.

Closely spaced lengthwise incisions are made all along the surface of the capsule, allowing the plant juice to escape. It coagulates upon contact with the air and is collected daily until the plant has been completely exhausted (1).

(1) See Appendix XXV, report of M. Lussan, Cochinchina customs agent. The latter was sent on a mission to Upper Laos to experiment with growing opium poppies by less rudimentary methods than the ones in use among the Meos and the Yaos. [654]

PAPER TREES. There are several trees in Laos whose bark is used 249
to make paper. They seem to be of the mulberry type and are called 289
"Kok-Sa."

The paper is made by hand on forms, by extremely rudimentary methods. Its manufacture occupies several villages of northern Laos.

149: Reinach--430 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

316 healthy, and labor could be found quite easily. The route of access to the territory of Muong-Son would be through Tonkin, either by way of Cho-Bo-Van-Bu-Muong-Het or by way of Cho-Bo-Ta-Koa-Muong-Het. The journey from Hanoi to Muong-Son can be made in fifteen to eighteen days, as follows: two by steamship, eight by pirogue and the rest on horseback with bearers for the baggage.

(Extract from the reports by M. P. Macey.)

[131]

APPENDIX XXII
NOTES ON RUBBER
I

314 In Laos, the rubber lianas are known to the natives by the generic name Khua (1). According to the information which M.

[552] (1) In Laotian, khua is a generic term applied to all lianas and to all climbing plants without exception.

Leblévec, head of the Upper Mekong Hydrographic Mission, was so kind to furnish me upon my request, their number seems to be quite large.

This traveler classifies the rubber lianas of Upper Laos into two categories, according to the nature of the product which they yield.

The first category includes the Khua-ka-tong-ka-tiou, the Khua-sout-long and the Khua-som-lam. The elastic gum which these varieties produce is dark in color, either black or chestnut. The bark is pebbly and blackish-green in color. The leaves are shiny and dark green. The fruit is elongated and produces pilose, barbed seeds. Some of these lianas are as much as 30 to 40 centimeters in circumference. They are found in the forests of the Laotian plains, on the banks of the Mekong.

The Ka-tong-ka-tiou is said to be found nearly everywhere on very humid terrain covered with rushes which are burned in the rainy season. The Sout-long is found on the banks of the Ngoum, in the region of Tourakom. The Som-lam grows on the upper Nam-Sam and in Xieng-Khouang.

M. Leblévec classifies the lianas which yield a light brown or dark reddish rubber in the second category. These are the Khua-mac-ka-khay, the Khua-kao-pong, the Khua-lam-sai and the Khua-tang-tong.

314 The bark of these varieties is lighter in color, with green, gray and red spots. The leaves are a duller green and the fruits heavier and longer.

[132] These lianas belong to the highlands of Laos and to the thick mountain forests. The Mac-ka-khay is very plentiful in Borikan; the two following ones are found in the region of Van-Vien and the Tang-tong, which is quite rare, has been found in the interior on the right bank of the Mekong, as well as in Paksan.

In the absence of botanical specimens, we can only suppose that all these varieties belong, according to the indications given as to their fruits, to the Apocyneae family.

As for the samples of rubber which we have from these plants, some in balls and others in rolls of small dimensions, they all seem to have been obtained by the method of coagulating latex with heat in a receptacle of a certain size. The gum has remained sticky, and today, after having been kept for a year, all of it except one or two samples has become soft and viscous.

I am nevertheless persuaded that two or three of these lianas will yield rubber which is as good in quality as that of Nghe-An, provided that the crop is harvested in "tears" or in threads, this being the best system for avoiding the inclusion of putrescible serum.

Moreover, the rubber produced by these lianas already constitutes a noteworthy trade commodity in the Hua-Phans. M. Chaussé, one of our countrymen, has been making sizeable purchases of rubber there for several years, and comparatively large amounts of this product are said to be marketed in Cho-Bo at the rate of 45 piasters per picul, that is to say at more than two francs per kilogram.

[426] M. Delineau, whose commercial ventures in rubber in Tran-Ninh have also been brought to light, has bought wax and rubber there and tried to make the population accept loans which would be repayable in rubber.

314 654 But disadvantages are already arising in these regions--disadvantages of which the cascarilleros, or seekers of cinchona trees, once set a bad example in Brazil. Since the elastic gum is coming more and more into demand in Upper Laos, in some places the natives have hacked and massacred the producing plants in order to obtain the coveted merchandise more easily and in larger quantities.

Since this habit shows a tendency to become widespread, in Muong-Son M. Montpeyrat has drawn up restrictive measures against these clumsy procedures. And in order at the same time to encourage cultivation of these plants which yield a desirable product, he has

314 654 established a seed-garden designed to supply the inhabitants with cuttings and to teach them the most advantageous methods of exploitation.

314 I do not, however, believe that there is any need to fear the danger of the present barbarous method of exploitation, provided that it be carried out in a radical fashion. This estimate of the situation, which seems paradoxical, can be justified as follows. If the native fells the liana with a blow of his machete, it is best for him to cut it off at ground level. I assume that he will not be content merely with collecting the latex which flows out of the cutting [133] thus made, but that he will cut the liana into suitably small sections and collect the greater part of the latex which the whole length of the stalk contains at the time. This amount will certainly be greater than the amount which would flow out of an incision made so as not to compromise the life of the plant. What is more, new shoots will sprout from the foot of the felled liana, and it will then be a question of protecting them from too hasty a destruction so that after the required number of years there will be new plants which can be tapped. This amounts, so to speak, to exploitation of the rubber lianas by a radical pollard method. It would become profitable the day when the industry could obtain a constant output of rubber from the fresh or dried leaves, as is now done for gutta percha.

I believe, however, that exploitation by the method of regular and annual tappings of the adult plant is preferable by far. Felling would present really grave dangers only if it caused the felled plants to disappear and never to return.

We now have specimens of rubber from various regions of Upper and Lower Laos--from Vien-Tiane, Cam-Muon, Savanakhet, Ban-Mouang, Saravane, Song-Khone and Khong.

From the point of view of quality these specimens can be divided into two groups which, it would appear, are determined by two causes: their botanical origin and the way in which they are harvested.

The first group includes specimens in a compact, hand-kneaded ball the size of a billiard ball, or in twists from 10 to 15 centimeters long and 2 to 3 centimeters in diameter which are collected in bamboo tubes. These specimens are blackish, softer and less resilient, and occasionally contain hollow parts which are filled with a black pitch-like substance.

The second group includes specimens which are lighter in color, reddish and even whitish, dry and resilient. They are harvested in tears, thin strips or agglutinated threads, from which balls are made

314 which range from the size of a nut to the size of a billiard ball. These specimens are not sticky, do not deteriorate very much and are far superior to the preceding ones. I believe that it was a specimen of this last category which M. de Reinach, the government commissioner in Laos, sent to Paris, where it was valued at 7 francs per kilogram.

Since this specimen was sent we have sent two others for trial and evaluation to the business house Michelin et Cie., a large rubber manufacturer in Clermont-Ferrand.

The Superior Resident in Laos informs us that the Khua-nhut-niai, the liana which produces rubber, is found in all the thick forests along the banks of the Mekong. It grows in great numbers in the forests of the Bolovenes massif and on the sides of the great chain in the provinces of Saravane, Song-Khone and Cam-Muon. M. Tournier estimates that it can reproduce easily, [134] either by seeds or by cuttings. He believes it would also be easy to induce the natives in these regions to engage in the regular exploitation of the plant whenever they found a certain and remunerative market for the product.

To sum up the above observations, we have noted that Indo-China possesses at least two plant varieties which can yield rubber of excellent quality. These two varieties are the Parameria glandulifera in Cochinchina and the south of Cambodia, and an as yet undetermined species of Apocynaceae in Annam and Laos. Both the one and the other grow in such numbers that they hold forth hope of a veritable source of wealth for the colony. Up to the present time, only the lianas of the second variety have been exploited, and I should like to call attention to those of the first variety.

439 The customs statistics for exports from Tonkin for the whole of
314 1898 show that France received from this country 1,545 kilograms of crude rubber with a value estimated at 2,020 francs, and that other countries received 619 kilograms with a value estimated at 947 francs, making a total of 2,164 kilograms with a value of 2,967 francs (1).

[505] (1) It should be noted that the greater part of this product leaves Vinh, in Annam, by coastal vessels, and that Hai-Phong is given as the port of embarcation on the Tonkin export lists.

For the first quarter alone of the current year, we find the following exports from Tonkin: to France, 13,623 kilograms with a value

314 439 of 40,869 francs; to Hong Kong warehouses, 1,271 kilograms with an estimated value of 2,458 francs; making a total of 14,894 kilograms valued at 43,227 francs.

Thus while the customs statistics for the years previous to 1898 do not even mention the export figures for this product, we find that the 1898 figure, which is a little more than two tons, has more than sextupled in the first quarter of the following year, which is the current one.

This amount of progress gives us every right to conceive real hopes for the future.

314 654 The general government of Indo-China (Department of Agriculture and Commerce) recently sent to the business house Michelin et Cie. (Clermont-Ferrand, and 7 Rue Gounod, Paris), for the purpose of analysis and evaluation, specimens of rubber which were collected in Laos through the offices of the superior resident.

According to the report of the superior resident in Laos, these specimens were produced by a liana, the Khua-nhut-niai of the Laotians, which is quite widespread in the thick forests on the banks of the Mekong and on the Bolovenes massif, as well as on the sides of the Annamitic Chain. One of the specimens submitted for analysis (No. 1) comes from a variety of rubber which is found particularly in Saravane. The other (No. 2) is the ordinary rubber harvested by the natives, with no further processing.

[135] An expert chemist sets forth in the following terms the results of the examination to which these specimens were subjected at the rubber factory of Michelin et Cie. at Clermont-Ferrand (August 5, 1899):

"The rubber in both boxes has the outer appearance of rubber from the Dutch East Indies of the kinds known in trading circles as 'Java,' 'Penang' or 'Préanger.' Like the latter, it probably comes from plants of the Ficus family. This presumable identity of origin is confirmed, moreover, by the characteristics of the isolated gum and resin of these specimens, as well as by the nature of the bark fragments which the specimens contained.

"We purified this rubber mechanically by the usual shredding processes. The thin leaves thereby obtained were dried in a drying-cabinet at a temperature of 25°-28° C.

149: Reinach--435 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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	No. 1 Saravane	No. 2
Weight of specimen	.608 kilog.	1.86 kilog.
Weight of purified gum	.58 kilog	1.54 kilog.
Yield of purified gum	95.39%	82.79%

Proximate analysis of the product yielded:

Moisture at 105°	1.06	1.4
Fixed ashes	1.3	1.4
Resins	3.4	9.76
Rubber	89.24	87.44

For comparison, the following is an analysis of Java rubber:

	Type 1[a]	Type 2[a]
Moisture	.75	
Ash	.8	1.3
Resins	4.48	7 to 9%
Rubber	93.97	
	100.00	

Indo-Chinese rubber, if in accordance with the specimens examined, would be likened on the market to Java type 2[a] rubber, which is graded and regulated as follows:

First quality Java rubber includes sound gums, without resinified parts (parts which have turned oily), of a fine light color, and without bark fragments.

Darker gums containing some fragments, but which are still sound on the whole are classified as second quality.

The third quality includes rubber which has been harvested with less care or in the wrong season, which has been poorly preserved, is more or less resinified and laden with foreign matter, ligneous debris, bark, sand, etc.

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The following figures, taken from the daily price lists on the markets of Antwerp, Hamburg, Liverpool and London, will give some idea of the commercial value of these types of rubber.

149: Reinach--436 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

PRICE QUOTED ON "JAVA" OR "PENANG" ON THE VARIOUS EUROPEAN MARKETS

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Source	Date	Grade 1ª	2ª	3ª
Hamburg	7-30-1899		6.95	
"	7-8	8.95	6.95	
"			7.55	
"	6-28		7.55	
London	6-1	8.98		
Antwerp	3-14			3.00
Amsterdam	4-10		7.59	
Antwerp	3-3			3.00
Le Havre	11-18-1898	8.40	5.85	
Hamburg	11-9	8.45	6.55	
"	11-2	8.55	5.55	
Antwerp	10-25			3.00
Hamburg	10-11	8.80	6.25	
"	9-9	8.80	6.25	
"	9-9	8.75	6.30	

(Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine. Report of the Director of the Indo-China Department of Agriculture and Commerce, October 1, 1899.)

II

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In August 1900 the Indo-China Department of Agriculture and Commerce sent to the Colonial Office, for purposes of analysis, specimens of rubber extracted from the bark of rubber lianas by simple grinding processes using native crushers and successive washings.

These specimens were prepared under the auspices of M. Gaillard, government commissioner in Khong. The crushed bark came from the liana called Khua-nhut-nhai which is found throughout all Laos.

The Colonial Office has published the results of the analysis of the specimens sent from Khong. The analysis was carried out under the direction of Dr. Heim, head of the Laboratory of the National Office for Foreign Trade [Office national du Commerce extérieur].

The following are the results of a comparison made between the rubber which was extracted from the liana Khua-nhut-nhai [137] by coagulation of the latex, according to this report, and the rubber extracted by grinding from the dry bark.

It is of particular interest to compare the rubber extracted from

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the liana by grinding the bark with that prepared by coagulation of the latex. The latter process probably includes spontaneous coagulation of the latex on the plant incisions, drawing the still soft gum into threads, and winding the gum threads into a ball immediately. We have been able to draw up this comparison thanks to a study previously made in the Laboratory of rubber from the Khua-nhut-nhai which was prepared in the same province of Khong from latex which was obtained by bleeding the plant.

The table below makes the comparison possible:

	Rubber extracted by grinding the dry bark. I	Rubber extracted by coagulation of the latex. II
Water	2.07%	1.8%
Inert matter	1.75	7.9
Resinous matter	1.05	4.9
Ashes	.32	.49
Water-soluble matter	1.14	1.7
Reducing agents	.19	.43
Nitrogenous matter	traces	traces
Rubber in the strict sense	93.5	82.78
Calculated losses in washing	4.94	11.4
Experimental losses in washing		12.2

This comparison lends itself to the following remarks:

The excess water noted in I may be attributed to the method of preparation itself, but it is too slight to cause any appreciable increase in the washing losses and, what is more, the very low hydration of II may be such as to facilitate its "turning oily" (if we accept the current and entirely empirical opinion of the experts).

The much higher losses in washing for II will lead I to be preferred, for the resiliency of I is at least equal to that of II, although II is quite noteworthy in this respect. The lower proportion of resinous matter in I again seems such as to give it the preference in this regard, yet the scope of this factor should not be exaggerated. I was analyzed as soon as received, whereas a lapse of time of about two to three months separated the date of the arrival of II in France and the date of the analysis, and as we know, time has a considerable influence on the resin content of all rubber.

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Having made these reservations, we are justified in concluding that I is a type of rubber which [138] is appreciably superior to II, although II deserves to be classified among the very good varieties of gum.

One last remark is, however, necessary. Before giving any final pronouncement as to the value of a type of rubber it is indispensable to subject it to the test of time, since its value is in direct proportion to its resistance to resinification. Under this heading I can nevertheless indicate already that rubber from the Khua-nhut-nhai (sample II) was subjected for three months to the worst kind of preservation conditions and that it withstood this trial admirably, not becoming subject to any resinification and not losing any of its elasticity.

There does not seem to be any doubt, moreover, but that the method of extracting rubber by grinding the bark gives a much higher yield of gum than can be obtained by the extraction method of bleeding the liana (assuming equal weights of fresh liana to be used in both cases).

I shall add, by way of indication, that according to the replies sent in answer to a questionnaire which was prepared under my direction at the request of a private corporation which exploits the rubber lianas of Laos, it appears to be a proven fact that cutting completely through the Khua-nhut-nhai lianas in no way compromises their vitality, on the express condition that the cutting be made above the level of the buds. Repeated bleedings of the same branch, on the other hand, yield an increasingly watery latex with an increasingly lower gum content.

The above information seems to me to be such that it might usefully be communicated to the agents of the administration, for it constitutes yet another argument in favor of exploiting the lianas exclusively by the method of grinding up the bark.

[113]

(Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, January 1901, No. 31.)

III

It is of interest to note that the Superior Resident in Laos, following a long trip which he had just made between the Nam-Hou and the Mekong, remarked on the presence everywhere of numerous rubber lianas.

These lianas had not as yet been noted in the west. Colonel Tournier gave instructions for immediate exploitation to all the native chieftains who were not acquainted with the liana or its value.

654 What is more, according to the economic report for the months of February and March 1900 in Upper Laos, which has just reached the
• 314 Indo-China Department of Agriculture and Commerce, 3,250 kilo-
• 439 grams of rubber were exported during this period, or, to be precise, this was the verified figure at Vien-Tiane. The storehouses in this center also contained a large supply which would probably go down-
435 river at the first rises of the Mekong. [139] The sale price by natives at Vien-Tiane was said to be one piaster per kilogram.

Tran-ninh, which had not yet been able to supply any statistics, even approximate ones, indicated exports of 1,500 kilograms to Tonkin for the same period and at the same price as being the amount of export rubber which represented purchases from Vien-Tiane.

These prices, which are reasonable ones in view of the present value of money in Laos and the needs of the inhabitants, leaves the exporters sufficient profits. On the other hand, we have had occasion to note the entirely abnormal price of 5.50 francs per kilogram which rubber reached at Vinh towards the end of March 1900, a price which, when the cost of freight, transhipment and handling, insurance and losses in weight along the way is added, leaves only a small profit for the export trade.

IV

314 339,400 kilograms of rubber were exported from Indo-China
439 during 1900, as against 52,813 in 1899. Of this amount, 300,400 kilograms went out through Tonkin, and 39,000 kilograms through Saigon. The greater part of this rubber comes from Annam, and especially from Tran-Ninh (Laos).

By these figures we see how greatly the rubber trade has grown in Indo-China, and what a factor this raw material promises to be in the economic development of the colony.

The sale price in 1899 was one piaster per kilogram. Since that time it has risen appreciably in consequence of a rising demand from all quarters. In the province of Vien-Tiane the average price is two piasters per kilogram, and in the forests where the rubber is grown it costs 90 piasters per picul.

314 The rapid rise in the price of rubber has encouraged the natives to engage in excessive exploitation of the product, and without any care for the future they have destroyed large quantities of extremely productive lianas. The Laotians do not know how to collect the sap of the rubber plant and still spare the plant itself, and they thereby

314 lose forever the plant which they have mutilated. The Superior Resident in Laos has had studies made of the methods of extraction which can be employed without danger, and he proposes to make
314 them obligatory within a short time. As of the present time, he
656 has issued the following decree relative to the exploitation of rubber:

"Any native desiring to engage in harvesting rubber on Laotian territory must obtain a special authorization which will be conferred by the chau-muong if the interested party resides in the muong where he desires to operate, and in all other cases by the Government Commissioner of the province.

[65] [410] "This authorization shall indicate, in as clear a manner as possible, the limits within which exploitation is to take place, the methods of extraction which may be employed and those which are prohibited, and finally the point where the rubber must be submitted for checking and payment of the duties which represent land tax before it leaves Laos.

"Businessmen and corporations desirous of sending their paid agents into the regions of rubber production may address to the Government Commissioner a collective request, in which the names and residences of such agents shall be listed and in which they shall agree to abide by all regulations which the authorities shall deem it useful to prescribe. In return they shall be sent permits drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the preceding article, these permits to be delivered to their employees.

"The above authorizations shall be granted entirely free of charge.

"Contraventions to the present decree shall be prosecuted and punished by the provincial tribunals in accordance with the laws and customs in force in Laos." (Decree of September 21, 1900.)

[141]

APPENDIX XXIII
NOTE ON TOBACCO

249 Growth and preparation. Tobacco is best grown on the banks of watercourses which are left dry each year when the waters fall and which are fertilized by deposits of alluvia.

Tobacco is also grown, however, on the banks in old alluvia which are no longer inundated by the river, but where an ample supply of water is assured by the presence of a nearby stream.

134 In Laos the soil which is suited to tobacco is light and sandy and
249 contains a high proportion of potash, relatively little lime and an average quantity of nitrogenous vegetable matter.

3: Robequain--260 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 135, 316, 439, 471

"For the past several years the production of tin in the Nam Patène basin in Laos has exceeded that at Pia Ouac. The Nam Patène River is a left hand tributary of the Nam Hin Boun, which itself flows into the Mekong at Pak Hin Boun, north of Thakhek. Cassiterite has been mined here from time immemorial by the Laotians who dug small shafts a few meters deep into the alluvium. Native mining continues today on the European concessions, the ore being purchased by the companies. Formerly, after careful sorting, the richest particles were crushed, washed in cradles and reduced in Chinese charcoal-furnaces. But about 1920 production was still a mere ten to fifteen tons a year; it was exported to Thailand where it was used only as ballast for fish nets."

3: Robequain--260-261 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 135, 316, 471

"It was not until 1923 that the Société d'Études et d'Exploitations Minières de l'Indochine began to work the beds systematically. Veins had first been discovered in the eluvium and alluvium of a huge karstic basin some 30 kilometers long and 8 wide, cut into the Urals-Permian limestone which dominates it with dramatic masses and sheer, almost insurmountable slopes. The eluvial cassiterite is joined in depth to the veins which pass through the Muscovitic sandstone subjacent to the limestone, and which have been metamorphized by granite intrusions. Here it is not associated with wolfram as it is in Pia Ouac. It is about ten meters thick with a thin covering of unproductive soil; mining is quite easily performed by the open-pit method, under a 'cai's' direction. Almost all the ore extracted up to the present has come from the Phon Tiou bed on the Solange grant. The 1926-1929 boom brought about the formation of other companies whose grants are worked by the Compagnie Fermière des Étains d'Extrême-Orient. Production started in 1933 and is carried [261] on around Boneng. They have begun cutting out the veins, whose reddish chimneys stand out between their white sand-stone wells."

3: Robequain--261 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 135, 316, 402, 494

"Laos ore is harder to work than Tonkinese because of its lower metal content and the presence of considerable amounts of sulphurous and ferruginous matter. In addition, coal is scarce here: producer gas gazogenes run the dynamos which produce motive power, but they consume enormous quantities of wood, which must be cut farther and farther away from the mine. As a result, the ore has never been smelted on the spot. But mechanical processes for separating and purifying have gradually been set up at the mines. For example, after crushing and magnetic separation, very well-equipped washers prepare concentrates for export. Under sloping roofs, powerful machines stand in tiers one above another on the hillsides, so that the water and the gradually purified product itself are moved as much as possible by mere gravity from one process to another. The mud and rocks, which were dumped out of small wagons at the top of the mill, appear as black cassiterite crystals at the bottom where they fill little 35 or 50 kilogram sacks for shipment to Singapore. They are transported either via the Mekong or over the roads from Thakhek and Savannakhet to the Annam coast. Six thousand Annamites work in the tin mines of the Laos basin; though a few are Tonkinese most of them come from Nghê Tinh. Work is done by gangs and goes on continuously since the machines can be stopped only at great expense; at night this isolated basin, surrounded by rugged mountains and dotted with electric lights which furnish illumination for the coolies as they work to the accompaniment of the mills' unrelenting rhythm, is a striking picture."

3: Robequain--262 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 135, 316, 439

"More or less argentiferous lead ores are found together with zinc ores in most beds, and it was these for which the Chinese sought particularly. French companies have attempted to reopen the mines, particularly that at Ngan Son south of Pia Ouac, but without success. The Compagnie Minière et Métallurgique de l'Indochine exports a few tons of lead ore and some tens of kilograms of silver, mere by-products of the company's zinc mining."

10: d'Orleans--325 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 316, 346, 532, 821

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "When we land on the left bank, we notice a number of people stooping down, with their feet in the water, engaged in washing out the sand; these are gold finders, who earn but a scanty living, though they sometimes come upon an old coin or two which has been washed down stream. A climb of about fifty feet up decrepit steps, which in summer are under water, brings us to the town. Close upon the left is a small pagoda, Ouate Poune Saï, which is only remarkable for the fresco above the entrance gate, this representing Kop, the sun, eating the moon; in other words, the fresco is intended to designate an eclipse."

10: d'Orleans--357-358 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 135, 316

"There is a great deal of mineral wealth, in the Laos country, and among the many gold fields which might be worked to advantage are Pac Bay (above Luang Prabang), Xieng Mang, and Xieng Mon. There is an abundance of antimony, lead, copper, and iron, while there are agates and chalcedonies near Luang Prabang. Then, [358] in the neighbourhood of Kiangsen, there is a ruby mine belonging to the king of Nan, which is not yet worked, though a Burmese has applied for a concession."

rocks which tower precipitously over its course, the Sé-Kémane widens out as it is joined by the Dak-Bla, the sources of which, like those of its chief tributary the Sé-Souk, are near the Sésane. The Sé-Kémane is hardly navigable for pirogues except from Muong-Kao on. The latter is the most important center in the region and is generally known by the name of Attopeu. Pirogues can ply back and forth between this point and Stung-Treng in all seasons, but the many rapids with which the Sékhong is encumbered, mainly as far as the Sé-Pien, make its course extremely torrential and navigation very difficult. Before it reaches Siempang the Sékhong is joined on its right bank by the Sé-Pien which, like its [102] tributary the Sé-Kampho, comes from the plateau of the Bolovens. When they leave their gorges these two rivers water marvelous plains which are slightly hilly towards the north and which could serve as pasture land for immense flocks. From Siempang on the Sékhong can be navigated by steam launches during the high water period.

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Before it reaches the Mékong the Sékhong is joined, less than ten kilometers from its mouth, by its chief tributary the Sésane, which with its 400-kilometer course is of no less importance and interest than the Sékhong itself.

The Sésane comes from a mountain mass which dominates the amphitheater of Cong-Bol just above the 15th parallel. Its deep valley is called Poco by the natives. Like all the upper valleys of the watercourses in this region, it is encumbered with rapids and waterfalls and deeply cut between rock walls. On its left bank the Poco is joined by the Bla, the valley of which is followed for some distance by the road joining Attopeu to Qui-Nhon by way of Kon-Toum. The Sésane then traverses all this gold-bearing region which is still little-known and, so to speak, unexploited to this day. In its valley are found the mining posts of Ban-Phi, Ruhleville and Bokham. It can be navigated by pirogue in all seasons from Kong-Sédam on. The latter point, slightly above Ban-Phi, has a militia post stationed there to provide security for the works of the Attopeu Gold Mining Company [compagnie des Mines d'or d'Attopeu].

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Some twenty-five kilometers from its mouth the Sésane is joined by the Ton-Lé-Srépok, a large tributary. This river, also known as the Sé-Bang-Khan, comes from the south, not far from the plateau of Lang-Bian. It passes close by Darlac, the capital of the province of the same name, and through Ban-Don, from which point it is

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navigable during part of the year.

The Ia-Drang, whose valley is inhabited by the Djaraï tribe, is one of its principal tributaries. For that matter, the most important Kha tribes are settled in the valleys of the watercourses which have been dealt with in the foregoing. Thus we find the Lovè Khas between the Sé-Khong, the Sé-Souk and the Sésane; the Niaheun Khas and a few Alaks in the valley of the Sékhong; the Souk Khas in those of the Sé-Pien, [103] [Illustration] [104] [Blank page] [105] the Sé-Kampho and the lower Sékhong; the Salangs between the Sésane and the Sé-Souk; the Bahnars and the Rognaos in those of the Bla and the other left-bank tributaries of the Poco; the Penongs in the deep valley of the Srépok; the Djaraïs in the middle valley of the Sésane and in that of the Ia-Drang; and the Braos and the Tiam-Poueun in the lower Sésane. Those [Illustration here] of the Kha tribes which have been pacified work the gold-bearing alluvia of these rivers and pay their taxes with the gold dust which they extract.

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Upriver from Stung-Treng and as far as the waterfalls the Mékong can be navigated at low water by steam launches. At high water the large steamers of the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine] which provide service between Saigon and Pnom-Penh can go up as far as Khône. Below Stung-Treng and as far as Kratié the river can be navigated only by pirogues at low water. The following table [106] shows the average length of journeys by river between Stung-Treng and nearby points on this reach:

Kha

result. But the Kha ideal is to possess a battery of gongs of different 533
sizes and timbres, and with these they manage to obtain quite perfect chords.

Industry. Withdrawn in their mountains where they live in small 433
isolated groups, the Khas use their leisure time to make many basket-work and hollow-ware products which have a mark of elegance and a great deal of delicacy. Other tribes make paper from wood pulp, weave mats from rattan and bamboo bark, etc. They use all these products in trade.

Finally, certain Khas exploit deposits of iron ore and transform 316
it into farming implements, while others wash gold-bearing sands.

In general, although the Khas are industrious they work only to 461
procure what is strictly indispensable. They cannot resign themselves to staying away from home for any length of time and dread any stay in the low country, which they say is unhealthy for them. Since they [313]
have particular aptitudes for woodcutting, however, they have been successfully employed to cut teak wood in the forests on the right bank of the Mekong which are situated in Siamese territory. But it must be admitted that there they are in mountainous country and in the midst of forests, as in their native region.

The Khas of southern Laos. In southern Laos Khas are found who differ very little from those of Upper Laos. We shall not concern ourselves with them, but shall deal briefly with the many more numerous ones who have particular mores and customs.

The Djarais, the Rades, the Bahnars, the Cedangs, the Peunongs, [619]
the Rognaos (1), etc. are the principal types of these Kha tribes,

(1) See Appendix XVIII.

which for the most part are still independent.

These people are proud, large and muscular, supple, trained in 181
all forms of bodily exercise, bold, warlike and brave.

These qualities, moreover, have been developed by their pe- 567
culiar way of [257] [Illustration] [258] [Blank page] [259] life.
Accustomed to hunting slaves from which they extracted large profits 721
by selling them on the banks of the Mekong, these Khas have had to resort to continual expeditions in order to obtain their human game.

For many long years, in fact, they could acquire [Illustration 567
here] the gongs, buffalo, metals, textiles, etc. which they needed only by selling captives, generally Annamites, whom they went and

135 by the destruction, pulverization and washing of their gangues, all these metal particles were deposited, merely by virtue of their density, in nearby beds and on the least inclined planes along the courses of the waters in which they were contained.

Moreover, because the soil of Laos has long been stable we find the mineral deposits covered with a comparatively shallow layer of sterile alluvia. Sometimes this layer is practically nonexistent, and it is always easy and inexpensive to work. In some points the lode-bearing deposits are even on the surface or only just below the alluvial deposits.

The list which follows will give some idea of the extensive mineral wealth in Laos. Because of a lack of means of communication and mechanical equipment, however, the exploitation of its forest, animal and vegetable resources will be delayed for some time. But although one might hesitate to come to Laos in order to experiment with the rich crops which would be suited to its warm, damp climate and its virgin soil, we believe that the exploitation of its mineral deposits is of such a nature as to tempt French capitalists who, if they operate prudently, can be assured of reaping rich rewards in a short length of time for their effort and their initiative.

316 Here is an enumeration of the mineral wealth of Laos, based on the most recent information.

1. Gold Mines

A. Deposits of Nam-Beng and Nam-Ngao (province of Luang-Prabang).	Prospected in 1895 by Mallet and Isnard, engineers.
B. Deposits of Nam-Poun, (Outhai-Thani, Luang-Prabang, right bank).	Goldbearing gravel prospected in 1899 by M. Macey, government commissioner.
[316] C. Deposits of Tran-Ninh.	Prospected in 1895 by a private company.
D. Deposits of Ban-Tong-Ak (Upper Nam-Teun, province of Cammon) and of Vang-Kham (same province)	Deposits noted but not yet prospected.

149: Reinach--232 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

316

E. Deposits of the Nam-Kok (tributary of the Se-Bang-Hien, province of Song-Khone).	Goldbearing gravel noted, but not yet prospected.
F. Deposits of Muong-Son (Nam-Het, province of the Hua-Pahn).	Prospected by M. Macey, government commissioner.
G. Deposits of Vien-Tiane, Nong-Khay (Nam-Ngum, Nam-Tone, Nam-Sang, Nam-Sone).	Goldbearing gravel noted, but not yet prospected.
H. Deposits of the region of Attopeu.	Concession given to the Attopeu Goldmining Company [Société des mines d'or d'Attopeu].
I. Deposits of Bokham (province of Stung-Treng).	Prospected in 1894 by the Pelletier mission.
J. Deposits of Ban-Phi (province of Stung-Treng).	Concession given to the Attopeu Goldmining Company.

2. Tin Mines

Deposits in the valley of the Nam-Pa-Then (province of Cammon).	Concession for these deposits given to the Hin-Boun Tin Company [Société anonyme des étains du Hin-Boun]. These mines are worked by natives and supply all the tin used in the land.

3. Copper Mines

A. Deposits of Tia-Vit (province of Saravane).	Deposits noted, but not yet prospected.
B. Deposits of the Se-Done (Kham-Thong-Niai, province of Saravane).	

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C. Deposits of the Pou-Thong (province of Ban-Mouang).

D. Deposits of the Upper Nam-Beng (province of Luang-Prabang).

} Deposits noted, but not yet prospected.

E. Deposits of the Nam-Katang (province of Cammon).

F. Deposits of the Sekhong (across from Pak-Hoi, province of Attopeu).

} Deposits prospected, but not yet being worked.

[317]

4. Lead Mines

A. Deposits of Ban-Memo. Silver-bearing galena (province of Attopeu).

B. Deposits of the Houe-Palai. Galena (province of Ban-Mouang).

} Deposits noted, but not yet prospected.

C. Deposits at several points (province of Luang-Prabang).

D. Deposits at several points (province of the Hua-Pahn).

} Exploited by the natives.

5. Iron Mines

There are iron deposits at several points in the provinces of Luang-Prabang, Vien-Tiane, Cammon, Tran-Ninh and the Hua-Pahn, and among the Cedangs. Some of these are worked by the natives.

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6. Coal mines

Deposits have been noted along the Sekhong and in the provinces of Luang-Prabang and Muong-Hou.

7. Antimony Mines

There are deposits of antimonious galena in the provinces of Vien-Tiane, Luang-Prabang and Darlac (Puong region).

8. Sulphur Mines

The natives extract sulphur at several points in the provinces of Luang-Prabang and the Hua-Pahn.

9. Saltpeter Mines

The natives obtain saltpeter in the provinces of Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang.

10. Alum Mines

There are several unworked deposits in the province of Song-Khone, particularly at Pou-Hin-Soun (mountain of alum) near Muong Vang-Kham.

11. Rock Salt Mines

The natives work several rock salt mines in the provinces of Song-Khone, Attopeu, Vien-Tiane, Luang-Prabang and Poukha.

12. Precious Stone Mines

A. In the north of the province of Khong (Pou-Nafang).	Deposits noted, but not yet prospected.
[318] B. Deposits in the region of Xieng-Khong (left bank) (1).	Deposits of sapphires and rubies worked by the Burmese. Prospected in 1895.

(1) A company is shortly to be formed in France for the exploitation of these deposits.

13. Sources of Sulphur

316 Sources of sulphur have been noted in the provinces of Cammon, Saravane and Darlac.

As a supplement to this list, the reader is referred to Appendix XXI, in which several goldbearing deposits are noted which have been prospected, but for which concessions have not yet been granted and which are not being worked by any European enterprise. We shall now continue with a consideration of the conditions under which various other deposits, such as iron and salt, occur.

Iron. The various iron deposits which exist in Laos are alluvial deposits caused by the erosion of rocks under the action of rain water and water courses. They occur sometimes in hills from two to three hundred meters high, and sometimes in hillocks of a lesser height which do not exceed fifty or sixty meters.

The ore is found scattered throughout the mass of reddish clay alluvia, in flint nodules and isolated blocks of small dimensions. The richest ores are formed of irregular masses of a reddish cellular rock somewhat similar to millstone rock, but softer.

The ore is extracted in furnaces provided with alternating blowers. These are first loaded with a layer of crushed and washed ore, then a layer of charcoal, and the layers are thus repeated several times. When the process has been completed a bloom of spongy iron is left at the bottom of the furnace, and this iron is reheated and puddled. When the molten mass is sufficiently homogeneous, blacksmiths take it and transform it into farming implements--axes, machetes, etc.--all of which are sold locally.

[326]

[439] Production from the iron deposits in Laos is not sufficient for the needs of local consumption, since [319] [Illustration] [320] [Blank page] [321] iron is imported from Europe in small bars and sold for from 1 franc 30 centimes to 1 franc 50 centimes per kilogram.

It is unlikely that the country's iron deposits, at least those which have so far been discovered, will ever justify exploitation by European methods, because of their insufficient size.

317 Salt. The same is true in the case of salt, and the country's production is insufficient for local consumption.

The salt mines or, to use the proper term, saltbearing deposits are of three different kinds:

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1. Layers of rock rain located in the center of mountain masses and through which infiltration water seeps. When this water reaches the bottoms of the valleys, it is held there by the first layer of impermeable terrain which it encounters. It is brought to the surface through wells, and the salt which it contains is extracted by evaporation. This procedure can be carried out during only a few months of the year, after the greater part of the rain water has run off.

2. Here we have the same type of salt formation as the above, but seepage of saline water takes place along a hillside or over rocks exposed to the open air. The saturated water impregnates the soil and becomes partly crystallized there or forms saline efflorescences on the surface. In the first case, the soil is washed and the wash water evaporated. In the second, the saline efflorescences are collected and mixed with the salt which has been extracted from the soil by washing.

3. Lastly, other deposits seem to be constituted by old sandy bottoms of saline lakes. During the rainy season ground water becomes saturated through contact with the layer of saltbearing sand and is extracted through wells and then evaporated.

b) Mining Companies

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Instead of going to nourish foreign enterprises which are often hazardous, French capital should, as we have already noted, encourage the exploitation of the mineral deposits in Laos.

We ought to set to work resolutely and begin by [322] working the gold mines. We might hope thereby to obtain a large immediate profit, even in the country's present state of dévelopment, and with no need for better means of communication.

Plans and even studies are being made, moreover, towards the economic equipment of Laos as regards more rapid transport facilities, both in the interior and between the Mekong and the coast.

Other mineral deposits will very probably be discovered along with the gold mines, as has been the case in Attopeu, and they may begin to be worked when the network of roads and means of communication has been completed, or even partly so. Other enterprises, such as the exploitation of forest resources, livestock breeding, farming, etc. will follow as the country becomes better known.

At the present time two French mining companies have been formed in Laos, one to work the gold and copper in the region of

Attopeu, and the other to work the tin mines of the Nam-Hin-Boun. 316

1. Gold and Copper

The goldbearing deposits in the region of Attopeu have been known to the natives for many years. In fact, the natives have long paid their taxes in gold dust (1) obtained by washing sand.

(1) Here are the prices of native gold in nuggets and dust in the different goldbearing regions of Laos:

Luang-Prabang.....	1930 to 2760	francs per kilogram.
Pak-Lay.....	2900 to 3005	" " "
Vien-Tiane.....	2750 to 2900	" " "
Attopeu.....	2060	" " "

Realizing the goldbearing wealth of this region, M. Rulhe succeeded in forming a "Joint Stock Company for the study of the Attopeu Mines"["Société anonyme d'études des mines d'Attopeu"], with a capital of 250,000 francs. By a decree of the Governor General of Indo-China of August 6, 1895, this company was granted the following areas of research:

1. The basin of the Se-Souk and its tributaries;
2. The basin of the right bank of the Se-Sane and its right-bank tributaries as far as the Nam-Satai, including the basin of this latter river.

[323] An exploratory mission was at once sent to the spot. The goldbearing deposits noted by M. Rulhe were found, and at the same time copper-bearing deposits were discovered, for the development of which the company obtained an exclusive franchise. By reason of these new concessions it was led to increase its capitalization to 450,000 francs. These modifications were ratified by a decree of the Governor General of Indo-China, under the date of September 10, 1896.

Thanks to the invaluable help of Lieutenant-colonel Tournier, who was then Superior Commandant in Lower Laos, a mission composed of Messrs. Lazergues and Barraud, prospectors for the company, discovered the presence of rich lodes of gold (1) in the region of

(1) Samples from these deposits contained gold which was frequently visible to the naked eye.

316

Ban-Phi. A decree dated August 31, 1897, granted further concessions which had been requested as a consequence of these discoveries.

In 1897 M. Bel, a mining engineer, made a complete exploration of the goldbearing region on behalf of the company.

The conclusions of his report are as follows:

"From the mineralogical point of view the eruptive region which extends east of the Attopeu meridian to the China Sea, at least between the 13th and 16th parallels, is a goldbearing zone which embraces a very large part of the Kha lands. In this zone the alluvial gold deposits have been worked since time immemorial by the natives, using methods which might well be improved on. Deposits of gold in seams had heretofore been unknown in the Kha territories, and our own mission inaugurated the period of discoveries of this type of deposits, which were already known and partially exploited in the Annamite territory. Will the seam deposits, still virgin of all exploitation, which have recently been discovered among the Kha peoples have a brilliant future? This is a question which only prophets can answer. But the fact of their existence is, in itself, an important basis on which we are at least justified in founding hopes" (2).

(2) Mission to central Indo-China. Lecture delivered on May 26, 1898, before the Society for Colonial and Maritime Studies by J. M. Bel.

In 1898 a mining post was established at Ban-Phi, and at the same time a detachment of native guards was sent there to protect the workshops. We are therefore justified in hoping that the undertaking will soon enter into a working phase at this point.

[324] 2. Tin

We have seen, in our listing of mineral wealth, that tin has been found at only one point in Laos, the valley of the Nam-Pa-Then (province of Cammon).

These deposits have long been known to the natives and worked by them, but with unsatisfactory methods. Their annual production, [Illustration here] according to Captain Gosselin, is only 1,200 kilograms which, at local prices, represents a value of 600 piasters

316 (1,500 francs). This sum is enough for those whose only purpose is to obtain, through trade, the clothing, utensils and food which they need. During the time of the Siamese occupation part of the taxes of the villages in the valley of the Nam-Pa-Then was paid in tin.

As a consequence of prospecting operations carried out in 1894 and 1895 by M. Ménager, a small syndicate was formed at Saigon. After it had [325] obtained a concession for these deposits from the General Government of Indo-China, the syndicate was transformed, in 1896, into a joint stock company with a temporary working capital of 130,000 francs. Several study missions have been sent out under the auspices of this company. Samples brought back by the missions have been analyzed by M. Thompson, a Paris chemical expert who, despite their somewhat exceptional composition, [Illustration here] found a sufficiently high tin content to justify working the mines. The ores consist of highly ferruginous alluvia.

The tin itself is in very small fragments in the form of cassiterite. A few other mineral elements, containing lead and arsenic, can easily be eliminated by the proper roasting and washing techniques.

A new mission is on the spot at the present time. It is directed by M. Schlogel, an engineer. Its first labors have shown that the deposits contain a high percentage of [326] workable ore, and that they cover a comparatively large area since they stretch over a distance of more than thirty kilometers.

In view of a permanent working arrangement now anticipated for 1901, the company has successively raised its capital to 210,000 and then to 250,000 francs, and is shortly to increase it further.

In addition to the engineer Schlogel who directs exploratory work and studies of deposits as well as the installation of trial workshops, the company employs two French clerks at the present time, one French chief miner, and several hundred native workers of all categories, particularly Annamite carpenters from the province of Vinh and mechanics and miners from Saigon, who are also Annamite.

Several shafts and galleries have been opened, and the samples collected justify the belief that the enterprise is destined to have a rapid and extensive development. Its trial factory will soon be in a position to produce several tons of metal regularly each month, and there is every hope that before very long the tin from Hin-Boun will hold an honorable place on the metal market.

The same company holds the concession for important copper deposits in the valley of the Nam-Katang, a small tributary of the

Se-Bang-Fai. But studies are not yet sufficiently advanced for us to be able to give any useful information. 316

We have nevertheless felt that we should mention these deposits, in order to establish the importance of all this part of Laos from the point of view of mineral wealth.

[327] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER VII

I

SCAVENGING

We have seen that the inhabitants of Laos are apathetic and little inclined to work. They nevertheless find, although they go to scarcely any trouble, enough to supply their needs easily. 461 241

Indeed, with the exception of a few annual crops such as tobacco, cotton and indigo which are grown on the ever-renewed alluvia of the watercourses, the production of rice and of maize are the only occupations which require--and even then during a relatively short time--any degree of work or perseverance. We may mention the opium poppy, ramie, hemp and the mulberry tree merely as a reminder, for only a small part of the population devotes its time to these crops, which are still not at all extensive. [249]

Yet, it may be objected, the native has an easy life, dresses adequately, [328] lives in a house which is solid and comfortable from his point of view, has various tools and utensils, weapons, and sometimes even valuable cloth goods, jewels, etc. He spends money for celebrations and for offerings to the bonzes and pagodas. He pays taxes, he supports court costs which are often large with respect to the question at issue, and he is subject to the exactions of his mandarins to a greater or less degree. Finally, the commercial transactions of Laos involve quantities and sums which are quite high in comparison to the sparse population. 511 [438]

How are we to reconcile all these factors, and how is it that the Laotian, who produces so little with his labor, nevertheless has all he needs to get along on?

This is due to the fact that Laos is above all else a scavenging country. 314

who were disposed to follow them.

464 stitions and perhaps also the opposition of the mandarins who for
563 centuries have tried [516] to prevent any exodus towards the lands situated beyond the mountains, have in the long run made him a stay-at-home.

This industrious, intelligent and prolific people prefers to struggle
000 for life in agglomerations which are too dense, rather than emigrate in order to obtain a life of well-being and ease.

We should not, however, despair of ever seeing the Annamites spread into Laos and there provide a powerful force for repopulation and make the low plains which border the Mekong from Cammon to Cambodia bear fruit. It is up to us to destroy the legends, to reduce to nothingness the superstitions which have gained currency, and then to use our influence to bring an end to the ostracism in which Laos is held. Does it not belong today to the great Indo-Chinese family in which all the component peoples are French subjects in the same right?

On the day when the mandarins no longer sustain a fear of Laos and a dread of slavery among the Annamites, it will be possible to induc them to emigrate into the Mekong basin. The colonies already in existence, particularly at certain points in Cammon, will grow from that day on through the addition of newcomers. We must not deceive ourselves into thinking that such immigration will not take time, and so in order to meet our most pressing needs European colonies in Laos will have to appeal to laborers from the southern provinces of China and especially from the island of Hainan, that inexhaustible reservoir which has supplied coolies to several parts of the world for so many years.

But, it will be asked, is Laos ready to welcome colonists who want to work the mines and forests and to engage in trade, agriculture and livestock breeding? We believe that, in the present state of communications, some of these undertakings are possible at this moment and that others cannot hope to succeed until the country's economic equipment has developed.

316 As concerns commerce and the exploitation of forests and mines,
313 we have noted that several attempts have already been made. These are valuable indications showing the [517] courses which isolated
185 colonists or companies which would like to employ their capital in our new possession can follow as of the present time. Indeed, such undertakings yield profits almost from the very beginning, and if they are

316 begun at judiciously chosen points [Illustration here] they can be accommodated to the existing means of communication and transport
313 if necessary. As for the sums needed to engage in a commercial, mining or forest enterprise, it is difficult to determine these in any
185 precise fashion for, depending on the region and the special conditions of the terrain, such matters may require more or less capital.

[518] For dealing in teak wood (1), for example, the sums needed

(1) A rigorous investigation made by a chief guardsman of the Laotian militia of the region of Xieng-Khong, on the left bank of the Mekong, has shown that the number of teak trees ready for cutting in the province of Muong-Sing is 4,975 in all, 2,000 of which are of exceptional size for the region, that is to say that their diameter varies between 0.3 and 0.6 meter. Counting the young shoots and young trees, the total number of teaks which we possess in Muong-Sing may be estimated at about 20,000.

Another group is situated on the right bank of the Mekong, in the vicinity of Pak-Lay and in the basin of the Nam-Poun. It includes from 10,000 to 12,000 teak trees ready for cutting, concessions for about half of which have been granted. (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900.)

for purchase and transport would depend on the quantity which it was desired to export. As an average indication, the sum of 40,000 francs might be given for operations on 1,000 teak trees.

From the point of view of mineral resources, certain deposits require capital in the millions for their exploitation, while others might be worked profitably with sums varying between 250,000 to 500,000 francs.

433 In the way of industries which may be started at the present time,
185 we may cite only the establishment of rice distilleries in southern Laos and of a mechanical sawmill at Khone.

[273 A distillery could be set up without any great expense at the
243] mouth of the Mekong and the Sedone, for example. Thanks to the price of glutinous rice which is five or six times less expensive in this region than at Pnom-Penh, the alcohol from such a distillery would find a certain market in Cambodia.

185 For several years now there has been talk of establishing a mechanical sawmill on the island of Khone which would obtain its
313 motive power from the nearby waterfalls. Besides teak wood (2),
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(2) Teak is generally regarded, although wrongly, as the wood

Kha

563 in a few particulars. They all inhabit the peaks of mountains, where they generally engage in the cultivation of poppies and maize.

[439] [241] Hos. The Hos are genuine Chinese who came in with the caravans from Yunnan and settled in the land to engage in trade or to grow cotton (1).

(1) According to a monograph by Government Commissioner Grand.

[105] APPENDIX XVIII

NOTE ON THE EASTERN REGION OF LOWER LAOS (1)

[113] (1) Extract from a report by Colonel Tournier, Superior Commandant of Lower Laos. (Bulletin Economique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900, No. 19.)

PRESENT STATUS OF THE DIFFERENT KHA TRIBES

563 TRIBES LIVING ON THE GREAT ANNAMITIC CHAIN. 1. The tribe of Tha-Hoi may be regarded as being entirely pacified. It is a dependency of both Annam and Laos, but the spheres of influence of the two lands were perfectly delimited at the time of the establishment by Annam of the administrative post in Lao-Bao.

2. The Khon-Tou-Khas, the Ve-Khas and the Alak Khas are completely pacified and extremely tranquil. They are dependencies of Saravane.

Between the high valleys of the Se-Kemane and the Sesane (where the word Legnau, which is unknown in the region, is found on the Pavie map), there is an absolutely deserted region which serves as a buffer between the abovementioned tribes and the Cedangs.

[316] 3.The great tribe of the Cedangs, so far unconquerable. It occupies both sides of the chain, and its villages are situated in extremely
563 difficult positions. The land is very poor, and until the last few years, besides the iron deposits which they work, their real commerce
567 was the slave trade. All the Annamite slaves of the Mekong valley, both on the left bank and the right, came from raids made by these tribes in Annamite territory, even down as far as the sea. The abolition of slavery in Laos was a great blow to them, but since it is absolutely necessary for them to procure buffalo and oxen in order to live and especially for their superstitious practices, they still continue to make occasional captures in Annam and find a market for

149: Reinach--422 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[124]

APPENDIX XXI

NOTES ON GOLD-BEARING DEPOSITS

1. DEPOSITS OF NAM-BENG AND NAM-NGAO (District of Pak-Ta--Luang-Prabang)

316 These deposits, which are situated in the principality of Luang-Prabang a hundred kilometers west of the capital, are made up of alluvial beds in the valleys formed by the left-bank tributaries of the Mekong (Nam-Beng, Nam-Ngao, Nam-Ta, etc.).

[643 556] Before our settlement in Laos, these deposits had long constituted part of the patrimony of the kings of Luang-Prabang. It was from here that they extracted all the gold needed not only to pay their tributes of vassaldom to the Chinese, Annamite and Siamese sovereigns, but also to make purchases in Bangkok and cast gold articles and massive pieces of jewelry for their family, as well as the insignia of officials.

Our own prospecting trips to these deposits in 1893 and 1894 yielded, merely by washing in a wash-trough and without amalgamation, "crude gold" which was clearly visible in the form of nuggets, grains and dust. Moreover, from natives who worked these deposits we acquired nuggets which were obtained by means of this same rudimentary process and which varied in weight from two to forty-five grams. We even saw nuggets of unrolled "or crespelé" weighing [301] 140 and 225 grams, which came from the same place. What is more, it is not unusual to meet children wearing nuggets hung around their neck like amulets--nuggets which vary in volume from the size of a hazelnut to that of a pressed fig.

The gentle slope and short length of the valleys where the deposits are found, and the proximity of the mountains from which the gold comes, are precious indications of the presence of outcropping lodes. Moreover, the appearance of the crespelé metal, as if it were spongy, [125] to which particles of quartz still adhere, is a confirmation of this hypothesis.

In 1895 a corporation called the "Mining and agricultural company of Laos" ["Société minière et agricole du Laos"], with a capital of 150,000 francs, was established in Paris through our efforts. It sent M. Isnard, a mining engineer, to the locality to study the deposits of gold and precious stones which we had prospected.

A corporation with a capital of several millions was later to take the place of the study group.

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The above engineer remained in the country for more than a year. He made a careful study of the deposits, and the report which he presented to the Company upon his return from his mission stated that we had been too modest in our estimates; that the gold-bearing deposits were of the first order, easily workable and almost at ground level. He concluded by proposing that a company with a very high capital be formed (1). Things seemed to be going well when an

(1) The content of these deposits varies from 3 to 14 grams of visible gold per ton of alluvia or of rich gravel.

event took place which reduced all our hopes to naught and rendered sterile the efforts of the Mining and agricultural company of Laos.

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Subsequent to a report by M. Mallet, an engineer sent by the government to prospect the region with which we are dealing, the governor general issued a decree dated February 16, 1896, stipulating that "possession and exploitation of gold-bearing mines or mines so reputed which are situated in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang on the left bank (between the Mekong and the Nam-Hou) may not be effected, until further notice, except by public tender."

This decree was not known in Laos until the engineer Isnard was actually on the spot. But it was justifiable to suppose that when confronted with the capital which had been collected, with that which had been offered, and with the work already done the government would invite tenders for the deposits.

Such was not at all the case. Today in 1900, it is still not the case!

The consequences may easily be guessed. Faced by this occurrence with the impossibility of doing anything at all, the Company abandoned the matter.

In the interest of Laos and of the finances of French Indo-China, we should like to express the wish (2) that the above-quoted decree be

(2) A proposal made by M.P. Macey before the 1900 Convention of Economic and Commercial Geography [Congrès de Géographie économique et commerciale de 1900].

abrogated and that the further notice of which mention is made be given within a short time so as to enable French capital to be put to good use in this part of our possession.

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In case our proposal should be accepted and the matter once more taken under consideration, we should advise that it be undertaken in the following way.

It would be well, especially in the beginning, to treat the gold-bearing alluvia by washing in a sluice and to extract the gold by amalgamation and cyanidation. The results would be sufficiently remunerative to make it possible, even while realizing profits, [126] to study and make ready for further exploitation of the lodes by means of more complete and more highly developed equipment. Such a procedure would, in our opinion, be wise, foresighted and of such a nature as to inspire a just confidence in capitalists. It would also enable them to advance in a sure fashion and with a well-founded hope of certain profits. Such profits, if held in reserve by prudent administrators, could not only provide sizeable dividends, but also go to increase the initial capital to any figure deemed necessary for exploitation at a later date of the deep-seated lode-bearing deposits.

The volume of these alluvial gold-bearing deposits may be estimated at approximately four million cubic meters, with an average weight of more than seven million tons.

They are all situated near that part of the Mekong which is navigable all year long by pirogues and rafts of from one to three tons, and in a reach which can be served by steam launches as far as Luang-Prabang during nearly five months of the year.

The countryside, moreover, is fairly well populated, offers sufficient resources in the way of food and contains a population which could provide more than a thousand specialized workers who have been accustomed since their childhood to treating gold-bearing alluvia (1).

(1) The study by M. Mallet shows us that all this part of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang is rich in gold. The gold extracted by the natives comes either from the sand of the river beds, from consolidated alluvia near the banks, or sometimes from hillside mines at a somewhat higher altitude, but never from direct treatment of the primitive rock, that is to say from gold-bearing quartz. The rock samples have always yielded amounts of gold which were insufficient to justify any attempt to treat them, but it would be entirely natural to try to work the consolidated alluvia. In the latter task, as M. Mallet's report proves, experienced miners could probably be recruited with ease "who would not be afraid to go down seven or eight meters and dig veritable mine

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galleries at this depth."

During this period of limited exploitation of the alluvia, which are quite rich, detailed studies could be made of the region in order to determine whether the gold content of the deep-seated rocks is really as slight as M. Mallet's summary explorations would seem to indicate. (Report by M. Courillon, head of the geological service of Indo-China.)

2. DEPOSITS OF VIEN-TIANE, NONG-KHAY

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That part of the territory of Vien-Tiane and Nong-Khay which is situated in the 25-kilometer restricted zone contains vast deposits of gold-bearing gravel which are deposited on the bottom of an immense basin about 5,000 square kilometers in area. The deposits are covered with a layer of more recent alluvia which varies from 7 to 12 meters in thickness.

The Mekong and its left and right bank tributaries called the Nam-Ngume, [127] the Nam-Tone, the Nam-Sang, the Nam-Soue and the Nam-Luong, now flow through this elliptical basin which straddles the intersection of the 100th meridian and the 18th parallel.

Between 1896 and 1898, after prospecting the deposits in the region of Nong-Khay, Tourakhome, Nam-Tone and Pone-Pissaye, we there noted the presence of the same bank of gold gravels at several points which were quite far apart.

Not until after discovering that they were currently being worked by the natives in several villages on the banks of the Mekong and in the upper part of its tributaries, did the idea occur to us to examine these deposits more closely.

These studies have been the object of several official reports in which we expressed the theory that two twin lake basins once existed on the two present banks of the Mekong, and that their bottoms would be covered by a sedimentary stratification of gold-bearing gravels about two meters in thickness.

According to one of our consuls in Siam, this hypothesis has been found to be correct by prospectors of various nationalities on the right bank of the Mekong, at several widely separated points both on the circumference and in the center of the lake basin. Supposing this to be true, our theory is thereby confirmed and the presence of gold noted under the conditions which we suggested.

The natives have for many years exploited the gold-bearing gravels on the Nam-Sang, the Nam-Tone, at Tourakhome and at

316 five points along the Mekong from Vien-Tiane to Pone-Pissaye (about 100 kilometers).

In the high valleys of the Nam-Sang and the Nam-Tone, the gold-bearing layer is covered only by a thin depth of sterile alluvia. At these points the gold content is quite high, and may be as much as nine to ten grams of visible crude gold per ton of rich gravel. The black schlich is scorned by the natives, and cast aside with the sand.

On the great river, in the places where by hollowing out its present bed through alluvia which have filled former lakes, the Mekong has laid bare the strata of gold-bearing gravels, the content of visible crude gold varies from eight to nine grams per ton of rich gravel. The points currently being worked are Phiea-Watt (Vien-Tiane), Banhom and Ban-Sithane (between Vien-Tiane and Nong-Khay), and then Hatt-Kam-Noi and Hatt-Kam-Ngiai (between Nong-Khay and Pone-Pissaye).

To sum up: since this basin has an area of 5,000 square kilometers, if we suppose that the gold-bearing stratum covers only half of its bottom, the volume of gold gravels would be two and a half billion cubic meters, or about five million tons in weight.

The covering alluvia are made up of superposed beds of various rocks which were brought in suspension into the waters of the former lake and which were successively deposited at different periods, forming a quite compact sandy-clay mass in which mine galleries could be cut [128] without danger if wooden supports were used. The thickness of this layer varies, as we have noted, between seven and twelve meters.

As early as 1898 we directed the official attention of the technical committee of Indo-China to this interesting formation, the exploitation of which would, in our opinion, be a powerful vital element for Laos and a source of great budgetary profits.

3. DEPOSITS OF THE PROVINCE OF OUTHAI-THANI-SI-PAK-LAY

These deposits are situated on the right bank of the Mekong, in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang, 250 kilometers south-southwest of the capital.

Only a short distance from Pak-Lay, they occupy the valley of watercourses called the Nam-Sone and the Houei-Tani, which are tributaries of the Nam-Poun and have their source in the mountain

316 Pou-Khao-Tong.

The gold is found in fine gravel including miscellaneous rock debris which has been covered by the recent alluvia of the water-courses, at a depth varying from a few decimeters to a meter and a half.

In 1899, as samples resulting from trial prospecting, we provided the local organizing committee for the Exposition of 1900 with gold, with black schlichs, with untreated gold-bearing gravel and with superposed sterile alluvia.

The fifteen and a half grams (15-1/2 grams) of gold in the form of grains and dust which was supplied represented the supervised production of a single gold-washer, in visible gold, for thirty days work at the rate of 20 wash-troughs per day which weighed 3.5 kilograms each on the average.

The gold content of the black schlichs which resulted from the washing and which we collected can be determined only by analysis (1).

(1) They were sent for analysis to the Saigon laboratory, but the results have not yet been published.

On the average, a ton of treated gravel represented a weight of about 300 grams of black schlichs, and a volume of 118 cubic centimeters.

Thus, with the rudimentary methods used in this prospecting operation, without amalgamation and despite the inevitable losses, the fifteen and a half grams of gold collected, using local procedures and labor, cost 30 francs, or 1.935 francs per gram and 1,935 francs per kilogram (2).

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(2) Here, by way of comparison, are the cost prices of gold at several points of the globe:

Saint-Elie (French Guiana), 1619 francs
Siberia 2170 francs
California, 1500 to 1700 francs
Australia, 1600 to 1900 francs

This, of course, by using the most advanced methods which reduce losses of the precious metal to almost nothing.

The respective densities of the schlichs, of the gold-bearing gravels and of the sterile alluvia [129] were 2.6 for the schlichs, 1.82 for the gravels and 1.49 for the sterile alluvia.

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It should be noted that the various points of the deposits where prospecting operations were carried out were chosen arbitrarily and at random. We are therefore justified in supposing that the average everywhere would remain close to what we have noted. Moreover, the extent of the Nam-Sone and Houei-Tani deposits which, in their known parts, stretch over a length of about 30 kilometers, may be estimated at nearly two million cubic meters of rich gravel, or a weight of three million tons. The volume of sterile alluvia which would have to be removed in order to reach the rich gravels would be about three million cubic meters.

It should now be stated that, in our opinion, these deposits do not require the establishment of powerful corporations for their exploitation. On the contrary, the most suitable arrangement here, given the general appearance of the whole length of the deposits and the obligatory division into small holdings as specified by the decree governing mines, would be small groupings of capital in amounts of 100,000 or 200,000 francs, which would work simultaneously side by side.

It is to be hoped that these lines will come to the attention of persons interested in this question, and will decide them to exploit deposits which are located in proximity to the Mekong, in a region which is sufficiently populous and offers highly varied resources.

4. DEPOSITS OF MUONG-SON (HUA-PHAN-HA-TANG-HOC)

These deposits, known as "Muong-Son" deposits, occupy the upper valley of the Nam-Het, a right-bank tributary of the Nam-Ma (or Song-Ma) which itself flows into the Gulf of Tonkin. They are situated in the province of Hua-Phan-Ha-Tang-Hoc, which forms a part of Laos and borders on both Tonkin and Annam.

The Nam-Het flows in an erosion valley where calcareous masses, which have remained standing and which support hills of hard schists, form a succession of more or less elongated cirques at whose points of junction the channel is greatly constricted.

This arrangement "like a string of beads" constitutes a succession of terraced valleys which are from four to ten kilometers long and 800 to 1500 meters wide, and which are highly favorable to alluvial deposits. The gold-bearing rocks come from peaks more than 2,000 meters high called Pou-Luong and Pou-Loi, and have been disaggregated, carried into the valleys and reduced to small fragments from which the metallic particles have been released. By reason of

316 their greater density, and thanks to the eddy currents caused by the constricted parts of the valleys, these precious particles have been deposited on the bed rock amidst rolled stones, gravel and sand.

[130] It is there, under a thin layer of sterile alluvia which does not exceed two meters in depth and the surface of which is entirely covered by ricefields, that gold can be found in the form of nuggets and grains.

With a view toward satisfying requests for information on the part of the Geological Service of Indo-China, we were led to investigate:

1. The plausibility of the presence of gold in the region through an examination of the formations of the peaks from which the gold came;

2. Having acknowledged the plausibility thereof, to prospect the valleys in order to discover whether gold were really present there. Our predictions were crowned with success, since excavations in the midst of ricefields, at points chosen almost absolutely at random and without any outer indications, yielded visible crude gold merely through washing in a wash-trough and without amalgamation with mercury, to the great astonishment of the natives and, it must be said, of some Europeans.

According to the methodical and supervised prospecting operations which we carried out, the layer of sterile alluvia covering the gold-bearing stratum is from 1.5 to 2.5 meters in depth and is made up of matter which is easy to work by mere manual digging with spade and pick.

The visible crude gold content per ton of rich alluvia would be, on the average, three and a half grams.

The black schlichs resulting from the washing operations are numerous and high in density, but the Laboratory of Saigon to which they were sent has not yet made known the results of its analysis. Plentiful and heavy, they ought also to contain quite a large amount of pure gold.

The valleys like beads on a string which may contain gold-bearing alluvia extend over more than half of the course of the Nam-Het, that is to say over about sixty kilometers. Given the average breadth of the valleys and the thickness of the gold-bearing stratum, its volume and weight may be estimated, respectively at fifty million cubic meters and from seventy-five to eighty million tons.

A more complete study of these deposits and their exploitation would be undertakings worth trying. The climate of the region is very

•316 healthy, and labor could be found quite easily. The route of access to the territory of Muong-Son would be through Tonkin, either by way of Cho-Bo-Van-Bu-Muong-Het or by way of Cho-Bo-Ta-Koa-Muong-Het. The journey from Hanoi to Muong-Son can be made in fifteen to eighteen days, as follows: two by steamship, eight by pirogue and the rest on horseback with bearers for the baggage.

(Extract from the reports by M. P. Macey.)

[131]

APPENDIX XXII
NOTES ON RUBBER
I

314 In Laos, the rubber lianas are known to the natives by the generic name Khua (1). According to the information which M.

[552] (1) In Laotian, khua is a generic term applied to all lianas and to all climbing plants without exception.

Leblévec, head of the Upper Mekong Hydrographic Mission, was so kind to furnish me upon my request, their number seems to be quite large.

This traveler classifies the rubber lianas of Upper Laos into two categories, according to the nature of the product which they yield.

The first category includes the Khua-ka-tong-ka-tiou, the Khua-sout-long and the Khua-som-lam. The elastic gum which these varieties produce is dark in color, either black or chestnut. The bark is pebbly and blackish-green in color. The leaves are shiny and dark green. The fruit is elongated and produces pilose, barbed seeds. Some of these lianas are as much as 30 to 40 centimeters in circumference. They are found in the forests of the Laotian plains, on the banks of the Mekong.

The Ka-tong-ka-tiou is said to be found nearly everywhere on very humid terrain covered with rushes which are burned in the rainy season. The Sout-long is found on the banks of the Ngoum, in the region of Tourakom. The Som-lam grows on the upper Nam-Sam and in Xieng-Khouang.

M. Leblévec classifies the lianas which yield a light brown or dark reddish rubber in the second category. These are the Khua-mac-ka-khay, the Khua-kao-pong, the Khua-lam-sai and the Khua-tang-tong.

13. Sources of Sulphur

316 Sources of sulphur have been noted in the provinces of Cammon, Saravane and Darlac.

As a supplement to this list, the reader is referred to Appendix XXI, in which several goldbearing deposits are noted which have been prospected, but for which concessions have not yet been granted and which are not being worked by any European enterprise. We shall now continue with a consideration of the conditions under which various other deposits, such as iron and salt, occur.

Iron. The various iron deposits which exist in Laos are alluvial deposits caused by the erosion of rocks under the action of rain water and water courses. They occur sometimes in hills from two to three hundred meters high, and sometimes in hillocks of a lesser height which do not exceed fifty or sixty meters.

The ore is found scattered throughout the mass of reddish clay alluvia, in flint nodules and isolated blocks of small dimensions. The richest ores are formed of irregular masses of a reddish cellular rock somewhat similar to millstone rock, but softer.

The ore is extracted in furnaces provided with alternating blowers. These are first loaded with a layer of crushed and washed ore, then a layer of charcoal, and the layers are thus repeated several times. When the process has been completed a bloom of spongy iron is left at the bottom of the furnace, and this iron is reheated and puddled. When the molten mass is sufficiently homogeneous, blacksmiths take it and transform it into farming implements--axes, machetes, etc.--all of which are sold locally.

[326]

[439] Production from the iron deposits in Laos is not sufficient for the needs of local consumption, since [319] [Illustration] [320] [Blank page] [321] iron is imported from Europe in small bars and sold for from 1 franc 30 centimes to 1 franc 50 centimes per kilogram.

It is unlikely that the country's iron deposits, at least those which have so far been discovered, will ever justify exploitation by European methods, because of their insufficient size.

• 317 Salt. The same is true in the case of salt, and the country's production is insufficient for local consumption.

The salt mines or, to use the proper term, saltbearing deposits are of three different kinds:

149: Reinach--236 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

1. Layers of rock salt located in the center of mountain masses and through which infiltration water seeps. When this water reaches the bottoms of the valleys, it is held there by the first layer of impermeable terrain which it encounters. It is brought to the surface through wells, and the salt which it contains is extracted by evaporation. This procedure can be carried out during only a few months of the year, after the greater part of the rain water has run off. 317.

2. Here we have the same type of salt formation as the above, but seepage of saline water takes place along a hillside or over rocks exposed to the open air. The saturated water impregnates the soil and becomes partly crystallized there or forms saline efflorescences on the surface. In the first case, the soil is washed and the wash water evaporated. In the second, the saline efflorescences are collected and mixed with the salt which has been extracted from the soil by washing.

3. Lastly, other deposits seem to be constituted by old sandy bottoms of saline lakes. During the rainy season ground water becomes saturated through contact with the layer of saltbearing sand and is extracted through wells and then evaporated.

b) Mining Companies

Instead of going to nourish foreign enterprises which are often hazardous, French capital should, as we have already noted, encourage the exploitation of the mineral deposits in Laos. 316

We ought to set to work resolutely and begin by [322] working the gold mines. We might hope thereby to obtain a large immediate profit, even in the country's present state of development, and with no need for better means of communication.

Plans and even studies are being made, moreover, towards the economic equipment of Laos as regards more rapid transport facilities, both in the interior and between the Mekong and the coast.

Other mineral deposits will very probably be discovered along with the gold mines, as has been the case in Attopeu, and they may begin to be worked when the network of roads and means of communication has been completed, or even partly so. Other enterprises, such as the exploitation of forest resources, livestock breeding, farming, etc. will follow as the country becomes better known.

At the present time two French mining companies have been formed in Laos, one to work the gold and copper in the region of

396 is also cut out with a hatchet so as to decrease the thickness of the walls and render them more elastic.

When the pirogue is as wide as is desired, or else as wide as the wood being used will allow without any danger of splitting or bursting, strong rectangular crossbraces are set at regular intervals and tailed into the sides of the pirogues a few centimeters below the gunwales. When it has reached this state the pirogue is virtually finished. It has its final shape, and looks like the elongated half of a fish which has been split lengthwise.

All that remains is to finish the work by giving the bottom and sides the requisite thickness, by polishing the wood, smoothing the curves, etc.

Finally comes the moment of launching. It must be said, to the honor of the builders' sure eye and skill, that it is always successful and that once put into water the pirogue behaves well in its element, with a light and graceful balance.

396 The price of pirogues varies depending on their dimensions and
[466] the region, and can therefore not be fixed in any absolute
439 fashion. A new pirogue, in fact, costs from 50 to 300 francs. In
435 Cambodia a pirogue from Laos costs twice what it cost in its land of origin. Thus it may readily be imagined that pirogues are exported from Lower Laos in fairly large numbers. The statistics for 1899 show exports of 552 pirogues of various dimensions, with a [Illustration here] total value of 55,195 francs, or an average purchase price of 100 francs apiece.

398 Cartwrights. The construction of carts, wagons, pack-saddles for oxen and elephant palanquins is a specialized industry only on the right bank and in Siam. In French Laos carts are little used because of the nature of the terrain, and there are no cartwrights. Pack-saddles for oxen and elephant palanquins are made by nearly everyone, particularly by drovers and carnacs.

•317 Lime. Lime is made in Laos, primarily for inclusion in betel masticatories.
276 [467] The kilns are dug in the clay on banks of watercourses, near calcareous masses from which limestone is taken.

272 Alcohol. The distillation of grain--rice, maize and hemp-seed--is not an industry in the strict sense, for every village and every family makes alcohol on occasion.

272 The distillation methods used are good ones, but the equipment used leaves much to be desired and does not make it possible to obtain rectified alcohol of a high degree. By taking 25 or 28 proof native alcohol and distilling it for a second time with European equipment, a fairly good-tasting alcohol can be obtained which is 68 to 72 proof.

389 Powder-making. The inhabitants of Laos make the powder themselves which they use for hunting and for fireworks. They know how to proportion and triturate the ingredients--charcoal, saltpeter (1)

[317] (1) The saltpeter which is collected in grottoes containing calcareous rocks is chiefly made up of masses of droppings from birds and bats. The bat is called "Kiea" and saltpeter "Khi-Kiea," or, literally, Droppings of bats.

and sulphur--in order to make either explosive powder or fusing powder.

792 The bonzes are the fireworks-makers par excellence who make
527 the many and varied fireworks without which no celebration is really
389 complete. Bombs, firecrackers, Roman candles, serpents, pinwheels, etc. and, in a word, almost all the usual fireworks are made using rudimentary processes and local products.

389 The rockets (Bang-Fai) deserve special mention. They consist of a body containing fusing powder, to which is attached a wick several meters long and made of spun cotton or sometimes even of paper. The latter is smeared with mealed gunpowder mixed with gum, and the whole is fastened to a directing shaft. If the rocket is an Aeolian one, its rear is provided with a kind of Pan's pipe made of bamboo tubes which gives forth a harmonious sound as it describes its trajectory in the air.

The rockets vary greatly in size. In some the powder weighs only a few decagrams, and [468] the guide shaft is from two to three meters long. Other larger ones carry a "Mune" of powder (about 12 kilograms) and sometimes more, and the guide shaft is a whole stalk of bamboo some 15 meters long and from 12 to 15 centimeters in base diameter.

Rockets are generally decorated with gilded or colored paper. With the application of rice paste motifs, some of them manage to look very like a dragon with threatening jaws and terrifying eyes, and in these the body envelops the shaft and the head contains the Aeolian harp as well as the powder cylinder. The stands used for launching

degree.

289 Paper. The manufacture of paper using the bark of a tree called "Kok-Sa" (1) is limited to a single region of northern Laos.

(1) See Chapter VII.

It is not of any great importance, since it does not even suffice for local consumption.

The manufacturing processes are those familiar to everyone as being used in China, in Japan, in Annamite lands and in Burma.

321 531 Wood and ivory carving. Here we no longer have to deal with an industry, but with an art. The men who practice it are few in number, are highly paid, work slowly and are generally inveterate opium smokers.

Like the goldsmiths and jewelers, the wood and ivory carvers of Laos reproduce, ad infinitum, immutable models which their predecessors have handed down. They are, however, able to execute motifs from any given design. To be sure, they are inferior to their Burmese, Annamite, Malay, Chinese and especially Japanese colleagues as regards the movement, harmony, purity of form and finish of their work.

532 Fresco painting. The pagodas of Laos, which have been left untended for many long years, contain curious fresco paintings set off with gold, but lack of care and exposure to the weather have partly destroyed them. This art has very few practitioners in Laos, and it should be added that most of the existing frescoes are mainly the work of Burmese, Cambodians and Chinese of whom the native artists are only the pupils.

396 [438] Pirogue carpenters. Nearly all the inhabitants who [464] live on the banks of the big river or its principal tributaries are able to carve out a pirogue. Certain villages, however, have a monopoly in this industry.

When it is a matter merely of hewing out a pirogue which is to be used only for crossing the river, fishing or agricultural service, everyone does a fairly good job. But for the large pirogues which are reserved for regattas, voyages and commercial transports, recourse must be had to specialists. Only they know how to give their products

149: Reinach--250 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8 314 385 501 322

19. Miscellaneous resins.

Several trees, such as the "Kok-Mai-Niang, Kok-Mai-Tabeng, [Illustration here] Kok-Mai-Sak" (1), etc., yield an oleo-resin which

(1) See Appendix XX.

when mixed with paddy husks, is used to make torches and a siccative, shiny extract which is called "Nam-Mane-Niang," and again a kind of pitch (Khi-Si) which is used to caulk pirogues and to smear various basketwork receptacles so as to make them watertight. It is similar to damarine.

The production of these resins is limited to local needs. 314

20. Black lacquer. 501

The black lacquer of Laos is a natural black varnish, thick and [343] solid, which is called "Nam-Kieng." It is secreted by the "Kok-Mai-Nam-Kieng." 322

Nam-Kieng is used to lacquer racing pirogues, elephant palanquins, pagoda columns and statues, frames, receptacles of different kinds, sword sheaths, etc. The lacquer producing trees grow only in certain localities, and the varnish is not exported. Its price varies throughout the land between 62 and 75 francs per hundred kilograms. [435]

It would be of interest to identify this lacquer with that of Japan, and to study the question as to whether it might not be possible to increase the number of trees which produce it with a view towards making it the basis of an export trade, at least to the countries bordering on Laos.

21. Cunao (the mock gambier, Mak-Soua in Laotian).

The cunao is a brownish tubercle used instead of catechu, the color of which it has, for dyeing cloth. It is found in Cammon, in a part of the Hua-Pahn and on the right bank of the Nam-Hou. This product is bought mainly by Annamites and Chinese, who use it in Annam and Tonkin for dyeing the peasants' work clothes. 314 386

137
824
322

Mai-nam-kieng	Cai-son (Annamite) Dom-crul (Cambodian) Melanorrhea laccifera (varnish-tree)			Yields a fine black varnish similar to lacquer. Would be suitable for cabinet work.			Lower Laos	Red wood, reminiscent of Brazilian rosewood. Very rare. Does not last under moist conditions.

B. TREES WITH WOOD SUITABLE FOR CABINET WORK

Mai-Niompha	Mock mahogany	30	.6 to .7	Furniture, boards. Resembles the mahogany of Florida or Texas, used for cigar boxes.	Yes	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Very beautiful soft-wood, pink in color. Fairly plentiful. Floats.
Mai-pouei or Mai-pouei-kien	Cai-bang-lang (Annamite) Lagerstroemia (?)	30	.6 to 1	Furniture, fine boards.	Yes	Thick forest	Lower Laos	White wood with slight gray tinge, not very resistant, fine grain. Very plentiful. Lasts about ten years, does not withstand rain.
Mai-thon	Cai-lim (Annamite) Mock walnut	30	.5 to .6	Boards, fine cabinet work.	Yes	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Very beautiful brown wood, veined like the walnut which it resembles although darker. Very long life. Very plentiful. Very well-grown tree.

[Table continued over]

137
824
322

Mai-kha-niem	Cai-trat (Annamite)	15 to 25	.5 to .6	Furniture, boards, pirogues.	No	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Resistant wood, slightly yellowish, fine grain, quite light, well-grown. Rather scarce. The tree bears very odoriferous yellow flowers.
Mai-lang-dam	Cai-mun (Annamite) Don-hayean (Cambodian) Diospyros ebenum Ebony	10 to 15	.3 to .4	Good for cabinet work. House traverse beams. Its fruit is used to make a black dye.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Hardwood, black, heavy, non-floating, small, resembles ebony. Lasts about seven years. Plentiful.
[114-115]								
Mai-deng	Cai-huong (Annamite)	25	.6 to .7	Columns and posts for houses and pagodas. Furniture.	No	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Resistant, red, very well-veined wood. Highly esteemed, hard, difficult to work. Resembles rosewood somewhat. Very well-grown tree, well-known to the Laotians, plentiful.
Mai-te	Cai-go (Annamite) Grandifera cochinchinensis	30 to 50	.6 to .7	Columns for houses and pagodas. Boards.	No	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Very hard wood, mahogany yellow, fine grain. Unlimited life. Plentiful. Edible fruit.

[table continued over]

137
884
322

Mai-dou or Mai-dou-khao	Cai-hoi-moc (Annamite)	30	.7 to .8	House columns, furniture, chests, cart axles.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Beautiful, very hard wood, slightly reddish, very well-veined; reminiscent of the thuja. Quite hard to work. Unlimited life. Plentiful.
Mai-pan-sat		20 to 35	.8	Very fine planks and columns.	No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Very hard wood, difficult to work.
Mai-khen-kin	Cai-sao-da (Annamite) Hopea (?)	30	.4	Very fine columns and traverse beams.	No	Thick Forest	Lower Laos	Very beautiful, very hard wood, highly resistant, yellowish in color, very heavy. Life would be unlimited. Plentiful.
Mai-ed	Dom-khnor-prey (Cambodian) Nauclea orientalis (?) Jack-tree	10	.4	Columns, furniture and boxes. The bark is used for dyeing bonzes' clothing yellow.	No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Very pretty light wood, yellowish in color. Quite easy to work. Floats when dry. Noted especially for its fruit.
Mai-bok-khai			.9 to 1	Not used by the Laotians, the grain being too hard for their tools. Ought to make fine boards.		Forest glades	Lower Laos	Hardwood, whitish-yellow in color. Very well-grown. Plentiful.

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137
824
322

Mai-kha-nieung	Cai-trac (Annamite) Dom-cranhung (Cambodian) Dalbergia (?)	15 to 20	.5 to .6	Used for cart axles and in the wheelwright's trade. Would be a good wood for cabinet work.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Very hard wood, dark red veined with black, like the Brasilian rosewood. Unlimited life. Rather scarce. Respected by the Laotians because almost impossible to work with their tools.
Mai-pousi-lai	Cai-bang-leng (Annamite) Lagerstroemia (?)	30 to 40	1.5	Interior woodwork, furniture.	No	Low mountains, valleys	Upper Laos	Beautiful hardwood, gray with wavy veins like the maple. Medium in color between the ash and the beech. Difficult to work, gives a striking effect under varnish.
Mai-kan-luong		17 to 18	.6	Furniture and framing. Very good for woodworking.	No	Beside water	Upper Laos	Hardwood, yellow, good grain, easy to work.
Mai-som		16 to 17	.3 to .4	Furniture and framing.	No	Beside water	Upper Laos	White wood, straight grain, easy to work, quite plentiful.
[116-117] Mai-kha		24 to 25	.4 to .5	Furniture, framing, posts.	No	Large forests	Upper Laos	Hardwood, red heartwood; difficult to work; plentiful.
Mai-ka-bok	Dom-kaka (?) (Cambodian) Sindora sumatrana (?)	18 to 19	.3 to .4	Used for turned pieces and long-lasting items.	No	Same	Upper Laos	Hardwood, brown with reddish reflections, fairly easy to work; very beautiful when polished.

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137
824
322

Mai-sak	Dom-mayeac (?) (Cambodian) Tectona grandis Teak	30 to 40	.8 to 1.2	Framing, woodworking, cabinet work, boatbuilding.	No	Mountainsides and valleys	Upper Laos	Easy to work, reddish beautiful close grain, very well-grown, rot-proof, floating. Edible fruit; sometimes replaces the betel nut in the betel masticatory.
Mai-khao-khwai				Excellent posts	No	Hillsides and valleys. Thick forests.	Upper Laos	Hardwood, fine grain, unlimited life.
Mai-tchouang or Mai-kiouneng				Cabinet work.	No	Hillsides and valleys	Upper Laos	Wood which has the perfume of sandalwood. Used to make statues of Buddha.
Mai-dou-deng	Service tree (?)	30 to 35	1.5 to 1.8	Posts, pirogues, tools.	No	Mountainsides and valleys. Thick forest	Upper Laos	Excellent hardwood, with the look and qualities of the service tree, that is to say reddish brown with fine grain. Very well-grown, plentiful, fairly easy to work. Unlimited life.
Mai-sakhan		20 to 25	.5	Posts, framing, boards.	No	Low slopes and valleys	Upper Laos	Good red wood, straight grain, quite scarce, easy to work.

[table continued over]

137
824
322

Mai-fene		25 to 30	1.2	Posts	No	Valleys	Upper Laos	Good wood, fairly difficult to work, much sought-after, rather scarce, long life.
Mai-kha-bioung		18 to 20	.25 to .35	Posts, framing.	No	Large Forests	Upper Laos	Hardwood, white, quite difficult to work, quite plentiful.
				C. MISCELLANEOUS TREES				
Mai-khan-hok		30 to 35		Boards, traverse beams, laths.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Hardwood, white with black heartwood, plentiful on the plateau of the Bolovens; edible fruit.
Mai-khen	Cai-sao (Annamite) Dom-kaki (Cambodian) Hopea spuria (?)	.3 to .4	1 to 1.5	Used mainly in the construction of pirogues.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Semi-hard wood, with beautiful fibers of a yellow color, very well-grown. Water-resistant. Lasts 12 to 15 years.
Mai-hang	Cai-sen (Annamite) Vatica (?)			Columns and mediocre traverse beams.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Greatly resembles the Mai-khen-hin, but is neither as resistant nor as highly esteemed; unlimited life.
[118-119] Mai-tab-tao		10	.4 to .6	Mediocre traverse beams, very little used in building.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Soft wood, yellowish in color, quite well-grown, little used, quite light; plentiful.

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149; Reinach--417 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

137
824
322

Mai-tiou		12	.5 to .6	Same as above.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Very soft wood, white, slightly grayish, of inferior quality, cannot withstand rain; fine grain; well-grown tree. Lasts about 7 years.
Mai-koung		15	.6 to .8	Boards and traverse beams. The dried leaves are used to make pirogue roofs and partitions for Laotian houses.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Fairly hard wood, slightly reddish, well-grown; plentiful.
Mai-kha-thang		25 to 30	.25 to .3	Beams	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Hardwood, slightly yellowish, plentiful, quite well-grown.
Mai-tong		35	.5	Coffin planks.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Softwood, white, acid fruit; plentiful.
Mai-keng-seng		15	.6	Planks, studs for partition walls and doors.	Yes	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Softwood, heartwood dark red; plentiful in the valleys.
Mai-man-pa		15	.25	House columns.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Hard and resistant wood, grayish-yellow, fairly easy to work; plentiful, unlimited life.
Mai-hat	Cai-xnai (Annamite)	25	.4	Wooden bells, mediocre traverse beams and columns; little used in building.	No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Rather unresistant, yellowish-white wood; plentiful, unlimited life.

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137
824
322

[26]

Mai-mok		.2 to .25			Forest glades	Lower Laos	Slightly yellowish wood, light, with fine grain; dwarf tree, bears large yellow flowers which are very odoriferous.
Mai-seng-kham		.5 to .6	Bark used by the Laotians for chewing with betel.		Forest glades	Upper Laos Lower Laos	Yellowish wood with quite fine grain; well-grown tree; not very plentiful.
Mai-si		.3 to .4			Forest glades	Lower Laos	Slightly grayish wood, quite close-fibered; well-grown tree; not very plentiful.
Mai-lieng		.6 to .7	Used only for making plowshares.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Hard, knotty, red, rather dark wood; difficult to work with an ax, does not grow straight; not very plentiful; unlimited life.
Mai-scuek		.6 to .7		No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Very hard wood, very dark reddish-gray in color, well-veined, difficult to work; very well-grown tree.
[120-121]							
Mai-lam-sing		1 to 1.2		No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Hardwood, dark red, close-grained, difficult to work; well-grown tree; quite plentiful.

[table continued over]

137
884
302

Mai-seng	Dom-khleng-cong (Cambodian) Strychnos nux-vomica		.5 to .6	Its wood, roots and leaves, with the exception of the pulp of its fruit, are used as a remedy against fever and snake bite.	No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Very hard wood, slightly whitish, difficult to work; well-grown tree, its seed is the nux vomica; not very plentiful.
Mai-som-hong		20 to 25	.9 to 1		No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Slightly grayish wood, difficult to work, cannot withstand rain; well-grown tree; not very plentiful.
Mai-lek	Vap (Annamite) Mesua ferrea (?)	20 to 25	.6 to .9	Railway ties. Piles for wharfs.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Ironwood, very hard, mahogany in color.
Mai-thom-da		20 to 25	.6 to .8		No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Very tall tree with blond heartwood. It is sought-after by the bonzes, who use it to make steeples.
Mai-khao		18 to 20	.5 to .6	Boards, framing.	Yes	Thick forest	Lower Laos	White wood of inferior quality; lasts about five years.
Mai-niou	Oai-gon (Annamite) Dom-cor (Cambodian) Bombax and Calotropis Mock cotton	15 to 20	.6 to .8	Not used as wood.	Yes	Banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Quite unresistant wood. The tree yields cotton of excellent quality. It grows rapidly, and is very common.

[table continued over]

Mai-pedoung		20 to 25	.8 to 1	Paneling.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Beautiful wood, purplish-red heartwood, blackens upon exposure to air.
Mai-ka-ssn		25	1	Building wood.	No		Lower Laos	Hard and resistant wood, resembles the Mai-tabeng; plentiful; unlimited life.
Mai-bi-smi		18 to 20	.6 to .8	Framing.	Yes		Lower Laos	Wood of inferior quality, hard but not very resistant, red in color; lasts from 6 to 10 years.
Mai-khai-so		18 to 20	.6 to .8	Framing.	Yes		Lower Laos	Wood of inferior quality, hard but not very resistant, red in color; lasts for seven years.
Mai-ngs-loi		15 to 18	.5 to .6	Interior woodwork.	Yes		Lower Laos	White wood, of inferior quality; lasts for 5 to 6 years.
Mai-sisiet	Catechu Acacia catechu	30	1.3	The bark alone, which forms catechu, is used for chewing with betel.	Yes	Valleys and low slopes	Upper Laos	The wood is good only for burning.
[122-123] Mai-kok-sa		8	.25 to .35	The bark alone is used in making a very resistant paper.	Yes	Valleys	Upper Laos	
Mai-so		30	1.5	Framing and mediocre woodwork.	No	Low mountains and valleys	Upper Laos	Hard wood, fairly good, very light; not very plentiful.

[table continued over]

137
824
322

Mai-hiene		30	.8	Framing, posts, mediocre woodwork.	Only after ten years	Low slopes and valleys	Upper Laos	Good wood, straight grain; not very plentiful; very straight tree.
Mai-ka-kalang		25 to 30	.5 to .6	Posts and framing.	Yes	Low slopes and valleys	Upper Laos	Soft, reddish wood, easy to work; plentiful.
Mai-sa-ke		14 to 15	25 to 30	Used to make charcoal. Also used for short-lived projects.	Yes	Low slopes and valleys	Upper Laos	Softwood, white, good grain; plentiful.
Mai-li				Posts and columns			Upper Laos	Very hard wood, difficult to work.

326 bracelets, necklaces, rings, long neck chains and chignon chains,
306 hairpins, buckles, buttons, earrings, etc., either of gold or of silver.

The purity of the metals used in this work varies widely, and is usually left to the choice of the person who commissions the work. In some cases gold is left free of any alloy, while often a fourth part of silver is used and sometimes even more.

Silver taken from coins is left as pure as it was originally, or else its purity is decreased by alloying it with copper and tin.

The precious stones used in jewelry include sapphires, rubies, quartz, crystal, onyx, glass and even basalts. Cutting facets on gems is unknown in Laos, and only cabochon cutting, which may be more or less regular, is practiced.

326 Ironmongery. The blacksmiths of Laos are quite skillful. Their extremely scant equipment includes a double-action bellows, one or two pairs of tongs, two or three hammers, a hot set and a small anvil. They use only wood charcoal.

By taking plenty of time they are nevertheless able, using bars of soft iron imported from Europe, deadheads, and "Duongs" which come from the high primitive furnaces [457] of the Koui region, to forge various tools and utensils such as machetes, swords, knives, scissors, spades, bits, elephant halters, carnac hooks, etc.

Each blacksmith has his own specialty. With the help of routinism and by virtue of constant repetition of the same forms, these artisans manage to acquire a real skill and to utilize every last scrap of iron. It should also be noted that iron is very expensive. It costs from 30 to 70 francs per hundred kilograms in Laos, and sometimes as much as 90 or even 110 francs.

A certain number of articles, such as plowshares, spade irons, axes, etc. are imported from China and Siam.

323 Pottery. The pottery industry is very active, and in spite
415 of the many imported pots made of wrought, enamel or cast iron or copper, the industry still makes a large number of pots and vases of every size and shape which are destined for various uses.

The potters of Laos produce glazed jars which serve as receptacles for alcohol and water, water coolers, flower vases, drinking mugs, oil lamps, cuspidors, smooth and rough mortars, tiles, brick, drains, ornamental modillions, etc. The products of this industry are mainly
[439] destined for local consumption. Some of them, however, also find markets in nearby countries.

323 The potters' methods and equipment do not differ from those which are in widespread use everywhere.

The method of firing depends on the nature of the article, and firing may be done either in kilns dug out of the clay soil, in the banks of watercourses, or under stacks of rice straw. Wood or rice straw is used to fire the kilns.

In some regions articles are given a shiny black patina resembling graphite by firing them for a second time in paddy husks.

326 778 411 415 Brass-founding. One has only to explore the pagodas of Laos in order to realize that brass-founding used to be held in honor. Religious statues can be found which are sometimes of great [458] weight and usually of quite fine workmanship and taste, taking into account, to be sure, the quite special manner in which they conceive esthetics.

Although the crucibles have not been fired for many long years for casting such large pieces, the industry of brass-founding continues to be exercised by a certain number of specialists who are content with producing religious statuettes, necessities for betel, bells for elephants and livestock, various kinds of vases, cuspidors, etc.

This industry is an extremely ancient one in the land. It was certainly practiced during the Bronze Age, as is attested by the spearheads, daggers, hatchets and halberds which have been found in northern Laos and which can now be seen in the Saint-Germain museum.

[821 172] It is interesting to note that the inhabitants of Laos attribute a meteoric origin to objects of the Bronze Age, as also to those of the Age of Polished Stone. They believe that these objects fall from the sky when it thunders, and that they are produced by lightning.

The following are some of the methods used by Laotian founders. Casting is always done by the lost wax process.

325 532 Casting statues. On an initial rough clay model, the artist applies a layer of fine, soft and well-pugged clay which he shapes in a more careful manner. Then after covering the statue, which is already much more than a rough draft, with a layer of beeswax of the proper thickness, he finishes modeling the statue on the wax, inserting all the details and all the ornaments which it is to include. Polishing a bit here, engraving there, setting precious stones or simply glass between the eyelids to represent eyes, and inserting gold lips where the mouth is to be located, he gives the

532
325 model the appearance which it will have when cast.
[323] On this wax surface a very thin layer is first overlaid of clay which is finely pugged, well diluted with water and quite similar in appearance and consistency to the kaolin from which utensils of thin porcelain are molded. When this [459] [Illustration] [460] [Blank page] [461] first layer is dry, a second is applied which is made up of coarser clay, then a third which is still thicker. Finally, when the whole is no more than a mass which has the vague shape of the original model, a good thickness of fire clay which has been kneaded together with chopped straw, buffalo dung and paddy husks is applied by hand. The mold is then ready for pouring as soon as the outer layer dries.

At certain carefully chosen points in the less conspicuous parts of the model, wax plugs have been inserted at the correct angle through the different layers of clay so that they come out to the surface. Some of these will be vent holes to give passage to the vapors which will be emitted when the statue is cast, and the others are the spouts through which the molten metal will be poured from the crucibles.

The mold has been prepared in an excavation in the ground which is as deep as the statue is tall. When everything is ready, the excavation is filled with dry sand which is well tamped down. Finally the crucibles are arranged all around the mold, in greater or less numbers depending on the size of the object to be cast. Each of these has a bellows and sometimes two so as to be prepared for accidents, to hasten melting and to obtain perfect equality of fluidity and heat in the metal in all the crucibles.

When the time comes the metal is poured into all the spouts at once, and if the mold does not burst because of excess humidity, the bronze soon replaces the wax inside the walls of the mold. It is allowed to cool, then the mold is removed. If the operation is successful the statue then appears, smooth and pure and perfectly identical with the wax model. Only the junction points of the spouts and vent holes need any retouching, but the main parts usually come out admirably well.

325 415 Casting various utensils. Small utensils are cast in just the same way, except that the crucible containing the molten metal is connected to the mold and packed in a common covering--a mixture of buffalo dung, chopped straw and paddy husks. Between the mold and the crucible two small lateral openings have been carefully made, the purpose of which is both to allow vapors to escape and to permit judging the degree of fusion of the metal.

25: Brodrick--109-110 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 325, 532

"Some of the Vientiane and the Luang-Prabang temples still contain a number of bronzes, mostly of the Buddha, seated, upright or reclining. These figures, which have only just begun to appear in the European market, are already rather keenly sought after and soon may become quite rare. The Laotian bronzes show a high degree of stylization. The long fingers are as supple as tendrils, while the feet are harsh and squared as though hacked out with a hatchet. The chest is taut and rounded, the waist exceedingly [110]slender. The heads and faces are of the same style as those of the stone or lacquer images we saw at Luang-Prabang. Under the curved nose, the thick lips are pursed up into a rather disdainful pout, which in some statues takes on what must be called a leer. From the topknot flares up a burst of flames conventionalized so as to resemble a budding daffodil--all rather super-realist.(1)

1. The ancient Laotians seem to have been skilled in the difficult art of large-scale bronze-casting. From what remains of the Buddha in the Vat Manorom at Luang-Prabang, the original image must have stood over eighteen feet without its pedestal. Often the Laotian Buddhas have a date engraved upon them but it is only a cyclic era date so that no absolute chronology can be established."

323 The potters' methods and equipment do not differ from those which are in widespread use everywhere.

The method of firing depends on the nature of the article, and firing may be done either in kilns dug out of the clay soil, in the banks of watercourses, or under stacks of rice straw. Wood or rice straw is used to fire the kilns.

In some regions articles are given a shiny black patina resembling graphite by firing them for a second time in paddy husks.

326 778 411 415 Brass-founding. One has only to explore the pagodas of Laos in order to realise that brass-founding used to be held in honor. Religious statues can be found which are sometimes of great [458] weight and usually of quite fine workmanship and taste, taking into account, to be sure, the quite special manner in which they conceive esthetics.

Although the crucibles have not been fired for many long years for casting such large pieces, the industry of brass-founding continues to be exercised by a certain number of specialists who are content with producing religious statuettes, necessities for betel, bells for elephants and livestock, various kinds of vases, cuspidors, etc.

This industry is an extremely ancient one in the land. It was certainly practiced during the Bronze Age, as is attested by the spearheads, daggers, hatchets and halberds which have been found in northern Laos and which can now be seen in the Saint-Germain museum.

[821 172] It is interesting to note that the inhabitants of Laos attribute a meteoric origin to objects of the Bronze Age, as also to those of the Age of Polished Stone. They believe that these objects fall from the sky when it thunders, and that they are produced by lightning.

The following are some of the methods used by Laotian founders. Casting is always done by the lost wax process.

• 325 532 Casting statues. On an initial rough clay model, the artist applies a layer of fine, soft and well-pugged clay which he shapes in a more careful manner. Then after covering the statue, which is already much more than a rough draft, with a layer of beeswax of the proper thickness, he finishes modeling the statue on the wax, inserting all the details and all the ornaments which it is to include. Polishing a bit here, engraving there, setting precious stones or simply glass between the eyelids to represent eyes, and inserting gold lips where the mouth is to be located, he gives the

532
325 model the appearance which it will have when cast.
[323] On this wax surface a very thin layer is first overlaid of clay which is finely pugged, well diluted with water and quite similar in appearance and consistency to the kaolin from which utensils of thin porcelain are molded. When this [459] [Illustration] [460] [Blank page] [461] first layer is dry, a second is applied which is made up of coarser clay, then a third which is still thicker. Finally, when the whole is no more than a mass which has the vague shape of the original model, a good thickness of fire clay which has been kneaded together with chopped straw, buffalo dung and paddy husks is applied by hand. The mold is then ready for pouring as soon as the outer layer dries.

At certain carefully chosen points in the less conspicuous parts of the model, wax plugs have been inserted at the correct angle through the different layers of clay so that they come out to the surface. Some of these will be vent holes to give passage to the vapors which will be emitted when the statue is cast, and the others are the spouts through which the molten metal will be poured from the crucibles.

The mold has been prepared in an excavation in the ground which is as deep as the statue is tall. When everything is ready, the excavation is filled with dry sand which is well tamped down. Finally the crucibles are arranged all around the mold, in greater or less numbers depending on the size of the object to be cast. Each of these has a bellows and sometimes two so as to be prepared for accidents, to hasten melting and to obtain perfect equality of fluidity and heat in the metal in all the crucibles.

When the time comes the metal is poured into all the spouts at once, and if the mold does not burst because of excess humidity, the bronze soon replaces the wax inside the walls of the mold. It is allowed to cool, then the mold is removed. If the operation is successful the statue then appears, smooth and pure and perfectly identical with the wax model. Only the junction points of the spouts and vent holes need any retouching, but the main parts usually come out admirably well.

325 415 Casting various utensils. Small utensils are cast in just the same way, except that the crucible containing the molten metal is connected to the mold and packed in a common covering--a mixture of buffalo dung, chopped straw and paddy husks. Between the mold and the crucible two small lateral openings have been carefully made, the purpose of which is both to allow vapors to escape and to permit judging the degree of fusion of the metal.

325
415

When thus prepared the mold and the crucible, which form a single block, are placed on the furnace with the crucible undermost, amidst the charcoal which is given a forced draft with an alternating bellows. What happens then cannot be imagined. The wax melts with the first heat and falls into the crucible, leaving a void between the two walls of the mold which the metal will fill. As soon as the latter is ready, as can be seen by the color of the flames which come out through the lateral openings, the founder seizes the block with a pair of tongs and turns it upside down suddenly so as to pour the contents of the crucible automatically into the cavity of the mold. After the metal has cooled the clay envelope is broken like an egg shell, and the object appears with the shape and relief or chased ornaments which the wax model possessed.

The founders use various alloys, depending on whether the objects which they are making are statues, common utensils or bells. Some are made of brass, zinc and tin, others of red copper, silver and bronze from old gongs, etc. Sometimes, when the statue is a religious one, the faithful are impelled by their ardor to throw gold and silver jewelry and coins into the crucible.

[778]

The principal pieces of equipment of the founder are the bellows, crucibles, tongs, a series of sculptor's boasters, an alternating turn-bench, graving tools, scrapers, hammers, etc.

285

Basketry. The inhabitants of Laos, especially the Khas, are past masters in the art of basketry, and the objects which come from their hands have a finish, a delicacy, a seal of elegance and a purity of form which are surprising at first sight.

Rattan, certain kinds of bark and thin skins and strips of bamboo are the materials used in basketry.

The main articles produced by this industry include floor mats, bed mats, calibrated baskets for measuring grain, buckets for drawing water, large baskets, baskets for holding cooked rice, platter covers, trays with feet, boxes for betel necessities, baskets to carry on the back, bird cages, hats, etc.

[463] Most basketwork articles are delivered unfinished, although some are smoked or else lacquered black or red. Except for a few articles which find a market outside of the region of manufacture, but always within the limits of Laos, it may be said that the basketwork industry is an entirely local one.

The Khas, moreover, do not have a monopoly in this industry, and all the inhabitants of Laos are basket makers to a greater or less degree.

10: d'Orleans--338 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 326, 402, 644

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "There are several artisans in this quarter, and we were taken to see a goldsmith, the bellows of whose forge consisted of the trunk of a hollow tree with a piston inside, and he tells us that he had left the king's service because he was so irregularly paid."

"The wooden panels which formed the walls, the corbels, and 341
the beams were all carved with great delicacy. This pagoda was 346
as pretty in the fineness of its details as it was elegant in its gen- 172
eral lines.

"But nothing is left of it" (1).

1. Cf. G. Maspero, L'Indochine /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine, Paris, 1929-1930/, p. 186.

Sculpture. For these sanctuaries, the Laotians made hordes of 532
statues out of stone, brick, and especially bronze, which were 175*
wholly or partly covered with gold. Of the latter, which were al-
ways molded from wax models, some attained gigantic size. /127/
All of them strike the various attitudes of the Buddhist liturgy. The
bodies are sketchily draped and may be seated, standing, walking
or lying down, their arms outspread. The faces are surmounted by
a sort of tiara and are frozen in a hieratic smile which is not very
expressive and seldom varies.

Painting. As for the fresco paintings which brighten the walls
of certain pagodas, they are not of any special interest. Most of /177/
them were "primarily the work of Burmese, Cambodians or Chinese
of whom the native artists (were only) the pupils" (1).

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The art of the gold and silver smith. On the other hand, the 326
Laotian jewelers and silversmiths knew and still know, with only
the most meager of tools, how to work gold and silver admirably--
primarily silver--and how to chase and engrave it. Their motifs
show an attractive decorative invention, and it is chiefly in this
"minor art" which borders on small-scale industry that we find the
most original manifestations of old-time Laotian life /128/ --
betel services, vases, cups, sword and dagger hilts; bracelets,
necklaces, rings, headpins, earrings, etc.

Basketwork and weaving. Finally, "like all the peoples of the 285
Far East, the Laotians are skilled in all kinds of basketwork. A 531
very pretty object which seems to be peculiar to this land is the
small basket for women in which the basketwork is covered with

13. Sources of Sulphur

316 Sources of sulphur have been noted in the provinces of Cammon, Saravane and Darlac.

As a supplement to this list, the reader is referred to Appendix XXI, in which several goldbearing deposits are noted which have been prospected, but for which concessions have not yet been granted and which are not being worked by any European enterprise. We shall now continue with a consideration of the conditions under which various other deposits, such as iron and salt, occur.

Iron. The various iron deposits which exist in Laos are alluvial deposits caused by the erosion of rocks under the action of rain water and water courses. They occur sometimes in hills from two to three hundred meters high, and sometimes in hillocks of a lesser height which do not exceed fifty or sixty meters.

The ore is found scattered throughout the mass of reddish clay alluvia, in flint nodules and isolated blocks of small dimensions. The richest ores are formed of irregular masses of a reddish cellular rock somewhat similar to millstone rock, but softer.

The ore is extracted in furnaces provided with alternating blowers. These are first loaded with a layer of crushed and washed ore, then a layer of charcoal, and the layers are thus repeated several times. When the process has been completed a bloom of spongy iron is left at the bottom of the furnace, and this iron is reheated and puddled. When [326] the molten mass is sufficiently homogeneous, blacksmiths take it and transform it into farming implements--axes, machetes, etc.--all of which are sold locally.

[439] Production from the iron deposits in Laos is not sufficient for the needs of local consumption, since [319] [Illustration] [320] [Blank page] [321] iron is imported from Europe in small bars and sold for from 1 franc 30 centimes to 1 franc 50 centimes per kilogram.

It is unlikely that the country's iron deposits, at least those which have so far been discovered, will ever justify exploitation by European methods, because of their insufficient size.

317 Salt. The same is true in the case of salt, and the country's production is insufficient for local consumption.

The salt mines or, to use the proper term, saltbearing deposits are of three different kinds:

326
306 Gold and silver smiths and jewelry-making. In nearly all the large centers there are gold and silver smiths who are also jewelry-makers. They work either on their own behalf manufacturing articles which they then sell, or else on order for individuals who wish to transform silver coins which they have saved over the years, or native gold which they have obtained by gold-washing or purchase, into gold and silver articles or jewelry.

The Laotian silversmiths and jewelers use very few tools. A bellows, a crucible, a few pairs of tongs, some drawplates, caulking chisels, graving tools and hammers are all they need to cast, forge, braze, draw, laminate, chase, and checker gold and silver.

The different phases of the work include casting the metal either with or without alloy (1), laminating it with a hammer and drawing

(1) The alloys are tin and copper for silver, and always silver for gold.

it partly with a hammer and partly with a drawplate, embossing it, chasing it, checkering it, brazing on filigree or globular ornaments, and giving a patina to and burnishing the finished product.

The patina is obtained on silver by dipping it in lemon juice and tempering it while hot in a strong alum solution.

Gold jewelry is usually covered with a reddish patina which has a very warm color. This is obtained by tempering it in boiling water containing, by weight:

2 parts of saltpeter.
3 parts of salt.
1 part of alum.
Sufficient quantities of sulphur.

[531] [456] All the artists work from uniform models. The decorative motifs are taken from Brahminic tradition, with a few modifications arising out of the introduction of certain elements which are derived from Chinese art.

Yet the Laotians are capable of producing work which is not based on their usual models. Thus a great many jeweler-goldsmiths can reproduce designs which are different in shape, appearance and style from the common types which are handed down from father to son or from master to pupil.

The usual gold and silver articles include betel services, vases, cups, boxes, knife handles and sword hilts. Generally these objects are made of silver, but sometimes also of gold. The jewelry includes

326 bracelets, necklaces, rings, long neck chains and chignon chains,
306 hairpins, buckles, buttons, earrings, etc., either of gold or of silver.

The purity of the metals used in this work varies widely, and is usually left to the choice of the person who commissions the work. In some cases gold is left free of any alloy, while often a fourth part of silver is used and sometimes even more.

Silver taken from coins is left as pure as it was originally, or else its purity is decreased by alloying it with copper and tin.

The precious stones used in jewelry include sapphires, rubies, quartz, crystal, onyx, glass and even basalts. Cutting facets on gems is unknown in Laos, and only cabochon cutting, which may be more or less regular, is practiced.

326 Ironmongery. The blacksmiths of Laos are quite skillful. Their extremely scant equipment includes a double-action bellows, one or two pairs of tongs, two or three hammers, a hot set and a small anvil. They use only wood charcoal.

By taking plenty of time they are nevertheless able, using bars of soft iron imported from Europe, deadheads, and "Duongs" which come from the high primitive furnaces [457] of the Koui region, to forge various tools and utensils such as machetes, swords, knives, scissors, spades, bits, elephant halters, carnac hooks, etc.

Each blacksmith has his own specialty. With the help of routinism and by virtue of constant repetition of the same forms, these artisans manage to acquire a real skill and to utilize every last scrap of iron. It should also be noted that iron is very expensive. It costs from 30 to 70 francs per hundred kilograms in Laos, and sometimes as much as 90 or even 110 francs.

A certain number of articles, such as plowshares, spade irons, axes, etc. are imported from China and Siam.

323 Pottery. The pottery industry is very active, and in spite
415 of the many imported pots made of wrought, enamel or cast iron or copper, the industry still makes a large number of pots and vases of every size and shape which are destined for various uses.

The potters of Laos produce glazed jars which serve as receptacles for alcohol and water, water coolers, flower vases, drinking mugs, oil lamps, cuspidors, smooth and rough mortars, tiles, brick, drains, ornamental modillions, etc. The products of this industry are mainly [439] destined for local consumption. Some of them, however, also find markets in nearby countries.

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10: d'Orleans--321 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 328, 438

"The industries special to the country are represented by silver work, cups for the temples, tobacco jars, apparatus for crushing the betel nut, and knife handles. These articles are made of gold for personages of very high standing, but only to order."

7: Thompson--374 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 306, 341, 532

"The seventeenth century was an era of peace that permitted the Laotian arts to flourish. The insouciance, which is a Laotian characteristic, explains the fragility of their innumerable monuments. In the South, Khmer influence predominates; in the North, Burmese. Under this double aegis temples, libraries, and reliquaries have been built by the Laotians without originality but always with grace and elegance. The pitiless tropical vegetation has strangled almost all of them: even the Vat Prakeo, which the French have tried to save, seems doomed to destruction. The wood sculpture is of gigantic proportions and fashioned in the expressionless attitude of the Buddhist liturgy. The painting, which consists of frescoes in the pagodas, was the work of foreign artists of whom the Laotians were only the pupils. It is in jewellery and the working of precious metals that the Laotians have shown their most inventive artistry. Like all Far Eastern peoples they are very clever at basketry and weaving."

The roof, the greater part of which still existed when Pavie 175*
went to Vientiane, has since collapsed and the two colossal statues 172
of Buddha which sit on the abandoned altar remain exposed to the 346
elements. Even as it is this grandiose ruin is wonderfully allied to 532
the natural vegetation which holds it in its grasp and one cannot, without some emotion, evoke before it the past splendor of the kingdom of Lan-Xang.

But the capital accomplishment of Setthitharath is the That-Luong, located about two kilometers away from the city. It is /341/ doubtless also the masterpiece of this Laotian architecture which has no powers of endurance but which cannot be denied grace and elegance. Miraculously spared by the Siamese at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the That-Luong was overthrown in 1873 by the Yunnanese pirates and partly restored, in rather a clumsy manner, in 1897-1898.

This pyramidal edifice, called the "plume of the world" by its founder, was the "reliquary of the kingdom" and is still a highly frequented center of pilgrimage. A stele commemorating its erection bears /85/ the date 1566, and according to legend the original that was built about the eleventh century on one of Buddha's hairs.

The first enclosure, which has today crumbled away, is almost confused with the large group of ruined temples which surrounds it. It was formed by an open cloister which was colored with frescoes and in which the faithful and the priests assembled. The second enclosure is formed by a ledge along which runs a garland of bulging ornaments. "One would be tempted to call them the petals of a gigantic lotus bloom on the point of opening. Heavy pedestals covered with inscriptions support thirty-four slender pinnacles. Leaning on these pedestals as on buttresses, the mass on which the pyramid is set begins to deploy its curves and the pyramid itself springs from a sheaf of broad leaves, like the stem of a plant. . . . It once sparkled with gold applied on a lead base, shreds of which can still be seen" (1).

1. De Carne, ibid. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois. Paris, 1872./, quoted by Aymonier, Voyage dans le Laos. See below, Laotian Architecture, p. 124.

First Burmese invasion (1563-1565). Solidly entrenched in his 643*
new capital, Setthathirath waited to see what the turn of events 648*
would be. /86/ He did not have long to wait, for Bureng-Naung 726
175*

545 and a barb of satire are mingled with the ancient traditions."
/177/ (L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 191.)

341 The other arts: architecture. Carefree artists: this is what the
346 Laotians seem to have been throughout the ages. And this is what
172 explains the extreme fragility of the innumerable monuments with which they adorned their land and which the pitiless tropical vegetation is today strangling for the most part. Under the Kmer influence
/177/ in the south and the Burmese in /125/ the north they built temples, chapels, pagoda-libraries, and reliquaries in the shape of "lotus blossoms" or pyramids or cones which were without any originality of their own but almost always charming in the grace, prettiness and elegance of their details. The reigning princes, from Fa-Ngoun to Souligna, were all great builders of temples, but if we except three or four edifices in Luang-Prabang, a few pagodas and chapels, the That-Luong in Vientiane and the Vat Sisaket which is only a century old, practically nothing is left of this abundant flowering (1).

1. There can be no question here of the important monastery of Vat-Phou (Bassac), which is really Kmer and belongs in some way to the Angkor group.

Everywhere in Laos one encounters impressive ruins of brick pagodas which were clumsily built but in which the plaster which covered them still frames the openings with many-colored ornaments and exquisite arabesques. For several years the French have tried, albeit somewhat tardily, to save the chief of these mutilated vestiges of an Edenic past from total destruction. Even the Vat Prakeo itself is today, alas! irrevocably destined to final disintegration.

"More fragile still (was) the style of building /126/ in wood which may well have yielded the most beautiful of the country's achievements. One of the most interesting of these exists today only in the memory which was recorded by a drawing of Delaporte at the time of the expedition of Doudart de Lagree... This was a pagoda located in the vicinity of Luang-Prabang... its form was highly individual, and reminds one of a feeding trough or a bread-pan. Delaporte compares it to an Oriental tomb. Rectangular in shape, its walls flared out up to the first roof. The latter was surmounted by a second recessed story which flared out again to support a second richly ornamented roof..."

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the beams were all carved with great delicacy. This pagoda was 346
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149: Reinach--175 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai 341

Building materials, interior arrangement and furniture in Thai houses do not differ in any significant way from what we have described in connection with the Laotians.

Births. Like the Laotian women, Thai women generally give birth to children with the greatest ease, and the ceremonies accompanying births are identical. 844

Marriages. Betrothals generally take place among the Thais after the farming work is over, in December or January, during the cold season. Sheds are built in the villages. Fires are laid there and the marriageable girls install themselves there with a spinning wheel, reel or cotton gin to keep them busy and prevent them from losing countenance. The young men come and join them and exchange declarations, compliments, betel quids and cigarettes with them. There it is that promises of marriage are made, which are followed by a request to the girl's parents when she gives her lover permission to do so. 584

A few days later, during a banquet which takes place in the girl's house, the engagement is announced and the young [236] people are then free to see one another and come and go together at all hours and in all places.

The marriage is not celebrated until several months after the betrothal unless traces of pregnancy are evident in the engaged girl, in which case the marriage takes place at once.

The ceremony is much simpler than among the Laotians, but it is followed by a series of banquets which succeed one another for several days and at which great quantities of rice brandy and rice beer are consumed. 585

The groom comes to live in his wife's room on his wedding day. He is supposed to stay in the home of his in-laws for eight years (only three years in some regions) and share in their work. 591

Adultery. Divorce. "Cases of adultery are extremely rare. When such an eventuality does occur, the man is condemned to a fine of seven bars of silver (about 260 francs) and the woman to a fine of six bars of the same metal (about 225 francs). Half of these sums is awarded to the judges and the other half to the husband, who may then either take back or repudiate his unfaithful wife. 586 684

"In the latter case, the unfaithful wife generally marries her accomplice.

"Divorce is rarer, but just as easy among the Thais as among 586

149: Reinach--247 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"What makes everything easy and is used for everything is this hollow wood, at once so solid and so light, the incomparable bamboo. In France we see it only in the form of pleasant but useless little articles of furniture. Here bamboo is sufficient to every task. It provides the whole house, frame as well as walls. The inner walls and floors are made of matted bamboo lathwork. Yet such a house, with its furniture, bed, tables, various accessories and its luxury objects, if you are a person of refinement, can be improvised for you in a space of two hours wherever you want. 313 341 352

"Has a bridge been washed out? In two hours, thanks to this wood which is easy to manage and to work, men will have made a new bridge. One is especially struck, at the beginning of this life which is so free and, more than any other, independent of men and things, by the great simplicity and ingenuity of all the procedures. Objects are rudimentary but practical, easy to make, soon ready and simple to repair. Everyone knows how to build ordinary furnishings, and no interruptions are caused here as they are when even the slightest damage occurs to one of our highly developed utensils, which only a specialist knows how to repair.

"A bamboo tube is a safe place for your maps and papers. It is a drinking glass, and it is also a pipe for smokers. On a larger scale, it is a bucket for carrying water, and the receptacle for all liquid and solid provisions. When provided with a handle it serves as a pot for the Laotians to cook their rice in, or to prepare syrup from the sugar palm. When torn into thongs it is used as rope and string. Ligatures of sapeks are threaded on kelates, or bamboo filaments, and this is what makes our new Indo-Chinese sou, with its round hole in the middle, so impractical. Those who preside over the striking of our coins are unaware that the kelate is square, a fact which the first comer from the interior could have told them. Baskets of all kinds are made with these same kelates for holding and transporting material. Hats are also made of them to provide shelter from the sun and rain. At night, when the stage of your journey is too long and you have to continue after nightfall even at the risk of meeting a tiger, setting fire to a bamboo branch is enough to frighten any off and to light your way. And not only is bamboo used to make torches, hats, string, dishes, furniture, houses and bridges, but it also serves as animal fodder and even as food for the natives, who eat the tenderest shoots as we would eat asparagus. 313 415 436 285 313 291 [372] [262] [231]

10: d'Orleans--258 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 131, 342, 361, 485

"Although the region called Laos has not, properly speaking, any clearly defined frontiers, we may consider that we have crossed the eastern boundary between Dien Bien and Sop Nao. Here the country changes, and we appear to enter a more civilised world; the houses are still based upon piles, but they are better built than those of the Thaïs, and they are arranged in regular lines on each side of a street; at the entrance an empty hostelry is ready for travellers."

10: d'Orleans--264 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 231, 342, 361

"We find some villages in the afternoon, and I get out at one of them--Sop Kin. It contains about twenty huts--small houses built upon piles like those of the Thaï's, but more elegant, and half hidden amongst clumps of flowering trees, orange groves, palms, cocoanut palms and bananas. The mulberry tree is also cultivated for the purpose of rearing silkworms."

10: d'Orleans--265 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 342, 361

"... We arrive at Muong Ngoï, a rather important centre. The situation is delightful. The houses are built twenty yards above the river; they are made of woven and white-washed bamboos, which produce the effect of walls. They contain two stories, and are built with very sloping roofs; the staircases with balustrades, balconies, and verandahs, are arranged outside. They might be taken for Swiss chalets, with something lighter, more original, and less conventional about them. But the placard in European letters, 'Royal Siamese Post-office,' throws a discordant note into the scene."

10: d'Orleans--265 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 231, 342

"... The houses in the village [LSS: at Muong Ngoi] are built upon piles; in front of them, I notice some round cages containing doves, and these being half enveloped in stuff to protect them from the sun, produce from a distance, the effect of Chinese lanterns."

10: d'Orleans--307-308 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 342, 476

"There would be but a poor opening for labour here, [LSS: at Luang Prabang] as what work has to be done is paid for in kind, one family helping another. Thus, for instance, let us suppose that a certain family wants to build a house. Having gradually got together all the necessary materials, it calls its neighbours together, and the [308] whole work is completed in a single day, the housewarming taking place the same evening, and all who have shared in the work joining in it."

10: d'Orleans--369-370 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 342, 361, 563, 712

"We reach Paklay. The river here is broad with sand-banks on either side and water just covering the top of the rocks. The village is situated on the right bank. The piles which support the houses are hid by a net-work of bamboo, arranged also to shut in the animals. A fairly clean hut is set apart for us, as we are to stay here for a day. The Siamese lieutenant has ordered our elephants, but we cannot have them before to-morrow, so I employ a part of the day in taking photographs. The town, if so it may be [370] called, is not large, having 780 inhabitants, including women and children. The Siamese garrison is made up of eighty men, and is shifted every three years. The lieutenant lives in one half of a rather large house, and the other half is occupied by Chinese merchants."

11: League of Nations--54 [4] G-5 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 342, 352

"The houses in Lao are square with a fairly large veranda serving as a hall, reception room and weaving-room. The interior is divided into two parts by partitions of planking or bamboo; one part is the common room, while the other consists of small rooms for the women.

The veranda is reached by a staircase, and a second staircase leads to a small open-air platform at the other end of the house which serves as a kitchen.

There is no furniture. Mats and quilts are spread on the floor."

23: Franck--269 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 342, 352, 361 Ethnic subgroup

"Though I only suspected it then, I was destined to know Nam-lien [EJ: a 'Black Miao' village in Laos.] better than I know my own birthplace, nay, than Paris or Rio de Janeiro. It consisted of a dozen thatched huts with earth floor and wattled walls on either side of the wide space that served as road, one of them the sala or rest-house for French travelers. Two bare-woven bamboo cots and a rough wooden table comprised the furnishings of this, unless one also counted the soft layer of dust on the earth floor as a rug. A few things such as eggs were purchasable about the village--though I should have been in hard luck indeed if I had not taken official advice and brought a few canned supplies with me--and a native was available to boil water and do the simplest form of cooking."

23: Franck--279 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 231, 342, 793

"I spent the morning in a hot walk about the scattered thatched town, [EJ: Xieng Khuang] climbing to jungle-guarded half-ruined old stupas on the rounded hills behind it. Priests of the yellow robe had again appeared, dawdling about their simple monasteries with the leisureliness of men who know that to step on an insect means to be set back that far on the long and difficult road to Nirvana. Speaking of insects, the people of Tran-ninh boast that they are never troubled by mosquitos, because, all their domestic animals being at home under their pole-legged houses, these pests are so busy down there that they never trouble to rise to human height. The custom of living over unconfined stables is further exonerated by the warmth the animals are reputed to give the householders above--for so thin-blooded a race needs its central heating-plant also, during the short tropical 'winters.' "

23: Franck--286-287 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 342

"The plain facts of the case were that Chao Duong Chan--the 'Chao' meaning prince in the language of this region--[EJ: the native ruler of Luang Prabang] seemed to look upon me, even in the incredibly mud-bespattered state in which I burst forth from the jungle night, as his social superior. At first, evidently, he refused to believe I was I, not because of the bedraggled rags to which the day had reduced what no longer ago than that morning had been a costume fit to be seen at a commissaire's table, but because a telegram had apprised him of my departure, and every one in Laos knew that I could not reach Muongyu that same evening, whatever the evidence of the five senses. But in time the impossible was admitted accomplished, and the rest-house to which I had retired became a place of pilgrimage. We were down in the realm of woven bamboo splints again, and they were used for everything--walls, floors, rafters, granaries, fences, beds--though not for boats, as in Annam. The building to which I had climbed well above the damp and snaky ground was therefore so soft underfoot that there was really no need to open my cot, though nothing in the form of furnishings was to be seen. Gradually a murmur in the night became the sound of muffled voices; torches flashed here and there in the darkness, and at length there crept silently up the very slanting ladder masquerading as a stairway one barefooted smiling Laosian man after another, each bringing me a bouquet of heavy jungle-flowers in a banana-leaf cone, the traditional

greeting to honored visitors to the kingdom, as the flower necklace is in Hawaii. Behind these village [287] authorities, after a fitting lapse of time, came the prince himself, manfully erect, who presented a document from the government of Luang Prabang setting forth his rank and explaining the errand on which he had been sent. He was a slender young man of aristocratic features, this gendre du roi--son-in-law of the king, to translate one of the two languages on the paper he had laid before me--a prince in his own right many generations before he had married one of the royal daughters. He wore a reddish sampot, the adult diaper of Siam, Laos, and Cambodia, and a white jacket of French military cut, starched and spotless, as did also the chief local authority. He spoke excellent French; had in fact, unless my memory fails me, been at school in France, and all in all was a man whom any one might have thanked a king for offering as a companion on such journey as lay before me."

23: Franck--332-333 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 304, 342, 855 Ethnic subgroup

"In most of the [EJ: Kha] huts grandmother and even skinnier grandfather were tending the third generation while the intermediate one was out in the hills in quest of a livelihood. Some of the villages had their basket-like thatched-top huts raised above the ground, like those of the other people of Laos; the commoner custom was to squat on the ground itself in a thatch structure like a flat wigwam. The women, and for that matter the men, were all naked to the waist, a disgusting custom [333] in the case of the old women, whose breasts were as shrunken as if they were about to dry up and drop off. They gave one an unhappy reminder of how brief is the span of human existence. Old men and women alike had holes in their ears large enough to hold a cigar."

23: Franck--341-342 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 342, 361, 515, 779

"The uncrowded, simple, but commodious houses of these Laosian villages are always set well apart and high above the ground, back among palm-trees, banana-plants, and the like. They do not have to crowd together and save all the arable land for rice to feed too numerous mouths, for here a gentle Buddhism takes place of an ancestor-worship so [342] ardent that offspring must be had at any effort and cost. Most families have round or square granaries like huge covered baskets made of wide woven splints and covered by a big thatch roof, all raised off the ground out of reach of rats. The simple houses themselves were of similar materials, a ladder or half a dozen bamboo or pole rungs leading up to the big porch at one end, and close to the floor, a tiny window or two that can be pushed open to one side. Such a village is a thousand per cent more pleasant than a Chinese town, even when there is no public stopping-place except in the same room with slightly supercilious priests who sometimes break sound sleep with their devotions. There is an incredible amount of bathing and great quiet compared to densely packed Chinese existence. Such a village is like a country home in its atmosphere, while those of China resemble tenement-living on the worst of East Sides."

25: Brodrick--101 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 262, 272, 342, 352

"[HD: The Laotian's] bamboo house on stumpy piles costs nothing to make. He has no furniture, no chairs, no tables. He sleeps on a mat. There may be a few bowls in his hut, but most of the meal is served on palm-leaves. His food is simple--rice, salt fish in brine, raw pork chopped up and smothered in a pungent, aromatic sauce, cakes of rice and bananas (and delicious they are), and he eats iguanas, alligator's eggs and red ants.

When he is not swigging lao, or rice-alcohol, he drinks water and uses tea--Laotian tea is poor stuff--as we did until a few generations ago, as medicine."

25: Brodrick--106 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 342, 592

"[HD: In Luang Prabang province] you go out into the shapeless streets of straw huts and tall trees, of a European-style house here and there, of spires and steep roofs, of a brand-new royal palace, of bamboo huts on piles with three compartments, two for the public and one sacred to the family."

68: Mouhot--90-91 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 162, 164, 342, 361

"At Khao-Khoc, [HD: north of Saraburi in Siam]although the second king often visits it, there is no landing-place, nor even steps cut in the steep banks to aid the ascent.

Immediately after landing I set off to look for a lodging, having been informed that I should find numerous vacant houses belonging to mandarins, amongst which I might make my choice. My men and I hunted amid the brushwood, often sinking up to our knees in mud, but could discover only seven or eight Laotian huts, the inhabitants of which form the nucleus of the population of this future stronghold, now peaceful and hospitable agriculturists, who would be deeply afflicted, and still more terrified, if ever their echoes should repeat the roar of cannon and varied sounds of war. As for the royal habitations, I could not reach them, for the whole ground, excepting a strip about fifty feet broad next the river, is a swamp; and the narrow paths are obstructed by bushes and tall grass, which had had time to grow during the six or eight months that have elapsed since the King has visited the place.

Not being able to find a lodging, some men from the village joined us, and we all set to work to cut down bamboos, with which to construct one, which was soon accomplished; and in this hut, open to every wind, we took up our abode.

I was told that a white elephant had just been taken in Laos, and had been sent off to Bangkok under the care of a mandarin. [91]

All the inhabitants of the village, amounting perhaps to about fifty, have brought their children to me, begging for remedies; some for fevers, others for dysentery or

68: Mouhot--90-91 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 162, 164, 342, 361

rheumatism. I have not heard of any cases of leprosy here, as at Khao-Tchioulaü, but the children are repulsively dirty; they are covered with a coating of filth, which makes them resemble little negroes, and the greater number of them are shaking with fever."

115: Le Boulanger--68 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

Frontier agreements with the neighboring kingdoms. In conse- 631
sequence of agreements reached with the princes of the peninsula, 643*
the frontiers of Lan-Xang were permanently fixed from Khone in 175*
the south to Pha-Day in the north, and from Siam in the west to 653
Annam in the east. With this last country, to which Souligna had bound himself by taking one of King Le-duy-Ky's daughters as a concubine, it was agreed that all the people who lived in "houses on piles and with verandas" should be called subjects of the king of /342/ Vientiane, and that those who inhabited houses "without piles or verandas" should belong to Annam.

The stay of the Dutchman Van Wusthof in Vientiane (1641). 175*
In 1641 Vientiane was visited by the Dutch traveler Van 114
Wusthof (2). /105/ The account which he has left of his stay in the

2. A Jesuit, Father Jean-Marie Leria, had visited Vientiane before Van Wusthof and had returned to Annam by way of Hinboun and Vinh. Cf. G. Maspero, op. cit. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./, and P. Martini, Relation de divers voyages curieux, published at Paris in 1666, "chez Sebastien Marbre-Cramoisy, imprimeur du Roy, rue Saint-Jacques, aux Cicognes."

capital of Lan-Xang contains precious information, even though it remains rather vague because of a lack of previous knowledge and of impartial observation (1). Thus Buddhism in Laos, for example,

1. Histoires singulieres qui se sont passees dans les royaumes du Cambodge et au pays du Laos, aux Indes orientales depuis l'annee 1635 jusqu'en l'annee 1664 avec le voyage des Neerlandais du Cambodge, en remontant la riviere de Laos, a Vinejan, la cour de S. M. le roi de Laos et enfin le cruel massacre qui a eu lieu au Cambodge par les Indiens en l'an 1643, published at Haarlem without any author's name and printed in 1669 by "Pieter Casteleyn, imprimeur demeurant au marche, dans la couronne imperiale." Cf. G. Maspero, op. cot. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./

appeared to him as a crude "paganry," and the number of bonzes scandalized him, as did the morals of the gentle and sensual

633 be seen from a great distance. To be sure, it extends over a prodigi-
174 ous area and is so large that one would take it for a city... The king's
344 apartments, which are embellished with a superb and magnificent portico and a large number of beautiful rooms accompanied by a large parlor, are all made of wood which will not decay and ornamented inside and outside with excellent bas-reliefs so delicately gilded that they seem rather to be covered with flakes of gold than gold leaf.

"From that point one enters the courtyards which are extremely spacious, and one first sees a long line of houses built entirely of brick and roofed /113/ with tile in which the second wives usually stay, and outside another row of houses built alongside in the same symmetry for the mandarins' officers. I could write a whole volume if I undertook a minute description of all the other parts of the palace, the riches, the departments, the gardens and a number of other such things...

565 "The houses of the principal lords and of well-to-do persons are
342 very high and beautiful, and are all made of wood with a great deal
352 of artifice and a greater or lesser number of ornaments, depending on the expense to which the individuals are willing to go, but I must confess that the common people and the poor are housed extremely badly
/793/ and that their dwellings are cabins and huts rather than houses. Only the talapoins (bonzes), who are the priests of the idols, have permission to build their monasteries and houses out of brick and stone. Instead of rugs and other such furnishings, persons of quality use small reed mats in which the weave is so delicate and so highly ornamented with figures and various leaf patterns that, to my mind, there is nothing more beautiful nor more pleasing to the eye. They ordinarily use them to cover the walls of /114/ their rooms and houses inside and outside, which they keep very clean and of which they take particular care...

643* "The king is absolute and independent... all the land belongs to
/423/ him, and he disposes as absolute lord of all that his subjects possess...
631 offices, employment, honors and wealth depend absolutely on the
174 king, who raises those persons who please him most to the highest offices in the kingdom.... The principal dignities and offices of the kingdom are eight in number. The first is that of viceroy general... and because the kingdom is divided into seven provinces seven other viceroys are appointed... there are also other governments of less consequence which depend on the former both in respect to civil affairs and to those which concern war.... Each of these provinces has
/701/ its militia, which consists of infantry and cavalry.

149: Reinach--22a G-3 (no date)1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Fig. 9 /p. 30/ Home of the Superior Commandant at Khong, in 1895.

149: Reinach--22b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

342

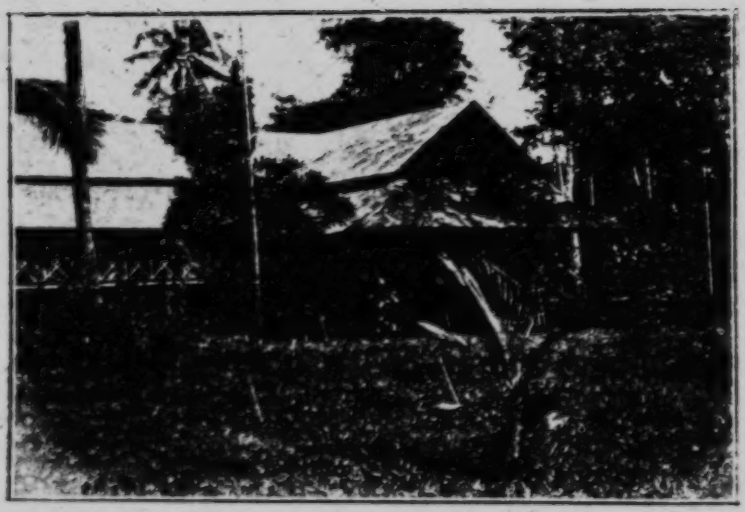

Fig. 10 /p. 31/ Superior Residence at Khong, in 1898

342

Fig. 12 /p. 35/ The approach to South Khone, in 1898.

342

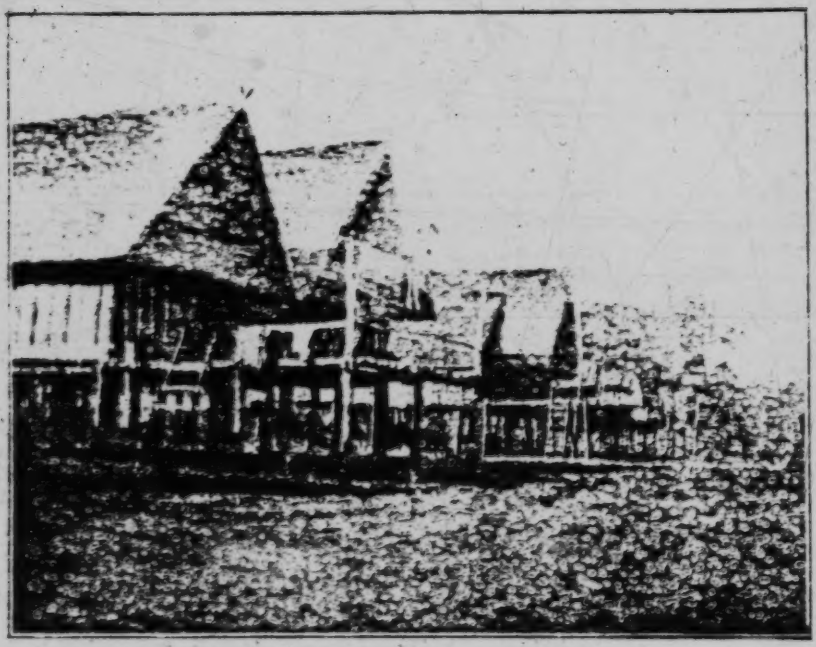

Fig. 15 /p. 50/ A village of Khas. --Plateau of the Bolovens.

149: Reinach--72a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

342

361

Fig. 26 /p. 96/ Bank of the island of Khong, at low water (1895).

Fig. 31 /p. 107/ A European house in Khong.

149; Reinach--86 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

4. HYGIENE

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The choice of dwelling sites is of prime importance from the point of view of hygiene. Insofar as necessities permit, Europeans in Laos should seek to satisfy the following conditions:

1. Avoid building in regions which are low, hemmed in, formed of damp alluvia or near swamps or stagnant ponds.

2. Also avoid living on the banks of small watercourses and choose instead, insofar as possible, the larger rivers, especially near the point where they join a sea-going river or on the banks of the sea-going river itself (2).

(2) We have seen in Chapter II that the Mékong is the only river in Laos which flows into the sea.

3. Build houses on an eminence, no matter how small, and preferably on a rock foundation or on sand or on alluvia which are sandy and permeable to water.

4. Houses may be of brick or quarry-stone. They may be roofed [116] with tiles, wooden shingles, bamboo lath or ordinary thatch, depending on the local resources. They must be raised above the ground (at least 1.5 meters), and air must be able to circulate underneath.

5. However, a house made of wood or of a double thickness of bamboo lath can be as healthy as a brick house if it is carefully built.

6. Houses should be large, well ventilated and surrounded by [Illustration here] broad verandas provided with awnings made of strips of rattan. There should at least be verandas on the south and west.

7. Floors must be such that they can be washed with running water, while mats and rugs must be kept to a strict minimum and be easy to move. The best procedure is to use a colored plaster or an encaustic and apply it to the floor of the rooms and verandas and to the bottoms of walls and partitions half a meter up from the floor.

8. Furniture must be light and easy to move, clean and even wash. Bent wood, in the Thonet style, and rattan fulfill these two conditions perfectly.

/117/ 9. Avoid hangings and draperies insofar as possible. Have only folding doors and windows with two interchangeable sets of panels for each (glass for winter and shutters for the hot season).

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149: Reinach--86a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

342

Fig. 33 /p. 116/ A Laotian house.

462 Tilling the ricefields, hunting, fishing and managing rafts and
241 pirogues take up about six months of the year. The rest of the time they rest and enjoy themselves. The status of women in Laos, although not as low and painful as that of other women of Asiatic races, is nevertheless not as pleasant as that of their husbands. In fact, all the petty farming tasks fall on them. They perform all the household labors, care for the poultry yard and the livestock, etc. They do the cooking, decorticate the paddy, go and fetch wood and water, spin, weave and dye cotton and silk, take care of the children, etc. Less [182] fortunate than her husband, the Laotian woman has no leisure except on holidays, and even then she has to make all the preparations without letting her daily occupations suffer.

Of ordinary height, generally well made and even elegant of
142 figure, the Laotian woman has a friendly face and is not without
562 either grace or coquetry before her marriage. This does not mean that there are no homely girls, but these are rather an exception. As she grows older and worn from bearing children the Laotian woman loses much of her early grace, but in spite of everything she retains her joyousness, her high spirits and her very pronounced taste for celebrations when there is singing and feasting.

862 Laotian mothers worship their children. They take great care
858 of them and often push their weakness for their children to such a point as to prolong the period of breast-feeding, often beyond the child's fourth year.

342 Dwellings. Like all the representatives of the Thai family, the
574 Laotians inhabit houses which are rectangular in shape and are always raised one or two meters above the GROUND on piles. Wood and bamboo, in the form of beams, framing members, rafters, door and window casings, partitions, doors, windows, floors and shingles, are used to build houses, without the use of any nails, all joints and assemblies being fastened together with rattan.

The dimensions of the houses vary greatly and depend on the number of families that they are designed to shelter. Verandas with roofs which are sharply inclined and come down quite low are placed around the house, mainly on the south and west, to temper the heat of the sun and serve as a vestibule, a reception hall or a workshop. The family stays there during the day, as on a sort of neutral ground where people who are coming and going can be received without transgressing custom, which decrees that no one except members of the family and close friends shall have access to the inner apartments, which form the private home of the house's inhabitants.

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which form the private home of the house's inhabitants.

A sort of stairway without railings or a ladder gives access to the veranda from one of the short sides of the rectangle. Often a second ladder leads to a small uncovered platform [183] situated at the other end of the house. This, so to speak, is the service stairway, or the platform serves as a kitchen or storeroom and for various private uses.

Inside the house is divided into two parts by a longitudinal partition pierced by openings which give access to compartments used as bedrooms. The corridor [Illustration here] left free between the partition and the opposite wall constitutes the common room, and is provided with one or several rectangular hearths. The floor of the verandas, the bedrooms and the common room is covered with mats.

Furnishings are generally scanty, and consist of mattresses, pillows, cushions, footstools, low stools, blankets, chests, etc. [352]

The space under the house serves as a stable or barn for horses and livestock, a poultry house and a pigsty. The animals are shut up there each night. [343]

[184] Looms for weaving may be found either under the verandas or underneath the house. [286]

The storehouse for paddy is found nearby. It is also mounted on piles and may be built in a rectangular or circular shape. The "hand" or "foot" mortars used to decorticate paddy may either be near the storehouse under an addition, or else under the house. [343]

The dimensions of houses are reckoned in Hon or units as long as the span of the arms (1.8 to two meters). Houses may be anywhere from two to eight or nine hons (4 to 20 meters) in length. Their width varies from two to three spans of the arms on the average (four to six meters), not including verandas. 342 [804]

Strictly speaking, the piles are columns which rise from the ground to the tie-beams of the roof trusses. Mortises are cut in them a meter of two above the ground, and the floor joists fitted into the mortises.

Even as they are, these houses resist high winds. They provide good shelter from the sun, rain, etc. and are sufficiently comfortable, even for Europeans. The latter often have to be contented with such houses and can find little fault with them except the instability of the floor and the narrowness of the windows, which makes the inside somewhat dark.

181 bread by their work, they have scarcely a care for the morrow.
461 Scrupulous observers of the traditions handed down to them by their ancestors, they live an utterly carefree life and instinctively dread everything foreign or unknown to them.

463 Occupations. The men busy themselves with the tasks of farming,
241 fishing and hunting. They are very industrious and skilled farmers, and can draw admirably on the soil's resources. They bring in the wate needed for irrigating their rais or mountain ricefields through ingenious
462 canals built along the sides of hills, and they also know how to capture springs, often very distant ones, for the same purpose. To decorticate paddy, they use mills driven by artificial waterfalls. The women perform the household chores, take care of the children, make and mend clothes, harvest and spin cotton, breed silkworms, unwind the cocoons and mill the silk. Theirs also is the task of supplying the home with water and with wood which they gather in the forest, as well as sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, getting in and decorticating the rice. These many tasks leave Thai women and girls little leisure, and it would thus seem only natural that they should profit by a momen of pleasure, whenever one presents itself in the midst of their multiple duties. They do, in fact, go in for fun eagerly and behave as keenly, despite their more reserved appearance, as their Laotian sisters.

361 Houses. There is no difference between Laotian villages and Thai villages, except that the latter are better kept and cleaner.
342 Thai houses are generally longer and higher than those of the
592 Laotians, by reason of the custom which decrees that the whole family-parents, children and grandchildren--shall live under the same roof. Some Thai houses are as much as thirty meters long and from eight to ten meters wide. In rare cases one finds much larger houses which are from seventy to seventy-five meters long and twenty-five meters wide.

Thai houses very often have no verandas on their long sides, but
342 always have two, one at each end, which are covered by rounded roofs
554 and serve as reception terraces or antichambers.

The houses of mandarins and notables can be distinguished from the others by the fact that the roof rafters and the trusses of the gables extend above the line of the roof and cross. These members are decorated with wooden silhouettes or scallops ending in discs which, depending on their number and arrangement, indicate the rank of the house's owner.

149: Reinach--179a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

342
554

Fig. 61 /p. 244/ Mandarins of the province of Muong-Hou.
(Courtesy of M. Besson.)

149: Reinach--187 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

caught even on the other side of the watershed and then delivered as 567
slaves to the Burmese, Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian merchants of the low country. The barbarity of their mores has been greatly lessened since our arrival in Laos, but traces of it still exist and manifest themselves in rivalries and attacks between tribes. The police force which [260] we have organized in the land in the form of a native militia, the influence of the missionaries who have settled among the turbulent Khas, and also the help and example of the tribes which have submitted to our tutelary authority will soon cause this abnormal state of things to disappear. Finally, our increasingly effective occupation of the land, which has been completed by the organization of the province of Darlac, and the strict protectorate which we exercise over Cambodia, the chief purchaser of slaves, have begun to bring order in an effective fashion to this shameful traffic in human flesh (1).

(1) See § I of Chapter XI.

It should be noted that the Djarais and the Rades are the only 197
Khas who speak Cham, that is to say a greatly corrupted Malay tongue which they have preserved for centuries.

The men's clothing consists of a loin-cloth, and that of the 291
women consists only of a short skirt knotted around the waist or under the armpits, the torso left bare.

Both men and women have long hair wound in a coil. Both 301
sexes, but mainly the men, wear jewels of a crude shape, made of tin or brass, in the form of bracelets, neckbands, ear pendants or cylinders and hairpins. They are also very fond of glass bead necklaces.

These Khas smoke tobacco, either dried or green, as well as 276
bamboo shavings impregnated with nicotine. They make terra cotta pipes with highly worked bowls and also use imported brass pipes. They do not blacken their teeth.

From the point of view of diet and housing, practically the same 511
conditions obtain as we have seen above except that the houses are built with greater care and arranged in the form of a circular camp.

In the middle of Cedang and Rognao villages there is a large 342
house some twenty to thirty meters long by twelve to fifteen meters 883
wide, with a high pointed roof. This is the common house where all the boys of the locality live from the age of nine or ten until the day of their marriage.

149: Reinach--191 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Hill Tribes

595 There is polygamy among the Meos, and the Meo women do not enjoy any higher regard than the Kha women.

[101] The Yaos. The Yaos have the same origin as the Meos, and are strikingly like them in many respects. Their mores, their beliefs and their habits are identical.

619 As we have seen above, the Yaos are divided into three varieties, these being the Lantenes, the Khao and the Ao-Tchaine.

291 The Lantenes (blacks) wear broad trousers, a long smock buttoning at the side and a turban, all made of black cottonstuff. They wear
302 their hair long and either wound under a turban or braided in Chinese style.

[342] Their houses are like those of the Meos and shelter several families, each of which has its own quarters. They are generally clean and well kept-up.

593 The mores of the Lantene Yaos are patriarchal, and these folk are monogamous. The women are very reserved and do not let them-
562 selves be seen much by strangers. They enjoy a certain respect and are treated with consideration by their husbands.

231 The Lantenes are great livestock breeders, and cultivate the opium poppy in addition to rice and maize. They are skilled hunters of wild
241 animals, and each man owns a rifle from which he is rarely separated.
224 Besides a dialect peculiar to them, they speak Quoan-hoa (a
[212] Cantonese idiom), and many of them can write Chinese characters.
[198] The Khao Yaos are less outgoing than their fellows and do not
101 greet strangers with as much good will.

The men's clothing is like that of the Lantenes, [269] but the
291 women are garbed in a different manner and wear their hair in a special way which has earned their tribe the name "Khao" (horns).

Over a pair of black trousers ornamented with colored embroidery and held in place by leggings, Khao Yao women wear a tunic which comes down to the knees but the flaps of which are fastened to the belt. This tunic also has colored embroidery on the chest, back, neck and cuffs, and is held shut with wide silver hooks.

302 Their hairdress consists of a coil which is smeared with wax and lacquer to hold it in place and in which a wooden socket is imbedded. A light bamboo framework is inserted into the socket, and over this is spread a red cloth or a black cloth embroidered in red. The women thus appear to have two horns on their head.

301 Silver jewelry, neckbands, bracelets and ear pendants are worn by the Khao Yaos.

149: Reinach--298a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

342

Fig. 99 /p.406/ A Laotian house.

516 progresses at an even, elongated pace, carrying as much as 30 kilo-
417 grams in his pack without even seeming to suspect the feats of strength,
suppleness and balance which he accomplishes. As long as he remains
[132] on high ground his resistance to fatigue is very great indeed, but he
cannot go down to the lowlands without danger, especially in the hot
season.

101 Certain authors claim that the word "Meo" which, when pronounced
with a certain intonation, means cat in several Indo-Chinese languages,
was given to these folk by reason of their agility. However, we must
note that in [109] Laotian the word "Meo" used to designate these
mountainfolk is neither written or pronounced like the word meo
which is used to designate cats. There is the same difference between
these two words as there is in French between the words maitre and
metre.

342 A Meo house is built at ground level on slightly leveled ground.
The walls are made of puddled clay or of ill-fitting boards, and the
house is roofed with thatch or crudely-squared wooden shingles. The
doors are made of wood which has been shaped with an ax, and there
[592] are no windows. Often several families live in the same house, and
then each has a fireplace to itself and a compartment which serves
it as a bedroom. In the common room there is an oven and fireplaces
above which objects are placed to dry on a bamboo framework.
Behind the house a narrow passageway is left free separating the
[343] building from the sheer mountainside. In front there is a narrow
veranda where the horses are kept when they are not housed in a
stable built on piles and overhanging the mountainside, as are the
animal barn and pig sty, the rice granary and the goat pen. This
system has the advantage of protecting the animals from the dampness
of the ground, since the planks which form the floor jut out over
empty space on their solid piles.

[101] Inside the house there are a few furnishings, as among all peoples
of Chinese origin. There are benches, tables, camp beds, dishes,
352 iron and copper cooking utensils and opium smoking accessories, all
so repulsively filthy that even the least delicate would hesitate to
356 enter and stay in these hovels, where vermin swarm under the pro-
tection of the ancestors' altar.

Although amongh themselves and with their families the Meos
198 speak a rather unharmonious language, nearly all the men can under-
stand and speak Qouane-hoa, the language of the Chinese mandarins,
212 which is the official language in Yunnan. They can neither read nor
write Chinese characters, and have no system of writing of their own.

173: Deydier--37 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

585 In front of the bride's house, guards make a sham defence of the gate of the house. The husband and his retinue can enter only by making a gift of money or alcohol. When he reaches the stairway of the house, the young man may only climb it after having his feet washed on a piece of stone covered with a banana leaf by the sisters or the women servants of the bride. He must pay for this service, then seat himself in front of the two ritual phakhouan next to his bride, who is already sitting there. The Sou Khouan of the wedding [801] resembles the bassi. However at the wedding there are only two phakhouan and everything in the ceremony must be in even numbers. They are, however, larger and better decorated than the ordinary phakhouan. The marriage is celebrated by two individuals officiating who recite sacramental formulas in duet. Then, after tying a large number of cotton threads around their wrists, the married couple prostrate themselves before each of the aged people and those who are present. They are then led to their room by a lady chosen from among the most virtuous.

Funerals

764 In Laos as in all Buddhist countries, the dead are burned. How-
766 ever, a distinction is made between two kinds of death, normal death and accidental (drowning, suicide or violent death). The dead of the second category must be buried within twenty-four hours. The story is told of a peasant's wife who, having died in childbirth, was quickly cut up in pieces by the villagers who scattered them to the four winds so that she would not become a wandering soul capable of tormenting the living.

764 [58] When there is a death in a house, the body is bathed with tepid water, then with cold water. It is then perfumed and dressed. Two garments are put on it, one wrong side out, the other right side out. The former symbolizes death, the latter life, for the favorite garment of the dead person while alive was chosen. His hair is then combed and he is shackled with a white cotton thread, for he must not return to the world of the living. The same thread is used to wrap around his neck, to tie his two hands together, and his two feet together. This bond must not be cut, so a knot is made at each place where it is attached. This thread also shows man how illusory are the bonds which tie him to the world. Then the body is wrapped in [823 342] a shroud. It is laid parallel with the largest dimension of the house, as opposed to the living who always lie in the direction of its width.

764 coffin is placed on a truck. The bonzes are at the head of the procession, then the widow and the children dressed in white as a sign of mourning.

[60] The coffin is placed on the pyre. All those attending, holding a lighted candle or resinous torch, go to the pyre in single file, and throw the brands into the fire. It is forbidden to light a torch by lending one's light or by borrowing that of a neighbor. During this time the family must throw offerings to the crowd: pieces of banana branches, lemons, etc., into which have been introduced coins mixed with grilled rice. The cotton thread, called fay mongkhou, which [751] had surrounded the house in order to chase away sorrow, illness, the phi, etc., is removed at the end of the ceremony.

[187] [775] On the third day the bones are fetched away. The bonzes are invited, but before touching the ashes, they must be examined to see if they have left any imprints either animal or human, in order to know in what form the dead man will be reborn. The bones are gathered with wooden pincers and then placed in an urn. A statue in a vaguely human form is erected of wet cinders. The urn and the offerings are surrounded by a cotton thread, then the bonzes recite a prayer and this closes the ceremony. The urn will be placed in a pagoda or buried by the family who will erect a that. A little later, to commemorate the death of the departed, the family will dig a hole in the pagoda or near the that, and in it plant a long bamboo at the end of which is fastened a cotton banner laminated with small bamboo sticks. A tray of offerings is brought, which had been placed at the foot of the bamboo pole while it was being set up, and which is held by the relatives and friends of the dead man. Before this, offerings of food had been wrapped in a banana leaf. Once the bamboo is set up, water is poured all around on the earth which is holding it up, in the hope that the merits of this action will reach the other world. Then the whole family [61] squats down around the pole and with joined hands recites prayers.

The Laotian House.

342 It is built on piles and has a veranda. The roof is curved slightly inwards. A long stake holding the water jar is sunk in the ground near the veranda outside the house. The floor is of bamboo or of thin wide boards. The wall and ceiling are of bamboo panels, or of boards, or of mud. There are two principal doors and few windows. A partition going from the inner beam of the front gable separates the house lengthwise in two parts, most often of equal size. One is divided into

342 bedrooms separated from each other by partitions or curtains, the
[178] other is the communal room. In the space between the inner and outer beam, and not limited by the longitudinal partition, is the altar on which there are always one or several buddhas. It is placed on the side of the bedrooms, on the "soung" side of the dwelling, that is on the side opposite the entrance. The dimensions of the dwellings vary between six and twenty-four meters long by four to nine meters wide.

342 The houses are most often open to the east or to the north. They may also overlook what is passing by in the streets or the paths and,
823 as the case may be, the whole length of the river. For there is a superstition which forbids building "across the current," which is considered as unconquerable and invincible, and it would be dangerous to defy it.

343 The outhouses consist of an adjoining kitchen and a granary, a few meters removed from the principal dwelling. Near this granary
[252] is found the picturesque rice pestle (khok khao) which the women work with their feet.

343 [62] All the villagers participate in building the house. When the propitious day and moment have been determined, the owner feeds
476 everybody the whole time the house is being built.

Tattooing

301 Every self-respecting Laotian must be tattooed. The absence of
885 tattooing is a sign of mental and moral, therefore of social, inferiority.
562 As a general rule, however, the Laotian woman is not tattooed. This custom is found only among the women of Youan, Kha or Lu.

The Laotian is tattooed chiefly on his thighs, forearms and chest.
301 The tattooing on the thighs is so close together that from a distance a tattooed man looks as if he were wearing close-fitting blue shorts. The Laotians are called "white bellies" as opposed to those who are tattooed down to the navel and are then called black bellies. The colors used for tattooing are indigo blue, red, and black made from a mixture of lampblack diluted with buffalo gall.

Those who have been tattooed are convinced that the signs they
[157] wear give them certain supernatural powers, particularly making them invulnerable to bullets and snake bites. During the events of 1941 Siamese soldiers were found wearing white cotton vests covered with cabalistic signs closely related to tattooing. These are a kind of removable tattooing intended to protect those who are wearing them.

23: Franck--345 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 243, 343

"Little huts on stilts everywhere awaited the coming of laborers to the fields, lying fallow in grass now, but planted in July and harvested in November. There is no water for flooding at other times, because it does not rain enough, though with the industry and industry and ingenuity of the Chinese they could easily harness the rivers that run away toil-less to the distant sea. But there is no need to do so, because there is no such crowding and consequent hunger as in China and its slender little offspring, Annam."

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which form the private home of the house's inhabitants.

A sort of stairway without railings or a ladder gives access to the veranda from one of the short sides of the rectangle. Often a second ladder leads to a small uncovered platform [183] situated at the other end of the house. This, so to speak, is the service stairway, for the platform serves as a kitchen or storeroom and for various private uses.

Inside the house is divided into two parts by a longitudinal partition pierced by openings which give access to compartments used as bedrooms. The corridor [Illustration here] left free between the partition and the opposite wall constitutes the common room, and is provided with one or several rectangular hearths. The floor of the verandas, the bedrooms and the common room is covered with mats.

Furnishings are generally scanty, and consist of mattresses, pillows, cushions, footstools, low stools, blankets, chests, etc. [352]

The space under the house serves as a stable or barn for horses and livestock, a poultry house and a pigsty. The animals are shut up there each night. [343]

[184] Looms for weaving may be found either under the veranda or underneath the house. [286]

The storehouse for paddy is found nearby. It is also mounted on piles and may be built in a rectangular or circular shape. The "hand" or "foot" mortars used to decorticate paddy may either be near the storehouse under an addition, or else under the house. [343]

The dimensions of houses are reckoned in Hon or units as long as the span of the arms (1.8 to two meters). Houses may be anywhere from two to eight or nine hons (4 to 20 meters) in length. Their width varies from two to three spans of the arms on the average (four to six meters), not including verandas. 342 [804]

Strictly speaking, the piles are columns which rise from the ground to the tie-beams of the roof trusses. Mortises are cut in them a meter of two above the ground, and the floor joists fitted into the mortises.

Even as they are, these houses resist high winds. They provide good shelter from the sun, rain, etc. and are sufficiently comfortable, even for Europeans. The latter often have to be contented with such houses and can find little fault with them except the instability of the floor and the narrowness of the windows, which makes the inside somewhat dark.

149: Reinach--182a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

343
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Fig. 66 /p. 251/ Typical Lus.
(Courtesy of M. Besson)

Meo

516 progresses at an even, elongated pace, carrying as much as 30 kilo-
417 grams in his pack without even seeming to suspect the feats of strength,
[132] suppleness and balance which he accomplishes. As long as he remains on high ground his resistance to fatigue is very great indeed, but he cannot go down to the lowlands without danger, especially in the hot season.

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[101] Inside the house there are a few furnishings, as among all peoples of Chinese origin. There are benches, tables, camp beds, dishes,
352 iron and copper cooking utensils and opium smoking accessories, all so repulsively filthy that even the least delicate would hesitate to
356 enter and stay in these hovels, where vermin swarm under the protection of the ancestors' altar.

Although amongh themselves and with their families the Meos
198 speak a rather unharmonious language, nearly all the men can understand and speak Qouane-hoa, the language of the Chinese mandarins,
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[778] other is the communal room. In the space between the inner and outer beam, and not limited by the longitudinal partition, is the altar on which there are always one or several buddhas. It is placed on the side of the bedrooms, on the "soung" side of the dwelling, that is on the side opposite the entrance. The dimensions of the dwellings vary between six and twenty-four meters long by four to nine meters wide.

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10: d'Orleans--290 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 344

[LSS: at Luang Prabang] "Our boatmen stop on the right side at a bamboo landing stage, a staircase cut in the bank leads to an edifice built upon piles and surrounded by large trees. It is a good sized house made of strong wood, with a gallery round it and a kind of kiosk in front, the walls and posts are painted green and red, or green and white; the roof is covered with bamboo thatch, and from its centre floats the tricoloured flag. We have arrived at the French Consulate, which contains the office of the company. M. Massie, and his second in command, M. Counillon, live here, and the surrounding houses are occupied by Cambodian interpreters; we are received with open arms and lodged in the Consulate."

23: Franck--304 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 344

"The king's palace is a building mainly in French style, more like a hotel with a steeple-cupola than the abode of an Oriental potentate. It stands in a fairly spacious yard, not quite large enough to be worthy the name of park, on the eastern bank of the Mekong, at the foot of the hill graced by Buddha's footprint, and it was somewhat in disorder. Chairs were kicking about the foreign-style dining-room, and there were other suggestions of a late party and over-sleeping servants. The building was quite new, it seemed; there were few decorations on the walls yet, though a man had come all the way from Paris to cover them with paintings. Evidently he had found the climate not conducive to constant work, particularly work paid for by the day by a protected people; for surely he could not have discovered a means of squandering his time in the social amenities of the king's harem, and there was no other means of accounting for his Oriental leisureliness of execution."

la Sainte-Chapelle, a la seconde boutique, a l'enseigne 175*
du Voyageur. 114
/127/

naivete, the work /111/ does not have the ring of sincerity which constitutes the merit of the Dutch account. It was probably written from the reminiscences of Father J. M. Leria (1) and is of value

1. Father Giovanni-Maria Leria, a Piedmontese Jesuit, left Cambodia in April 1642 accompanied by some Cochinchinese neophytes with a caravan of Laotian traders who were returning to their country. He remained in Laos for five years "despite the opposition and the intrigues of the bonzes" and did not leave Vientiane until December 2, 1647. (Cf. Fr. Garnier, 1871, and Father Alex. de Rhodes, 1651.)

only as a document at second hand. It will nevertheless be of some interest to extract the following passages:

"In the East it (the kingdom of the 'Langiens') has the kingdom 131
of Tonkin which stretches to the southwest towards Cochinchina, 175*
and further to the South that of Cambodia; in the southwest and the west the kingdom of Pegou; and in the north that of Ava and the province called U or Lu (2), and still further again to the north as

2. See below, p. 176, note 1.

far as the frontiers which limit it in this direction, where there are certain peoples who are called Gnai. . . .

"Because of its fertility and because the things necessary to life 421
are found there in abundance, the kingdom is so heavily populated 433
that only a little while ago in the census which was taken of per- 161
sons who were /112/ judged fit to serve the king at war and to bear arms, 500,000 were counted, not including the old people who are so numerous and so rubust that even of those who are a hundred years old a very large army might be formed for the defense of the kingdom if the need should arise. . .

"The chief city and the one in which the king ordinarily stays 633
is situated in the middle of the kingdom, eighteen degrees toward 174
our Arctic pole, and is called Langione. It has good moats and 344
extremely high walls on one side, and on the other the great river to defend it against the undertakings of enemies. . . . The royal palace, the structure and symmetry of which are admirable, can

633 be seen from a great distance. To be sure, it extends over a prodigi-
174 ous area and is so large that one would take it for a city... The king's
344 apartments, which are embellished with a superb and magnificent portico and a large number of beautiful rooms accompanied by a large parlor, are all made of wood which will not decay and ornamented inside and outside with excellent bas-reliefs so delicately gilded that they seem rather to be covered with flakes of gold than gold leaf.

"From that point one enters the courtyards which are extremely spacious, and one first sees a long line of houses built entirely of brick and roofed /113/ with tile in which the second wives usually stay, and outside another row of houses built alongside in the same symmetry for the mandarins' officers. I could write a whole volume if I undertook a minute description of all the other parts of the palace, the riches, the departments, the gardens and a number of other such things...

565 "The houses of the principal lords and of well-to-do persons are
342 very high and beautiful, and are all made of wood with a great deal
352 of artifice and a greater or lesser number of ornaments, depending on the expense to which the individuals are willing to go, but I must confess that the common people and the poor are housed extremely badly
/793/ and that their dwellings are cabins and huts rather than houses. Only the talapoins (bonzes), who are the priests of the idols, have permission to build their monasteries and houses out of brick and stone. Instead of rugs and other such furnishings, persons of quality use small reed mats in which the weave is so delicate and so highly ornamented with figures and various leaf patterns that, to my mind, there is nothing more beautiful nor more pleasing to the eye. They ordinarily use them to cover the walls of /114/ their rooms and houses inside and outside, which they keep very clean and of which they take particular care...

643* "The king is absolute and independent... all the land belongs to
/423/ him, and he disposes as absolute lord of all that his subjects possess...
631 offices, employment, honors and wealth depend absolutely on the
174 king, who raises those persons who please him most to the highest offices in the kingdom.... The principal dignities and offices of the kingdom are eight in number. The first is that of viceroy general... and because the kingdom is divided into seven provinces seven other viceroys are appointed... there are also other governments of less consequence which depend on the former both in respect to civil affairs and to those which concern war.... Each of these provinces has
/701/ its militia, which consists of infantry and cavalry.

10: d'Orleans--265-266 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 531, 712

[LSS: at Muong Ngoi] "On the summit of a hillock that overlooks the valley stands a polygonal embankment formed of red [266] earth in which some openings have been made, a wall in the centre surrounds a block of masonry seven or eight yards in diameter which supports a dome of white plaster, with gilt ornaments. Above it, there is a cone made of seven gilded circles, surmounted by a point, the whole edifice may be about fifteen feet high, and I remark some small reliquaries containing rough statuettes, of which the faces are half obliterated. The natives, whom I question, tell me that it is a fort, and in truth, a few cannons in that position, could easily command both sides of the valley, but at present they are missing. However, in my opinion, the monument is of religious origin; it reminds me of similar edifices in Thibet; but I cannot obtain any information either upon the date or the object of its construction."

10: d'Orleans--289 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 361

"Here is Luang Prabang: at the first glance from the boat we can see nothing, or at least very little that indicates a city. For some hundreds of yards there are Laotian buildings on the left bank of the river, but their roofs are scarcely seen through vistas amongst the palm trees, cocoa trees, and bamboos, but the verdure gradually diminishes as the houses become more crowded and are arranged in more compact lines. We realise that it is an important city, an earthen mound dominates the whole, surmounted by one of those gilded domes, which recall the cupolas of the Russian churches. In the confusion of yellowish dwellings the pagodas are recognised by their superior height and by their roofs which are covered with brown tiles, laid one above the other and raised in Chinese cornices at the extremities, the palace has almost the air of an European building."

10: d'Orleans--325 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 316, 346, 532, 821

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "When we land on the left bank, we notice a number of people stooping down, with their feet in the water, engaged in washing out the sand; these are gold finders, who earn but a scanty living, though they sometimes come upon an old coin or two which has been washed down stream. A climb of about fifty feet up decrepit steps, which in summer are under water, brings us to the town. Close upon the left is a small pagoda, Ouate Poune Sai, which is only remarkable for the fresco above the entrance gate, this representing Kop, the sun, eating the moon; in other words, the fresco is intended to designate an eclipse."

10: d'Orleans--330-331 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 532, 778

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "The market occupies the principal artery of the town, with numerous pagodas and palaces to the right and left, one of those on the left being Ouate Mal', ouate being the word used in Laotian, Siamese, and Burmese, to signify temple, while mal' means new. The pagoda itself from 100 to 130 feet long by fifty to seventy feet broad, with whitewashed walls and a tile roof. The interior is very similar to that of a Catholic church, with pictures on the walls representing religious legends, and at the end an altar, upon which are accumulated ornaments of all kinds and statues of gods in every variety of pose, while in the centre, as in all the other temples, is a golden figure of Buddha seated, from seven to ten feet high. The features are the same in all these statues of Buddha, and, with his legs crossed, and his hands resting upon his thigh the statue which is more the outcome of high strung religious feelings, and represents the very spirit of the races which have [331] succeeded one another upon this soil for so many centuries, than the work of any great artist, seems to have concentrated in it attitude, its countenance, and its gaze, the essence of the moral beliefs, the object of existence, and the reason of death, as they were conceived by one-half of the old world."

10: d'Orleans--332 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 735, 788

"The temples are public, and they who have no family home are entitled to sleep in them, while upon week days the people come to make offerings of flowers, and perform libations with water, listening to the advice given them by the priests, while the women tell their beads, and signify that they have got through them by blowing through a sea shell."

10: d'Orleans--332 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 524, 778, 793

"Outside the principal building, in the courtyard of the pagoda, [LSS: the pagoda of Ouate Mai in Luang Prabang] are a series of ongmong, or small buildings which contain the statues of the gods; pyramids (Tâte) containing the bones of prominent bonzes or members of the Royal Family, and plaster bells like the lotus flower, behind all these buildings, hidden among the trees, being the houses of the bonzes, whose pupils we remark at play, the game at which they play, with a hollow ball made out of bamboo canes twisted together, being one which requires great skill."

10: d'Orleans--332 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 202, 346, 731, 793

"After leaving Ouate Maï, we ascend the small hill which commands a fine view of the town, about 350 feet above, and upon the summit of which are several small buildings and a gilt belfry in which is hung a tam tam about three feet in length. Several men keep guard over it and beat it to let the bonzes know when it is the hour for study, or else an alarm bell in case of fire. There is a grand view from here, as the city is at our feet, half hidden among the cocoa trees, one part, which was burnt last year and has been rebuilt, being less wooded than the others."

10: d'Orleans--332-333 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 776, 826

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "We collect some bivalve fossils as we come down, half-way from the summit, being a covered terrace with a building, inside which is a bath-shaped cavity with five marks supposed to have been made [333] by the foot of Buddha when he traversed the Mekong. This is why it is called Pra bate (1) (foot of God).

1. Bate is the word used for the feet of deities or kings; tine for those of ordinary mortals."

10: d'Orleans--333-334 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 532, 177.53

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "Among the other pagodas are Ouate Tiomsi, which contains nothing remarkable, and Ouate Pahope, with a good deal of wood carving and frescoes representing animals and scenes in the life of Buddha, to say nothing of pictures of Frenchwomen in the dress of the First Empire, which may possibly have been brought here by the traveller Monhot some forty years ago. Beyond these are Ouate Paphay and Ouate Pakay, both of which are very graceful and have beautifully carved facades. The whole effect reminds me in a remote measure of the Hindoo architecture, and among the figures on the wood-carving of the doors is [334] one of Nangmanouba, a woman standing up on a dragon, and another of a personage wearing a costume very similar to that which was in vogue with us during the middle ages."

10: d'Orleans--338-339 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 777

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "There are several other pagodas at the far end of the town to be visited, including that of Ouate Sieng Tong, in which we notice a large banner on which are depicted a series of circles representing the march of Buddha. True believers can see upon these banners the footprints of the god, and these figures reproduced upon the coats of the soldiers are regarded as a talisman.

Among the accessory monuments in the courtyard is a small pyramid partly covered with blades of silver or copper and bearing a Laotian inscription, which, as the interpreter tells me, informs passers-by [339] that the bones of a mandarin named Tianone are laid to rest inside it, and the edifice is surrounded by pillars, surmounted by lotus flowers and looking very much like large asparagus."

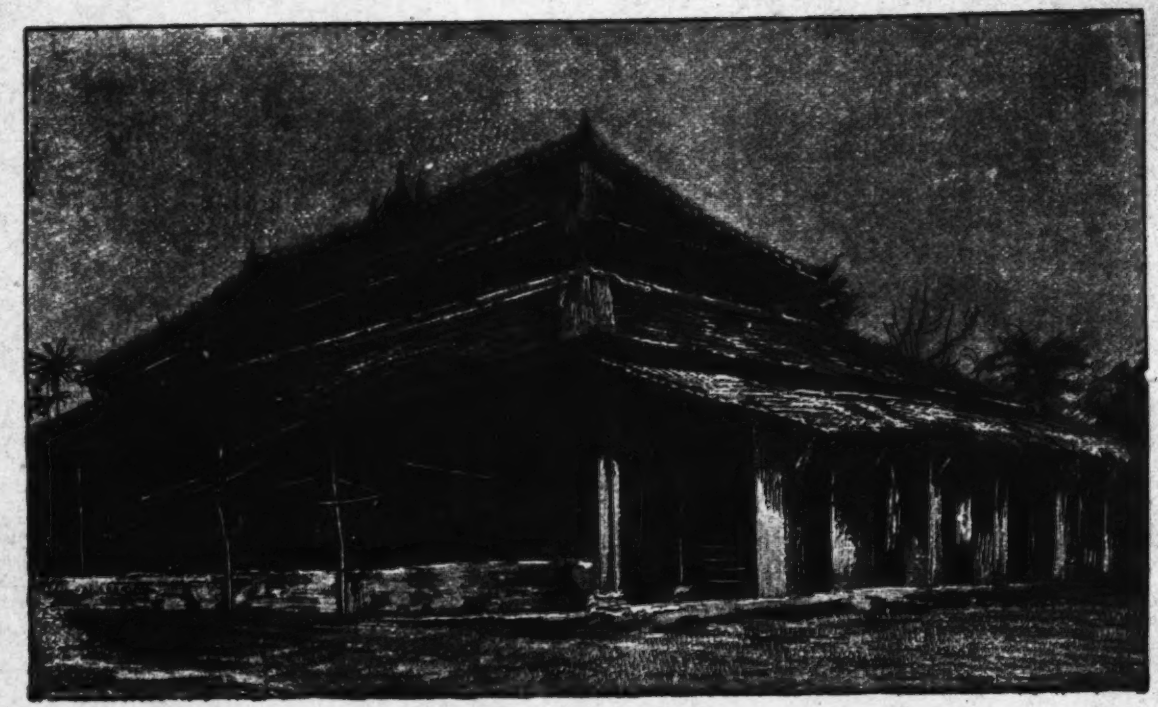
10: d'Orleans--339-340 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 361, 532, 778

"Part of the town is very sparsely inhabited, a few ruins on the track indicating the site [340] of the ancient ramparts, while turning back in the direction of the river, we have on our left the grounds of several houses belonging to mandarins, and on the right, at the foot of the hill, a group of pagodas well worth a visit.

The most important of these is Ouate Uisoune, so named after the king who built it. Dating, as the Siamese Colonel tells us, from the fourteenth century, it is in a very decrepit state, but there is much in it worth seeing; notably the gates which are of carved wood and gilt. To the right in Pra Noriei, the fourarmed goddess, borne up by Kroute, the god of the birds, and in the centre are two women, one of whom is being carried by five elephants, while to the left a god standing erect upon a buffalo is supposed to represent the chief of the coolies who weed the courtyards of the pagodas. In the interior are a number of wooden columns covered with gilded designs and others of masonry, together with pictures representing the history of Pra Uetsandaha and of Guadama. Upon the altar is a large gilt statue called Pratiao Ong Luong (great god)."

10: d'Orleans--341
116, 346

T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos



OUATE UISOUNE (PAGODA), LUANG PRABANG.

10: d'Orleans--340-343 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 173, 346, 777, 782

"Behind the altar [LSS: of the pagoda of Ouate Uisoune in Luang Prabang] is a semi-circular black stone upon a wooden pedestal and covered with Laotian inscriptions. Upon one side of this stone, it is related how the king of Muong Hay (near Muong Yan), having come for a festival with the king of Luang Prabang, left in the pagoda images of Buddha and books made of palm branches about 1198. The date is 1198 after Tiaoman Ta, who is supposed to have lived sixty-six centuries ago, so that it is one difficult to verify. Upon the reverse is a cabalistic sign which, worn by a soldier on the [pages 341 and 342 contain illustration] [343] breast, renders him invulnerable. This sign is as follows:-

10: d'Orleans--340-343 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-2
116, 173, 346, 777, 782

The figures are in Laotian.
Ruk is an invocation to the gods.
Poutin erexa means (Pra god) pout, protect me.
Tom (in) erexa means (Teonda god) protect me.
Sonkin erexa means, bonzes protect me.
In this, as in the other temples are to be found the conduit for the holy water, the pulpit, the sunshades, the divinities which lay hands on the faithful, the adorned gods and the Buddhas with clasped hands (Pra Hopokoute), while in the adjoining pagoda of more recent construction are twenty rows of small gilt Buddhas placed close beside one another against the wall."

10: d'Orleans--343-344 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346

"In going back to the market street, [LSS: in Luang Prabang] we pass the residence of the Siamese Colonel, the barracks and the house being built for the members of the English survey party.

Following the main street eastward, we at last reach the important temple of Tâte Loung (literally, [344] grand monument), which is situated upon a grassy eminence, the temple being white in colour and having a double roof of light tiles. This building seems bright and trim by comparison with those already visited, but when we come to examine it more closely we find that the medallions of carved wood between the two roofs are of considerable antiquity, while the interior is not so interesting as that of several others. It is here that the king and the people confer the principal religious orders, and this is why it is called the royal pagoda. I may add that there are several small pagodas of less importance upon the right bank."

23: Franck--299-300 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 346, 361, 778

"Luang Prabang means Kingdom of the Divine Buddha. What more natural then than that there should be many Buddhist temples, shrines, and monasteries in its capital? Indeed there are so many on both sides of the river that the town might easily be mistaken for a holy city, devoted to priests and pilgrims. Some of the temple compounds are bare ground scattered with yellow-roofed buildings of Siamese or Burmese character, with big stupas made of mud bricks and more or less overgrown with vegetation, with mere cells raised on piles, in which languid bonzes meditate. Others are covered with groves of trees, shaded by masses of palm and banana leaves; but in them all great calm and quiet reigns. Just behind the main and market street fronting the royal palace is a rocky ridge called Pagoda Hill, two hundred feet above the plain and half encircled by the Nam-khan by which travelers unworthy of Fords come to [300] the capital from the east or south. It is worth climbing if only for the view it offers of the idyllic city and its surrounding semi-jungle; and along it ramble queer old religious structures, including one built over a gigantic 'footprint of Buddha' in the native rock."

23: Franck--348-349 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 346, 361

"Formerly Vientiane had a hundred and twenty magnificent temples, so well built that, in addition to many ruins lost in the bush, some still remain symmetrical and perfect in general form, though their beams have rotted away and the masonry has been exposed to tropical sun and rain for a century. There are some striking doors giving entrance to roofless ruins; within the falling shell of a temple near the Résidence, in which I was lord of all I surveyed because of the absence of the résuper,' two big Buddhas sit in the infinitely [349] patient attitude of the East, though the rains fall and the sun beats down upon their coiled-serpent covered heads, while the vegetation piously strives to clothe and hold them together as the mud and stone of which they are made crumble bit by bit away."

25: Brodrick--104-105 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 346, 696

"Most of the Laotian pagodas are a mass of jumbled ruin. Others are in sore straits. Still, there is an abundance of temples in Luang-Prabang itself. The sixteenth-century That-Luong has been restored, as has the old [105] Royal Pagoda. There is the ruined Vat-Manorom, built it is said, in 1372 to shelter a colossal statue of the Buddha, of which only the bust and head have survived. And there is the Pagoda of the Crystal Statue, which statue was carried off in 1827 by the Siamese to Bangkok. Any criminal who reached the Temple of the Crystal Statue could claim absolute asylum--in the olden days--but now the building is breached. And there are many more, temples and stupas."

25: Brodrick--105-106 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-2
116, 346, 531

"The that, or Laotian stupa, is as imposing in size as the vat, or temple. Sometimes, but rarely, the that is just a dome, like the stupas of Ceylon, then, again, it may be bell-shaped as in Siam and Burma, but the peculiar Laotian form is bulbous and elongated into a sort of spire which, however, shows a peculiar section, ridged at four corners and bulbous between them. This shifting outline lends a pleasingly impermanent air to the pinnacles jutting up above the feathery fronds of the garden-city. So, despite botching in the Siamese taste, and manifest foreign influence, the Luang-Prabang pagodas with those of the Tran-ninh province, have retained much of their archaic character. But although there may be buildings in ancient style there are no very ancient monuments. The oldest still in use cannot date farther back than 1500.

The plan of the viharas, or temples, is similar to that of the Cambodian. The familiar fig-tree spreads its glistening leaves over the sacred enclosure. But the architecture is quite different. Gone are the twisting, twining eaves, the fragile, delicate fretwork of the modern Khmers. Here the temples are rectangular and white-washed-over brick. The roofs are high and deep and drop far down, giving the whole structure a queerly Oceanian or South Seas appearance. Within, the walls are richly frescoed with floral arabesques and geometrical designs on a red background. The doors and shutters are adorned with presentments of giants, garudas, polycephalous serpents and the phantasies of Indian legend. A rich, and often lavish, display of

enamelled lead-work, gilded stucco and panelling inlaid with chips of looking-glass, does not detract from a general appearance of elegance and strangeness, due not a little to the curious Laotian convention of battened openings. Windows and doors all have sides converging from base to top and even the pillars and columns taper. Here must be some lasting tradition of wooden-hut architecture still preserved intact by more primitive peoples of Indo-China and Indonesia.

It seems that in the olden days, when the Laos lands were rich [106] in gold, the temples were sheathed in gold sheets so that the sanctuaries seemed precious reliquaries.

And, within, at the far end, in the half-gloom you will see a great image of the Buddha, often of lacquered and gilded brick, an image quite different from the representations of the Blessed One in any land or at any time for the last two thousand years. The narrow long face, the jutting aquiline nose, reminding you sometimes of the curves you see on masks from the Sepik region of New Guinea, the daemonic expression, the short head (the Laotians themselves are predominantly short-headed), the visage all features and expression and almost no face. You are a long way from any other interpretation of the Hellenistic inspired Buddha image. Here, in the Laos, you have a South Seas Buddha, a Buddha assured indeed but active and not contemplative."

25: Brodrick--109 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 346, 527, 641

"The Moon City [HD: i.e. Vientane] was once a town of sanctuaries and held, they say, over eighty pagodas, but there are now only twenty-four, most of which are in ruins. The place was thoroughly sacked by the Siamese in 1827. The Sisaket pagoda has been more or less restored, and here take place twice a year the ceremonies of the Great and of the Little Oath, [HD: of allegiance] this time to the prevailing government in France and not to the Lord of the Elephants and the Umbrella. [HD: i.e. the king of Luang Prabang]"

25: Brodrick--109 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 177, 346, 532

"The Phra-Keo Pagoda or Temple of the Emerald Buddha, [HD: in Vientane] is, by tradition, supposed to have been founded in A.D. 814, but it was razed by the Siamese and the Emerald Buddha was carried off to Bangkok where it may still be admired in its gorgeous temple. Needless to say, the Emerald Buddha is not carved out of emerald. It is fashioned in green jasper and is undoubtedly of Laotian workmanship, for the image, as you can behold it in the Siamese capital, has a most Laotian face, vehement, cunning and, it may be, lecherous.

The sight of Vientiane to-day is the That-Luong. This large stupa is some mile and a half outside the city and is set in a palm grove. The buildings seem to date from about 1567 and were put up to shelter a relic of the Buddha. The sanctuary was spared by the Siamese. However, in 1874, the Chinese Yünnan land-pirates, who feared neither God nor man, plundered and ravaged the shrine. It was botched up unskilfully, but a few years ago, was restored to its pristine appearance through the efforts of the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient. The stupa not only shows the curious bulbous spire we noted at Luang-Prabang, but the whole place is uncommonly complicated in plan. It is surrounded by a cloister in the Siamese mode and the stupa itself rises from a series of rectangular terraces set round with numerous pinnacles joined together by an arcade."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM 1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

132 started cellular constructions in the window shutters and armies of
485 cockroaches marched across the floors. Precious, expensive water was brought in large pots and left in the subdivision of the room where, using a gourd with a hole in its bottom, you could take a shower. The main advantage of having this open pot of water in the room was that it collected a gauzy layer of mosquitoes which were content to stay there in harmless concentration, unless disturbed. The Mekong could be seen from the window, a sallow strip of water across half a mile of whitened river-bed. Perhaps this drought had something to do with the town's electrical generating system, because only occasionally – and never at night – would the filament of the electric light bulb consent to glow feebly. Whenever the hot wind sprang up, stirring the trees round the house, great dry leaves as big as dishes came tumbling down and fell with a crash in the layer already deposited on the earth. It was the death-rattle of the year, which in Laos expires in croaking senility, to be re-born with the raging storms which were about to break.

• 346 Vientiane is a religious centre, one of the two ancient capitals of Laos. It abounds with pagodas, many of them deserted and in ruins; and colossal Buddhas, with dusty half-obliterated smiles, sit in the tumbled brickwork.

527 Since at this time[1] when the earth had dried up, there was no
794 work to be done anywhere, it was the season of *bouns*; the Laotian festivals. Each pagoda holds one, as a means of collecting funds. They last for three days, and although an attempt is made not to hold two *bouns* at the same time, there are so many pagodas that duplication cannot always be helped; so that every night for several weeks the sky over one or more districts of Vientiane glows with the reflection of thousands of lights, while from a distance one catches the gusty, carnival sounds of Laotian rejoicings. *Bouns* start at about eleven, and go on all night.

527 The first night after my arrival I went to a *boun*, which I found by

1 [late March. --
Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

acknowledge in the street a lady with whom one happens to be on 584
particularly good terms. These things in Laos are fraught with an 576
etiquette which is the legacy of a highly organized society not too
far gone in decay.

The charm of Vientiane lies in the life and the customs of the 346
people. Unless one is an amateur of pagoda architecture there is 531
little else to be seen. The Laotians have preferred to work in wood,
rather than stone, and their art, confined chiefly to the decoration by
religious artists of the doors, pillars and interiors of pagodas,
quickly perishes in such a climate.

Outside the town there is a great, grey, half-decayed *stupa*, built 771
as a tomb for a hair of the Buddha. It is surrounded by a cloister, 755
containing perhaps a thousand Buddha images; a collection of 778
which the people of Vientiane are very proud. But even here,
where the religion is practised in its purest form, there is a little
degeneration, a little backsliding from the lofty philosophic conception; and the taint of magic practices shows itself. Selecting one of
the numerous images as a personal tutelary divinity, the devotee
subjects it to a kind of bribery similar to that sometimes practised
in Southern Europe with images of the saints. In this case the image's
chief function is healing, and when the sufferer recovers from any
complaint he hastens to the pagoda to apply gold-leaf to the part of
the Buddha corresponding to that where he has felt the pain in his
own body. I was interested to deduce from this practice that the
people of Vientiane are much plagued by headaches – perhaps [164]
those which accompany malaria.

Standing in a corner of the sanctuary was an ancient ithyphallic 778
statue, an old Hindu divinity, no doubt, which had been worn 789
smooth in the appropriate parts by the feminine adoration of a 842
thousand years. I was told that the women of the French colony
who wish for a child frequently emulate their husbands' pose of
Laos-ization by coming here secretly to pay their respects. I 000
wondered whether this clandestine tribute might not be extended

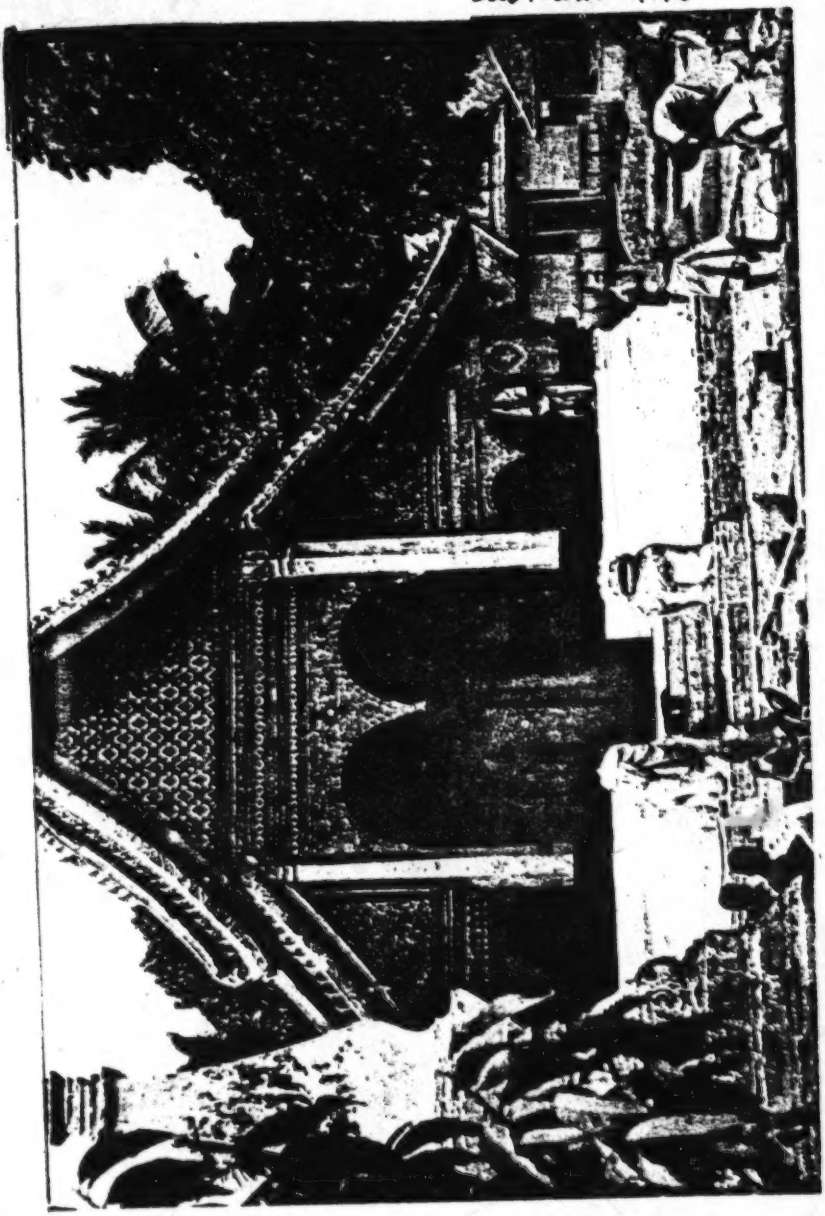
69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM 1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

361 fluence with the river of a tributary; a small, somnolent and sanctified Manhattan Island. A main street has turnings down to the river
346 358 on each side and a pagoda at every few yards, with a glittering roof and doors and pillars carved with a close pattern of gilded and painted designs. There is an infallible sense of colour, a blending of old gold and turquoise and of many greys; but the bonzes are continually at work, painting and carving and refurbishing, so that everything is just a little too new (an extraordinary complaint in Laos), too spruce, too odorous of freshly applied varnish. The roof finials glisten with new applied glass and china mosaic. The ancient, blunted features of lions and dragons get regular scrubbings, have their teeth painted dead white and are re-fitted, as required, with new eyes of green glass. A year or two's neglect might greatly improve Luang Prabang.

000 For all the briskness with which its holy places are maintained, the silence in Luang Prabang is only disturbed by the distant, classroom sounds of bonzes chanting in Pali, and the slow, mild booming of gongs. It is the home-town of the siesta and the Ultima Thule of all French escapists in the Far East. Europeans who come here to live soon acquire a certain, recognizable manner. They develop quiet voices, and gentle, rapt expressions. This is accompanied by the determined insouciance of the New Year's reveller. It is an attitude which is looked for and is put on like a false nose or a carnival hat. Laos-ized Frenchmen are like the results of successful lobotomy operations – untroubled and mildly libidinous. They salt their conversation with Laotian phrases, all of which express a harmoniously negative outlook. *Bo pen nhang*, which is continually to be heard, means no more than, 'It doesn't matter'. But said in Laotian it takes on the emphasis of a declaration of faith. Single men instantly take to themselves Laotian wives, completing their bride's happiness with the present of a superb bicycle, covered with mascots and pennants, and with chaplets of artificial flowers round the hub-caps, instead of the leather, dust-removing strap one sees in Europe. Several painters have retired here to escape the world,

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

346



Pagoda at Luang Prabang

[facing p. 288]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

A DRAGON APPARENT

000 But it was beginning to seem to me that, even allowing for the heat, something must be wrong. A hill rises sharply in the middle of the town, topped by a glittering pagoda. The climb up to this, long put off, was so thoroughly exhausting that it used up the day's
● 346 supply of energy. The pagoda when I finally got there was very small and contained a collection of mouldering wooden Buddhas. The re-decorating bonzes had not been able to bring themselves to climb up here, so that most of the paintwork and gilding had weathered away, to the carvings' great advantage. But there seemed to have been a recent clear-out, perhaps in preparation for a re-furbishing to come. The images that were too far gone in decay had been stuffed into niches of the surrounding rocks, one of which bore a bright yellow poster which I supposed at first to have some religious significance, but which proved to be an advertisement for the Victory Brand Glorious Firecracker Company, and showed a Chinese nationalist soldier giving the V sign. The attraction of the pagoda lay in its doors, deeply carved with a graceful, swirling design of foliage, dancers and elephants. In either direction one looked out upon a very Chinese scene of mountains and rivers barely sketched in mist. It was viewed through the bare scrawny branches of frangipani trees planted round the pagoda, and at a lower level the slopes were clouded with the flowering trees bearing the blossoms which are called locally golden flowers of Burma.

000 After the descent from the pagoda I actually felt the need of a pre-lunch nap, and slightly alarmed I asked a French acquaintance's advice. Characteristically, he recommended me to a Sino-Vietnamese doctor, celebrated, he said, for his almost magical cures. This readiness to put one's faith in exotic medicine is another phase of going native. I have seen it happen before in Central America where people of European origin are quite ready to have themselves treated by Indian *shimans*, excusing themselves with a 'you never know; there may be something in it, after all'. In this case I had formed the private theory that amoebic dysentery might be the trouble, which, while it exhausts the vitality, does not always pro-

Figure 1: /Frontispiece/. Temple of Sisaket at Vientiane.

order to prove that they had arrived first they pointed to a 175*
rattan basket which was placed at the top of a tree and 563
intertwined with the highest branches. That evening the Thaïs chose a higher tree and placed their oldest basket at the top of it. The following morning they showed it to the Khas, whose simple minds were convinced by the subterfuge and who yielded the spot."

4. The establishment of the Thaï dynasty of Khoun, which at first preserved close ties with Cambodia and perhaps also with China following the Mongol invasions, and whose 23rd representative, Phaya-Kham-Phong, reigned in 1316.

The chronological list, as complete as possible, of the chief- 175*
tains who ruled over the region before this latter date may be 643*
drawn up in the following manner:

/39/ 1. Phaya-Nan-Tha (from Ceylon?).

2. Phaya-Inthapatha (from Cambodia) who is said to have married the above chieftain's widow.

3. Thao-Phou-Tha-Saine, son of the foregoing.

4. Phaya-Ngou-Lueum, son of the foregoing.

5. Thao-Phe-Si, son of the foregoing.

6. Ay-Saleukheuk, son of the foregoing.

7. Ay-Tiet-Hai, son of the foregoing.

8. Thao-Tiantha-Phanit, a simple "betel merchant" who came from Vientiane miraculously covered with gold and magnificent cloth and who struck wonder into the people of Xieng-Dong-Xieng-Thong. When elected king he used his wealth to beautify the city. He built the first pagoda of Xieng-Thong and the "that" on the Phou-Si (1).

1. The group of religious structures which today bears the /346/
name of Xieng-Thong is said to date from 1561. (H. Parmentier, Inventaire des monuments du Laos.) With its graceful annexes and its neo-Burmese gate, it is numbered among the greatest successes of Laotian architecture.

9. Khoun-Swa, a Kha chieftain.

10. Khoun-Ngiba, son of the above.

11. Khoun-Viligna, son of the above.

12. Khoun-Kan-Hang, son of the above, under whose reign the Thaï invasion took place.

643* Complaints against such tyranny, which had heretofore been un-
175* known in the region of Lan-Xang, reached his father-in-law the king
642 of Cambodia. The latter summoned his son-in-law to Angkor and in the name of the Buddhist precepts advised him to use /47/ moderation and "pity towards the weak" (1). Fa-Ngoun seemed to accept the

1. According to Auguste Pavie's translators, Fa-Ngoun was content merely to send an embassy to Angkor at the request of Queen Nang-Kéo.

lesson, was baptized in accordance with the rites of the Hinayana and himself urged that a Cambodian mission composed of clergymen, scholars and artisans be sent to Muong-Swa. Pha-Maha-Pasaman-Théla-Tiao, the head of the mission, brought the sacred books of orthodox Buddhism and a statue of Buddha which had been given to the Kmer sovereign by the king of Ceylon in the ninth century. This statue was the Prabang, which became the palladium of the kingdom of Lan-Xang (2).

2. When the mission passed through Vientiane the governor Phao is supposed to have requested and obtained the right to keep the statue in the city for three years. Many legends recount the voyage of the Prabang in diverse manners and disagree as to the route followed. Here again it may be a question of the Vien-Kham in Tran-Ninh.

346 The Prabang. When they reached their destination the Kmer
175* workers began the construction of a temple, the Vat-Gnot-Kéo, where
643* the Prabang was solemnly placed in 1358. But it was not until two
103 centuries later, when the seat of the capital was transferred to Vientiane by the king Setthathirat (1563), that the name of Luang-Prabang was given to the city.

643* /48/ When he returned to his States Fa-Ngoun proclaimed him-
175* self Supreme Chief of religion and resumed, with a severe hand al-
631 though never exceeding the bounds of firmness, the administration of the various territories which then made up the kingdom of Lan-Xang. These were, namely, Muong-Swa in the strict sense; Xieng-Khong in the north (present region of Houei-Sai); Vientiane, Hoi-Luang and Xieng-La (on the Mékong downstream from Vientiane), Muong-Kabang (Bassac) in the south; Kham-Keut (now the province of Cammon) and Muong-Van (Savannakhet) in the east.

645 who should be in the dynastic tradition. After a long deliberation
175* which was made laborious by the fact that Lane-Kham-Dèng's children
643* were minors, it offered the crown to Thao-Lu-Sai, the governor of Muong-Sai-Muoi and last legitimate son of Sam-Sène-Thaï. Thao-Lu-Sai accepted and mounted the throne under the name of Phaya-Sai-Tiakaphat.

643* Twenty-three years old, he assumed power under difficult condi-
175* tions. The excesses of Nang-Keo-Phimpha had indeed weakened royal authority within the country and aroused the attention of the neighboring princes who, whether tributaries or not, were more or
/668/ less jealous of the power of the king of Lan-Xang. The rich province of Vientiane had always retained an inclination /64/ towards independence, and its governor, Sai-Moni, thought that the moment had come to shake off the yoke, but he was assassinated before he even had time to set out on the march (1). The failure of this movement

/346/ 1. The temple of Wat-Thai is supposed to have been erected in his memory by the inhabitants of Vientiane.

which was crushed "in the egg" doubtless gave cause for reflection to the vassals, who lay quiet and congratulated themselves on their reserve when they realized that Tiakaphat was a wise, steadfast and prudent sovereign who was quite determined to maintain the integrity of his States. He governed peaceably for forty years, intelligently seconded in the last years of his reign by his eldest son Thao-Kone-Kèo, who rapidly acquired an enlightened knowledge of the kingdom's affairs and an unquestioned authority in the Council of Ministers. The king created the unprecedented title of Sene-Muong for him, named him prince of Xieng-Lo and gave him the position of Oupahat.

721 The Annamite Invasion (1478-1479). Meanwhile the Annamites
643* were only waiting for an opportunity to extract vengeance for the
175* affront which Lê-Loi had once suffered and also to consolidate their western frontier which lay open on the Black River. /65/ If they had not done so before it was only because they had been prevented by the incessant incursions of the Chams on their southern frontiers, but in 1471 the king Lê-Thanh-Tôn occupied the land of Qui-Nhon and succeeded in destroying the kingdom of Champa once and for all, and in 1478 he used a futile incident as a pretext for invading Lan-Xang. If we are to believe the legend, Tiakaphat had refused

643* merchandise).
648* His life was also a short one. He died at the age of thirty-three,
175* handing down the crown to an only son born two years after his accession to the throne.

SOM-PHOU (1488-1502), KING 1496-1501.

643* This child, Som-Phou, who gave only his name to his reign, was
175 removed from power by the ministers, for reasons unknown, when he reached the age of thirteen. He then died in the following year.

/71/ VISOUN (1467), KING 1501-1520.

643* His uncle Phé-Sai (1) was summoned to the throne in his place in
175

1. Next to the last son of Tiakaphat.

/821/ 1501. According to the Annals, the sky was streaked with lightning and thundered unceasingly on the coronation day. Struck by this phenomenon, in which they saw a manifestation of divine satisfaction, the Council of Ministers gave him the name of Phaya-Visoun (lightning).
/787/ In 1506 a son was born to him who was named Phothisarath in consequence of a dream which Visoun's mother had a few days before the queen's delivery. "Banyans in flower (Kok-Pho) had appeared to her in which innumerable birds warbled joyfully." When consulted, the priests predicted that the expected child would be a Saint, and in the royal family everyone rejoiced at the thought that the newborn would come into the world under the sign of the sacred tree in whose shade Buddha had attained the triple science and found the secret of the destinies.
346 In order to magnify in anticipation, so to speak, the marvelous
643* events of his reign, King Visoun built many temples around his palace.
175* /72/ The foundations of a pagoda which was erected under his auspices to the memory of a daughter who had died young can still be seen today in Luang-Prabang (1).

1. Another pagoda, "Posot-Luang," which was located on the present site of the ice-house, has completely disappeared. Great celebrations were held there in honor of the birth of Photisarath.

643* PHOTHISARATH (1506), KING 1520-1547.
His son Phothisarath, who succeeded him in 1520, was an extremely

pious king who justified the bonzes' prophecies by his deeds. He 643*
built a magnificent pagoda to the memory of his father, the
Wat-Visoun (2), the materials for which were requisitioned from 346
175*

2. The edifice which bears this name dates from the time of the king Zakarine (1898). The enormous "stupa" next to it, which covered rich treasures which have only recently come to light, is now in the process of being restored.

the vassals of the northern provinces. Legend has it that the raft
carrying the columns provided by the king of Tran-Ninh sank /539/
downstream from Pak-Vet, and the inhabitants of the region still
say today that they can be seen at certain times of the year beneath the waters of the Nam-Khane.

Edict against the cult of the "Phis." The king's great piety 771
and his mystical attachment to the /73/ dogmas of orthodix 175*
Buddhism made him intolerant of the Brahmanic practices which 643*
continued to be honored by the peoples of his States. In 1527 he
prohibited the cult of the Genii and decreed that all the temples
erected to the "Phis" should be demolished. A pagoda called
"Sisouvannathevalok" (1) was built on the very site of the sanctuary/778/

1. This pagoda was destroyed by a tornado in 1883. The king at that time, His Majesty Sisavang-Vong, had it rebuilt in 1905 on the original foundations.

of the tutelary Genie of the capital. But it was impossible, even
for the supreme chief of existences, to drive from the heads of
people as fatalistic as his subjects were the innumerable superstitions
which they attached to accidents, to diseases and to the phenomena
of sky, earth and water. Despite the royal ordinances the cult of
the "Phis," together with a belief in sorcerers and witches, persisted and still persists today.

Phothisarath was the first of the kings of Lan-Xang to leave his 663
Xieng-Thong palace and reside at Vientiane for many years. 175*

Thanks to its central location and its comparative nearness to 633
the kingdoms of Ayuthya and Annam, this city had grown extensively as a consequence of the development of trade. The
Kmers, who had been in full decline /74/ since the ruin of Angkor
by the kings of Ayuthya, no longer had any influence there. The

115:Le Boulanger--53. H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

Fig. 5. The That-Luong at Vientiane.

/ facing p. 80/

633 Lunet de la Jonquiere has deduced that the ramparts of
643* Vientiane were composed of brick walls from four to six
175* meters in height with an earth banquette inside. They in-
172 cluded three sections, the salients of which were provided
/712/ with circular forts about eight meters high. Two gates which were fortified and crowned with spearhead ornaments gave entrance to the second section, one on the east towards the That-Luong, and the other on the west at the exit of the present Luang-Prabang road.

royal palace in the pagoda of which the emerald Buddha (Pra-Keo), the sign of power and command /82/ which he had brought from Xieng-Mai in 1548 (1), was placed.

/778/ 1. The emerald Buddha was in reality cut from a block of green jasper. The Siamese were to capture it in 1778 and take it to Bangkok, of which it became the tutelary divinity and where the sumptuous temple which rises today in the first court of the royal palace was built for it in 1785.

172 Of the eighty some pagodas which Vientiane was to boast, the
633 Wat Pra-Keo was assuredly one of the greatest and most beautiful.
175* "The trees which veil it (today), the lianas which tie it to the columns and spread a mysterious shadow over its ruins make the visitor feel something of what the soul of the ancients felt on the threshold of a sacred wood. Brick openwork forms the enclosure and monumental staircases lead to the parvis. A dragon writhes on the ramps and raises its menacing head in a last coil. The columns of the gallery are graceful, tall, slender and without a base, but end in a capital of long, sharp leaves which fold outwards and look as though they were raised by the weight which they bear..." (2).

2. De Carne, op. cit. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois. Paris, 1872./

175* The sanctuary was built on a terrace with three levels. The facade
172 opened onto a monumental portico whose three gateways and side
346 windows were richly framed /83/ /Page 83 is devoted to an illustra-
532 tion: "Ruins of the Pra-Keo at Vientiane"--Translator./ /84/ with many-colored sculptures. The whole edifice was entirely gilded on the outside.

Fig. 6. Ruins of the Pra-Keo at Vientiane.

/Facing p. 82/

The roof, the greater part of which still existed when Pavie 175*
went to Vientiane, has since collapsed and the two colossal statues 172
of Buddha which sit on the abandoned altar remain exposed to the 346
elements. Even as it is this grandiose ruin is wonderfully allied to 532
the natural vegetation which holds it in its grasp and one cannot, without some emotion, evoke before it the past splendor of the kingdom of Lan-Xang.

But the capital accomplishment of Setthitharath is the That-Luong, located about two kilometers away from the city. It is /341/
doubtless also the masterpiece of this Laotian architecture which has no powers of endurance but which cannot be denied grace and elegance. Miraculously spared by the Siamese at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the That-Luong was overthrown in 1873 by the Yunnanese pirates and partly restored, in rather a clumsy manner, in 1897-1898.

This pyramidal edifice, called the "plume of the world" by its founder, was the "reliquary of the kingdom" and is still a highly frequented center of pilgrimage. A stele commemorating its erection bears /85/ the date 1566, and according to legend the original that was built about the eleventh century on one of Buddha's hairs.

The first enclosure, which has today crumbled away, is almost confused with the large group of ruined temples which surrounds it. It was formed by an open cloister which was colored with frescoes and in which the faithful and the priests assembled. The second enclosure is formed by a ledge along which runs a garland of bulging ornaments. "One would be tempted to call them the petals of a gigantic lotus bloom on the point of opening. Heavy pedestals covered with inscriptions support thirty-four slender pinnacles. Leaning on these pedestals as on buttresses, the mass on which the pyramid is set begins to deploy its curves and the pyramid itself springs from a sheaf of broad leaves, like the stem of a plant. . . . It once sparkled with gold applied on a lead base, shreds of which can still be seen" (1).

1. De Carne, ibid. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois. Paris, 1872. /, quoted by Aymonier, Voyage dans le Laos. See below, Laotian Architecture, p. 124.

First Burmese invasion (1563-1565). Solidly entrenched in his 643*
new capital, Setthathirath waited to see what the turn of events 648*
would be. /86/ He did not have long to wait, for Bureng-Naung 726
175*

545 and a barb of satire are mingled with the ancient traditions."
/177/ (L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 191.)

341 The other arts: architecture. Carefree artists: this is what the
346 Laotians seem to have been throughout the ages. And this is what
172 explains the extreme fragility of the innumerable monuments with which they adorned their land and which the pitiless tropical vegetation is today strangling for the most part. Under the Kmer influence
/177/ in the south and the Burmese in /125/ the north they built temples, chapels, pagoda-libraries, and reliquaries in the shape of "lotus blossoms" or pyramids or cones which were without any originality of their own but almost always charming in the grace, prettiness and elegance of their details. The reigning princes, from Fa-Ngoun to Souligna, were all great builders of temples, but if we except three or four edifices in Luang-Prabang, a few pagodas and chapels, the That-Luong in Vientiane and the Vat Sisaket which is only a century old, practically nothing is left of this abundant flowering (1).

1. There can be no question here of the important monastery of Vat-Phou (Bassac), which is really Kmer and belongs in some way to the Angkor group.

Everywhere in Laos one encounters impressive ruins of brick pagodas which were clumsily built but in which the plaster which covered them still frames the openings with many-colored ornaments and exquisite arabesques. For several years the French have tried, albeit somewhat tardily, to save the chief of these mutilated vestiges of an Edenic past from total destruction. Even the Vat Prakeo itself is today, alas! irrevocably destined to final disintegration.

"More fragile still (was) the style of building /126/ in wood which may well have yielded the most beautiful of the country's achievements. One of the most interesting of these exists today only in the memory which was recorded by a drawing of Delaporte at the time of the expedition of Doudart de Lagree... This was a pagoda located in the vicinity of Luang-Prabang... its form was highly individual, and reminds one of a feeding trough or a bread-pan. Delaporte compares it to an Oriental tomb. Rectangular in shape, its walls flared out up to the first roof. The latter was surmounted by a second recessed story which flared out again to support a second richly ornamented roof..."

"The wooden panels which formed the walls, the corbels, and 341
the beams were all carved with great delicacy. This pagoda was 346
as pretty in the fineness of its details as it was elegant in its gen- 172
eral lines.

"But nothing is left of it" (1).

1. Cf. G. Maspero, L'Indochine /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930/, p. 186.

Sculpture. For these sanctuaries, the Laotians made hordes of 532
statues out of stone, brick, and especially bronze, which were 175*
wholly or partly covered with gold. Of the latter, which were al-
ways molded from wax models, some attained gigantic size. /127/
All of them strike the various attitudes of the Buddhist liturgy. The
bodies are sketchily draped and may be seated, standing, walking
or lying down, their arms outspread. The faces are surmounted by
a sort of tiara and are frozen in a hieratic smile which is not very
expressive and seldom varies.

Painting. As for the fresco paintings which brighten the walls
of certain pagodas, they are not of any special interest. Most of /177/
them were "primarily the work of Burmese, Cambodians or Chinese
of whom the native artists (were only) the pupils" (1).

1. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 342.

The art of the gold and silver smith. On the other hand, the 326
Laotian jewelers and silversmiths knew and still know, with only
the most meager of tools, how to work gold and silver admirably--
primarily silver--and how to chase and engrave it. Their motifs
show an attractive decorative invention, and it is chiefly in this
"minor art" which borders on small-scale industry that we find the
most original manifestations of old-time Laotian life /128/ --
betel services, vases, cups, sword and dagger hilts; bracelets,
necklaces, rings, headpins, earrings, etc.

Basketwork and weaving. Finally, "like all the peoples of the 285
Far East, the Laotians are skilled in all kinds of basketwork. A 531
very pretty object which seems to be peculiar to this land is the
small basket for women in which the basketwork is covered with

been the vassal of Annam and used to pay a triennial trib- 643*
ute. The Tayson revolt forced it to submit to the Siamese, 648*
who are mistreating the people. Today, seeing the glory 175*
and power of Emperor Gia-Long, the prince of Vientiane asks to serve Annam once again and to pay tribute as in the past.' The embassy was received in a solemn audience by Gia-Long, who questioned it at length on the administration of the country, and was sent back, after a month's stay, with magnificent gifts.... The ambassadors brought back to the prince of Vientiane a letter from Gia-Long conceived in the following terms: 'Your predecessor Chao-In was my vassal, and my policy with respect to your kingdom has always been marked by gentleness and goodwill. Remain faithful to your duty and show yourself ever humane towards your people, and you will thereby comply with my wishes.' The question of tribute was settled. It was to be paid every three years, and the time of payment set in such a way that the embassy responsible for bringing it might greet the king during the holiday of the Tet." (Cf. Annals of the court of Hue.)

to /161/ detach Luang-Prabang from Bangkok (1). After the Bassac

1. See below, p. 201.

campaign he had sent Chao-Ngo to fortify Oubone. A triple-entrenched camp was built there and recruits trained, supposedly to defend Siam against any attack from inside or outside.

In Vientiane, he governed in the midst of a brilliant court. 369
The city of Setthathirath and Souligna, although fallen from its 175
former splendor, still contained more than ten thousand families and prided itself on its royal /162/ palace (1) and its many pagodas

1. When the Doudart de Lagree mission visited the city in /172/
1867 the mass of its fallen stones stretched from the Prakeo to the ruins -- which were then still imposing -- of the Wat-Kang. (De Carne, op. cit. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'empire chinois. Paris, 1872./) See above, p. 122, the account by Father Marini.

whose gilt glittered above the walls of its fortifications. In 1818 /346/

369 Anou had built the new temple of Sisaket not far from the deconse-
175 crated Prakeo "with the purpose of attracting the grace of Heaven
/346/ to the souls of his parents as well as to those of all his relatives and to all the souls which people Hell and the world" (2). The corner-

2. Cf. inscription on the stele.

stone was laid on "Thursday, the ninth day of the waxing moon of the year Kap-San" (1824), in the midst of a large assembly of the populace.

778 Inauguration of the temple of Sisaket (1824). On this occasion
796 the king made innumerable gifts to the bonzes (clothing, sandals,
346 fans, iron pen points to write on latania leaves, mats, mattresses,
175* copper betel services, rice baskets, vases, metal drinking cups, carafes, goblets, etc.). He gave /163/ pieces of cloth to the poor, and generous bounties to artisans and musicians. The people walked in procession around the royal palace, carrying oriflammes and effigies of animals which were flowered and perfumed with incense. The holiday lasted three days, to the accompaniment of general rejoicing (1).

1. Ibid. /Inscription on the stele./

346 This temple was the only one which the French found still standing when they reached Vientiane. Of the first enclosure there remain two 'thats', which have recently been restored, and an elegant square pavilion-library whose quadruple pinnacled roof is supported by a graceful colonnade. Three other pavilions have disappeared (2).

2. A bath pavilion, one for worship and one for the tom-toms and gongs.

A cloister pierced by a porch on each side surrounds the central sanctuary, the outer gallery of which discloses a gateway and finely worked windows under the triple porch roofs. The inside walls are
/532/ illuminated by frescoes surmounted by many niches in the form of lotus leaves where thousands of statuettes are grouped in pairs. A wooden ceiling is embellished with gilded panels, and on the altar stands a giant Buddha entirely covered with gold leaf.

115:Le Boulanger--105 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

Fig. 10. Square of the temple of Sisaket at Vientiane.

/Facing p. 164/

115: Le Boulanger--161- H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(20th Cent.) Laotians AM8

Fig. 14. The peristyle of the Vat-Mai in Luang-Prabang.

/Facing p. 260/

115: Le Boulanger--194 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(20th Cent.) Laotians AM8

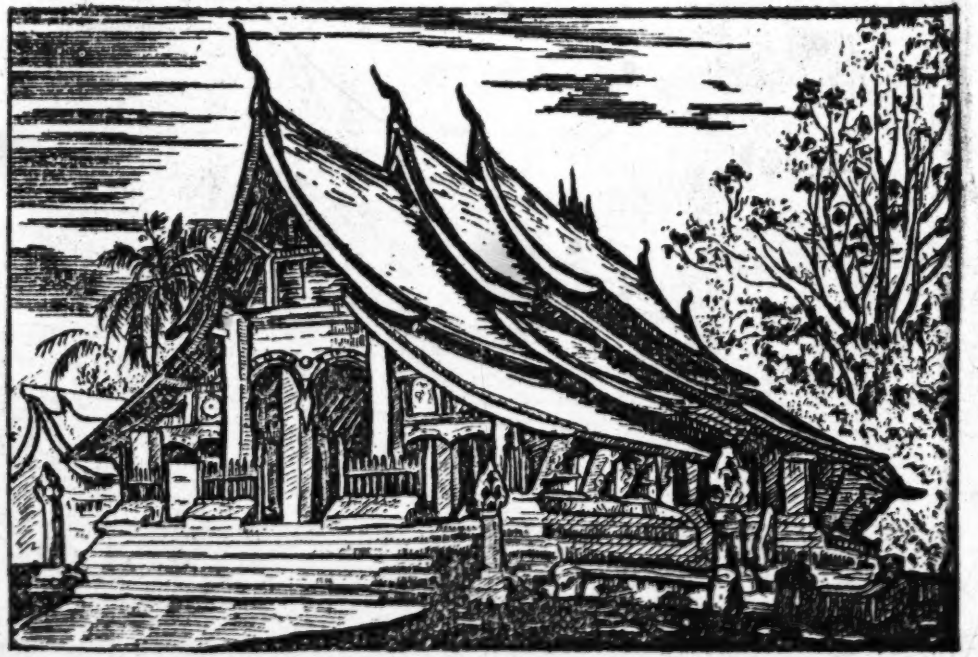


Fig. 17. The pagoda of Kieng Thong in Luang-Prabang.

/Facing p. 321/

149: Reinach--4a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

● 346

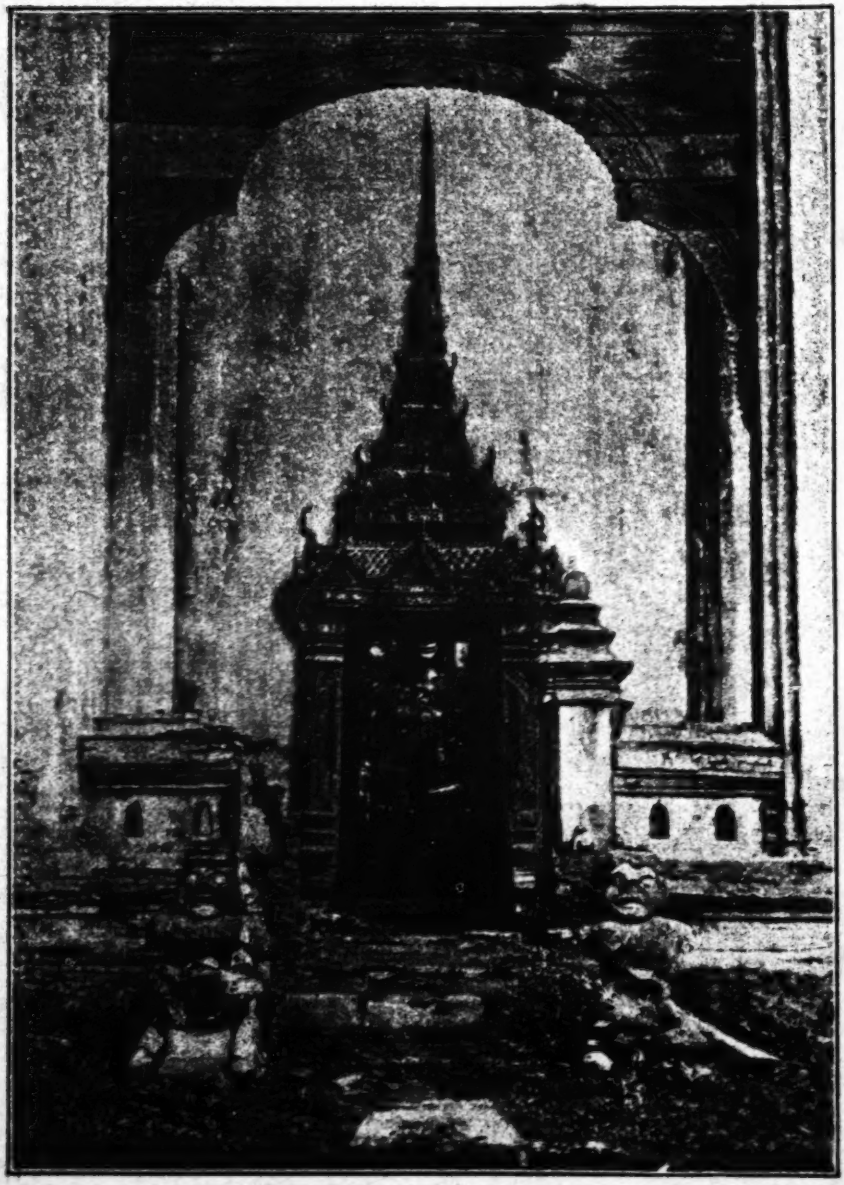
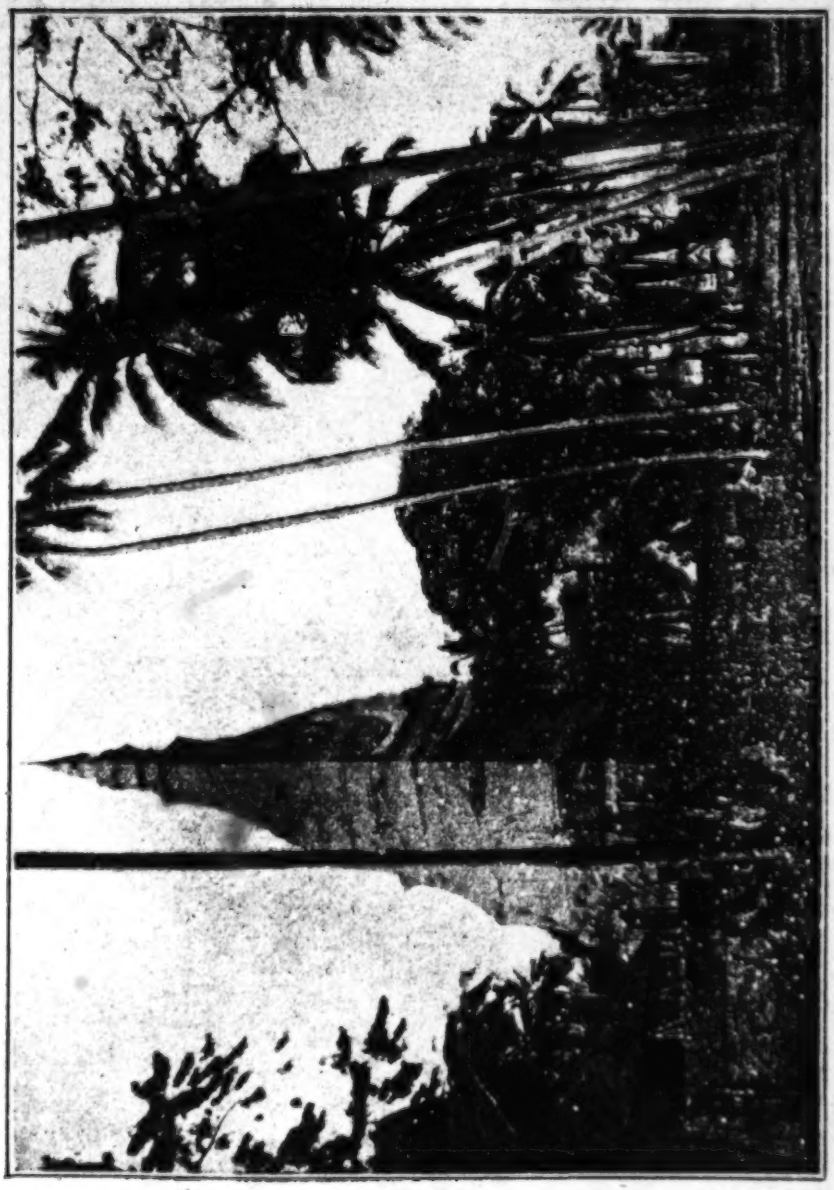


Fig. 3 [p. 5] Entrance to a pagoda in Vien-Tiane.
(Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

149; Reinach--64a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

346



149: Reinach--97a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

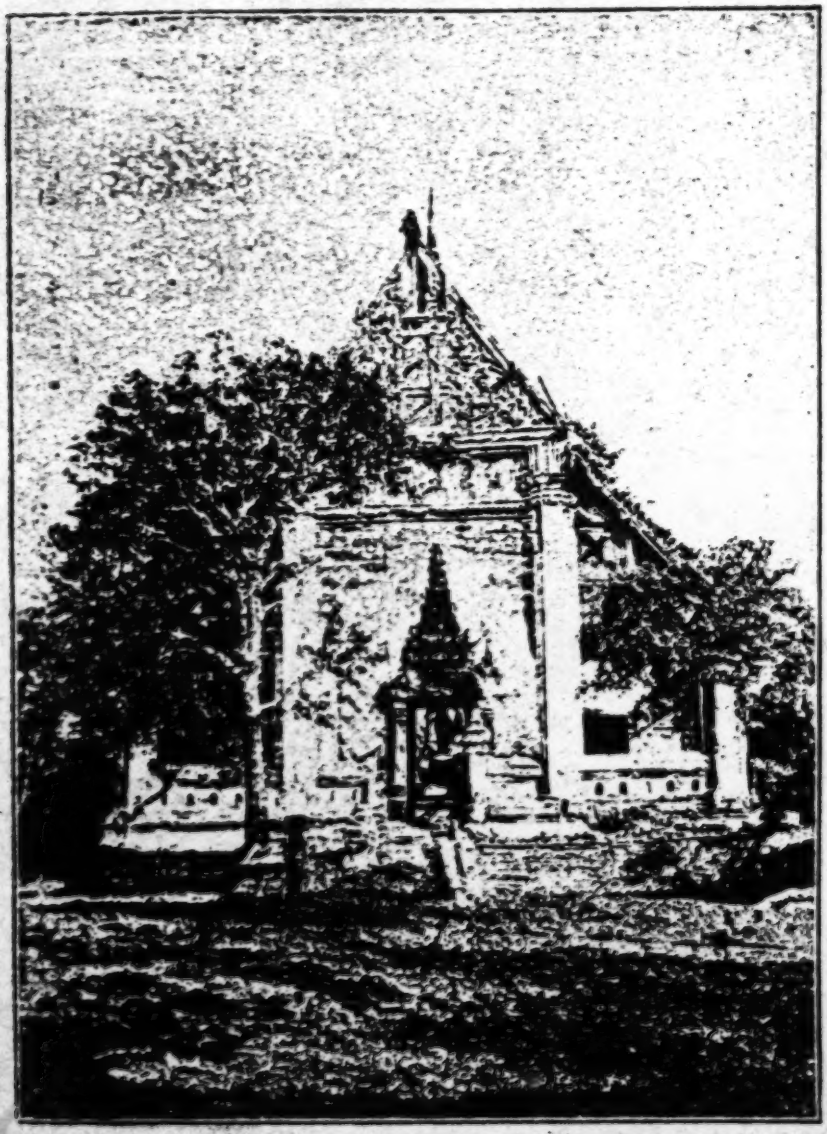


Fig. 35 /p. 129/ Ruins of a pagoda in Vien-Tiane.
(Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

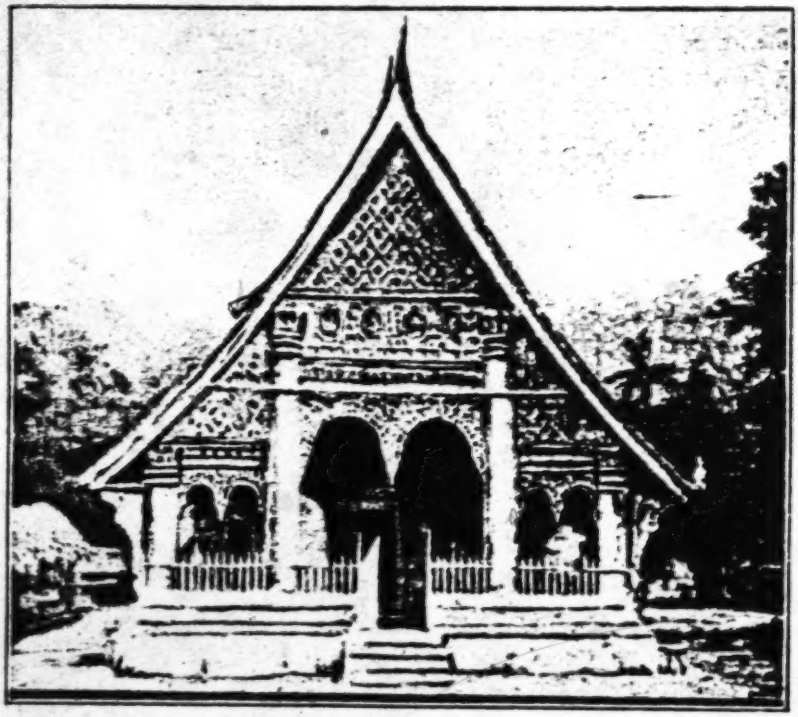


Fig. 38 /p. 146/ Pagoda in Luang-Prabang.
(Courtesy of M. Besson.)

149: Reinach--110a ©-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

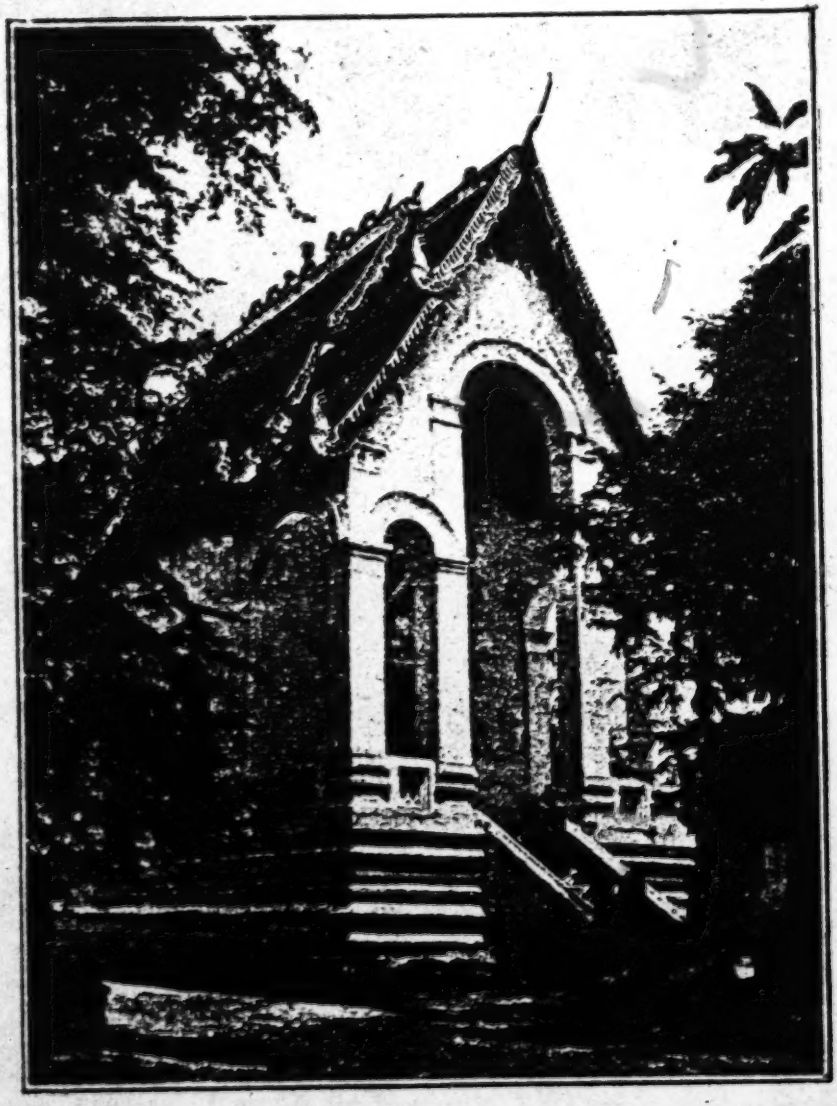


Fig. 39 /p.148/ Doorway of a pagoda in Don-Sang-Phai.
(Khong Archipelago.)

149: Reinach--114a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Fig. 40 /p.152/ Pagoda in Khong.

149: Reinach--116a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AMB

Fig. 41 /p.155/ Pagoda of the Rocks. --Island of Khong.

149: Reinach--124a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

792
346
778

Fig. 43 /p. 165/ A ceremony in the Wat-Si-Saket Pagoda in Vien-Tiane.

304 produced with an implement bearing several fine points which are dipped in India ink or diluted cinnabar. Depending on the coloring matter used, the tattoos are dark blue or brick red in color. The tattoo artists give their taste and fancy free rein and produce the most varied designs which, for example, represent intertwined snakes, dragons, lions, tigers and imaginary animals. Oftentimes there is only one overall color which makes the tattooed person look like a man wearing a close-fitting blue bathing suit.

304 885 The practice of tattooing is a very old one and its origin is lost in [186] dark antiquity. It is at once a kind of coquetry and a proof of courage because of the suffering which the operation causes and the dangers it involves in a land where antisepsis is unknown to the natives and where the tools used are as dirty as the operators. [Illustration here]

In some localities a man who is not tattooed is regarded as lacking in virility, and as a sign of his inferiority he may not bathe upstream from women.

562 304 Laotian women are not tattooed. This custom is practiced only by the Youn and Kha women, where tattoos are usually limited to lines, stars or reptiles on the hands, imitations of rings on the fingers, etc.

301 [187] Personal adornment. In all seasons both men and women wear flowers on their ears or in a string around their coil of hair. This gracious custom, which flatters both the eye and the sense of smell, must be extremely ancient in origin. It is to be found in many parts of the globe which have no relation to Laos, and particularly in Polynesia. [Illustration here]

• 346 531 Pagodas. Laotian pagodas are as numerous as they are varied in respect to type of construction, architecture, dimensions and ornamentation. In sparsely populated villages and poor muongs the pagodas are built like the houses, either of wood, thatch or bamboo lattice, although with greater care and a few slight additional decorations. Elsewhere, in the larger centers, the pagodas are built of brick, roofed with tile, enhanced by many-colored and gilded ornaments of carved wood and embellished with pseudo-sculptured motifs made of staff. On the inside, the walls are covered with brightly colored frescoes [188] which often picture, against a gold background, religious or warlike scenes taken from the Ramayâna and other more realistic ones which often border on obscenity.

346 Pagodas are always built on ground which has been perfectly leveled, is quite extensive and is surrounded by a wooden palisade or brick wall of elbow height.

[485] Within the pagoda enclosures there are bonzeries and dependent structures to serve as quarters for the bonzes, schools for their pupils and hostelries for travelers.

735 The construction and upkeep of pagodas are entirely dependent on the generous liberality of the faithful. Thus these edifices can be used
346 as a criterion for discovering both the state of prosperity of a region and the religious faith of its inhabitants.

[778] As used to be the case for our churches, Laotian pagodas and even their enclosures are, according to the customs of the land, sanctuaries which confer immunity against legal prosecution for certain crimes and misdemeanors.

[527] It is also in the enclosure and sometimes under the cloisters and verandas of the pagodas that the inhabitants gather on the legal holidays, and also private holidays, which are known as "Ngans".

844 Childbirth. Dr. Estrade describes the delivery of a woman of southern Laos as follows. The preliminaries, the operation itself and post-delivery procedure are the same, with only slight differences in detail, in northern Laos, and we may therefore quote Dr. Estrade's description as applicable to all of Laos in general.

"Childbirth never takes place in the house inhabited by the pregnant woman or her direct relatives, but always in the home of a neighbor or distant relative who gives hospitality to the patient until she is up and about again. The duration of pregnancy is counted in moons, as in all calculations of time, the moon being the essential element for the Laotian in the measurement of time and the occurrence
777 of a great many phenomena. When a woman reaches the last moon of her pregnancy she takes certain precautions all tending to delay
821 delivery until the first phase of the new moon, since births during the last phases are signs of misfortune [189] such as the death of the child,
[782] deformity, etc. These prejudices have such force that parents are careless in caring for any child born during the last phases of the moon, and in such a case all of their effort goes into prayers, offerings to the bonzes and the making of votive offerings (1)

(1) This assertion should not, however, be taken too literally or in any general sense. This is a prejudice which is kept up by the bonzes in their own self-interest, and is easy to see through. (Author's note.)

149: Reinach--198a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

346

Fig. 76 /p. 282/ Catholic mission in Bassac.

149: Reinach--270a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

346

Fig. 93 /p. 368/ A that.

149: Reinach--387a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

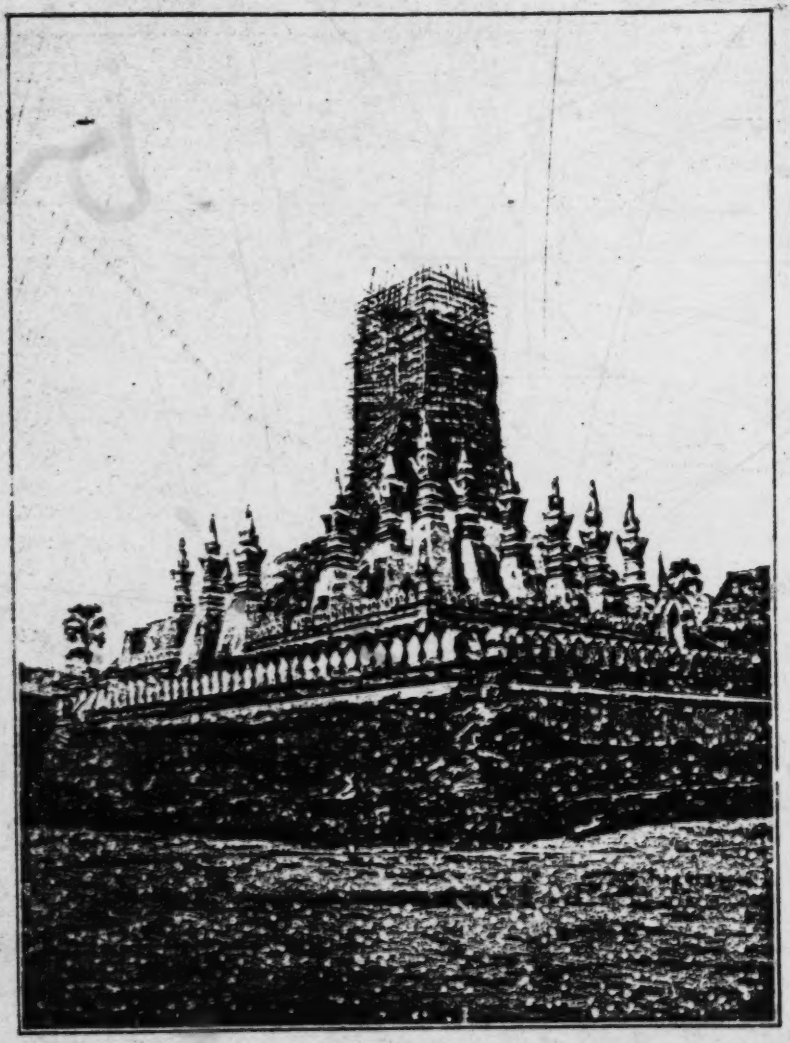


Fig. 122 /p. 513/ The That-Louang in Vien-Tiane.

175 the fourteenth century. Archaeological discoveries made in recent
177 years in the region of Luang Prabang and more recent ones in the
779 neighborhood of Vientiane may enable this important event in the religious history of Laos to be moved back more than two centuries.

[23] The Pagoda.

346 "Laotians liked to place their pagodas on high points, but their
778 marked taste for the edge of the water made them prefer the neighborhood of rivers. This location of pagodas is a natural consequence of
[792] the relations between bonzes and inhabitants. The former drew their livelihood from the latter, and these are crowded on the river banks."
In principle the pagoda consists of three elements:

346 1) The buildings connected directly with the cult: vat, chapels, libraries; that, standing landmarks and niches;

2) The surrounding enclosures, exterior and interior;

3) The buildings for the immediate use of the inhabitants of the pagoda: monastery [bonzerie], cells for the bonzes, reception halls.

The vat consists of a large hall furnished with a pedestal on which stands the statue of the Buddha often accompanied by a preaching pulpit. The columns and walls are frequently ornamented with paintings.

Among the annexes of the vat, the most numerous are the chapels which are in the form either of delicate buildings or small compound halls.

The that is a votive and sometimes a funereal monument. (See appendix on Vientiane).

The only piece of furniture always found in the vat is the preaching pulpit, an elegant construction, often made of gilded wood. By way of furniture there are a few seats for the chiefs of the bonzes,
[788] particularly for the torch bearer. Finally, particularly in the region of Luang Prabang, one finds the hang-lin, a curious spout-shaped object, with elegant decoration, which is used for sprinkling the Buddhas on great feast days (cf. the New Year). These various finely carved objects are usually made of gilded wood and are sometimes inlaid with enamelled lead [24] whose brilliant gleam makes them sparkle. The manuscript chests are usually collected in the
[217] libraries, piled up in the shape of an inverted pyramid; they are generally carved and gilded.

796 disciples: "It is not proper that I should enter Nirvana without having conversed with those who have taken care of me, without having spoken to the community of disciples." After he had spoken to them, he received a visit from Mara, the Buddhist demon, to whom he said: "Do not worry, oh Malin, [perhaps= oh wily one--Translator] in a short time it will be the Nirvana of the Perfect one, in three months I will enter into Nirvana."

It is the memory of this reunion of disciples which the Laotians celebrate during the feast. This ceremony is the classic boun with alms to the bonzes, candles, small stick of incense, etc.

Boun Pha vet.

796 This boun may take place from the third Laotian month on. Once
346 a year, each pagoda in turn organizes a great feast. The day before, the pagoda is filled with bonzes who have come from very far away to hear the reading of this edifying story, while the young people arrive during the night to pay court to the young girls. By six o'clock of the next morning, the reading begins and only ends at nightfall. At half past seven the offering of food is made to the bonzes, then the recitation of an act of grace. After which the venerables continue the reading of the Phat Vet until the evening, taking turns at regular intervals. In the courtyard of the pagoda, a pedestal has been erected especially for the ceremony. In the center of this rises a preaching pulpit made of a banana trunk which is carved all over and surrounded by draperies on three sides in order to [35] mask the public from the bonz At the base of the four pillars supporting the pulpit, four urns of perfumed water are placed, covered with a banana leaf, and between them in the center there is a bag of paddy and a basket of salt. Along the walls of this temporary hall is displayed the history of Pha Vet painted on cloth. Each reader receives a basket in which the offerings are fancily arranged. At the end of the reading of each chapter all the listeners throw a handful of grilled rice afar. Outside at the four cardinal points small altars are erected with offerings of rice. To the east, in a secluded spot, stands a larger altar which is covered and in which are placed a miniature mat and mattress, some pillows, small sticks of incense, candles, rice pellets, flowers, a tea pot and a bowl for alms. This altar is for the reception of Pra Upagutta who will protect the feast from the malignant influences of Mara (Cf. B.E.F.E.O. 1904: Mara and Upagutta).

This story is often represented in the pagoda paintings, particularly in the Vat May at Luang Prabang.

173: Deydier --66 H, 8-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

346

Fig. IX. Vientiane. Library of the Vat Siaket (Cl. Service Français d'Information [French Information Service]).

173: Deydier --67 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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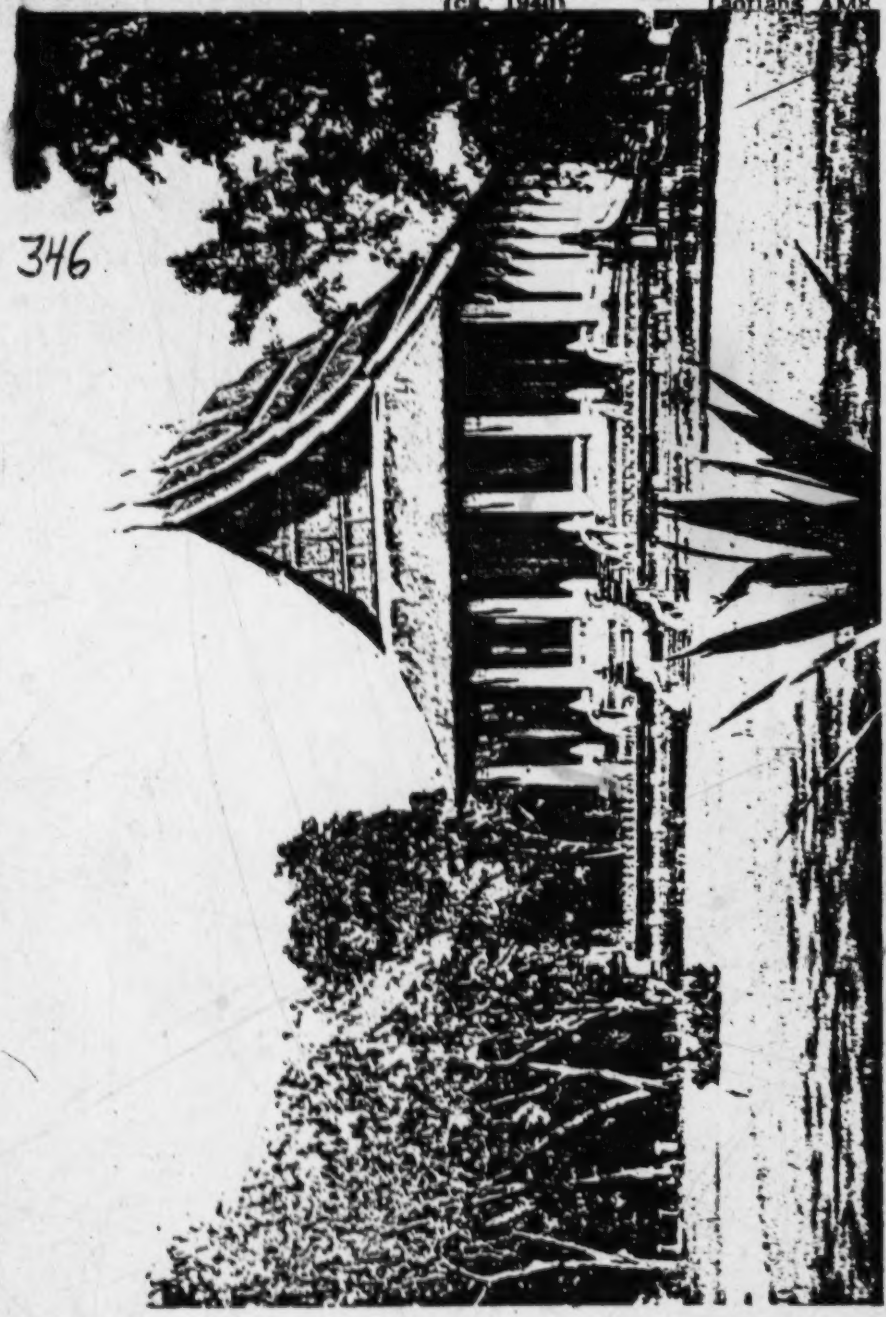

Fig. X. Vientiane. The Vat Phra Keo (Cl. Roz). [150]

173: Deydier--69 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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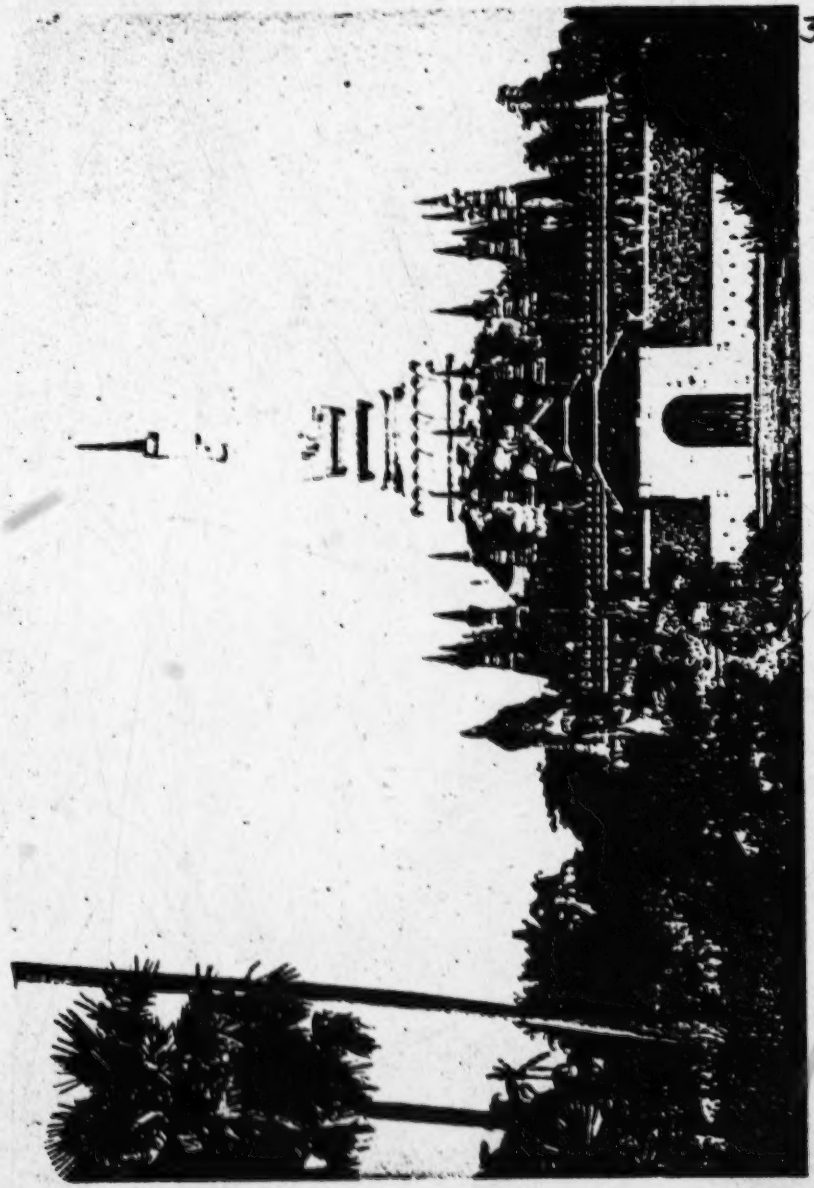

Fig. XII. Vientiane. The That Luang seen from the west. (Cl. Presse Information).

173a Deydier --70 H. B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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Fig. XIII. Luang Prabang. Vat Visun. Door wing of the northern facade. (Cl. E.F.E.O.)

173: Deydier--71 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

[154]

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Fig. XIV. Luang Prabang. Vat Pakhe, Door-wing of the Dutch (Cl. Presse Information).

173: Deydier--72 H. B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

346

Fig. XV. Luang Prabang. Vat Phra Huak. Principal eastern facade. (Cl. E.F.E.O.)

173: Deydier --73 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

346

Fig. XVI. Luang Prabang. The That Luang. (Cl. E.F.E.O.)

10: d'Orleans--325 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 347, 363, 443

"In front of us is a broad avenue, lined with fine trees, which is perpendicular to the river, and is intersected at a distance of a hundred yards or so by a road which runs parallel to the Mekong. This is the main street of Luang Prabang, upon the two sides of which the market is held morning and evening. The animation is greatest in the morning, when, for a distance of more than half a mile, there is a long row of small booths, some of which are rather lofty, and are surmounted by a roof of bamboos, while others are very close to the ground. These booths are the rendezvous of the whole population, of the bourgeoisie, of the mountaineers, of the bonzes, of the working classes, and of the villagers."

10: d'Orleans--327 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 347, 363

THE MARKET STREET AT LUANG PRABANG (ELEPHANTS PASSING THROUGH).

149: Reinach--10a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Fig. 7 /p. 15/ Stung-Treng. Residence of the agent of the French Government, in 1892. (Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

[p.16 is blank]

149: Reinach--78a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

347

Fig. 30 /p. 105/ Agency of the River Merchant Fleet /Messageries fluviales/ at Luang-Prabang. (Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

149: Reinach--84a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

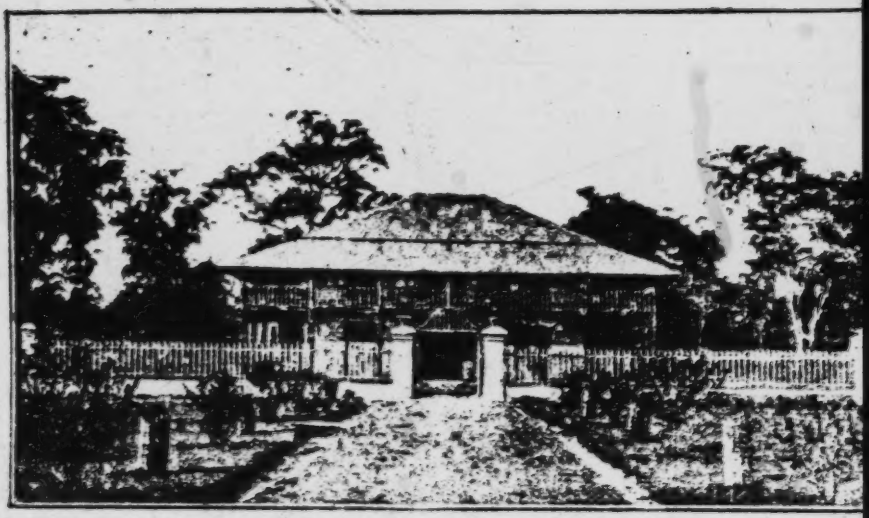

Fig. 32 /p. 113/ Main office of the River Merchant Fleet /Messageries fluviales/ in Savannakhet
(Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

149: Reinach--270 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

GROUND NUTS. Only the subterranean varieties of ground nuts, or peanuts, are found in Laos. The inhabitants call this plant "Mak-Thoua-Dine," which means, literally, Fruit of the ground bean. Peanuts are not used for their oil, but are eaten boiled, roasted or with certain pastries in which they are incorporated. They are fed to convalescents as a tonic and restorative, doubtless because of their high nitrogen content. 244

COCONUT AND SUGAR PALMS. The former is called "Kok-Mak-Phao" and its fruit is called "Mak-Phao." The second is called "Kok-Mak-Tane" and its fruit the "Mak-Tane." The sugar extracted from the "Mak-Tane" is called "Nam-Tane." 245

These two trees are cultivated almost everywhere in the environs of villages.

Coconuts are consumed on the spot, either fresh or dried. In the latter case their meat is used to make an edible oil which is quite good when newly made, or else it is shredded and then used to make a kind of sugar cream. Coconut meat is one of the constituents of carry.

The number of coconut palms in Laos is not great enough [368] to provide for local needs and still leave any over for export of their pulp, which is known commercially as copra. Sugar palms are used only for the needs of the local population. The sugar which they yield is whiter than cane sugar as extracted by the Laotians, and so the natives give the name of "Nam-Tane" to the crystallized European and Chinese sugar, because of its color, and never apply to it the name "Nam-Oi," which designates their black cane sugar.

BETEL PALMS. Betel palms are grown wherever the altitude permits, and are even found at heights greater than eight hundred meters. [Illustration alongside text here] The betel palm, which is called "Kok-Mak," produces the "Mak" nut with the veined meat which enters into the composition of the national masticatory together with betel, lime, etc. 249 276

When it reaches maturity the betel nut is picked and prepared in two different ways in order to be either consumed on the spot or transported to parts of the country which have none. There is even a small export trade, but so slight that we need only mention it. [348]

It may be preserved whole after the floss envelope from which it is extracted has been dried, or else it may be cut up into [369] thin

23: Franck--261-262 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 349, 491

"There were many long thatch-roofed bridges, some of them curved, some with sharp angles, bridges of timbers and rough-hewn planks evidently cut on the spot, some covered with woven bamboo splints, bridges supported only by the upright trunks of trees along the sides of them, so that even [262] the least nervous of travelers could not but have wondered whether they would always hold the weight our heavy car suddenly put upon them. Many similar bridges had been abandoned and left to disintegrate into the jungle again, because the road had been cut farther back into the hillsides."

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[584]
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colors are bright and harmonious. It is during these days of rejoicing that the first amorous intrigues often spring up between young people which, generally speaking, end in marriage.

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Preparations for the funeral celebration went on, and dusk had not yet fallen when music and singing began to be heard and plates of food were passed around, as well as jars full of rice brandy.

Immediately after the death, men went to the forest to select the dead, but not decaying, tree whose trunk was to serve for making the coffin. Others prepared the pedestal on which it was to be placed and the roof which would surmount it.

The coffin was finally finished. Trapezoidal in shape, with the base uppermost, it rested on a wooden pedestal decorated with carvings. [531] The roof placed above it was copied from the roofs of pagodas. The frame was made of bamboo lattice covered with glued calico, and the whole was ornamented with gold paper cutouts, streamers and multicolored cotton floss.

[205] The body was sealed in its coffin, where it rested on a bed of aromatic branches and leaves. It was fully dressed and surrounded by bedclothes. A sliding cover was dovetailed into place, and all joints sealed with an indestructible caulking compound made from lime, clay, albumen and paddy husks. [Illustration alongside text here]

The catafalque stood in the middle of the room, one of the walls of which had been removed, as we have seen. It was surrounded by flowers, green branches, lighted candles and stick incense perfumed with powdered benzoin.

In the course of the next four days the province bonzes and officials arrived, and all recited the ritual prayers in Pali around the catafalque without understanding anything of what they said but scrupulously observing the consecrated rhythm and intonation.

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In the meantime a funeral pyre had been built on the sandy bank of the Mékong, left bare by the low waters, using about three [206] steres of dry wood which had been impregnated with resin, wood oil and kerosene.

Solidly held in place at the side by six heavy stakes of green wood, the pyre was surmounted by a high canopy or rectangular pavilion, the roof of which rose in tiers and was covered with flowered cotton cloth and decorated with gold paper garlands, cutouts and many-colored streamers.

This pavilion, supported by four posts decorated in the same taste, would presently serve to shelter the coffin.

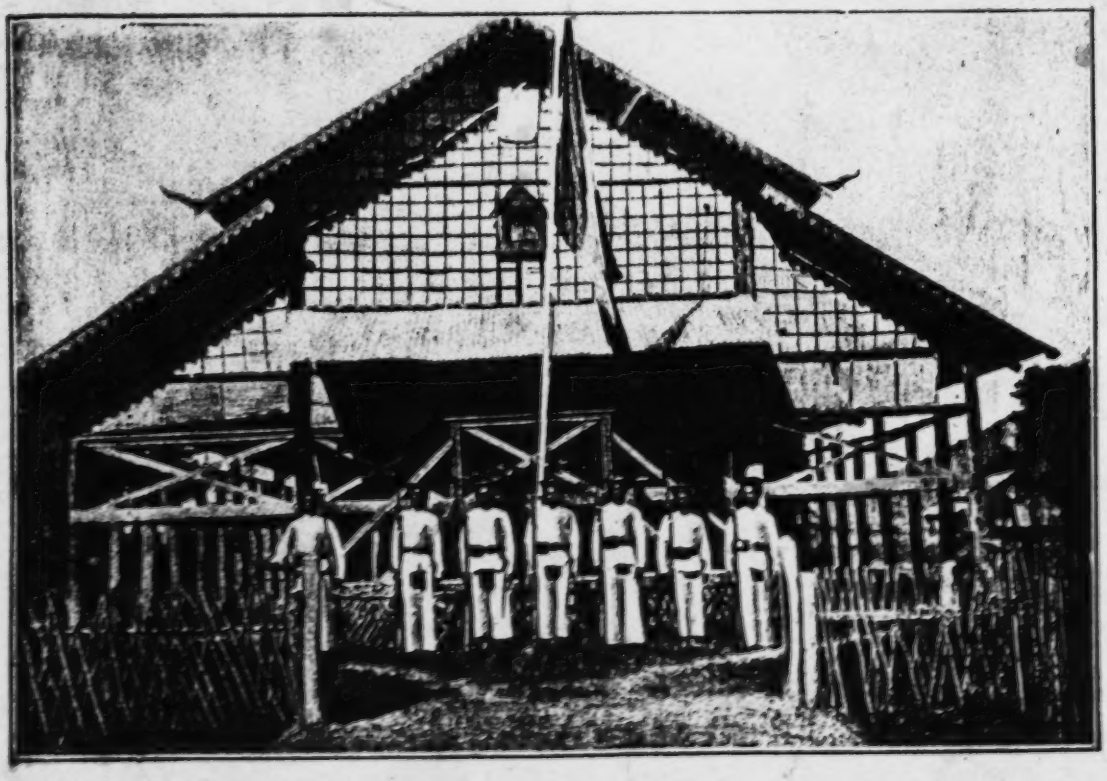

Fig. 75 /p.279/ Barrack of the militia at Khong.

149: Reinach--28la G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 96 /p.385/ A house of the "Phis."

149: Reinach--139 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Houses are generally situated in the middle of an enclosure which serves as a garden, and where coconut palms, betel palms and other fruit trees are planted.

276

Use of tobacco and betel. The Laotians use tobacco, which they grow and prepare quite skilfully, in the form of conical cigarettes which are rolled in dried banana leaves. They also mix it with their betel quids. Everybody smokes--men, women and children. It is not unusual to see children four years old, completely naked, puffing clouds of smoke from a cigarette which is enormous in comparison to their little fingers.

Like a great many other peoples of Asia, Laotians chew "betel." As we know this type of quid is composed of a leaf of "piper betel" which is smeared with slaked lime and on which is placed tobacco, a piece of betel nut or some "sisiet" bark (or [185] the extract from this bark, called catechu). It is then rolled and placed in the mouth between the cheek and the gums.

Chewing betel causes abundant salivation, blood red in color, which makes quite an impression at first sight but to which one gradually becomes accustomed.

It is claimed that chewing betel is not a mere habit, but that it has several useful effects on the organism. It is supposed to keep one from being thirsty and to be an astringent and tonic, somewhat like cola or coca.

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Teeth lacquer. So as to preserve the enamel of their teeth from the corrosive action of the lime and from other acidulous elements contained in the betel nut, the Laotians have the custom of lacquering their teeth black. To accomplish this they rub them with the sap of certain hardwood trees, which they obtain through partial combustion of the wood and condensation of the smoke on an iron spatula. A kind of sticky black coating is thereby produced, which dries rapidly and is made to adhere to the teeth by means of alum.

276

Opium. The use of opium is quite widespread in Laos, and unfortunately its effects do not help to diminish the natural apathy of the race.

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Tattoos. It is customary for men to be tattooed from beneath the knee to the upper part of the thigh. For this reason the Laotians of the left bank of the Mekong are called "white bellies" in opposition to the Youns of the other bank, whose tattoos cover the stomach and abdomen and who are known as "black bellies." The tattoos are

11: League of Nations--54 [4] G-5 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 342, 352

"The houses in Lao are square with a fairly large veranda serving as a hall, reception room and weaving-room. The interior is divided into two parts by partitions of planking or bamboo; one part is the common room, while the other consists of small rooms for the women.

The veranda is reached by a staircase, and a second staircase leads to a small open-air platform at the other end of the house which serves as a kitchen.

There is no furniture. Mats and quilts are spread on the floor."

23: Franck--269 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 342, 352, 361 Ethnic subgroup

"Though I only suspected it then, I was destined to know Nam-lien [EJ: a'Black Miao' village in Laos.] better than I know my own birthplace, nay, than Paris or Rio de Janeiro. It consisted of a dozen thatched huts with earth floor and wattled walls on either side of the wide space that served as road, one of them the sala or rest-house for French travelers. Two bare-woven bamboo cots and a rough wooden table comprised the furnishings of this, unless one also counted the soft layer of dust on the earth floor as a rug. A few things such as eggs were purchasable about the village--though I should have been in hard luck indeed if I had not taken official advice and brought a few canned supplies with me--and a native was available to boil water and do the simplest form of cooking."

25: Brodrick--101 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 262, 272, 342, 352

"[HD: The Laotian's] bamboo house on stumpy piles costs nothing to make. He has no furniture, no chairs, no tables. He sleeps on a mat. There may be a few bowls in his hut, but most of the meal is served on palm-leaves. His food is simple--rice, salt fish in brine, raw pork chopped up and smothered in a pungent, aromatic sauce, cakes of rice and bananas (and delicious they are), and he eats iguanas, alligator's eggs and red ants.

When he is not swigging lao, or rice-alcohol, he drinks water and uses tea--Laotian tea is poor stuff--as we did until a few generations ago, as medicine."

633 be seen from a great distance. To be sure, it extends over a prodigi-
174 ous area and is so large that one would take it for a city... The king's
344 apartments, which are embellished with a superb and magnificent portico and a large number of beautiful rooms accompanied by a large parlor, are all made of wood which will not decay and ornamented inside and outside with excellent bas-reliefs so delicately gilded that they seem rather to be covered with flakes of gold than gold leaf.

"From that point one enters the courtyards which are extremely spacious, and one first sees a long line of houses built entirely of brick and roofed /113/ with tile in which the second wives usually stay, and outside another row of houses built alongside in the same symmetry for the mandarins' officers. I could write a whole volume if I undertook a minute description of all the other parts of the palace, the riches, the departments, the gardens and a number of other such things...

565 "The houses of the principal lords and of well-to-do persons are
342 very high and beautiful, and are all made of wood with a great deal
352 of artifice and a greater or lesser number of ornaments, depending on the expense to which the individuals are willing to go, but I must confess that the common people and the poor are housed extremely badly
/793/ and that their dwellings are cabins and huts rather than houses. Only the talapoins (bonzes), who are the priests of the idols, have permission to build their monasteries and houses out of brick and stone. Instead of rugs and other such furnishings, persons of quality use small reed mats in which the weave is so delicate and so highly ornamented with figures and various leaf patterns that, to my mind, there is nothing more beautiful nor more pleasing to the eye. They ordinarily use them to cover the walls of /114/ their rooms and houses inside and outside, which they keep very clean and of which they take particular care...

643* "The king is absolute and independent... all the land belongs to
/423/ him, and he disposes as absolute lord of all that his subjects possess...
631 offices, employment, honors and wealth depend absolutely on the
174 king, who raises those persons who please him most to the highest offices in the kingdom.... The principal dignities and offices of the kingdom are eight in number. The first is that of viceroy general... and because the kingdom is divided into seven provinces seven other viceroys are appointed... there are also other governments of less consequence which depend on the former both in respect to civil affairs and to those which concern war.... Each of these provinces has
/701/ its militia, which consists of infantry and cavalry.

which form the private home of the house's inhabitants. 000

A sort of stairway without railings or a ladder gives access to the veranda from one of the short sides of the rectangle. Often a second ladder leads to a small uncovered platform [183] situated at the other end of the house. This, so to speak, is the service stairway, for the platform serves as a kitchen or storeroom and for various private uses. 342

Inside the house is divided into two parts by a longitudinal partition pierced by openings which give access to compartments used as bedrooms. The corridor [Illustration here] left free between the partition and the opposite wall constitutes the common room, and is provided with one or several rectangular hearths. The floor of the verandas, the bedrooms and the common room is covered with mats.

Furnishings are generally scanty, and consist of mattresses, pillows, cushions, footstools, low stools, blankets, chests, etc. [352]

The space under the house serves as a stable or barn for horses and livestock, a poultry house and a pigsty. The animals are shut up there each night. [343]

[184] Looms for weaving may be found either under the verandas or underneath the house. [286]

The storehouse for paddy is found nearby. It is also mounted on piles and may be built in a rectangular or circular shape. The "hand" or "foot" mortars used to decorticate paddy may either be near the storehouse under an addition, or else under the house. [343]

The dimensions of houses are reckoned in Hon or units as long as the span of the arms (1.8 to two meters). Houses may be anywhere from two to eight or nine hons (4 to 20 meters) in length. Their width varies from two to three spans of the arms on the average (four to six meters), not including verandas. 342 [804]

Strictly speaking, the piles are columns which rise from the ground to the tie-beams of the roof trusses. Mortises are cut in them a meter of two above the ground, and the floor joists fitted into the mortises.

Even as they are, these houses resist high winds. They provide good shelter from the sun, rain, etc. and are sufficiently comfortable, even for Europeans. The latter often have to be contented with such houses and can find little fault with them except the instability of the floor and the narrowness of the windows, which makes the inside somewhat dark.

149: Reinach--247 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"What makes everything easy and is used for everything is this hollow wood, at once so solid and so light, the incomparable bamboo. In France we see it only in the form of pleasant but useless little articles of furniture. Here bamboo is sufficient to every task. It provides the whole house, frame as well as walls. The inner walls and floors are made of matted bamboo lathwork. Yet such a house, with its furniture, bed, tables, various accessories and its luxury objects, if you are a person of refinement, can be improvised for you in a space of two hours wherever you want. 313 341 352

"Has a bridge been washed out? In two hours, thanks to this wood which is easy to manage and to work, men will have made a new bridge. One is especially struck, at the beginning of this life which is so free and, more than any other, independent of men and things, by the great simplicity and ingenuity of all the procedures. Objects are rudimentary but practical, easy to make, soon ready and simple to repair. Everyone knows how to build ordinary furnishings, and no interruptions are caused here as they are when even the slightest damage occurs to one of our highly developed utensils, which only a specialist knows how to repair.

"A bamboo tube is a safe place for your maps and papers. It is a drinking glass, and it is also a pipe for smokers. On a larger scale, it is a bucket for carrying water, and the receptacle for all liquid and solid provisions. When provided with a handle it serves as a pot for the Laotians to cook their rice in, or to prepare syrup from the sugar palm. When torn into thongs it is used as rope and string. Ligatures of sapeks are threaded on kelates, or bamboo filaments, and this is what makes our new Indo-Chinese sou, with its round hole in the middle, so impractical. Those who preside over the striking of our coins are unaware that the kelate is square, a fact which the first comer from the interior could have told them. Baskets of all kinds are made with these same kelates for holding and transporting material. Hats are also made of them to provide shelter from the sun and rain. At night, when the stage of your journey is too long and you have to continue after nightfall even at the risk of meeting a tiger, setting fire to a bamboo branch is enough to frighten any off and to light your way. And not only is bamboo used to make torches, hats, string, dishes, furniture, houses and bridges, but it also serves as animal fodder and even as food for the natives, who eat the tenderest shoots as we would eat asparagus. 313 415 436 285 313 291 [372] [262] [231]

Meo

516 progresses at an even, elongated pace, carrying as much as 30 kilo-
417 grams in his pack without even seeming to suspect the feats of strength,
[132] suppleness and balance which he accomplishes. As long as he remains on high ground his resistance to fatigue is very great indeed, but he cannot go down to the lowlands without danger, especially in the hot season.

101 Certain authors claim that the word "Meo" which, when pronounced with a certain intonation, means cat in several Indo-Chinese languages, was given to these folk by reason of their agility. However, we must note that in [109] Laotian the word "Meo" used to designate these mountainfolk is neither written or pronounced like the word meo which is used to designate cats. There is the same difference between these two words as there is in French between the words maitre and mètre.

342 A Meo house is built at ground level on slightly leveled ground. The walls are made of puddled clay or of ill-fitting boards, and the house is roofed with thatch or crudely-squared wooden shingles. The doors are made of wood which has been shaped with an ax, and there
[592] are no windows. Often several families live in the same house, and then each has a fireplace to itself and a compartment which serves it as a bedroom. In the common room there is an oven and fireplaces above which objects are placed to dry on a bamboo framework. Behind the house a narrow passageway is left free separating the
[343] building from the sheer mountainside. In front there is a narrow veranda where the horses are kept when they are not housed in a stable built on piles and overhanging the mountainside, as are the animal barn and pig sty, the rice granary and the goat pen. This system has the advantage of protecting the animals from the dampness of the ground, since the planks which form the floor jut out over empty space on their solid piles.

[101] Inside the house there are a few furnishings, as among all peoples of Chinese origin. There are benches, tables, camp beds, dishes,
•352 iron and copper cooking utensils and opium smoking accessories, all
356 so repulsively filthy that even the least delicate would hesitate to enter and stay in these hovels, where vermin swarm under the protection of the ancestors' altar.

Although amongh themselves and with their families the Meos
198 speak a rather unharmonious language, nearly all the men can understand and speak Qouane-hoa, the language of the Chinese mandarins,
212 which is the official language in Yunnan. They can neither read nor write Chinese characters, and have no system of writing of their own.

10: d'Orleans--370 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 353, 643, 177.35

"We gather information as to the route which we are to follow from the second King of Luang Prabang, who has just returned that way from Bangkok. He lives near us in an enormous room, which his baggage has transformed into a veritable bric-à-brac shop. There are glass-globes, imitation paper flowers under glass, European hats, cooking utensils, and cruets, indeed, a little of everything which has attracted the prince in the way of European civilisation. After living twenty-two months at Bangkok, he is returning to Luang Prabang slowly by easy stages. Elegantly turned out, he seems franker than his brother, and after exchanging visits he sends us a present of cocoanuts and bananas."

149: Reinach--178a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

353

Fig. 60 /p. 241/ Typical young Phou-Eune woman, at Xieng-Khouang.

to get something which is above the head of someone else. A polite 576
person realizes that it is very impolite to touch the head of another /826/
person, even that of his closest friend. To hit someone over the head with the mak kok is a very grave offense. The mak kok, which signifies olive, is a fist formed in such a manner that the middle finger sticks out beyond the other fingers. To point out an object with one's foot is the gesture of a very crude person. A polite person always avails himself of the index finger of his right hand to point out something to someone.

On a visit. --When one arrives at the house of a Laotian 574
one walks very softly and greets in the Laotian manner. If the owner 576
of the house /973/ extends his hand, one should greet him in the European manner. Once in the living room one must wait till one is told "Sit down" before sitting down. The polite person asks his guest to sit down immediately after the exchange of greetings.

When you enter the house of a European, never walk in stealthily the way you do with a Laotian. The European would think that you had come to stab him. You should walk in such a way that he can hear you, without, at the same time, stamping on the floor with all your strength because you would, in so doing, frighten the master of the house. Before entering, you must knock on the door quite forcefully; then you must wait till you are told: "Come in!" or till someone comes to open the door for you. The Laotian visitor does not dare knock on the door for fear of committing an impoliteness, but he coughs outside the door.

In the living room the master of the house has arranged all the furniture in a certain way. When you are invited to sit down, /353/
you should do so without moving the chair that is designated to you. If you are offered a cigarette, you may refuse politely if you do not not smoke. If you do smoke, you should accept it. You will notice that there are ash-trays in the room. Use them. Do not drop the ashes from your cigarette on the table, the chair or on the floor.

To receive something from a superior, the polite Laotian extends his right hand supported by his left hand.

Visiting the sick. --When one of our acquaintances has fallen 734
sick, we must inquire about him by paying him a visit. If one is prevented from doing so by something important, one can have a

10: d'Orleans--282 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 354, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"We all remain talking in the sala. Some candles have been made of yellow wax (sold in disks), which the men [LSS: Kha boatmen in the service of a Laotian] roll round a cotton wick by rubbing them both between their hands; the light is good."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

following a crowd. It was about two miles from the town's centre 527
and I passed several pagodas on the way, where carpenters were working by lamplight in preparation for a future festival.

An enclosure had been built round the pagoda in which every 354
kind of light, from hurricane lamps to fluorescent tubes, had been 527
concentrated in an anarchic glare. The pagoda had hired a generator 545
for the occasion. There was no entrance fee, but young ladies with demurely lowered eyes waited just inside to accept donations, in return for which you received a candle, a posy of Japanese lilac and two joss-sticks in a bamboo container. Among the many attractions was a free theatre show, lasting for many hours, indistinguishable, except to an expert, from the theatre of Siam. Actors remained on the stage for what seemed interminable periods, occasionally advancing or retreating a few steps. Meanwhile their babies played happily round their feet, and quite frequently a stage-hand would walk across and interrupt a scene for a few seconds to pump up the pressure in the hurricane lamps.

On a nearby platform the *lap ton* was being danced. Once again 292
it was the major attraction, but as it was still incorrect for Laotian 301
girls to dance in public, religious enterprise had arranged for 535
hostesses to be brought over from Siam, just across the river. The 562
pagoda hired the girls for the three nights and lodged them in a 527
nearby building. It cost a piastre to cavort round the stage for about fifteen minutes with one of them. They were dressed in hideous knee-length frocks, and some seemed to have permanent waves. The backward Laotian girls in their dowdy finery, their silk scarves, their skirts woven at the hem and waist-band with silver and gold thread, and their abundant jewel-decked chignons, could only look on wistfully. As I arrived the organizers were having 403
trouble with the microphone – indispensable adjunct to any social 527
occasion in the new Far East. A young man chanted a soft, nasal melody which could only be heard within the *boun* enclosure itself. But suddenly the electricians were successful with their tinkerings and all Vientiane was flooded with a great, ogrish baying. The

516 progresses at an even, elongated pace, carrying as much as 30 kilo-
417 grams in his pack without even seeming to suspect the feats of strength,
[32] suppleness and balance which he accomplishes. As long as he remains on high ground his resistance to fatigue is very great indeed, but he cannot go down to the lowlands without danger, especially in the hot season.

101 Certain authors claim that the word "Meo" which, when pronounced with a certain intonation, means cat in several Indo-Chinese languages, was given to these folk by reason of their agility. However, we must note that in [109] Laotian the word "Meo" used to designate these mountainfolk is neither written or pronounced like the word meo which is used to designate cats. There is the same difference between these two words as there is in French between the words maitre and metre.

342 A Meo house is built at ground level on slightly leveled ground. The walls are made of puddled clay or of ill-fitting boards, and the house is roofed with thatch or crudely-squared wooden shingles. The doors are made of wood which has been shaped with an ax, and there
[592] are no windows. Often several families live in the same house, and then each has a fireplace to itself and a compartment which serves it as a bedroom. In the common room there is an oven and fireplaces above which objects are placed to dry on a bamboo framework. Behind the house a narrow passageway is left free separating the
[343] building from the sheer mountainside. In front there is a narrow veranda where the horses are kept when they are not housed in a stable built on piles and overhanging the mountainside, as are the animal barn and pig sty, the rice granary and the goat pen. This system has the advantage of protecting the animals from the dampness of the ground, since the planks which form the floor jut out over empty space on their solid piles.

[101] Inside the house there are a few furnishings, as among all peoples of Chinese origin. There are benches, tables, camp beds, dishes,
352 iron and copper cooking utensils and opium smoking accessories, all so repulsively filthy that even the least delicate would hesitate to
356 enter and stay in these hovels, where vermin swarm under the protection of the ancestors' altar.

Although amongh themselves and with their families the Meos
198 speak a rather unharmonious language, nearly all the men can understand and speak Qouane-hoa, the language of the Chinese mandarins,
212 which is the official language in Yunnan. They can neither read nor write Chinese characters, and have no system of writing of their own.

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM 1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

361 fluence with the river of a tributary; a small, somnolent and sanctified Manhattan Island. A main street has turnings down to the river
346 358 on each side and a pagoda at every few yards, with a glittering roof and doors and pillars carved with a close pattern of gilded and painted designs. There is an infallible sense of colour, a blending of old gold and turquoise and of many greys; but the bonzes are continually at work, painting and carving and refurbishing, so that everything is just a little too new (an extraordinary complaint in Laos), too spruce, too odorous of freshly applied varnish. The roof finials glisten with new applied glass and china mosaic. The ancient, blunted features of lions and dragons get regular scrubbings, have their teeth painted dead white and are re-fitted, as required, with new eyes of green glass. A year or two's neglect might greatly improve Luang Prabang.

000 For all the briskness with which its holy places are maintained, the silence in Luang Prabang is only disturbed by the distant, classroom sounds of bonzes chanting in Pali, and the slow, mild booming of gongs. It is the home-town of the siesta and the Ultima Thule of all French escapists in the Far East. Europeans who come here to live soon acquire a certain, recognizable manner. They develop quiet voices, and gentle, rapt expressions. This is accompanied by the determined insouciance of the New Year's reveller. It is an attitude which is looked for and is put on like a false nose or a carnival hat. Laos-ized Frenchmen are like the results of successful lobotomy operations – untroubled and mildly libidinous. They salt their conversation with Laotian phrases, all of which express a harmoniously negative outlook. *Bo pen nhang*, which is continually to be heard, means no more than, 'It doesn't matter'. But said in Laotian it takes on the emphasis of a declaration of faith. Single men instantly take to themselves Laotian wives, completing their bride's happiness with the present of a superb bicycle, covered with mascots and pennants, and with chaplets of artificial flowers round the hub-caps, instead of the leather, dust-removing strap one sees in Europe. Several painters have retired here to escape the world,

2: Gourou--183 N-5 (1939 ?) 1945 Laotians
101, 361

[HD: The Laotian] population is composed of varied elements, in which the Laotians, who are a T'ai people, and Kha--the name given by the Laotians to the Indonesian populations--predominate. (1) It is dispersed in hamlets, each mustering a few

1. L'Annuaire Statistique de l'Indochine (Hanoi, Ideo, 1937) gives 665,000 T'ai and 247,000 Indonesians.

dwellings and a few dozen inhabitants.

10: d'Orleans--258 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 131, 342, 361, 485

"Although the region called Laos has not, properly speaking, any clearly defined frontiers, we may consider that we have crossed the eastern boundary between Dien Bien and Sop Nao. Here the country changes, and we appear to enter a more civilised world; the houses are still based upon piles, but they are better built than those of the Thaïs, and they are arranged in regular lines on each side of a street; at the entrance an empty hostelry is ready for travellers."

10: d'Orleans--264 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 231, 342, 361

"We find some villages in the afternoon, and I get out at one of them--Sop Kin. It contains about twenty huts--small houses built upon piles like those of the Thai's, but more elegant, and half hidden amongst clumps of flowering trees, orange groves, palms, cocoanut palms and bananas. The mulberry tree is also cultivated for the purpose of rearing silkworms."

10: d'Orleans--265 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 342, 361

"...We arrive at Muong Ngoi, a rather important centre. The situation is delightful. The houses are built twenty yards above the river; they are made of woven and white-washed bamboos, which produce the effect of walls. They contain two stories, and are built with very sloping roofs; the staircases with balustrades, balconies, and verandahs, are arranged outside. They might be taken for Swiss chalets, with something lighter, more original, and less conventional about them. But the placard in European letters, 'Royal Siamese Post-office,' throws a discordant note into the scene."

10: d'Orleans--271 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 361, 417, 789

"We stop for lunch at the village of Ban Sop Huan, on the right bank of the river; the houses form a street, like the one at Sop Nao; as usual two posts stand at the entrance of it; each has a piece of carved wood on the top, which, from a distance, resembles a duck or a chicken, some white scarves also are hanging from them; they are intended to drive away the evil spirits."

10: d'Orleans--283 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 361, 501

"We still meet with fishing-rafts; but here the terraces support round huts with a rectangular opening in front; the bamboos are arranged above them to meet the current with a corner only, so that they should not catch the detritus, which would otherwise accumulate. From a distance, the effect of these buildings is rather like an enlarged beaver village, and we can imagine that the lacustral dwellings, of which so many remains are found in European lakes, must have resembled them closely.

We pass rafts laden with rice, in the middle two straw mats are connected by a roof; there is a little terrace in front and another at the back. The whole is fifteen yards long, and the Kas boatmen slowly row them down the stream."

10: d'Orleans--289 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 133, 361, 501

[LSS: near Luang Prabang] "The river is 300 or 400 yards wide; the banks are steep but low, the villages are numerous and always surrounded by small woods, while sea gulls wheel and cry over our heads. Our boats travel slowly; the men have fastened the two pirogues side by side, and like our boys they are busy washing and dressing before they enter the city. At four o'clock we pass the Laotian Custom House on our left, and, thanks to our flag, we are not stopped."

10: d'Orleans--289 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 361

"Here is Luang Prabang: at the first glance from the boat we can see nothing, or at least very little that indicates a city. For some hundreds of yards there are Laotian buildings on the left bank of the river, but their roofs are scarcely seen through vistas amongst the palm trees, cocoa trees, and bamboos, but the verdure gradually diminishes as the houses become more crowded and are arranged in more compact lines. We realise that it is an important city, an earthen mound dominates the whole, surmounted by one of those gilded domes, which recall the cupolas of the Russian churches. In the confusion of yellowish dwellings the pagodas are recognised by their superior height and by their roofs which are covered with brown tiles, laid one above the other and raised in Chinese cornices at the extremities, the palace has almost the air of an European building."

10: d'Orleans--339-340 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 361, 532, 778

"Part of the town is very sparsely inhabited, a few ruins on the track indicating the site [340] of the ancient ramparts, while turning back in the direction of the river, we have on our left the grounds of several houses belonging to mandarins, and on the right, at the foot of the hill, a group of pagodas well worth a visit.

The most important of these is Ouate Uisoune, so named after the king who built it. Dating, as the Siamese Colonel tells us, from the fourteenth century, it is in a very decrepit state, but there is much in it worth seeing; notably the gates which are of carved wood and gilt. To the right in Pra Noriei, the fourarmed goddess, borne up by Kroute, the god of the birds, and in the centre are two women, one of whom is being carried by five elephants, while to the left a god standing erect upon a buffalo is supposed to represent the chief of the coolies who weed the courtyards of the pagodas. In the interior are a number of wooden columns covered with gilded designs and others of masonry, together with pictures representing the history of Pra Uetsandaha and of Guadama. Upon the altar is a large gilt statue called Pratiao Ong Luong (great god)."

10: d'Orleans--369-370 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 342, 361, 563, 712

"We reach Paklay. The river here is broad with sand-banks on either side and water just covering the top of the rocks. The village is situated on the right bank. The piles which support the houses are hid by a net-work of bamboo, arranged also to shut in the animals. A fairly clean hut is set apart for us, as we are to stay here for a day. The Siamese lieutenant has ordered our elephants, but we cannot have them before to-morrow, so I employ a part of the day in taking photographs. The town, if so it may be [370] called, is not large, having 780 inhabitants, including women and children. The Siamese garrison is made up of eighty men, and is shifted every three years. The lieutenant lives in one half of a rather large house, and the other half is occupied by Chinese merchants."

23: Franck--269 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 342, 352, 361 Ethnic subgroup

"Though I only suspected it then, I was destined to know Nam-lien [EJ: a 'Black Miao' village in Laos.] better than I know my own birthplace, nay, than Paris or Rio de Janeiro. It consisted of a dozen thatched huts with earth floor and wattled walls on either side of the wide space that served as road, one of them the sala or rest-house for French travelers. Two bare-woven bamboo cots and a rough wooden table comprised the furnishings of this, unless one also counted the soft layer of dust on the earth floor as a rug. A few things such as eggs were purchasable about the village--though I should have been in hard luck indeed if I had not taken official advice and brought a few canned supplies with me--and a native was available to boil water and do the simplest form of cooking."

23: Franck--276-277 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 231, 242, 361

"Small villages appeared once more, this time of the real Laosians, villages of thatched houses raised on poles [277] well above snakes and possible floods, with a bit of cultivation about them. Each house had rounded gable walls at either end, one a kind of family veranda all but covered with a curving roof of thatch, where visitors are received and the family does its gossiping, the other a granary and store-room, where the cooking also seemed to be done. The walls of the houses, everything possible, in fact, were made of strips of narrow palm-leaves folded over a stick, forming panels overlapped like shingles. Many small but stout horses dotted the landscape here and there."

23: Franck--288-289 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 361, 576

"Every few [289] hours a cluster of jungle houses stood out in a tiny half-clearing on the high bank of the river, and most of these we visited. At each village the chief and the other men of importance, usually including several yellow-robed priests, came to pay their respects. Instead of snatching off hats or head-cloths, and performing an antic between a courtesy and an exaggerated bow, the form of salute in Luang Prabang is to come to a complete squat. Obsequious as this looked, it was evidently merely a gesture of politeness, for even the men of highest rank who had any intercourse with the prince, representative of the king in person, dropped to their haunches, and rose to human stature again only when the interview ended. In making any request of him, or in receiving anything from him, even the boatmen squatted, holding both hands, palms together, above the head. The village notables wore sampots of many colors--purple, pink, grass-green--topped by khaki coats of uniform cut, which they evidently donned in our honor. Always they brought us leaf-wrapped cones of flowers, usually on banana-leaf platters. A supply of these bouquets of greeting, one concluded, must be kept on hand for emergencies."

23: Franck--292[2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 231, 361

"The villages were as much alike, once one had seen a few of them, as our own stereotyped cities: from half a dozen to a score of woven-bamboo-and-leaf shacks, light as big baskets, raised on posts, in a little clearing overrun with children, curs, pigs, and chickens--four forms of life all but universal the world over--and little else except the surrounding jungle. Chickens of both sexes, perhaps I should have specified, for in this one matter the people seemed to believe in monogamy and to have as many roosters as hens."

23; Franck--296-297 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 361

"Luang Prabang, venerable capital of the ancient kingdom of the same name, is a spacious town of a few wide French streets, softly paved, if at all, with narrow Laosian streets like lovers' lanes between them. It is well wooded, with roomy yards usually whispering with palm-trees. In other words it is not a city at all, in the crowded, noisy, Western sense, but a leisurely congregation of separate dwellings of simple lines, each in its ample garden-park, or at least with sufficient ground so that its opinions or doings need not interfere with its neighbors. In short Luang Prabang town is in many ways what idealists picture the cities of Utopia to be, whatever insurance companies may think of the fire-risks involved in more thatch than tile roofs. It sits on a bank of the upper Mekong, more exactly the Me Nam Khong, that snaky dividing-line between Siam and at least half of Indo-China, which in time becomes one of the most important rivers of the Far East. Just here it happens that it is not the dividing-line, for a large chunk of Luang Prabang kingdom lies on the Siamese side of the river. Tiresome persons of statistical temperament tell us that the capital stands 340 meters, about 1135 feet, above sea-level; but one would hardly know it from the number of overcoats required. In fact, though it was still April, my host the commissaire knew the futility of expecting a guest from the temperate zone to sleep until [297] he had been cooled off with a jaunt by Ford through the tepid after-dinner night."

23: Franck--299-300 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 346, 361, 778

"Luang Prabang means Kingdom of the Divine Buddha. What more natural then than that there should be many Buddhist temples, shrines, and monasteries in its capital? Indeed there are so many on both sides of the river that the town might easily be mistaken for a holy city, devoted to priests and pilgrims. Some of the temple compounds are bare ground scattered with yellow-roofed buildings of Siamese or Burmese character, with big stupas made of mud bricks and more or less overgrown with vegetation, with mere cells raised on piles, in which languid bonzes meditate. Others are covered with groves of trees, shaded by masses of palm and banana leaves; but in them all great calm and quiet reigns. Just behind the main and market street fronting the royal palace is a rocky ridge called Pagoda Hill, two hundred feet above the plain and half encircled by the Nam-khan by which travelers unworthy of Fords come to [300] the capital from the east or south. It is worth climbing if only for the view it offers of the idyllic city and its surrounding semi-jungle; and along it ramble queer old religious structures, including one built over a gigantic 'footprint of Buddha' in the native rock."

23: Franck--302-303 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 175, 361

"A traveler who visited Luang Prabang in 1872 found it the most compactly built city of Siam, with the single exception of Bangkok, which it in some respects resembled. But of several disasters the greatest seems to have been in 1887, when the Black Flags of Taiping days in China burned and almost completely destroyed and depopulated it, so that perhaps it is not by [303] choice of its up-and-coming citizens that it is so roomy, pastoral, and ideal a city to-day."

23: Franck--333 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 361 Ethnic subgroup

"The little clusters of very simple huts of the Kha were not near even this rarely traveled trail, but in places half inaccessible--and for many people wholly so--beyond valleys or great gullies across which they can look and see in miniature the very thin trickle of traffic and consider themselves in the world but not of it."

23: Franck--341-342 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 342, 361, 515, 779

"The uncrowded, simple, but commodious houses of these Laosian villages are always set well apart and high above the ground, back among palm-trees, banana-plants, and the like. They do not have to crowd together and save all the arable land for rice to feed too numerous mouths, for here a gentle Buddhism takes place of an ancestor-worship so [342] ardent that offspring must be had at any effort and cost. Most families have round or square granaries like huge covered baskets made of wide woven splints and covered by a big thatch roof, all raised off the ground out of reach of rats. The simple houses themselves were of similar materials, a ladder or half a dozen bamboo or pole rungs leading up to the big porch at one end, and close to the floor, a tiny window or two that can be pushed open to one side. Such a village is a thousand per cent more pleasant than a Chinese town, even when there is no public stopping-place except in the same room with slightly supercilious priests who sometimes break sound sleep with their devotions. There is an incredible amount of bathing and great quiet compared to densely packed Chinese existence. Such a village is like a country home in its atmosphere, while those of China resemble tenement-living on the worst of East Sides."

23: Franck--348-349 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 346, 361

"Formerly Vientiane had a hundred and twenty magnificent temples, so well built that, in addition to many ruins lost in the bush, some still remain symmetrical and perfect in general form, though their beams have rotted away and the masonry has been exposed to tropical sun and rain for a century. There are some striking doors giving entrance to roofless ruins; within the falling shell of a temple near the Résidence, in which I was lord of all I surveyed because of the absence of the résuper,' two big Buddhas sit in the infinitely [349] patient attitude of the East, though the rains fall and the sun beats down upon their coiled-serpent covered heads, while the vegetation piously strives to clothe and hold them together as the mud and stone of which they are made crumble bit by bit away."

25: Brodrick--90 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 162, 361, 175.63

"Only ten Europeans lived in Houaphan.

Xieng-Khouang, about three thousand six hundred feet up, lies, all the same, in a valley surrounded with high hills. There is a new European quarter, by no means exclusively inhabited by Europeans, and the pagodas are among the most archaically planned of all the Laos land. (2)

2. Tran-ninh was for long ruled by independent chieftains until the province was annexed in 1830 by the King of Vientiane who, six years later, had to cede the territory to the Annamese Emperor. It was the French who added the province to the realm of Luang-Prabang."

25: Brodrick--91 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 142, 162, 291, 361

"The Laotians who, in their land, keep to the river valleys and avoid the hills and plateaux, are fairly easy to recognize, since there is no confusing them with the strangely garbed men and women of the northern hills or with the semi-savage 'Khas' of the mountains. The Laotians are, as a rule, of more sturdy build than any Annamese, and compared with the stolid and serious-looking Cambodians, the men of the Laos are gay and smiling. Their dress is quite unlike that of the Cambodians. Only the saffron-clad monks will be familiar if you come up from the south. The girls, especially, love bright colours. The usual costume is a skirt reaching to the ankles and often, if not generally, of light tint, puce, mauve, yellow or red. At the waist and the hem is a band of polychrome embroidery, green and white, purple and yellow or green, red and yellow. The women wear usually a white shift, sleeveless and cut rather low back and front, but all are girt about with a long, generally, yellow scarf, draped either as a bandolier with a long end hanging down one side or slung as a gigantic necklace like an Hawaiian garland."

25: Brodrick--108-109 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 361, 485

"Vientiane strings along the left bank of the Mekong and it faces almost due south over the expanse of eastern Siam's great bulge. Vientiane is quite a large place and has grown from 1900, when it was refounded, into a town of over 10,000 inhabitants, with a Government-owned bungalow and two rather modest hotels. In the Upper Laos, as a rule, there are no hotels at all, you either camp [109] out or put up in a sala where you can get eggs, chickens, rice and fuel very cheap. In the olden days, at least, before the last war, you could get by in the Laos very comfortably for ten shillings a day."

25: Brodrick--110 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 311, 361

"The Laotians have pushed down the Mekong valley and up the shores of some of its tributaries. But even in the Mekong Valley the population is sparse. Thakhek, Savannakhet and Paksé are just over-grown villages strung along a stream whose navigation becomes increasingly difficult, until at Khong and the Cambodian frontier the cataracts bar all passage, since the range of the Dangrek Hills, which borders northern Cambodia as a line of cliffs, offers a wall over which the great river's waters pour and seethe...

Laotian settlements, it is true, stretch down as far as Stung-Treng right into Cambodia, where the thin forest is always the same, though bursting here and there into richer vegetation. But the Laotians keep close to the main stream, and Cambodian influence does not cease to grow at the expense of Laotian among the 'savage' peoples off the Mekong's highway."

28: Crawfurd--215-216 G-3 (1821) 1830 Laotians - 1-2
116, 162, 361, 631

"The country of the Lao, a people speaking a dialect of the Siamese language, appears to be divided between the Siamese, the Chinese, and the Burmans. It is composed of petty states, tributary to those three powers. Four of these are under the dominion of Siam; namely, Changmai, Lan-chang, Pasak, and Luang-phra-bang. Their chiefs are hereditary princes. The first of those named places, has sometimes been written Zimai and Jang-mai, and is evidently the district which the authors of the Modern Universal His- [216] tory have converted into a kingdom, under the name of Jangoma. The town is situated upon the Menam, where it is so shallow as only to be navigable for small canoes. The distance from Bangkok to it was described to me as a month's journey, chiefly by water. Lan-chang, always considered the capital of Lao, is situated in about 15° 45' North latitude, on the great river of Kamboja, which is here as broad and as large as the Menam at Bangkok. It was described to me as being as populous as this last place; of which I have great doubt, because it has comparatively little foreign trade, is not much resorted to by Chinese, and is not the seat of a court. Among its inhabitants are said to be about eight thousand Chinese of the neighbouring province of Yunan, commonly known to the Siamese by the names of Ho and Nung-seh. Besides the four towns, with their provinces, above stated, a fifth considerable place was mentioned to me by a native of the country, under the name of Siang-kwang, situated about fifteen days' journey to the north-east of Lang-chang. An alphabet, and other specimens

of the language of the inhabitants of this portion of Lao, was shown to me at Bangkok. It appeared to be rude, and did not, as usual, follow the classification of the Nagri. The Siamese reckon, in all their portion of Lao, one hundred and one towns, large and small."

36: Gourou--23 (no date) 1947 Laotians
116, 311, 361, 376, 503

"Problems of the Mekong and of Laos.

Above Kratié the mighty River Mekong is of very little use. True, it is easy to imagine a marvellous control program, a sort of grandiose Laotian T.V.A. Dams would divide the river into level reaches; locks would allow ships of large tonnage to sail as far as Luang Prabang; the dams would make possible a huge electricity production, and the irrigation of vast tracts. Rice, cotton, maize, would fill the holds of river vessels that would ply to the sea without transhipping their cargos. Pacific and profitable co-operation would be established between Indochina and Siam.... All of which are daydreams. Capital is lacking and, above all, manpower. Such works would be possible only if the lands drained by the Mekong were populous. But Laos should nevertheless not be neglected. It should draw great profit from a modernization of forest exploitation, and from the application of the measures we have outlined above. Nothing valuable, however, will be effected in Laos unless, at first, small, selected areas are developed. It is difficult to help sparse, shifting populations, who escape both health measures and education. Whereas, if the Laotians scientifically colonize their own territory, beginning with integral development of favored areas with health control, they will then be setting up centers of demographic expansion and of economic activity from which the development of the less favored regions can proceed. Only then can the Mekong's domestication be begun."

66: Dobby--299 [4] N-5 (no date) 1950 Laotians
116, 133, 361

"The settlements of Laos are generally along the Mekong itself, with Vientiane, Luang, Prabang, Pakse, Savannakhet and Tha Khek as the largest. The river is the chief line of transport, especially between Savannakhet and Vientiane, but contact with the exterior by way of the Mekong is impeded by rapids, narrows and shifting sandbanks, the signs of an immature river."

68: Mouhot--90-91 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 162, 164, 342, 361

"At Khao-Khoc, [HD: north of Saraburi in Siam]although the second king often visits it, there is no landing-place, nor even steps cut in the steep banks to aid the ascent.

Immediately after landing I set off to look for a lodging, having been informed that I should find numerous vacant houses belonging to mandarins, amongst which I might make my choice. My men and I hunted amid the brushwood, often sinking up to our knees in mud, but could discover only seven or eight Laotian huts, the inhabitants of which form the nucleus of the population of this future stronghold, now peaceful and hospitable agriculturists, who would be deeply afflicted, and still more terrified, if ever their echoes should repeat the roar of cannon and varied sounds of war. As for the royal habitations, I could not reach them, for the whole ground, excepting a strip about fifty feet broad next the river, is a swamp; and the narrow paths are obstructed by bushes and tall grass, which had had time to grow during the six or eight months that have elapsed since the King has visited the place.

Not being able to find a lodging, some men from the village joined us, and we all set to work to cut down bamboos, with which to construct one, which was soon accomplished; and in this hut, open to every wind, we took up our abode.

I was told that a white elephant had just been taken in Laos, and had been sent off to Bangkok under the care of a mandarin. [91]

All the inhabitants of the village, amounting perhaps to about fifty, have brought their children to me, begging for remedies; some for fevers, others for dysentery or

68: Mouhot--90-91 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 162, 164, 342, 361

rheumatism. I have not heard of any cases of leprosy here, as at Khao-Tchioulaü, but the children are repulsively dirty; they are covered with a coating of filth, which makes them resemble little negroes, and the greater number of them are shaking with fever."

68: Mouhot--135-136 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 361, 489, 133

"On the 24th of June [HD: 1861] I arrived at Paklaïe, lat. 19° 16′58", the first small town on my northward route. It is situated on the Mekon, and is a charming place; the inhabitants seem well off; the houses elegant and spacious,--larger, indeed, than I have seen before in this country; and everything betokens a degree of prosperity which I have also remarked wherever I have stopped since. The Mekon at this place is much larger than the Menam at Bangkok, and forces its way between the lofty mountains with a noise resembling the roaring of the sea and the impetuosity of a torrent, seeming scarcely able to keep within its bed. There are many rapids between Paklaïe and Louang Prabang, which is ten or fifteen days' painful travelling.

I was tired of my long journey on elephants, and was [136] anxious to hire a boat here, but the chief and some of the inhabitants, fearing that I might meet with some accident, advised me to continue my route by land. I therefore proceeded as far as Thadua, ninety miles farther north, and during eight days passed through much the same style of country as before, changing one valley for another, and crossing mountains which became more and more elevated, and being more than ever annoyed by the leeches. We were, however, no longer compelled to sleep in the jungle, for every evening we reached some hamlet or village, where we found shelter either in a pagoda or caravanserai."

68: Mouhot--137 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 361, 162

"On the 25th of July [HD: 1861] I reached Louang Prabang, a delightful little town, covering a square mile of ground, and containing a population, not, as Mgr. Pallegoix says in his work on Siam, of 80,000, but of 7000 or 8000 only. The situation is very pleasant. The mountains which, above and below this town, enclose the Mekon, form here a kind of circular valley or amphitheatre, nine miles in diameter, and which, there can be no doubt, was anciently a lake. It was a charming picture, reminding one of the beautiful lakes of Como and Geneva. Were it not for the constant blaze of a tropical sun, or if the mid-day heat were tempered by a gentle breeze, the place would be a little paradise.

The town is built on both banks of the stream, though the greater number of the houses are built on the left bank. The most considerable part of the town surrounds an isolated mount, more than a hundred metres in height, at the top of which is a pagoda."

68: Mouhot--137-138 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
~~116~~, 101, 361, 643, 651

"Were they not restrained by fear of the Siamese, and their horror of the jungles so prolific of death, this principality [HD: i.e. Luang Prabang] would soon fall into the hands of the Annamites, who now dare not advance nearer than seven days' journey off. A beautiful stream, 100 metres wide, unites [138] with the great river to the north-east of the town, and leads to some Laotian and savage villages bearing the name of Fie. These are no other than the tribes called Penoms by the Cambodians, Khu by the Siamese, and Moï by the Annamites,--all words simply signifying 'savages.'

The whole chain of mountains which extends from the north of Tonquin to the south of Cochin China, about 100 miles north of Saigon, is inhabited by this primitive people, divided into tribes speaking different dialects, but whose manners and customs are the same. All the villages in the immediate neighbourhood are tributary; those nearest to the town supply workmen for buildings erected for the king and princes, and these are heavily taxed. Others pay their tribute in rice.

Their habitations are in the thickest parts of the forests, where they only can find a path. Their cultivated grounds are to be seen on the tops and sides of the mountains; in fact, they employ the same means as wild animals to escape from their enemies, and to preserve that liberty and independence which are to them, as to all God's creatures, their supreme good.

68: Mouhot--137-138 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 101, 361, 643, 651

Yesterday, and the day previous, I was presented to the princes who govern this little state, and who bear the title of kings. I know not why, but they displayed for my benefit all they could devise of pomp and splendour."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

000 process of going native involved a craze for collecting animals. By the time the parakeet had bitten him several times, he was ready to offer anything for it – including a worn out Citroen car he kept at Luang Prabang – but it was all of no avail.

When we left Sour Hak's place there was no one in sight in the street. Dupont said that the officers would be eating, so why worry them? We would motor off quietly down the road, have our bathe, and then see how we felt. So, driving quite slowly and pretending to take an interest in the sights, we edged our way out of the village; past the sentries, the last house, the last Laotian girl squatting on her veranda looking into space; out into the splendid and menacing amphitheatre of the landscape; very much alone, but invulnerable with the good red burgundy awash in our stomachs.

The river was there, as Dupont promised, and we swam about in it for half an hour, while the Laotian driver sat on the log bridge holding his Sten between his knees. People always alarm you with stories of the perils, the leeches and the parasites to be picked up from bathing in these countries, but as far as could be seen, the River Song – tributary of the Mékong – looked like any river in the south of England. The water poured with a swift, black, curling surface round the boulders and under the bridge. It was cold and there were long, flat, trailing weeds just below the surface. As we went into the water great mustard stains spread from us, were thinned and borne away. The Meo dog, yelping in protest, was thrown in over and over again.

Dupont now made mention of the next part of his programme. Since things had gone so well, why not stroll over to the village of Pha-Tang, half a mile off the road, down the river, and ask permission to sleep there? In this way we should at least get a comfortable night's sleep, and then, in the morning – if, of course, we felt like it – we could re-join the convoy without more ado, and no one would be the worse.

361 Pha-Tang was a cluster of palms and thatched roofs under the high scrawled translucent mountain shapes. A flourish of cranes

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

deserted the village paddy fields at our approach. Dupont told the 361
driver to wait behind as we went into the village. As a convert to 361
the Laotian way of life he paid much attention to local etiquette; 576
he said that we must on no account appear with arms. There were 784
no signs of life in the village and Dupont found this disconcerting. We must keep a careful look-out, he said, for a white thread across the path, or a cross decorated with red flowers. Either would mean that the village was taboo to strangers; in the first case because of a violent death or the presence of epidemic disease and in the second because the feast of the tutelary spirit was being celebrated. It was for reasons of these periodical taboos that Laotian villages, although built as near as possible to roads, were not actually on them. The places where we had stopped that day were not true Laotian villages at all, but military posts, around which a few store-keepers, mostly Chinese, had grouped themselves.

Although Dupont could find no signs of a definite taboo, he was 576
still very uneasy that no one had come out to greet us. The correct 784
thing on entering a Laotian village with the intention of staying the night was to ask for the headman and obtain his permission to do so. Unless this were done it would be a grave discourtesy to enter any house. Dupont emphasized that while the Laotians were tolerant, civilized and hospitable, there were certain indispensable forms, and as we mooched about the deserted village, he poured out information on the subject; even describing the position for correct sleeping; body stretched out at right angles to wall containing door, feet pointing to the door. When I suggested that we might find an empty hut and sleep in it, he was startled. Although the villagers might overlook minor breaches of custom, he said, this would be a grave one, involving them in an expensive purification ceremony before the hut could be occupied again.

I offered no more suggestions and in the end we found a rather 576
scared looking woman who said, when Dupont spoke to her in Laotian, that the headman was away, and was not expected back. It was quite clear now that we were not welcome, and Dupont said

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Miao AE5
Laotians AM8

boy's pockets lay strewn about; the lengths of string, the broken penknives, the buttons, the mirror glass, the tins, the bottles and the burned out lamp bulbs. Here was accumulated the jackdaw harvesting, the valuable glittering rubbish which was all a Meo wanted of civilization, and which he was free to take, while leaving the civilization itself severely alone. What foolish, generous people, these town-dwellers were! M 342 181

Our host's wife, a child of fifteen, was lying with her baby on a heap of rags in the corner. The baby was sick, he said, but the only thing necessary was to keep it away from the light – and air – as much as possible. Most Meo babies die in their first two years, and one wonders what would have happened by now to the fertile land of Indo-China, if they didn't. M 758 165

There was a gun in the corner – a muzzle-loader of the kind it takes a Meo two years to make. They are copied from the guns first supplied by the Jesuits to the Chinese, but are turned out by an endlessly laborious process involving boring out a solid bar by twirling a white hot iron in it. It was enormously long, like an old-fashioned Arab stove-pipe gun, and when Dupont took notice of it the Meo offered to show it to him in use. We went outside and he loaded it with powder and shot he made himself. This process took about five minutes. Before pressing the trigger he warned us to stand well away because of the muzzle blast. The target was a small banana-leaf, skewered against a bank at twenty paces. There was a tremendous bang when he fired, but the leaf remained intact. He blamed this on the maize-spirit which we had just drunk, and was quite delighted when Dupont, giving a demonstration with his American light carbine, also missed. M 411 177

There were no dogs at all at this village. They were all down at the poppy fields with their owners, the Meo said. 000

Luang Prabang lies at the end of a long, curling descent from the mountains and through smoking bamboo groves, on the banks of the Mékong. It is built into a tongue of land formed by the con- L 361

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM 1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

361 fluence with the river of a tributary; a small, somnolent and sancti-
fied Manhattan Island. A main street has turnings down to the river
346 on each side and a pagoda at every few yards, with a glittering roof
358 and doors and pillars carved with a close pattern of gilded and painted designs. There is an infallible sense of colour, a blending of old gold and turquoise and of many greys; but the bonzes are continually at work, painting and carving and refurbishing, so that everything is just a little too new (an extraordinary complaint in Laos), too spruce, too odorous of freshly applied varnish. The roof finials glisten with new applied glass and china mosaic. The ancient, blunted features of lions and dragons get regular scrubbings, have their teeth painted dead white and are re-fitted, as required, with new eyes of green glass. A year or two's neglect might greatly improve Luang Prabang.

000 For all the briskness with which its holy places are maintained, the silence in Luang Prabang is only disturbed by the distant, classroom sounds of bonzes chanting in Pali, and the slow, mild booming of gongs. It is the home-town of the siesta and the Ultima Thule of all French escapists in the Far East. Europeans who come here to live soon acquire a certain, recognizable manner. They develop quiet voices, and gentle, rapt expressions. This is accompanied by the determined insouciance of the New Year's reveller. It is an attitude which is looked for and is put on like a false nose or a carnival hat. Laos-ized Frenchmen are like the results of successful lobotomy operations – untroubled and mildly libidinous. They salt their conversation with Laotian phrases, all of which express a harmoniously negative outlook. *Bo pen nhang*, which is continually to be heard, means no more than, 'It doesn't matter'. But said in Laotian it takes on the emphasis of a declaration of faith. Single men instantly take to themselves Laotian wives, completing their bride's happiness with the present of a superb bicycle, covered with mascots and pennants, and with chaplets of artificial flowers round the hub-caps, instead of the leather, dust-removing strap one sees in Europe. Several painters have retired here to escape the world,

114 which he felt during his stay in Laos, despite the somber presentiments which prevented him, as he admits, "from appreciating and enjoying things as formerly."

For three years he had been a tireless explorer of the Indo-Chinese brush, a prey to the fatigues, the miseries, the privations and the dangers of the sly and evil forest. A poor traveler, as he himself ingrenuously relates, he had sacrificed his family, his comfort and his health (and perhaps his life) "to the sole end of being useful to his fellow men, of discovering an unknown insect, plant or animal /220/ or verifying a latitude point in a remote region."

133 Leaving Bangkok on April 12, he reached Paklay on June 24 after
361 crossing the terrible forest of the "King of Fire" for the second time
● and breathing "in the midst of an atmosphere of extreme stench, hot like a steam bath filled with putrid miasmas." Paklay was a great consolation to him. "A charming village," he wrote, "very rich, larger and more beautiful than any which I have so far encountered. The houses are elegant and spacious, and everything denotes an ease and well-being which I have since noted in all the localities where I have stopped. The Mekong is much wider there than the Menam at Bangkok, and it is with a noise like that of the sea and the impetuosity of a torrent that it cuts a path between high mountains which seem to have difficulty containing it in its bed. . . . The sight of this beautiful river had the same effect on me as meeting a friend, for I have long drunk of its waters. It is an old acquaintance, and has long cradled and tormented me. Now it flows majestic, full to the brim. . . it is a truly grandiose spectacle."

Dissuaded from going up the Mekong by the inhabitants, who feared that some mischance might befall him /221/ /Page 221 is devoted to an illustration: "The Mekong at Paklay."--Translator/ in the rapids, he resumed his journey on elephant back and reached Luang-Prabang on July 25. "A delicious little city," he noted, "which stretches over a space of a square mile and holds a population, not of 80,000 inhabitants as Mgr. Pallegoix says in his work on Siam, but of only seven or eight thousand. The site is charming, and the mountains which frame the city form a circular valley in the shape of an amphitheater nine miles wide which must once have been a closed basin. The countryside is extremely pretty and reminds one of the beautiful lakes of Como and Geneva.

132 "Were it not for the sun of the tropics which shines constantly on this valley, or if a gentle breeze tempered the overpowering heat which prevails there during the day, this spot would be a little paradise.

What would he have said -- and what would not have been 132
his delight -- if he had reached the smiling capital not in July
when the tropical sun does indeed alternate its hottest rays with
cataracts of the most violent downpours, but in December or
January during the delicious Laotian winter which spreads the
sweet coolness of Mediterranean springtime over an autumnal
decor? He could scarcely have been able, in the course of his /361/
hunts for insects, to grasp /223/ a fugitive vision, between two
tornadoes, of the golden minaret of the Phou-Si, the sacred hill
in the heart of the city, or of the harmonious suburbs all trembling
in their mantles of verdure, or of the flaming twilights on the
misty mountains at whose feet winds the capricious Nam-Khane, a
true river of diamonds by moonlight...

"The city," he explains, "is built on both banks of the river, 361
but the greater number of dwellings are built on the left bank. The
largest part surrounds an isolated peak which is a hundred and some
meters high and at the summit of which a pagoda has been estab-
lished."

On August 5 he was presented "to the princes who govern this 643*
little State and who bear the title of kings." He depicts them
(Tiantha-Koumane and his brother the Oupahat Oun-Kham) with a
dash of bantering irreverence, then immediately acknowledges that
the king is "kind and good" to him (1).

1. "He takes care of my letters. He himself will take them 643*
to Bangkok where he goes, I believe, to take his oath of /648*/
allegiance and vassaldom." "I do not know why," he con-
tinues, "but they display in my behalf all that they are
capable of imagining in the way of pomp and splendor."

He is thus the first to note the dominant character trait of this 609
kind, open-hearted /224/ and hospitable people. Tiantha- 157
Koumane was certainly ignorant of his guest's capacities and had 643*
no opinion on the naturalist Mouhot, who was still quite unknown
in Europe. It was therefore not the scholar whom he intended to
honor, but simply the stranger and the traveler whose visit was a
happy event for the kingdom, an event which should be celebrated
with great pomp and with general rejoicing. All the Frenchmen
from Pavie down to our own day who have explored the principality
have been given a welcome which has always been just as spontane-
ous and have been received with the same eager and smiling good
grace.

glades, but "instead of the oil trees, bogus teaks with their whitish foliage and their trunks deeply dented with wide grooves, we find gigantic, shade-giving pines; and instead of the bare, powdery or viscous soil, a fine level turf on which it is a pleasure to walk and where it is enjoyable to linger and slow one's pace" (2). 133 137

(2) Letter from Captain Rivière, reproduced by Captain Gosselin in Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900. [113]

It is also a region of wild beasts, and the inhabitants of the muong of Ma-Ha-Sa'i come there every year to hunt elephants. [136]

At the very source of the Sé-Bang-Fa'i there springs up a noteworthy peak about 1200 meters high from which many watercourses flow down to the Annam coast.

South of this point the Annamitic Chain drops to give way to the gap of Ai-Lao (about 410 meters in altitude) on the road from Savannakhet to Quang-Tri. Then the chain rises to form walls which are often more than 2000 meters high in the provinces of Saravane and Attopeu. Thus, Pou-Atouat has an altitude of about 2500 meters. It is an important orographic center from which spring the Sékhong and the Poyo, which belong to the Mékong basin, and also the Song-Buong, a tributary of the Song-Cai which is a coastal river of Annam. 133

Between the Sédone and the Sékhong, at about the 15th parallel, stands the remarkable plateau of the Bolovens, which takes its name from the Kha tribe which inhabits it. It is a mass about 100 kilometers in diameter, and its height varies between 600 and 1200 meters. Travelers who have explored it have extolled the mildness of the climate, the wealth of the vegetation, the beauty of the plains and the abundance of water, so [50] that Dr. Harmand suggested the idea that the plateau, which could easily be linked by road with the port of Tourane, might be made into the administrative center and sanatorium of our Indo-Chinese empire. [132]

The part which the plateau may be called on to play in the future has been somewhat exaggerated. It would be imprudent to envisage it as a wonderland, [illustration here] an eldorado destined to a great future from the administrative, commercial and sanitary point of view. Today it is a plateau with well-cultivated slopes which yield fine harvests of cardamom and rice, as well as tobacco, cotton and Chinese nettles [ortie de Chine], and is inhabited by gentle, peaceful folk who live in handsome, well kept-up villages. 133 241 361

487 A particularity which should be noted is that these two land routes which represent some hundred odd kilometers are the only ones which the traveler can take in order to go from Hanoi to Saigon by way of Luang- [Illustration here] Prabang, that is to say by way of the Red River, the Black River, the tributaries of the Mékong and the great river itself, or in order to cover a total distance of approximately 3200 kilometers. These hundred kilometers of land roads are the only ones which merit the name, since all the rest of the journey is made on navigable waterways in steamships, pirogues and rafts.

505 133 The Nam-Suong and its tributary the Nam-Seng can be negotiated in all seasons by pirogues and rafts. Ban-Pak-Seng, at the junction of the Nam-Suong and the Nam-Seng, is the capital of one of the most prosperous cantons in the province of Luang-Prabang.

A day's journey away from Luang-Prabang the Nam-Suong is blocked by [82] a shelf called the Keng-Luang which necessitates complete portage of merchandise and even of pirogues and rafts at certain seasons.

The Nam-Khan is navigable for pirogues and rafts during the greater part of the year, starting at Muong-You which is the ford for the road from Tran-Ninh to Luang-Prabang. It flows into the Mékong in the northern part of this city, one of the suburbs of which it circles.

[361] Luang-Prabang, the capital of the kingdom of the same name, is situated at an altitude of 350 meters above sea level, at 19° 54' 20" N. latitude and 99° 45' E. longitude. From the commercial point of view it is one of the most important centers--if not the most important--in Laos. The city numbers about 10,000 inhabitants and 2000 houses. In Luang-Prabang the river is 350 to 400 meters wide. Just above and below the city it is blocked by sandbanks which leave a channel only 100 meters wide during the low water period, but which is always navigable for pirogues and rafts.

The following table shows the average length of time it takes to travel both up and down the rivers between Luang-Prabang and the posts on this reach.

About fifteen kilometers from Luang-Prabang a series of rapids begins which makes navigation as far as Pak-Lay extremely difficult, even in pirogues. The Keng-Kaniok and the Keng-Louang [83] make it necessary to unload merchandise and transport it by land using bearers, while the pirogues pass the rapids empty. 505 133

Between Luang-Prabang and Pak-Lay the river is quite deeply cut into hills and rock masses, the sides of which constrict its bed to a width of only fifty meters at several points during the low water period. But as it approaches Pak-Lay (1) it widens out to 700

(1) Pak-Lay is situated at 18° 12' 20" N. latitude and 99° 5' E. longitude. [361]

or 800 meters.

In this part of the river we should note three tributaries of some importance on its right bank. These are the Nam-Houng, the Nam-Poun and the Nam-Lay, and in their valleys there are many teak trees.

Towards the 18th parallel between Pak-Lay and Xieng-Khan (2)

(2) It is at Ban Houé-Hat, between Pak-Lay and Xieng-Khan, that the Mékong comes closest to Bangkok (470 kilometers as the crow flies).

the Mékong is constricted between rocky headlands. Here it is extremely sinuous, and describes an overall northward bend slightly below the parallel (3). Then in another bend which is broader

(3) There is no tributary worthy of note on the left bank. On the right bank, however, about in the center of the bend and upstream from Xieng-Khan there are the mouths of two water-courses, the Nam-Huong and the Nam-Leui, which water a region of fairly dense population. One particularity to be noted is as follows: the sources of these two rivers are only a few kilometers away and are separated, by rather low ridges, 1) from the Nam-Lom-Sak, the easternmost branch of the Ménam, and 2) from the Klong-Koé-Noï, one of its middle left-bank tributaries.

and less winding, but which turns in the opposite direction, that is

133 to say towards the north, the river is joined on its left bank by the Nam-Sang and the Nam-Thon, the valleys of which are rich in gold
505 and catechu (sisièt). Then it finally leaves its steep gorges and reaches Sam-Pan-Na, the entrance to the great middle reach which extends as far as Savannakhèt.

Although it presents numerous navigation difficulties because of its rapids, native boats are nevertheless very active as far as Luang-Prabang by reason of the large flow of trade from this great market towards Bangkok by way of Pak-Lay on the one hand, and by way of Nong-Khay on the other.

[84] 2. The Middle Reach

133 At Sam-Pan-Na the Mékong leaves the region bristling with mountains which have restricted its course for good and all, and
505 spreads out at its ease in a fine navigable reach nearly 600 kilometers long.

361 It first passes through Vien-Tiane, the old capital of the kingdom of the same name which included, before 1827, all the Laotian territory on both banks of the Mékong between Luang-Prabang and Cambodia. Today the former state of things has been reestablished, and Vien-Tiane is once again the capital of French Laos. In fact, this point is the navigation terminus of the steam launches of the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine], even though the river is accessible to steamships as far as Kok-Peung, which is about 35 kilometers from Vien-Tiane, that is to say above Sam-Pan-Na. It would be true to add that the company would derive no commercial advantage from sending its launches that far up.

Between Vien-Tiane and Nong-Khay the river describes a sharp southward bend which doubles the 22-kilometer distance between the two points by land.

"Nong-Khay, which was founded after the destruction of Vien-Tiane by the Siamese, has partly inherited the importance of this old city. It is the greatest population center to be found on the banks of the Mékong between Pnom-Penh and Luang-Prabang" (1).

(1) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

149: Reinach--62 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina 361
Laotians AM8 133

Today Nong-Khay numbers about 10,000 inhabitants and 2000 505
houses. It is the starting point for the ox-cart caravans which travel [492]
to Bangkok by way of Korat carrying all the products of northern Laos.

From Nong-Khay on the Mékong winds through a plain in a 505
northeast direction. Its banks are densely populated and highly 133
fertile. At Pon-Pissay, on the 18th parallel (2), the river makes

(2) The reader will have noted that the 18th parallel has often been referred to in the foregoing. This stems from the curious fact that, in its meanderings, the great river is theoretically cut seven times by the parallel between Pak-Lay and Saniabouri, that is to say over a distance of 535 kilometers.

another northward bend [85] as far as Keng-Sa-Doc, which is just downstream from Pak-Sane (Patchoum). From this point on the Mékong takes the course which it will keep all the way to the sea, following a line approximately parallel to the Annamitic Chain and to the Gulf of Tonkin.

Somewhat beyond Pon-Pissay the Mékong is joined on its left bank by an important tributary, the Ngûm, a fine river with a peaceful course whose valley is highly populated and gives rise to quite extensive trade. Cinnamon, tobacco and catechu [sisièt] are its chief products. The Ngûm can be navigated by pirogues and rafts in all seasons as far as Tinh-Kéo, where the river is joined by the Nam-Song, about thirty kilometers from Tourakhom. The gunboat Massie went partway up the river during the high water period. It is said that the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine] intends to begin a steam launch service along the river because of its commercial importance.

After the Ngûm on the left bank of the river come first the Nam-Mang, which is of no great interest, and then the Nam-Nhiêp, which might be thought larger than it really is, to judge by its mouth. In fact, its total length is scarcely fifty kilometers, and its valley is sparsely populated. Just downstream from the Nam-Nhiêp is the mouth of the Nam-Sane, which flows into the river at Muong-Pak-Sane (Patchoum). This river, which has a very winding course, can be navigated by pirogues and rafts in all seasons as far as Keng-Louang, to the north of Borikan. It can be navigated by steam launches over a distance of about fifty kilometers during the high water period.

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or as far as Muong-Borikan which is about halfway between the Mékong and the Keng-Louang. At Pak-Sane a road comes from the right bank and leads to Tran-Ninh by way of Borikan.

Downstream from Pak-Sane there is a series of small rapids which can be negotiated in all seasons. One of these is the Keng-Sa-Doc. Below this point the Mékong is joined by an important left-bank tributary, the Nam-Ka-Dinh or Nam-Teûn. Captain Gosselin describes the latter as follows (1):

(1) Captain Gosselin, op. cit. [Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900.]

[86] "The Nam-Ka-Dinh, or Nam-Teûn, has its origin in the center of the muong of Cam-Mon, on a very high and irregular plateau containing the watershed between the basins of the Mékong and of the China Sea. This torrential river, which cuts the plateau of Na-Kaï and receives all its waters, is unusual in that it has navigable tributaries while it itself is not accessible to navigation over the greater part of its course.

"This peculiarity can easily be understood from a glance at the map, where one may note the enormous difference in altitude which its course shows over a distance less than sixty kilometers, immediately downstream from the point where its tributary joins it."

It is possible to travel up the Nam-Ka-Dinh for a two days' journey, as far as the rapids of Keng-Bi.

Throughout this whole reach, as far as Ban Ta-Sa-Kou (right bank) and Hueûn-Hin (left bank), the Mékong retains the appearance of a peaceful river flowing between low banks which are now sandy, and now covered with abundant vegetation. Its width varies between 1200 and 1500 meters, and its waters are deep enough to make steam navigation possible almost all year long. However, the first rapids or Keng-Kassek, which are situated just above Saniabouri, are an obligatory transshipment point during the dry season, although this obstacle does not exist in the period of high waters. After Saniabouri the river passes between Outhène, a quite important market on the right bank, and Pak-Hin-Boun, the capital of a province on the left bank (Cammon).

[361]

The Nam-Hin-Boun, a left-bank tributary, comes from the plateau of Na-Kaï. This river is unusual in that it flows into a tunnel

under the rocks, where it loses itself in an immense grotto. It can be navigated by pirogues in all seasons from Keng-Kièt on. 505 133

The large island of Don-Don is found between Pak-Hin-Boun and Lakhône.

Lakhone is an important center on the right bank located opposite Tha-Khèk, which is the nearest point to the Annam coast on the whole Mékong (1). [361]

(1) From Tha-Khèk to the mouth of the Cua-Nhuong (Hatinh) is reckoned 180 kilometers as the crow flies.

Just below the 17th parallel is found Muong-Panom, the holy city [87] [Illustration] [88] [Blank page] [89] of Laos and a celebrated spot of pilgrimage, by reason a That (1) which is said to contain relics [778]

(1) A that is a kind of stele or four-sided pyramid.

of Buddha. Opposite Panom, on the left bank, the Sé-Bang-Fai flows into the Mékong.

The Sé-Bang-Fai comes from the Annamitic Chain. It has a sinuous and extremely long course, but cannot be navigated in any season except by pirogues as far as Pou-Houa, that is to say for a distance of about eighty kilometers.

Below its mouth, and thirty kilometers upstream from Savannakhèt, is the Keng-Kabao. The latter deserves mention here, for during the low water period it forms an insurmountable obstacle for steam launches, which never go below this point from November to July.

Difficulties in navigation do not begin until after Hueûn-Hin, and the steam launches of the River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des Messageries fluviales] could reach that point during the high water period if there were any commercial advantage to be gained by so doing.

A series of rapids stretches over a length of about 160 kilometers between Hueûn-Hin and Pak-Moun. These are known as the "rapids of Kemmarat" because of the large muong (2) on the right bank which

(2) Muong = province; also means capital of a province. [631]

is located along this part of the river. They are a succession of rapids

3. The Inner Reach

505 133 361 438

After being joined by the Moun, the largest tributary on its right bank, the Mékong turns back eastward. As it leaves the narrow gorge of Pak-Moun where its course narrows to as little as 200 meters in width between sheer cliffs, it resumes a general north-northwest and south-southeast direction and spreads out over rich plains as far as the mouth of the Sédone.

Korat (1), the largest market in Siamese Laos, also belongs to the

(1) The Moun passes about 25 kilometers to the southeast of Korat.

Mékong basin through the Ta-Krong. The importance of this center is well-known, and today it is directly connected with Bangkok by a railway. Oubône (2), the other market town which is the storehouse

(2) Korat and Oubône are the seats of two French consulates.

of Lower Laos for Korat and Bangkok, as Nong-Khay is the storehouse of Upper Laos, is situated on the banks of the Moun about 300 kilometers from Korat, and only sixty from the Mékong. Communication between Korat and Oubône is achieved mainly by land, by means of ox-carts. We have seen in the foregoing that [93] steam navigation had been attempted on the Moun during the high water period as early as 1891, and that the Siamese were then planning to send their steamships out on the Mékong in the hope of getting there ahead of us. The launches provide a highly irregular service between Oubône and Tha-Phan-Sang, which is about 25 kilometers downstream from Korat. The trip takes from eight to ten days going upriver, and four to five coming down.

[492]

In its lower course, that is to say between Oubône and Pak-Moun, the Moun is barred near its mouth by shelves which make navigation extremely difficult, even for pirogues, during part of the year. The Chinese merchants of Oubône, however, who go by pirogue to Bassac or out on the Sédone, go up and down the Moun in all seasons. Because of the particular service for which they are used, their pirogues are known by the special name of Hua-Moun, or pirogues of the Moun (1)

(1) See table, Chapter VIII.

of the Moun (1). 000

(1) See table, Chapter VIII.

The most difficult rapid to negotiate is the Keng-Tanah, situated only three kilometers from Pak-Moun. During the low water period it is necessary to unload them completely and transport them by hand across dry land over extremely rough sandstone rocks. It has been negotiated during the high water period by the single-wheeler the Haiphong, and since the current beyond the rapids is weak and the width sufficient (300 meters), steam navigation is possible as far as Oubône for perhaps two or three months. 505 133

Francis Garnier describes this region as follows (2):

(2) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

"From Pi-Moun on the river is once more unobstructed. A very weak current, straight banks and a uniform width give it, in certain spots, the appearance of a canal dug by man."

At Pak-Sédone the Mékong is joined on its left bank by another important tributary, the Sédone. This river, which is about 200 kilometers in length, rounds the northern part of the plateau of the Bolovens. All the roads which descend from this mountain mass end in its valley, and all the products of the region leave it by way of the Sédone. Cardamom, which is the most important of these, is [94] an item much dealt in at the temporary market of Champi. The latter is the terminus of the convoys which come down from the plateau, and from this point on merchandise goes by river to Bassac or Oubône. 438 361 241

The market of Champi had to be established fairly near the mouth of the Sédone, for just upriver and less than thirty kilometers from Pak-Sédone the river is barred by insurmountable waterfalls [Illustration here] fifteen meters in height. From the point of view of navigation the Sédone is therefore divided into two sections: the part situated above the falls and the part situated below. 505 133

To the north of the falls the Sédone has a reach some thirty kilometers in length which can be navigated in all seasons by pirogues

in an almost exactly north and south direction through rich and extremely fertile plains where villages succeed one another almost without interruption. Halfway between Bassac and Khong there is another large island, called Don-Saï, which like Don-Dèng is highly populated and well-cultivated. Upstream from the island of Khong the river becomes much wider (eight to ten kilometers) and contains an important [96] group of islands which, by reason of their number, are known as Si-Pan-Don (4000 islands). The island of Khong is by far the most important. It is twenty kilometers long, seven wide, contains several fine villages and has a total population of 10,000 (1).

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[361]

(1) In all Laos, this is the point where the population density is greatest with respect to the area (1500 inhabitants per 100 square kilometers).

[16]

On this island is located the city of Khong, the former capital of Lower Laos. [Illustration here]

[361]

Slightly below the 14th parallel is found the island of Khône, famed for its waterfalls which form an absolute obstacle to navigation. Francis Garnier has given us a detailed description of the falls, which he calls cataracts. A few lines of his description are given below (2):

(2) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

"The two largest channels and the most beautiful cataracts are found on the outermost arms of the river, the Salaphe branch and the Paphèng branch. There one may see waterfalls more than fifteen meters in vertical height and which [97] sometimes reach a width of one kilometer. The broken line of cataracts has a total extent of twelve or thirteen kilometers. Upstream the river narrows momentarily until it occupies not more than half this extent, then it spreads out again over the immense plateau of rocks which precedes the falls, losing itself in the midst of numberless islands and embracing between its two banks a space of nearly five leagues."

We have already seen that a railway was established from north to south across the island of Khône to serve as a link between the reaches of Kratié and Bassac. [Illustration here]

The reach of Bassac can be navigated by steam launches during

149: Reinach--72a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

342

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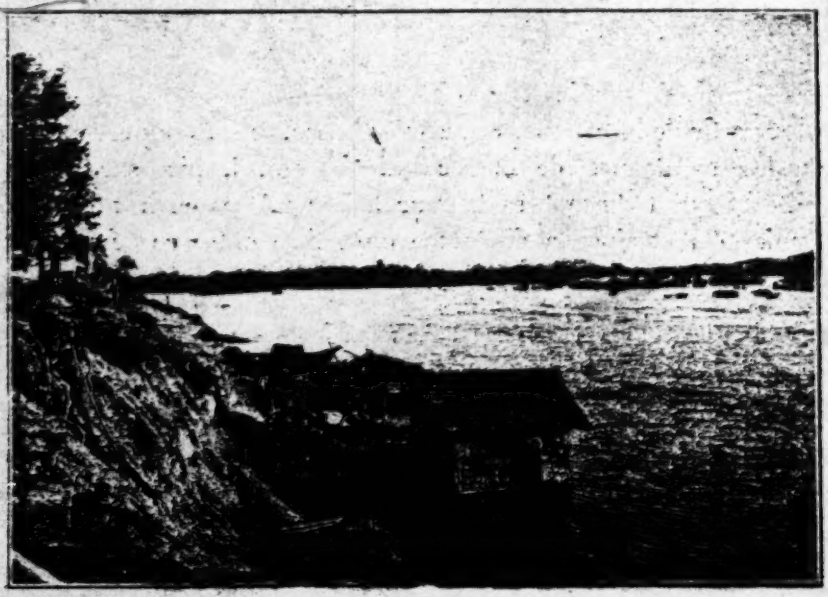

Fig. 26 /p. 96/ Bank of the island of Khong, at low water (1895).

4. The Maritime Reach

505 133 Below Khône the Mékong is encumbered by islands, islets and shelves which are more or less difficult to negotiate. During the high water period the river covers most of these hazards. Only the crests of the trees are left above water, and one navigates in a veritable submerged forest which reminds one of an inundation.

• 361 438 Stung-Treng is an important center, especially by reason of its site, for the city is located at the junction of the Mékong and the Sé-Khong, somewhat below the point where the latter joins the Sésane, which is itself swelled near its mouth by the Ton-Lé-Srépok. The produce of the region of Attopeu naturally finds its way to Stung-Treng, for it is the commercial intermediary between this region and Cambodia.

505 133 At Thboung-Kla, thirty kilometers below Stung-Treng, the Mékong enters Cambodian territory. Then begins a long series of rapids which impede its course and make it difficult [99] [Illustration] [100] [Blank page] [101] to negotiate, but which do not constitute an insurmountable obstacle for steam launches which have sufficient speed. The first important post in Cambodia is at Kratié, and steamships can go up as far as this point in all seasons.

The Sékhong, the Sésane and the Srépok form a basin which is noteworthy for its extent, being equal in area to all of Cochinchina. Unfortunately, the population density and importance of trade in the basin are not in proportion to so considerable an area. The valleys are sparsely populated and traffic there is, in consequence, quite limited. Finally, these watercourses are difficult to negotiate.

The Sékhong is a river whose course stretches over about 400 kilometers. Its sources lie near the 16th parallel, some hundred kilometers to the southwest of Hué, in the orographic nucleus of the Annamitic Chain which also gives rise to one of its large tributaries, the Dak-Poyo.

The upper course of the Sékhong bears the name of Dak-Mout. This river crosses an extremely rough region where towering rocks hem in its torrential bed. Beyond Koum-Kang the valley of the Sékhong widens out and small pirogues can navigate there.

At Muong-Mai, that is to say somewhat below the 15th parallel, the Sékhong is joined by the Sé-Kémane, an important tributary which, under the name of the Dak-Poyo, has its origin in the same mountain mass as the Dak-Mout. After it, like the Sékhong, flows past steep

149: Reinach--86 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

4. HYGIENE

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The choice of dwelling sites is of prime importance from the point of view of hygiene. Insofar as necessities permit, Europeans in Laos should seek to satisfy the following conditions:

1. Avoid building in regions which are low, hemmed in, formed of damp alluvia or near swamps or stagnant ponds.

2. Also avoid living on the banks of small watercourses and choose instead, insofar as possible, the larger rivers, especially near the point where they join a sea-going river or on the banks of the sea-going river itself (2).

(2) We have seen in Chapter II that the Mékong is the only river in Laos which flows into the sea.

3. Build houses on an eminence, no matter how small, and preferably on a rock foundation or on sand or on alluvia which are sandy and permeable to water.

4. Houses may be of brick or quarry-stone. They may be roofed [116] with tiles, wooden shingles, bamboo lath or ordinary thatch, depending on the local resources. They must be raised above the ground (at least 1.5 meters), and air must be able to circulate underneath.

5. However, a house made of wood or of a double thickness of bamboo lath can be as healthy as a brick house if it is carefully built.

6. Houses should be large, well ventilated and surrounded by [Illustration here] broad verandas provided with awnings made of strips of rattan. There should at least be verandas on the south and west.

7. Floors must be such that they can be washed with running water, while mats and rugs must be kept to a strict minimum and be easy to move. The best procedure is to use a colored plaster or an encaustic and apply it to the floor of the rooms and verandas and to the bottoms of walls and partitions half a meter up from the floor.

8. Furniture must be light and easy to move, clean and even wash. Bent wood, in the Thonet style, and rattan fulfill these two conditions perfectly.

/117/ 9. Avoid hangings and draperies insofar as possible. Have only folding doors and windows with two interchangeable sets of panels for each (glass for winter and shutters for the hot season).

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[114] of what has been observed, and because no better expression of the facts could be hoped for.

THE THAI RACE

142 "Laotians. Of all the Thais, the Laotian is the one who has
144 remained the purest, although he has a much higher proportion of Aryan blood than the other varieties, with the exception of the Lus. Fairly tall in stature, his hair cut short, elegant in his movements and more refined than all the other inhabitants of the land, he is the aristocratic type of Laos. His upbringing, his education, his religion and even his vices have a mark of distinction which make
438 them stand out above those of his neighbors. An excellent boatman,
505 and a trader rather than a farmer, he is the one who seems the master of the land, as much by virtue of his commercial aptitudes as by the
484 ease with which he ranges the country. Mounted on his long and narrow shaped pirogue, made in one piece of a tree trunk hollowed out by fire, he goes great distances to visit peoples of the most varied races [175] [Illustration] [176] [Blank page] [177] and serves as a link between all the human varieties which populate Laos. He is at home and at his ease everywhere, standing out clearly above all his countrymen in this respect.

[361] "The Laotian prefers to settle along navigable watercourses and in proximity to plains of ricefields. He is glad to have his land
[241] worked by mercenaries or by dependents of inferior race, and some-
[567] times by slaves (at least before our arrival). He himself, with quite an extensive knowledge of the needs and resources of the other inhabitants of the land, particularly likes to traffic in all kinds of merchandise. He it is who goes to buy forest products and cereal grains on the spot from the mountainfolk or from sedentary farmers, and sells them cloth, salt, tobacco, earthenware, farming implement
[439] etc. in exchange. He it is who exports the products of Laos to neighboring countries and brings back the things which Laotian industry cannot produce. His business as a commercial traveler, which he likes and which gives him a good standard of living, occupies him for only a few months of the year but brings him into contact with all the neighboring peoples and also with the Europeans and Chinese in the Siamese, Annamite and Cochinchinese trading posts. Thence arises his veneer of civilization which strikes one at first glance.

181 bread by their work, they have scarcely a care for the morrow.
461 Scrupulous observers of the traditions handed down to them by their ancestors, they live an utterly carefree life and instinctively dread everything foreign or unknown to them.

463 Occupations. The men busy themselves with the tasks of farming, fishing and hunting. They are very industrious and skilled farmers,
241 and can draw admirably on the soil's resources. They bring in the water needed for irrigating their rais or mountain ricefields through ingenious
462 canals built along the sides of hills, and they also know how to capture springs, often very distant ones, for the same purpose. To decorticate paddy, they use mills driven by artificial waterfalls. The women perform the household chores, take care of the children, make and mend clothes, harvest and spin cotton, breed silkworms, unwind the cocoons and mill the silk. Theirs also is the task of supplying the home with water and with wood which they gather in the forest, as well as sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, getting in and decorticating the rice. These many tasks leave Thai women and girls little leisure, and it would thus seem only natural that they should profit by a moment of pleasure, whenever one presents itself in the midst of their multiple duties. They do, in fact, go in for fun eagerly and behave as keenly, despite their more reserved appearance, as their Laotian sisters.

• 361 Houses. There is no difference between Laotian villages and Thai villages, except that the latter are better kept and cleaner.
342 Thai houses are generally longer and higher than those of the
592 Laotians, by reason of the custom which decrees that the whole family--parents, children and grandchildren--shall live under the same roof. Some Thai houses are as much as thirty meters long and from eight to ten meters wide. In rare cases one finds much larger houses which are from seventy to seventy-five meters long and twenty-five meters wide.

342 Thai houses very often have no verandas on their long sides, but always have two, one at each end, which are covered by rounded roofs
554 and serve as reception terraces or antichambers.

The houses of mandarins and notables can be distinguished from the others by the fact that the roof rafters and the trusses of the gables extend above the line of the roof and cross. These members are decorated with wooden silhouettes or scallops ending in discs which, depending on their number and arrangement, indicate the rank of the house's owner.

149: Reinach--178 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai

619 The Neua-Thais. The Neua-Thais differ very little, in all
361 respects, from their fellows. They generally live on higher ground than the other Thais, but they change the location of their village quite frequently. [241] [Illustration] [242] [Blank page] [243]

291 The women knot their skirts under their armpits, above their breasts, and always wear a very short jacket made of cotton, silk or velvet, depending on the season.

231 They engage in sericulture, and with the silk spin and weave brocaded cloth with harmonious colors.

779 At the same time as ancestor worship, the Neu-Thais practice an attenuated form of Buddhism. Pagodas are rare and the bonzes, few in number, serve several centers in turn.

461 Their character is docile. They do not have a very marked taste for trade and are content to be excellent farmers and livestock breeders.
276 Unfortunately, they are inclined to be opium smokers. This is doubtless due to the proximity of the Meos and Yaos who are the producers of the drug.

619 The Phou-Eunes. This branch of the Thai family is very close to
101 the Laotians in mores and customs.

There are only a few modifications in costume and language, modifications due to the age-old proximity of the Annamites and the continuous relations which have existed between the two peoples.
[458] These latter may be explained by the fact that the territory long inhabited by the Phou-Eunes in the east and southeast of Tran-Ninh is situated on the Tonkin Gulf side, and that their produce naturally flows towards the ports on the Annamite coast (1).

(1) To be sure, there are several groupings of Phou-Eunes in the Mekong basin, in Tran-Ninh, to the northeast of Vien-Tiane and in Camkeut-Cammon.

361 The Phou-Eunes prefer to live in high valleys and on high plateaus where the climate is quite severe during the winter. They are more reserved in character than the Laotians, more industrious and less inclined to celebrations and festivities of all kinds.

779 Their religion is Buddhism, but the bonzes are less numerous than elsewhere. It is probable that the little taste which Phou-Eunes have for the religious life is due to the influence of nearby Annam, where the bonzes are a long way from being venerated and coddled as they are in Laos.

291 cover their bust with a small short jacket which is very close-fitting and bright in color. It has a heart-shaped opening on the chest and, like the men's jacket, is ornamented with galloons and passementerie. For celebrations and ceremonies Lu women wear a heavy turban on their head which is folded flat or pleated, shaped like a mitre and generally made of black silk spangled with gold.

301 Both men and women pierce the lobes of their ears [246] with a broad opening, into which they introduce hollow gold or silver cylinders which are sometimes as large as three centimeters in diameter.

306 Great lovers of jewelry, the Lus number skilled jewelers and goldsmiths among them who make hair coil plaques, ear cylinders, flat braided metal belts with wide chased and checkered buckles, bracelets, rings, hilts and sheaths for daggers and swords, etc. [Illustration alongside text here]

411 The Lus almost always wear daggers and swords. Each of them, so to speak, possesses a rifle, generally flintlock, which by the shape of
243 the stock, the length of the barrel and the many bands which adorn it greatly resembles the long Moukhala so dear to our Arabs in Algeria.

[361] Lu villages are clean, and the houses are arranged in a checkerboard pattern.

[231] The Lus have a high reputation as breeders of oxen and horses.

527 A great lover of celebrations and parades, this boisterous people sets off gunpowder at every opportunity, and there is no festival, private or public, so small that it is not accompanied by salvos and fireworks.

[77] From their contact with the Burmese the men have retained a [247] [Illustration] [248] [Blank page] [249] taste for dancing and for
535 sword fights mingled with dance steps in which they manifest a real grace and elegance.

"Among other forms of amusement, the men execute, with a truly remarkable suppleness and skill, sword dances which are perfectly elegant. Naked to the waist, with their trousers rolled up and bunched and a wooden sword in each hand whose cutting edge has been dipped in dye so that the thrusts will leave a mark, the two champions confront one another. Moulinets, parries and returns follow one another without apparent effort, and the movements are undulating and rapid but without any abruptness. The men seem to be caressing one another, not fighting, and yet the slashes leave their colored traces on the skin of the vanquished. Direct thrusts are forbidden, but the entire body from head to foot is fair game for the opponent. Thus during the

149: Reinach--183 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Kha

"The most varied types are to be found among the Khas. Some are just like the American 'Redskins,' others have a heavier and more bestial appearance, and still others are small and puny. Certain of them are veritable savages who have never heard of clothing and live in shapeless huts, taking to the trees or fleeing into the forest at the slightest alarm, with monkey-like habits and the instincts of wild animals. 142 291

"Others, on the other hand, wear clothing quite like that of the Lus, build proper houses and enjoy a comparative degree of civilization. But they all carry a bag of dark blue cloth which never leaves them.

"It is a long way between the primitives which some of them are and the half-civilized beings which the better policed among them are. Thus the greater part of these poor folk have long been in servitude, especially in the northern and central part, and have become the humble servants of more highly refined races which exploit them. 563

"In the south, however, some tribes of particular origin have been able to resist all outer authority and are still free and independent today." [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

The Khas of northern Laos. All the Khas of northern Laos have been brought under control, and even emancipated, and live grouped in villages or hamlets which are distributed over the mountainsides, generally near some watercourse. 361

Houses. Kha houses, which are built on piles and in the same style as those of the Laotians although in less careful fashion, are set down without any care for symmetry or alignment. They are generally much smaller and built for a single family. The houses are extremely dirty. 242

The Khas have very little in the way of large livestock, and so the under part of the houses shelter only pigs and poultry. 231

A few Kha tribes, such as the Khouenes (white and black), Khmous and Lemets, which are the most civilized have quite fine villages with well built and carefully aligned houses. A pagoda will sometimes be found in these. 361

Costume. Khas of both sexes wear their hair long and wound in a coil on the nape of the neck or top of the head. The [258] Lemets comb part of their hair down over their forehead and cut it off straight at the eyebrow level. 291

149: Reinach--190 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Hill Tribes

Almost all are of low birth and are crude and illiterate. They have married Thai or Kha women and thereby founded a stock of halfbreeds. This race is destined to merge with the mass of the Laotians or Thai population and through successive crossings lose all distinctive characteristics. 619 563

The Meos. The Meos are also Yunnanese who have retained a degree of independence and have not been marked with the Chinese imprint like the Hos or adopted baggy clothes and the custom of wearing their hair only in a braid.

They are distributed in groups of a few families each of which live on the peaks of the mountains in northern Laos and the Sib-Song Chau-Thais. They can be divided into three great families--the blacks, the whites and the reds--which owe their names to the color of certain parts of the women's costume. Thus among the black and red Meos skirts or jackets are light blue in color, but the latter have a wide collar ornamented with black or red embroidery. Finally, a small turban with black and white checks or of red material, depending on the case, completes their garb. Among the white Meos, the women wear a skirt and jacket of unbleached cloth, with a white and blue embroidered collar. [361] 291

The men's clothing is light blue in all cases. It is composed of a broad pair of trousers which come down somewhat below the calf, where the legs are drawn tight, and of a short, tight-sleeved jacket which buttons down one side.

A turban winds around the head and covers their long hair, which may be rolled or braided. 301

The women's hair is parted and wound on the upper part of the nape of the neck in a coil. (1)

(1) See Appendix XIX.

The Meos practice ancestor worship primarily, like many Asian peoples. They have no pagodas or bonzes, but elders perform the office of priests and also administer justice. 769

[268] The Meos bury their dead, and make animal sacrifices on the occasion of births, marriages and deaths so as to gain the favor of the "Phis" or multiple and varied genii in whose existence and influence they believe.

Marriage is as simple as among the other peoples of Laos. [581]

Divorce may occur either through mutual consent or in the case of adultery. [586]

Finally, the Ao-Tchaine Yaos owe their name (bearing sapeks) 291
to the fact that the men's jacket, which is shorter than that of the other Yaos, is ornamented in front with several rows of flat copper or silver buttons which resemble sapeks (Annamite and Chinese coins).

The women fasten a pad of compact, gummed hair on their coil 302
by means of sticks made of ivory, of bone or simply of wood.

Like the Meos, the Yaos inhabit the peaks of mountains in 361
northern Laos where they grow poppies. They are confirmed opium [276]
smokers.

[270] [Blank page] [271] [Illustration at top]

CHAPTER V

1. ORGANIZATION

Consulate and Commercial Agencies. Before 439
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These new agencies were directed by "commercial agents" specially appointed for the purpose. In addition to the delegates of the French Syndicate of Laos who continued to hold office, these agents included a few inspectors of the Tonkin native guard.

The duties of these officials were poorly defined, and their chief role was to assert our presence. They were mere information agents. For this reason official circles soon decided to abolish these posts, an action made possible chiefly by the establishment of two new vice-consulates in Siam, one at Oubone and one at Ban-Dua-Makeng.

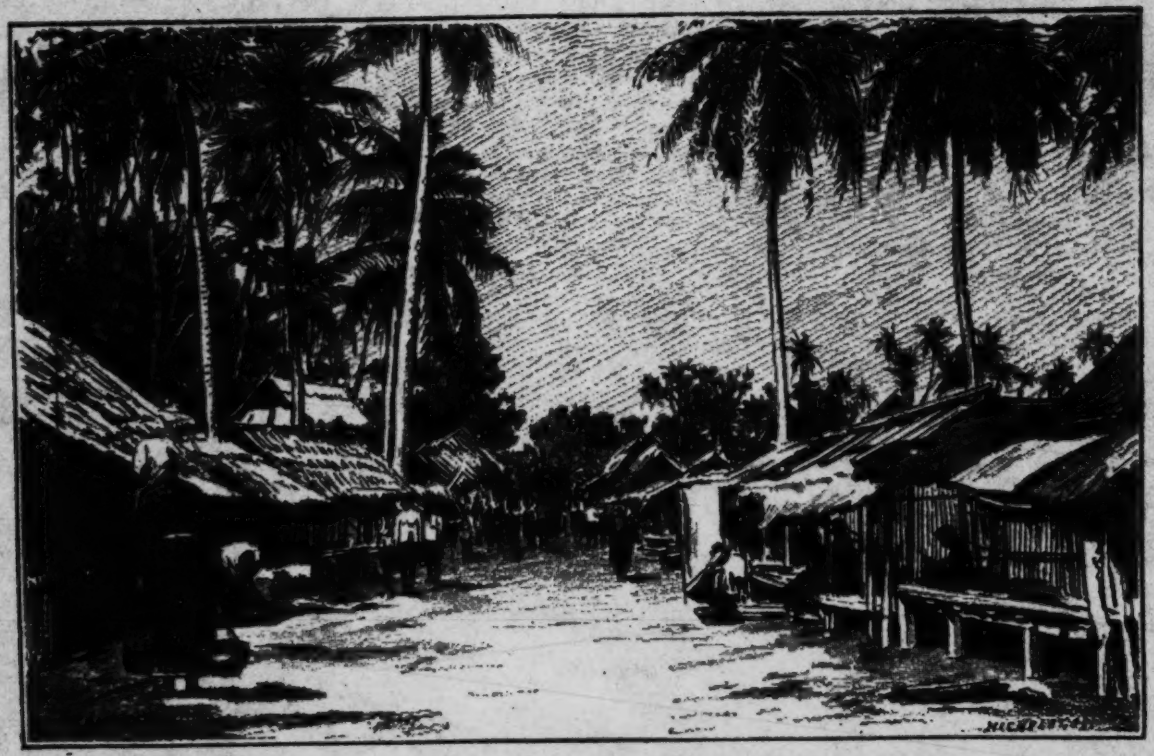
149: Reinach--278a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

Fig. 95 /p.379/ A street in Savannakhet.

10: d'Orleans--325 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 347, 363, 443

"In front of us is a broad avenue, lined with fine trees, which is perpendicular to the river, and is intersected at a distance of a hundred yards or so by a road which runs parallel to the Mekong. This is the main street of Luang Prabang, upon the two sides of which the market is held morning and evening. The animation is greatest in the morning, when, for a distance of more than half a mile, there is a long row of small booths, some of which are rather lofty, and are surmounted by a roof of bamboos, while others are very close to the ground. These booths are the rendezvous of the whole population, of the bourgeoisie, of the mountaineers, of the bonzes, of the working classes, and of the villagers."

10: d'Orleans--327 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 347, 363



THE MARKET STREET AT LUANG PRABANG (ELEPHANTS PASSING THROUGH).

10: d'Orleans--338 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 363, 775, 782

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "Between the palace and the river bank a broad street runs parallel to the market, and at frequent intervals are jars containing water, placed there by the inhabitants, who believe that in so doing they are making sure of a reward hereafter."

23: Franck--349 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 363, 493

"Though the French have brought a few automobiles, the humped-ox cart--a curious cart with a movable axle and huge wheels higher than a man--is still the more common type of conveyance. Vientiane has an avenue of flamboyants of which it is justly proud, and a lot of good French residences, with a pleasant woodsy atmosphere out of keeping with the solemn air of French officialdom."

11: League of Nations--68 G-5 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 312, 364

"Lastly, in Laos, the centres of Vientiane and Luang-Prabang, which already have a supply of drinking-water obtained in the one case from wells and in the other form a spring, are extending and modernising their plant."

149: Reinach--192 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Finally, the Ao-Tchaine Yaos owe their name (bearing sapeks) 291
to the fact that the men's jacket, which is shorter than that of the other Yaos, is ornamented in front with several rows of flat copper or silver buttons which resemble sapeks (Annamite and Chinese coins).

The women fasten a pad of compact, gummed hair on their coil 302
by means of sticks made of ivory, of bone or simply of wood.

Like the Meos, the Yaos inhabit the peaks of mountains in 364
northern Laos where they grow poppies. They are confirmed opium [276]
smokers.

[270] [Blank page] [271] [Illustration at top]

CHAPTER V

1. ORGANIZATION

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69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

837 suitable girl, and was back with one by six-thirty. At seven the
588 bonzès came and performed a marriage ceremony which took half an hour. At seven-thirty we opened a bottle of champagne and drank to the health of the bride and bridegroom, and by eight they were already in bed.'

548 The evening was rounded off by a routine visit to the local opium den,[1] which, probably by design, was as decrepit and sinister as a waxworks exhibit. We stayed only a few minutes in this green-lit, melodramatic establishment, but it was clear that the unprofitable puff at the pipe was not to be avoided. One had to make some show of going to the devil.

000 I was lodged in the minor palace of the *Conseiller de la République*, the senior French official in Northern Laos, a Monsieur Leveau. The *Conseiller* was a man whose shyness and slight reserve of manner failed to mask a quite extraordinary hospitality. He never, for instance, issued a formal invitation to a meal, preferring with an air of casual assumption to say something like: 'Of course, you'll be dining at home tonight.' Monsieur Leveau was married to a Laotian wife, to whom I was not presented, and the huge official building always seemed strangely empty. We dined facing each other across a darkly gleaming wasteland of ambassadorial table. Sometimes a Laotian servant stole into the room carrying dishes; trailing behind him the distant sounds of a domestic interior. These were immediately sealed off by the closing of the door, leaving us to the vault-like silences of the huge room. As we sat there the light bulbs gave out in various parts of the room and were swiftly re-
365 placed. In Luang Prabang the electric current was switched on at the same time as the water was turned off—at seven-thirty. But the result was no more than a feeble striving of the filament, and the lamp in my bedroom produced a light considerably less than that of one candle. Monsieur Leveau partly got over this difficulty by enormously over-running lamps intended for a much lower voltage, but they did not last long.

[1] [at Luang Prabang. --Analyst]

23: Franck--298 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 366, 697, 793

"The main street of the capital, [EJ: Luang Prabang] dying out at either end in semi-jungle, is lined by a long market, facing the entrance to the king's palace. But for that matter there is a market just outside the royal palace in Madrid, too, and many beggars also, which here seem to be unknown, unless we count the yellow-clad priests sauntering along with their begging-bowls in the early morning. Even such an Eden as this is not without its serpents, however; and rattling chains on the legs of prisoners working about the town make strange contrast both to its quiet gentle atmosphere and to the regality of its king."

23: Franck--278-279 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 136, 367

"Visitors do not come often to Xieng Khuang; besides, there are things of interest there, and whatever is worth doing, be it only a journey, is worth doing well.

There was the commissaire's zoo, for instance, a score of pets ranging from some distant member of the leopard family to monkeys that looked like puffballs, fittingly domiciled in his garden, with or without chains to assure their allegiance to a master from whose hand the fiercest of them ate with murmurs of pleasure. There are said to be more species of animals in the forests and on the plains of Tran-ninh than in almost any other space of similar size on earth--tigers, panthers, bears, gaur, gibbons, monkeys, deer, pythons, boa-constrictors, and a host of lesser serpents; a cobra was chased out of the yard of one of the French [279] residents that very day; and the museum maintained this quarter-century past by a tropic-emaciated Frenchman was easily proof that the province is an unspoiled paradise of the ornithologist and the collector of butterflies and insects."

gilt and jewels. The wily merchants accepted all these kindnesses 439
in the hope of extracting great profits from their packet (1). 175*

1. Cf. Cabaton, op. cit. /Le Laos et les Neerlandais au dix-septieme siecle (1913). /

The audience took place near the pyramid of That-Luong which was entirely covered with gold plate. The king, surrounded by all his court, stood in a great temple and had the newcomers sit on mats under the gallery. The following day danses, combats and /574/
water jousts were given in their honor on the river bank. Souligna-Vongsa was present, carried on a golden chair, and came and sat on a /108/ balcony erected over the river. In the evening more than two hundred fiery pirogues went down the Mekong. "The river seemed to be on fire."

As time passed the merchandise sold well, thanks to the gifts distributed to the king, the princes, the princesses and the officers. The Dutch cleverly disparaged the Siamese of Ayuthya as traders of little faith, offered to settle a misunderstanding which had arisen between the sovereigns of Lan-Xang and Cambodia, and obtained the Laotians' promise to deliver them enormous quantities of benzoin and gum lac. They finally left on December 24, "profoundly impressed with the wealth and splendor" of the kingdom of Vientiane (1).

1. Van Wusthof left without his two assistants, whom he left with the king to await the gifts destined for Van Diemen and the Laotian "ambassador" who was to accompany them. (Francis Garnier, Bulletin de la Societe de geographie, 1871.)

If we are to believe Van Wusthof, this city then had a huge 174
population, while Luang-Prabang was nothing more than a deserted 164
city. A terrible cholera epidemic had decimated its population, 369
and those who were left had come to life in Vientiane.

He also confirms the kingdom's frontiers as stated by the Annals and the perfect relations which /109/ Lan-Xang maintained with all its neighbors.

On the other hand he does not shed any light -- rather the con- 439
trary -- on the obscure period which preceded Souligna's accession 643*
to the throne. Indeed he writes with perfect serenity: "the present 175*
king inherited the crown three years ago from his brother, who died

been the vassal of Annam and used to pay a triennial trib- 643*
ute. The Tayson revolt forced it to submit to the Siamese, 648*
who are mistreating the people. Today, seeing the glory 175*
and power of Emperor Gia-Long, the prince of Vientiane asks to serve Annam once again and to pay tribute as in the past.' The embassy was received in a solemn audience by Gia-Long, who questioned it at length on the administration of the country, and was sent back, after a month's stay, with magnificent gifts. . . . The ambassadors brought back to the prince of Vientiane a letter from Gia-Long conceived in the following terms: 'Your predecessor Chao-In was my vassal, and my policy with respect to your kingdom has always been marked by gentleness and goodwill. Remain faithful to your duty and show yourself ever humane towards your people, and you will thereby comply with my wishes.' The question of tribute was settled. It was to be paid every three years, and the time of payment set in such a way that the embassy responsible for bringing it might greet the king during the holiday of the Tet." (Cf. Annals of the court of Hue.)

to /161/ detach Luang-Prabang from Bangkok (1). After the Bassac

1. See below, p. 201.

campaign he had sent Chao-Ngo to fortify Oubone. A triple-entrenched camp was built there and recruits trained, supposedly to defend Siam against any attack from inside or outside.

In Vientiane, he governed in the midst of a brilliant court. 369
The city of Setthathirath and Souligna, although fallen from its 175
former splendor, still contained more than ten thousand families and prided itself on its royal /162/ palace (1) and its many pagodas

1. When the Doudart de Lagree mission visited the city in /172/
1867 the mass of its fallen stones stretched from the Prakeo to the ruins -- which were then still imposing -- of the Wat-Kang. (De Carne, op. cit. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'empire chinois. Paris, 1872./) See above, p. 122, the account by Father Marini.

whose gilt glittered above the walls of its fortifications. In 1818 /346/

369 Anou had built the new temple of Sisaket not far from the deconse-
175 crated Prakeo "with the purpose of attracting the grace of Heaven
/346/ to the souls of his parents as well as to those of all his relatives and to all the souls which people Hell and the world" (2). The corner-

2. Cf. inscription on the stele.

stone was laid on "Thursday, the ninth day of the waxing moon of the year Kap-San" (1824), in the midst of a large assembly of the populace.

778 Inauguration of the temple of Sisaket (1824). On this occasion
796 the king made innumerable gifts to the bonzes (clothing, sandals,
346 fans, iron pen points to write on latania leaves, mats, mattresses,
175* copper betel services, rice baskets, vases, metal drinking cups, carafes, goblets, etc.). He gave /163/ pieces of cloth to the poor, and generous bounties to artisans and musicians. The people walked in procession around the royal palace, carrying oriflammes and effigies of animals which were flowered and perfumed with incense. The holiday lasted three days, to the accompaniment of general rejoicing (1).

1. Ibid. /Inscription on the stele./

346 This temple was the only one which the French found still standing when they reached Vientiane. Of the first enclosure there remain two 'that's', which have recently been restored, and an elegant square pavilion-library whose quadruple pinnacled roof is supported by a graceful colonnade. Three other pavilions have disappeared (2).

2. A bath pavilion, one for worship and one for the tom-toms and gongs.

A cloister pierced by a porch on each side surrounds the central sanctuary, the outer gallery of which discloses a gateway and finely worked windows under the triple porch roofs. The inside walls are
/532/ illuminated by frescoes surmounted by many niches in the form of lotus leaves where thousands of statuettes are grouped in pairs. A wooden ceiling is embellished with gilded panels, and on the altar stands a giant Buddha entirely covered with gold leaf.

648* A few weeks later his eldest son Kham-Souk was given permission to
175* return to his own land and left with a small armed force led by Louang Datzakorn, which preceded the Phya Surrissak's new army as an advance guard.

At the end of November Pavie was back in Luang-Prabang, and while he awaited news of the advance of the Pernot column which had left Lao-kay in the direction of Lai and Theng he settled temporarily with the Satou of the Wat-Mai. There he effortlessly resumed his close relations with the "good inhabitants" who all knew him and showed "so clearly that they thought him at home in the bonzery that one might have thought he had been living there for
727 years." The "enchanting city" was born again out of its ashes, en-
369 tirely new houses arouse out of the debris, the market took shape again and the girls who sold their wares there came back /274/ each day in greater numbers -- Laotian and Lu women from the country, timid Kha women from the nearby forest and girls from Luang-Prabang whom Pavie could identify by "the ease of their gestures and attitude, by their greater flexibility and distinction, by their sweet and familiar civility and by their coquettishness with its ingenuous charm." This "lovable people" began to live again in the aftermath of its misfortune with a rare carefreeness, as if it were unconscious of the present's uncertainties and in spite of the future's threats. "And each evening, by the light of the stars, troops of decisive young women and turbulent and laughing girls assembled in various spots and followed the khene players, singing until dawn..."

648* Although capable of appreciating all the poetry of this carefree
175* revival, Pavie was nonetheless anxious to set out and at long last make contact with the cantons of the highlands. He soon grew impatient at not receiving any precise information concerning the advance of the columns, of which he knew only that Colonel Pernot's forces had been concentrated in Phong-Tho and that the Oudri detachment had set out in the direction of Son-La. Moreover, the unusual length of time which Bangkok was taking to send him the three promised "commissioners" rightly made him suspect secret maneuvers on the part /275/ of the Siamese agents who had remained in the Twelve Cantons after the withdrawal of the Chao-Meun's expeditionary force.

part of the natives' diet? Do not its alluvia yield the cotton, tobacco and indigo which are indispensable to the Laotian, and does not the river itself, in the high water period, transport the wood needed for cooking food, so that, in a manner of speaking, it has only to recede in order to collect firewood? Finally, from the commercial point of view, is not the Mékong the great fluvial artery and the only practical route joining Yunnan to Saigon? M. Blancsubé, a former deputy for Cochinchina, envisaged the use to which the Mékong could be put when he said: [372] 133 [502]

"I see in our establishment throughout the whole Mékong valley, the means of making flow into Saigon the products of thirty kingdoms and tribes scattered along the river, as well as those of Yunnan and those of the interior provinces of China. I see the means of making Saigon into one of the greatest storehouses in the world, and making it the queen of the Far East." 000

The vision is a tempting one. Unfortunately, the reality is quite another thing. On the one hand the orientation of trade towards Bangkok was climaxed by the completion of the Korat railroad, while on our part the problem of making the Mékong navigable from Yunnan to the sea is still far from having been solved.

Looked at as a whole, the Mékong flows first in a largely north and south direction as far as Ban-Houé-Pak-Kop (1) (where the Houé- 133

(1) Pak = mouth, junction of rivers.

Kop flows into its right bank), then turns suddenly eastward in the gorge which it has cut around the plateau which forms the last stage of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na.

Macey (2) says, in this connection, that one can almost certainly

(2) "Cinq ans au Laos." Lecture delivered before the Society of Commercial Geography [Société de Géographie commerciale] on November 19, 1895. [113]

accept the hypothesis that in a relatively recent geological epoch the Mékong flowed into the sea in the Gulf of Siam through the valley of the present-day Ménam. The other branch of the Mékong which goes down to the sea through Cambodia and Cochinchina was a continuation of the Nam-Hou. It was only when an upheaval or

149: Reinach--247 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"What makes everything easy and is used for everything is this hollow wood, at once so solid and so light, the incomparable bamboo. In France we see it only in the form of pleasant but useless little articles of furniture. Here bamboo is sufficient to every task. It provides the whole house, frame as well as walls. The inner walls and floors are made of matted bamboo lathwork. Yet such a house, with its furniture, bed, tables, various accessories and its luxury objects, if you are a person of refinement, can be improvised for you in a space of two hours wherever you want. 313 341 352

"Has a bridge been washed out? In two hours, thanks to this wood which is easy to manage and to work, men will have made a new bridge. One is especially struck, at the beginning of this life which is so free and, more than any other, independent of men and things, by the great simplicity and ingenuity of all the procedures. Objects are rudimentary but practical, easy to make, soon ready and simple to repair. Everyone knows how to build ordinary furnishings, and no interruptions are caused here as they are when even the slightest damage occurs to one of our highly developed utensils, which only a specialist knows how to repair.

"A bamboo tube is a safe place for your maps and papers. It is a drinking glass, and it is also a pipe for smokers. On a larger scale, it is a bucket for carrying water, and the receptacle for all liquid and solid provisions. When provided with a handle it serves as a pot for the Laotians to cook their rice in, or to prepare syrup from the sugar palm. When torn into thongs it is used as rope and string. Ligatures of sapeks are threaded on kelates, or bamboo filaments, and this is what makes our new Indo-Chinese sou, with its round hole in the middle, so impractical. Those who preside over the striking of our coins are unaware that the kelate is square, a fact which the first comer from the interior could have told them. Baskets of all kinds are made with these same kelates for holding and transporting material. Hats are also made of them to provide shelter from the sun and rain. At night, when the stage of your journey is too long and you have to continue after nightfall even at the risk of meeting a tiger, setting fire to a bamboo branch is enough to frighten any off and to light your way. And not only is bamboo used to make torches, hats, string, dishes, furniture, houses and bridges, but it also serves as animal fodder and even as food for the natives, who eat the tenderest shoots as we would eat asparagus. 313 415 436 285 313 291 [372] [262 231]

23; Franck--330 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 373

"Two of the new men had gathered some sections of dried bamboo six or eight feet long to be used as torches, which made it to some extent harder than ever to see the way through the steep gullies cut deeply into the soil of the densest possible jungle and forest."

36: Gourou--23 (no date) 1947 Laotians
116, 311, 361, 376, 503

"Problems of the Mekong and of Laos.

Above Kratié the mighty River Mekong is of very little use. True, it is easy to imagine a marvellous control program, a sort of grandiose Laotian T.V.A. Dams would divide the river into level reaches; locks would allow ships of large tonnage to sail as far as Luang Prabang; the dams would make possible a huge electricity production, and the irrigation of vast tracts. Rice, cotton, maize, would fill the holds of river vessels that would ply to the sea without transhipping their cargos. Pacific and profitable co-operation would be established between Indochina and Siam. . . . All of which are daydreams. Capital is lacking and, above all, manpower. Such works would be possible only if the lands drained by the Mekong were populous. But Laos should nevertheless not be neglected. It should draw great profit from a modernization of forest exploitation, and from the application of the measures we have outlined above. Nothing valuable, however, will be effected in Laos unless, at first, small, selected areas are developed. It is difficult to help sparse, shifting populations, who escape both health measures and education. Whereas, if the Laotians scientifically colonize their own territory, beginning with integral development of favored areas with health control, they will then be setting up centers of demographic expansion and of economic activity from which the development of the less favored regions can proceed. Only then can the Mekong's domestication be begun."

149: Reinach--250 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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385
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19. Miscellaneous resins.

Several trees, such as the "Kok-Mai-Niang, Kok-Mai-Tabeng, [Illustration here] Kok-Mai-Sak" (1), etc., yield an oleo-resin which,

(1) See Appendix XX.

when mixed with paddy husks, is used to make torches and a siccative, shiny extract which is called "Nam-Mane-Niang," and again a kind of pitch (Khi-Si) which is used to caulk pirogues and to smear various basketwork receptacles so as to make them watertight. It is similar to damarine.

314
501
322

The production of these resins is limited to local needs.

20. Black lacquer.

The black lacquer of Laos is a natural black varnish, thick and [343] solid, which is called "Nam-Kieng." It is secreted by the "Kok-Mai-Nam-Kieng."

Nam-Kieng is used to lacquer racing pirogues, elephant palanquins, pagoda columns and statues, frames, receptacles of different kinds, sword sheaths, etc. The lacquer producing trees grow only in certain localities, and the varnish is not exported. Its price varies throughout the land between 62 and 75 francs per hundred kilograms. [435]

It would be of interest to identify this lacquer with that of Japan, and to study the question as to whether it might not be possible to increase the number of trees which produce it with a view towards making it the basis of an export trade, at least to the countries bordering on Laos.

21. Cunao (the mock gambier, Mak-Soua in Laotian).

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The cunao is a brownish tubercle used instead of catechu, the color of which it has, for dyeing cloth. It is found in Cammon, in a part of the Hua-Pahn and on the right bank of the Nam-Hou. This product is bought mainly by Annamites and Chinese, who use it in Annam and Tonkin for dyeing the peasants' work clothes.

[435] The price per hundred kilograms is from 50 to 54 francs in Luang-Prabang, 62 francs
824 in Pak-Lay, from 62 to 70 francs in Nong-Khay, 50 francs in Cammon, from 75 to 83 francs in Song-Khone, from 66 to 87 francs in Saravane,
314 from 70 to 83 francs in Bassac, from 83 to 95 francs in Khong, 58 francs in Attopeu, from 50 to 83 francs in Stung-Treng, 133 francs in Pnom-Penh, 140 francs in Cholen (1) and from 80 to 120 francs in

(1) At this market cardamom from Pursat brings from 625 to 830 francs per hundred kilograms.

Korat.

4. Cinnamon (Cinnamomum zeylanicum. Kai-Hom in Laotian).

The cinnamon tree must have been cultivated at one time in the territory of Vien-Tiane. Then the inhabitants were driven out as a result of foreign incursions and abandoned their gardens, which were
245 gradually invaded by brush. The harvesting of cinnamon has since become a scavenging operation without any form of cultivation. For several years now, doubtless in consequence of the many requests which were made when the Customs service tried to establish a monopoly of this product in Annam, [331] [Illustration] [332] [Blank page] [333] the inhabitants have once more begun to maintain the cinnamon trees and to give them some attention. Plantations have even been started, and this propitious initiative should be encouraged.

824 5. Indigo (Kok-Kam and Kok-Hom, depending on
314 whether the Indigofera tinctoria or the Indigofera anil is designated).

[245] These two plants are not always scavenging products, since the greater part of Laotian indigo comes from crops grown on the banks of the Mekong and its chief tributaries.

There is also an indigo-bearing liana which grows wild. The Laotians call this "Bouok-Khua".

386 In Laos the preparation of indigo is extremely simple. The fresh leaves and stalks of the different varieties of indigo plants are put to soak in wooden vats containing water and an acid element, usually the acid of lemons or limes. After a certain time the leaves are removed, then lime is precipitated in the water and the mixture is violently stirred. The lime fixes the dye and is deposited at the bottom of the vats, which are exposed to the air. When the clear water which rises to the surface has been completely evaporated, a hardened mass which is the indigo is left at the bottom of the vat. This product is not exported, but serves only for local consumption. Its price varies between 12 and 15 francs per hundred kilograms.

Its price varies between 12 and 15 francs per hundred kilograms. 000

6. Catechu (Sisiet). 824

Catechu is produced from a decoction of the bark of two varieties 314
of trees, the catechu acacia and the leafy butée.

This product, which is used in making the national masticatory 276
together with betel, betel nuts and lime, is consumed, in the large centers of Upper Laos, in the form of a dry residue obtained from a decoction of the bark. Generally, however, it is the bark itself which is consumed after it has been broken up into small pieces.

Natural sisiet takes the form of shreds of bark about a cubit (.45 meter) long by four centimeters wide and one centimeter thick. The shreds are tied together in packs of twenty-five or fifty, depending on the region.

The whole production is consumed locally. The natives [334] [438]
go into the forest at points where suitable trees are to be found, bundle up the pieces and load them on great rafts which go down from Pak-Lay and Vien-Tiane to Raseac and even to Khong.

At Pak-Lay sisiet is worth only 7 francs and 50 centimes per [435]
hundred pieces, but it naturally costs more the further away one goes from the centers of production.

7. Curcuma (Khi-Mine). 824

This plant, of the Zingiberaceae family, has a rhizome which 314
contains an orange-yellow coloring matter used for dyeing silk and 386
cotton.

Sometimes the inhabitants (chiefly the women and children) 302
rub their whole body with curcuma scrapings after a bath. The application of curcuma to the wet skin, which acquires a light yellow color, is said by the natives to ward off mosquitoes and keep the skin fresh.

Up to the present time this product has not formed the basis of [438]
any foreign trade. It is sold in small amounts on the markets of Laos.

8. Ginger. 263

The ginger which is called "Mak-Khing" in Laotian is the Zingi- 824
ber officinale or gray ginger. Used as a condiment by the entire 314
population, this product does not enter into trade. Its price varies [435]
between 12 francs and fifty centimes and 16 francs and fifty centimes per hundred kilograms.

9. Roucou. 824

The roucou, or fruit of the Roucouyer Bixia, is called "Kene- 314
Mak-Soum-Phou" in Laotian. Literally, this means Seed of an 386
acidulous mountain fruit. It is used to make red and orange dyes

824
314 when mixed with curcuma. The trees are found in the forest, and
386 sometimes in gardens.

10. Yams.

The yam is an edible tubercle of the Dioscorea family. It is
262 represented by two varieties, the white and the black, which are called
241 "Mane-Phuek-Khao" and "Mane-Phuek-Dam" in Laotian. These tubercles are the main standby when there is a scarcity of rice and [335] maize, but in ordinary times they are used only to supplement the usual diet.

11. Taro or cush-cush (Mane-Pa).

Taro is also a food plant of the Aroïdées caladiées genus (Caladium esculentum). Like the yam, it is one of the most useful edible tubercles in times of famine.

12. Medicinal plants.

824 Designated by the generic name "Ya" in Laotian, these plants are represented by special types of orchids, roots, bark, berries,
278 leaves and even pieces of wood of different kinds, the whole forming an assortment of medicaments.

[438] The Khas are the ones who collect these various products from the depths of the forests, and they trade them either to Chinese or to Laotians for money or other goods.

[435] Certain of these plants and barks are used by the Laotians while others, such as the leaves from orchid plants, for example, are purchased by Chinese merchants at prices which vary between 33 and 62 francs per hundred kilograms.

13. Cloves.

The clove tree (Caryophyllus aromaticus. Kane-Phou in Laotian) is quite scarce in Laos. Cloves are mixed with various ingredients in masticatories or are taken as medicine.

Cultivation of the clove tree ought to be developed in Laos because of the high value of its flowers which, when dried on the tree, constitute the cloves of commerce.

14. Beeswax (Phung).

222 Beeswax is much sought-after in Laos, where a great deal of it is
[231] consumed. It is a scavenging product par excellence since, except in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na, the inhabitants do not practice apiculture and
314 are content to go into the forest and look for honeycombs in order to extract the wax. The latter is used for domestic needs and for worship
[438] ceremonies. It also forms the basis of quite an important trade.

149: Reinach--250 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8 314 385 501 322

19. Miscellaneous resins.

Several trees, such as the "Kok-Mai-Niang, Kok-Mai-Tabeng, [Illustration here] Kok-Mai-Sak" (1), etc., yield an oleo-resin which,

(1) See Appendix XX.

when mixed with paddy husks, is used to make torches and a siccative, shiny extract which is called "Nam-Mane-Niang," and again a kind of pitch (Khi-Si) which is used to caulk pirogues and to smear various basketwork receptacles so as to make them watertight. It is similar to damarine.

The production of these resins is limited to local needs. 314

20. Black lacquer. 501

The black lacquer of Laos is a natural black varnish, thick and [343] solid, which is called "Nam-Kieng." It is secreted by the "Kok-Mai-Nam-Kieng." 322

Nam-Kieng is used to lacquer racing pirogues, elephant palanquins, pagoda columns and statues, frames, receptacles of different kinds, sword sheaths, etc. The lacquer producing trees grow only in certain localities, and the varnish is not exported. Its price varies throughout the land between 62 and 75 francs per hundred kilograms. 435

It would be of interest to identify this lacquer with that of Japan, and to study the question as to whether it might not be possible to increase the number of trees which produce it with a view towards making it the basis of an export trade, at least to the countries bordering on Laos.

21. Cunao (the mock gambier, Mak-Soua in Laotian).

The cunao is a brownish tubercle used instead of catechu, the color of which it has, for dyeing cloth. It is found in Cammon, in a part of the Hua-Pahn and on the right bank of the Nam-Hou. This product is bought mainly by Annamites and Chinese, who use it in Annam and Tonkin for dyeing the peasants' work clothes. 314 386

433 word, as regards everything connected with housing, furnishings,
clothing, household articles, etc. Everyone--men, women and even
472 children-- [454] is able to make the ordinary necessary articles by
463 means of very simple methods and rudimentary tools. Thus it may
be said that each house and each family represents a village in miniature.

The only industries really worthy of the name are embroidering on cloth, jewelry-making and working with gold and silver, ironmongery, brass-founding, pottery, basketry, the manufacture of certain lacquered articles, paper-making, wood and ivory carving, fresco painting, gold-washing and especially the making of pirogues, in which the natives show remarkable skill.

286 **Weaving.** The weaving of certain kinds of silk goods with
various shaded effects and often spangled with gold, as well as em-
386 broidering on cloth, is practiced by a certain number of women in
every locality which is of any importance.

The looms used for weaving are extremely simple, and yet brocaded stuffs are made in which the designs are obtained, as before the invention of the Jacquard loom, by isolating or alternatively raising certain woof threads by means of thin strips of bamboo.

Vegetable dyes are used, that is to say that they are produced by trees or plants which grow in the country. Dyeing methods are simple, yet despite this fact the colors last for a long time thanks to a mordant composed of alum or lemon juice. The fundamental colors are blue (indigo), red, yellow and black. With the aid of these dyes the women are able, either by suitably proportioned mixtures or by various juxtapositions on the threads or on the cloth, to obtain a great variety of shades.

For some fifteen years now tinctorial powders have also been used which have an aniline base and are of German origin. But these dyes fall far short of being as colorfast and long-lasting as the local dyes. Their colors do not merge as well, and with them it is impossible to obtain the harmonious shades which the tinctorial products of Laos give to cloth and to thread.

[455] For spangled cloth goods and embroidery, the gold thread
283 in most widespread use is the one made by the Chinese. It consists
28 of a strand of cotton on which a strip of paper gilded with fine gold
a few tenths of a millimeter thick is wound in a spiral. Attempts
have been made to introduce gold thread of European manufacture,
but it has not met with favor on the part of the specialists, who have
preferred the Chinese thread.

149: Reinach--354 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

272 The distillation methods used are good ones, but the equipment used leaves much to be desired and does not make it possible to obtain rectified alcohol of a high degree. By taking 25 or 28 proof native alcohol and distilling it for a second time with European equipment, a fairly good-tasting alcohol can be obtained which is 68 to 72 proof.

389 Powder-making. The inhabitants of Laos make the powder themselves which they use for hunting and for fireworks. They know how to proportion and triturate the ingredients--charcoal, saltpeter (1)

[317] (1) The saltpeter which is collected in grottoes containing calcareous rocks is chiefly made up of masses of droppings from birds and bats. The bat is called "Kiea" and saltpeter "Khi-Kiea," or,literally, Droppings of bats.

and sulphur--in order to make either explosive powder or fusing powder.

792 The bonzes are the fireworks-makers par excellence who make
527 the many and varied fireworks without which no celebration is really
389 complete. Bombs, firecrackers, Roman candles, serpents, pinwheels, etc. and, in a word, almost all the usual fireworks are made using rudimentary processes and local products.

389 The rockets (Bang-Fai) deserve special mention. They consist of a body containing fusing powder, to which is attached a wick several meters long and made of spun cotton or sometimes even of paper. The latter is smeared with mealed gunpowder mixed with gum, and the whole is fastened to a directing shaft. If the rocket is an Aeolian one, its rear is provided with a kind of Pan's pipe made of bamboo tubes which gives forth a harmonious sound as it describes its trajectory in the air.

The rockets vary greatly in size. In some the powder weighs only a few decagrams, and [468] the guide shaft is from two to three meters long. Other larger ones carry a "Mune" of powder (about 12 kilograms) and sometimes more, and the guide shaft is a whole stalk of bamboo some 15 meters long and from 12 to 15 centimeters in base diameter.

Rockets are generally decorated with gilded or colored paper. With the application of rice paste motifs, some of them manage to look very like a dragon with threatening jaws and terrifying eyes, and in these the body envelops the shaft and the head contains the Aeolian harp as well as the powder cylinder. The stands used for launching

389 the rockets are naturally in proportion to the size of the latter. For large rockets, they are made up of a kind of broad, triangular ladder, the top of which is leaned against a tree top.

524 527 Hot air balloons. In northern Laos, balloons are constructed out of paper which is either made locally or imported from China. They are cylindro-spherical in shape and a little gondola of rattan cane is suspended from them by a cotton thread. In the gondola there is an oil cup filled with lard and provided with two or three cotton wicks, and these are lit in order to keep the air in the balloons hot for a given length of time.

Since they are generally launched in the evening at the time of the great holiday of the twelfth month (October-November), the absence of wind makes it possible to follow their aerial course as long as the cotton wicks continue to give off light.

[469] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER X

1. PRESENT ROUTES OF COMMUNICATION BY LAND

487 We have already dealt in Chapter II with the routes of communication by river, and so shall deal here only with land routes (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVII.

In Laos they are of three kinds:

1. The cart roads negotiable by ox-carts and wagons;
2. The mule tracks over which elephants, horses, mules and oxen can pass.
3. The paths or even mere trails which can be used only by travelers on foot.

[481] [470] As a consequence of the ingrained habit which both animals and people have of always walking in single file, the roads of Laos, like those of many other lands, are reduced to the width of a path which is marked on the ground either by the trampling animals and men, or by two deep ruts into which the wheels of carts sink. In the forest, depending on how wide and how high a path has been cleared through the undergrowth, a road may be practicable for elephants, men on horseback, oxen or only for travelers on foot.

10: d'Orleans--266 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 396, 462, 697, 834

[LSS: at Muong Ngoi] "As I walk down by the side of the river I find a very animated scene; prisoners are going to and fro with manacles on their legs, which do not seem to inconvenience them at all. Elsewhere, men are making rafts and cutting planks; some of them are sawing a tree; they work horizontally, in pairs, putting in wedges as they advance. Women are fetching water in buckets made of bamboo tubes; they take the opportunity of bathing, and do not seem hindered by any bashful feelings. There is a curious remark to make on this point: amongst the Thaï's of the Black River, the men never hesitate to strip themselves, and enter the water; but the women appear more reserved; here, on the contrary, they are the ones that feel no shame, whilst their husbands seem to avoid undressing in our presence."

degree.

289 Paper. The manufacture of paper using the bark of a tree called "Kok-Sa" (1) is limited to a single region of northern Laos.

(1) See Chapter VII.

It is not of any great importance, since it does not even suffice for local consumption.

The manufacturing processes are those familiar to everyone as being used in China, in Japan, in Annamite lands and in Burma.

321 531 Wood and ivory carving. Here we no longer have to deal with an industry, but with an art. The men who practice it are few in number, are highly paid, work slowly and are generally inveterate opium smokers.

Like the goldsmiths and jewelers, the wood and ivory carvers of Laos reproduce, ad infinitum, immutable models which their predecessors have handed down. They are, however, able to execute motifs from any given design. To be sure, they are inferior to their Burmese, Annamite, Malay, Chinese and especially Japanese colleagues as regards the movement, harmony, purity of form and finish of their work.

532 Fresco painting. The pagodas of Laos, which have been left untended for many long years, contain curious fresco paintings set off with gold, but lack of care and exposure to the weather have partly destroyed them. This art has very few practitioners in Laos, and it should be added that most of the existing frescoes are mainly the work of Burmese, Cambodians and Chinese of whom the native artists are only the pupils.

396 [438] Pirogue carpenters. Nearly all the inhabitants who [464] live on the banks of the big river or its principal tributaries are able to carve out a pirogue. Certain villages, however, have a monopoly in this industry.

When it is a matter merely of hewing out a pirogue which is to be used only for crossing the river, fishing or agricultural service, everyone does a fairly good job. But for the large pirogues which are reserved for regattas, voyages and commercial transports, recourse must be had to specialists. Only they know how to give their products

396 the purity of line and elegance, joined with solidity, which go to make up the deserved renown of Laotian pirogues.

If it be noted that some of them are more than twenty meters long and can hold from forty to fifty paddlers, it will be agreed that a certain amount of effort is necessary to bring trees from which the pirogues are to be hewed from the forest to the workshop.

It is difficult, without the help of a drawing, to give a clear idea of how a pirogue is hewed to any who has not seen the process. We shall try to do so, however, referring the reader to the illustrations reproduced in this work for an idea of the general shape.

[313] After being selected in the forest, the tree destined to be made into a pirogue is felled and then taken to the nearest watercourse, where it is floated to the workshop. There it is divested of its bark and sap-wood, and the heartwood is laid bare. Depending on its kind and shape, one side or another of the log is chosen as the bottom of the pirogue.

Carpenters armed with hatchets begin to shape the piece, being careful not to harm the wood in the center of its length, where the main beam of the ship will be located. They hew out the prow and the stern, giving them the elegant, raised shape which the finished product will have. The piece of wood is then turned over. The thinned extremities are cut with a slight curve which is accentuated at the stern, and each end then has an outline shaped like a truncated fish tail.

Curved lines run from both ends to the more swollen part [465] which forms the center. A deep notch (1) as broad as a man's hand

(1) This notch is similar to that of a weaver's shuttle.

is cut vertically into the upper part of the still unfinished block, following the median line between the points of origin of the two ends, that is to say between the points where they join the body of the pirogue. This notch is cut deep enough to leave the requisite thickness of wood at the pirogue's bottom at the center of its length. It then decreases progressively, and disappears at the points where the ends join the body. Then levers are used to open up both edges of the notch gradually, while fire is also introduced into the hole and the bottom of the piece is kept wet. As the opening grows wooden cross-braces and chocks are placed between the sides of the trough which is gradually taking shape, like a pea pod being opened down the middle. Between each application of fire, and as the cavity grows larger, wood

396 is also cut out with a hatchet so as to decrease the thickness of the walls and render them more elastic.

When the pirogue is as wide as is desired, or else as wide as the wood being used will allow without any danger of splitting or bursting, strong rectangular crossbraces are set at regular intervals and tailed into the sides of the pirogues a few centimeters below the gunwales. When it has reached this state the pirogue is virtually finished. It has its final shape, and looks like the elongated half of a fish which has been split lengthwise.

All that remains is to finish the work by giving the bottom and sides the requisite thickness, by polishing the wood, smoothing the curves, etc.

Finally comes the moment of launching. It must be said, to the honor of the builders' sure eye and skill, that it is always successful and that once put into water the pirogue behaves well in its element, with a light and graceful balance.

396 The price of pirogues varies depending on their dimensions and
439 [466] the region, and can therefore not be fixed in any absolute
435 fashion. A new pirogue, in fact, costs from 50 to 300 francs. In Cambodia a pirogue from Laos costs twice what it cost in its land of origin. Thus it may readily be imagined that pirogues are exported from Lower Laos in fairly large numbers. The statistics for 1899 show exports of 552 pirogues of various dimensions, with a [Illustration here] total value of 55,195 francs, or an average purchase price of 100 francs apiece.

398 Cartwrights. The construction of carts, wagons, pack-saddles for oxen and elephant palanquins is a specialized industry only on the right bank and in Siam. In French Laos carts are little used because of the nature of the terrain, and there are no cartwrights. Pack-saddles for oxen and elephant palanquins are made by nearly everyone, particularly by drovers and carnacs.

317 Lime. Lime is made in Laos, primarily for inclusion in betel masticatories.

276 [467] The kilns are dug in the clay on banks of watercourses, near calcareous masses from which limestone is taken.

272 Alcohol. The distillation of grain--rice, maize and hemp-seed--is not an industry in the strict sense, for every village and every family makes alcohol on occasion.

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3: Robequain--261 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 135, 316, 402, 494

"Laos ore is harder to work than Tonkinese because of its lower metal content and the presence of considerable amounts of sulphurous and ferruginous matter. In addition, coal is scarce here: producer gas gazogenes run the dynamos which produce motive power, but they consume enormous quantities of wood, which must be cut farther and farther away from the mine. As a result, the ore has never been smelted on the spot. But mechanical processes for separating and purifying have gradually been set up at the mines. For example, after crushing and magnetic separation, very well-equipped washers prepare concentrates for export. Under sloping roofs, powerful machines stand in tiers one above another on the hillsides, so that the water and the gradually purified product itself are moved as much as possible by mere gravity from one process to another. The mud and rocks, which were dumped out of small wagons at the top of the mill, appear as black cassiterite crystals at the bottom where they fill little 35 or 50 kilogram sacks for shipment to Singapore. They are transported either via the Mekong or over the roads from Thakhek and Savannakhet to the Annam coast. Six thousand Annamites work in the tin mines of the Laos basin; though a few are Tonkinese most of them come from Nghê Tinh. Work is done by gangs and goes on continuously since the machines can be stopped only at great expense; at night this isolated basin, surrounded by rugged mountains and dotted with electric lights which furnish illumination for the coolies as they work to the accompaniment of the mills' unrelenting rhythm, is a striking picture."

10: d'Orleans--271-272 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 248, 286, 402, 462

[LSS: in the village of Ban Sop Huan] "Under the houses the women are busy in various employments, and the young girls are separating the cotton from its grain. They use an ingenious machine for this purpose: a tray is placed upon a support about the level of the waist; above it, two rollers, one of iron and one of wood, turn in contrary directions, as the cotton passes between them it is freed from its impurities, which drop on one side, while the textile fabric falls on the other. One of the rollers is moved with one hand by a simple crank while the other is worked by the foot and a pedal [272] which corresponds with an eccentric, it is also furnished with a flywheel (the machine is made entirely of wood). After the cotton is cleaned it is placed in baskets, about twenty-four inches high and ten wide. When full they are sold for one rupee each.

Elsewhere the spun cotton is being dyed, while other women are making a blue stuff, crossed with yellow threads. They are seated, and use a weaving loom with two pedals, two shuttles, and three small boards. They throw one shuttle after the movement of the two small boards, and the other after the third. Tobacco is being dried on some bamboos and further away another group is winding silk."

10: d'Orleans--338 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 326, 402, 644

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "There are several artisans in this quarter, and we were taken to see a goldsmith, the bellows of whose forge consisted of the trunk of a hollow tree with a piston inside, and he tells us that he had left the king's service because he was so irregularly paid."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

following a crowd. It was about two miles from the town's centre 527
and I passed several pagodas on the way, where carpenters were working by lamplight in preparation for a future festival.

An enclosure had been built round the pagoda in which every 354
kind of light, from hurricane lamps to fluorescent tubes, had been 527
concentrated in an anarchic glare. The pagoda had hired a generator 545
for the occasion. There was no entrance fee, but young ladies with demurely lowered eyes waited just inside to accept donations, in return for which you received a candle, a posy of Japanese lilac and two joss-sticks in a bamboo container. Among the many attractions was a free theatre show, lasting for many hours, indistinguishable, except to an expert, from the theatre of Siam. Actors remained on the stage for what seemed interminable periods, occasionally advancing or retreating a few steps. Meanwhile their babies played happily round their feet, and quite frequently a stage-hand would walk across and interrupt a scene for a few seconds to pump up the pressure in the hurricane lamps.

On a nearby platform the *lap ton* was being danced. Once again 292
it was the major attraction, but as it was still incorrect for Laotian 301
girls to dance in public, religious enterprise had arranged for 535
hostesses to be brought over from Siam, just across the river. The 562
pagoda hired the girls for the three nights and lodged them in a 527
nearby building. It cost a piastre to cavort round the stage for about fifteen minutes with one of them. They were dressed in hideous knee-length frocks, and some seemed to have permanent waves. The backward Laotian girls in their dowdy finery, their silk scarves, their skirts woven at the hem and waist-band with silver and gold thread, and their abundant jewel-decked chignons, could only look on wistfully. As I arrived the organizers were having 403
trouble with the microphone — indispensable adjunct to any social 527
occasion in the new Far East. A young man chanted a soft, nasal melody which could only be heard within the *boun* enclosure itself. But suddenly the electricians were successful with their tinkerings and all Vientiane was flooded with a great, ogrish baying. The

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

403 electricians hugged each other, and, enchanted by the din, the
527 audience began to drift away from the theatre and make for the dancing floor.

527 The second attraction in order of popularity was a love-court. A
584 quadrangular arrangement of tables had been formed, covered by a
782 thatched roof raised on posts decorated with woven bamboo
793 representations of animals, weapons and phallic emblems. Seated round the tables in the interior of the square were the girls, and their suitors sat facing them. Between the couples had been placed offerings of food, brought by the girls. Originally a tribute to some ancient, forgotten fertility god, a primeval Thai Venus, the offerings would be given, next day, to the bonzes. All through the night the bantering of witticisms, the singing and the exchange of improvised verse would go on, accompanied by the accordion-like
[534] wheezings of the Kène, the Stone Age gourd pipes of Laos. Sometimes through a happy fault in the circuit the splutter and bellow of the loud-speakers would suddenly lapse, and you heard the beehive dronings of the communal love-making, the kènes, and the voice of the presiding bonze, preaching continually in an archaic, incomprehensible language from the wicker cage into which he had been fastened. The cage symbolized the protection of his religion from these earthly distractions. As soon as inspiration failed he would be relieved by the next on the rota of preachers, waiting now to take his place.

584 Love-courts are the accepted preliminary to the consummation of
[533] affairs of the heart, which — despite European conviction that
576 romantic love is a Western invention — are accompanied in Laos by much versifying and mild, self-imposed frustrations. When, for instance, a well-known beauty is wooed by a number of suitors, a serenading match may be arranged on the veranda of her house to permit her to test under competitive conditions the poetic and musical capabilities of each of them. Complete pre-marital freedom
[836] is recognized, but much outward reserve is maintained. There is a time and place for everything. It is incorrect, for example, to

436 It will perhaps be of some interest to note here that the peoples of Laos have no respect for European gold coins, [420] because their gold
822 is alloyed with copper! In this country, as in all of the Far East in
439 general, it is thought that gold is the noble metal par excellance, that
177 it is polluted and diminished by alloying it with copper, which is unworthy of it, and that it can endure being made into an alloy only with silver.

The only "gold" coins in use, and still not at all currently in northern Laos, are books of gold leaf the thickness of tinfoil. They come from China and bear the official stamps of the country's banks which put them into circulation as "merchandise" in the same way as bars of silver.

Weighing instruments

405 The weighing instruments used in Laos include the "Ta-Dieng" or "Sing," a Chinese steelyard made of wood which has three rows of graduations. It may have a hook or a single platform, and is used for weights ranging from one "Sang" (1.23849 kilograms) up to several piculs.

For weights of less than a "Sang" the same kind of Chinese steelyard, with a hook or platform, is used, but it is smaller and made of ivory or bone.

A small pair of beam scales with platforms shaped like cupels, which is called "Sing-Dieng," is used mainly for weighing precious metals and gems.

There are several series of weights for balances. They are made of bronze, iron or copper and are most diverse in shape, representing elephants, imaginary birds, hexagons, pentagons, cones, pyramids, etc.

2. TRADE COMMODITIES AND PRODUCTS OF EXCHANGE

438 Since there is no industry to speak of in Laos, the local products
241 which make up the basic commodities of interior trade and exports come mainly from agriculture, livestock raising, scavenging, fishing and hunting. Mention may be made, however, of certain products of local, not to say familial, industry which enter into interior commerce and to some extent into the trade which goes on with neighboring countries.

438 [421] These include cloth goods of pure silk, either plain or
433 spangled with gold, goods of silk blended with cotton, and wholly cotton goods, then articles of jewelry and goldsmithing, and finally metals and ores from the still rudimentary mining industry and pottery goods, edge-tools, basketry, etc.

249 either in the natural state or in the form of black, pasty, molasses-laden sugar.

There are several varieties, the chief of which are the heavy, green cane which is highly cellulated, and the small violet-colored cane with joints closer together, which is fuller than the first.

Farming methods do not differ from those used in other countries. Cuttings are planted, and the plants are topped if they show a marked propensity to excessive leafy growth.

257 To manufacture sugar, the cane is crushed between two vertical
407 cylinders driven by two wooden gears of a most ingenious construction. A buffalo turns the whole by means of a crossbar or shaft, the end of which is attached to its neck and constitutes a whim. Sometimes the cane is crushed between two pieces of stone or hardwood, one of which rests on the ground while the other [364] is applied on top of it by means of a wooden lever. One or several persons work the other end of the lever with all their weight and move it up and down in a series of
[439] jerky motions. The juice extracted from the cane is placed in large
[415] cast iron cauldrons shaped like cupels, which are imported by Chinese merchants. Condensation takes place over an open fire laid in primitive hearths which are cut into the ground itself, if it is clayey. When the syrup reaches the desired degree of thickness the whole mass is poured into rectangular or circular molds made of wood or bamboo. After cooling the loaves of sugar which come from the molds, and which are from three to six centimeters thick, are wrapped in dry leaves. They are transported and sold in this form. The cane itself is called "Oi" and the sugar "Nam-Oi" or, literally, water of cane.

[276] The Laotians do not refine alcohol from the juice of sugar cane,
[101] and are even ignorant of the initial refining stage which the Annamites use and which produces brown sugar.

[435] The price of sugar on the markets of Laos varies from one point to another, and transactions involve small quantities only. Statistics do give evidence, however, from which market prices of 35 to 50 francs per hundred kilograms can be deduced.

249 INDIGO. We have seen above that the Laotians use the indigo-bearing properties of certain plants which grow wild in the forests in order to dye cloth goods blue. They also produce a variety of indigo, the Indigofera tinctoria, which is similar to the variety found in Bengal. The plant itself is called "Kok-Kame" and the extract or dye "Nam-Kame

10: d'Orleans--320-321 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 411, 438, 443, 778

"They [LSS: women merchants in Luang Prabang] have a very diversified stock of goods to choose from, including gold embroidered shirts made by the Lus, Siam brocaded vests, old silver, bracelets made of Kas bronze, and hatchets and other weapons in old bronze; these latter are very scarce and difficult to buy, as they are preserved with superstitious reverence by the families to which they belong. The hatchets, some of which are straight while others are curved, are very characteristic, while the ivory-handled knives represent yaks, the genii of the Buddhist religion, [321] similar to those which are found in the interior of Borneo."

10: d'Orleans--353 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 411, 531, 644

"Men of the king's household bear swords, the sheath of which is of chased gold, while the handle is of horn studded with precious stones. These swords are over 200 years old, and very fine, but the blade is common. Others carry lances with wooden shafts and silver bands at the top, the iron of the lance being encased in a red sheath. I also notice a javelin, the iron of which is crescent shaped with a notch at the lower end."

23: Franck--271 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 276, 411, 482, 492 Ethnic subgroup

"The men, [EJ: of the 'Black Miao'] and sometimes the women, carry crude daggers in home-made sheaths; some had a long slender rifle, a few of them crossbows of a simple form, and most of them smoked or carried in their sashes pipes of sometimes elaborately tortured shapes. They use pack-oxen as well as little horses, but most of them, of both sexes, carry in a basket on their backs, though Chinese influence perhaps has led some to fasten two baskets at the ends of a short, stiff whole bamboo over a shoulder, thereby losing all the advantage of the long and supple shoulder-pole of China and Annam."

23; Franck--326-327 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 206, 291, 411

"It looked strange to see men [327] wearing only a loin-cloth, and a dagger in a scabbard woven like a basket and held by a fiber band across the chest, putting up telegraph-poles; but the French insist on being able to talk to one another anywhere in Indo-China, and government ownership of telegraph lines has at least one advantage over the high-cost private system of the United States and China."

23: Franck--331 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 262, 411, 415, 482 Ethnic subgroup

"These fellows [EJ: Kha] carried a slim ration of glutinous rice in little round baskets with a telescope cover, and some uncooked rice in a cloth at the back of the waist, just as do some South American Indians. At their sides hung a kind of machete, in a sheath made of half bamboo with wooden strips across it, much the sort of thing a Boy Scout turned loose in the woods might contrive. They were as small as upper grammar-school boys, and though they looked hardier than almost any tame people, they were really even less useful as carriers than the Pwun. They prefer to carry by a band across the forehead, but as my baggage was not arranged for that method most of them were forced to endure one end of the stiff whole-bamboo that takes the place of the wiser springy split-bamboo or hickory carrying-poles of the Chinese--because one of them alone cannot carry a real load. Yet on the whole the long file of silent, rather anemic fellows made better time, thanks perhaps to their lighter loads, than those of the day before."

23: Franck--335 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 224, 411 Ethnic subgroup

"On the swift slope we passed an old man and a boy [EJ: of the Kha group] with a crossbow and some pencil-like arrows, who were evidently stalking birds, for all the rain."

25: Brodrick--107-108 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-2
116, 224, 411

"Nowhere in the Laos is the big-game shooting as good or as exciting as in Cambodia or in Annam. It is forbidden throughout the Laos to shoot elephant except in self-defence and the rhinoceros is as rare as in any other part of Indo-China. The Chinese have, for centuries past, imported vast quantities of rhinoceros horn for medicine and for carving into those rhinoceros horn cups now so sought after by collectors. No cups have been fashioned now for a century or more and, indeed, many are broken up and ground down to supply the demand for tonics, aphrodisiacs and antidotes among the Chinese. But in Mouhot's time, not a century ago, rhinoceros was fairly common in all the region between the Meking [HD: in Luang Prabang province] and the Annam Range, and the old traveller whose body lies buried in the jungle not far from Luang-Prabang, tells a vivid tale of his hunting:

'We were eight men, all armed with guns. Mine was fitted with a sharp bayonet. The Laotians carried only iron javelin-blades mounted on strong bamboo sticks, but their chief had a long, sharp [108] sword, not heavy, but very supple and almost unbreakable. After about two miles march through the forest, we heard the branches crackle and the dry leaves rustle. Motioning us to slow down and to hold ourselves ready, the chief strode forward. Soon we heard a piercing cry. It was the chief's signal that the beast was not far off. Then the chief began striking two bamboo rods together while his men shouted so as to force the rhinoceros from his lair . A few

minutes later, the animal, furious at being disturbed in his retreat, came straight at us. He was a very large male. With no sign of fear, but as joyful as though he were sure of his victory, the intrepid hunter advanced towards the monster and, with poised lance defiant, awaited the onrush. The animal charged straight forwards, his mouth wide open and alternately raising and lowering his head. Just as he came within range, the man flung his javelin, from a distance of about five feet, into the beast's mouth. Then, he left the weapon in place and walked back to us. We remained at a respectful distance in order to watch the rhinoceros's death-agony without danger to ourselves. He gave out the most terrifying roars and rolled on his back in dreadful convulsions while our men shouted for joy. A few minutes later, as the beast was vomiting streams of blood, we were able to approach him. I then shook hands with the chief and complimented him upon his skill and courage. He replied that I alone had the right to finish off the quarry and this I did by ramming my long bayonet into its throat. The chief, having jerked his javelin from out the body of Behemoth, offered the weapon to me and asked me to accept it as a souvenir. I gave him in exchange a magnificent European dagger.'"

149: Reinach--101a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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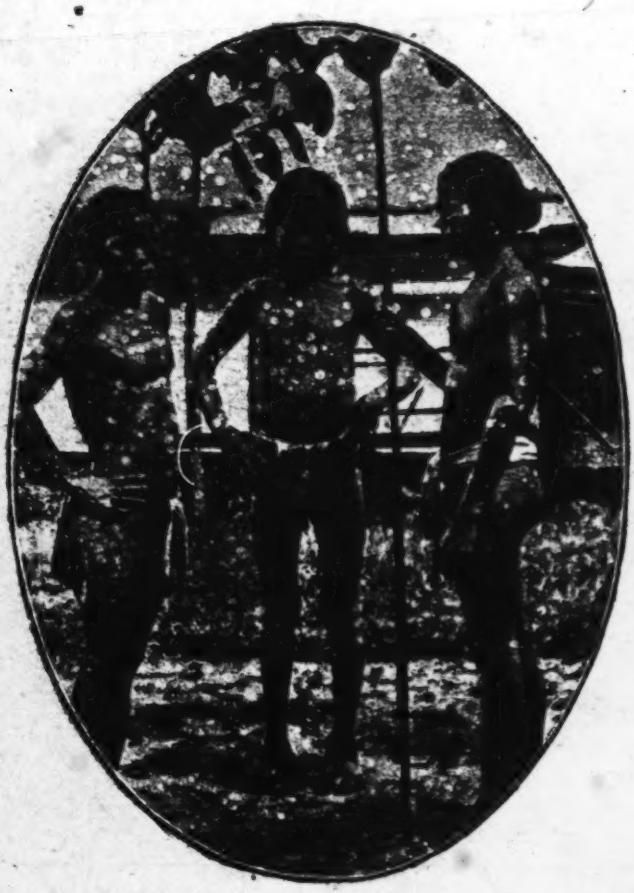

Fig. 36 /p. 135/ Typical Khas of the province of Stung-Treng.

149: Reinach--102a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

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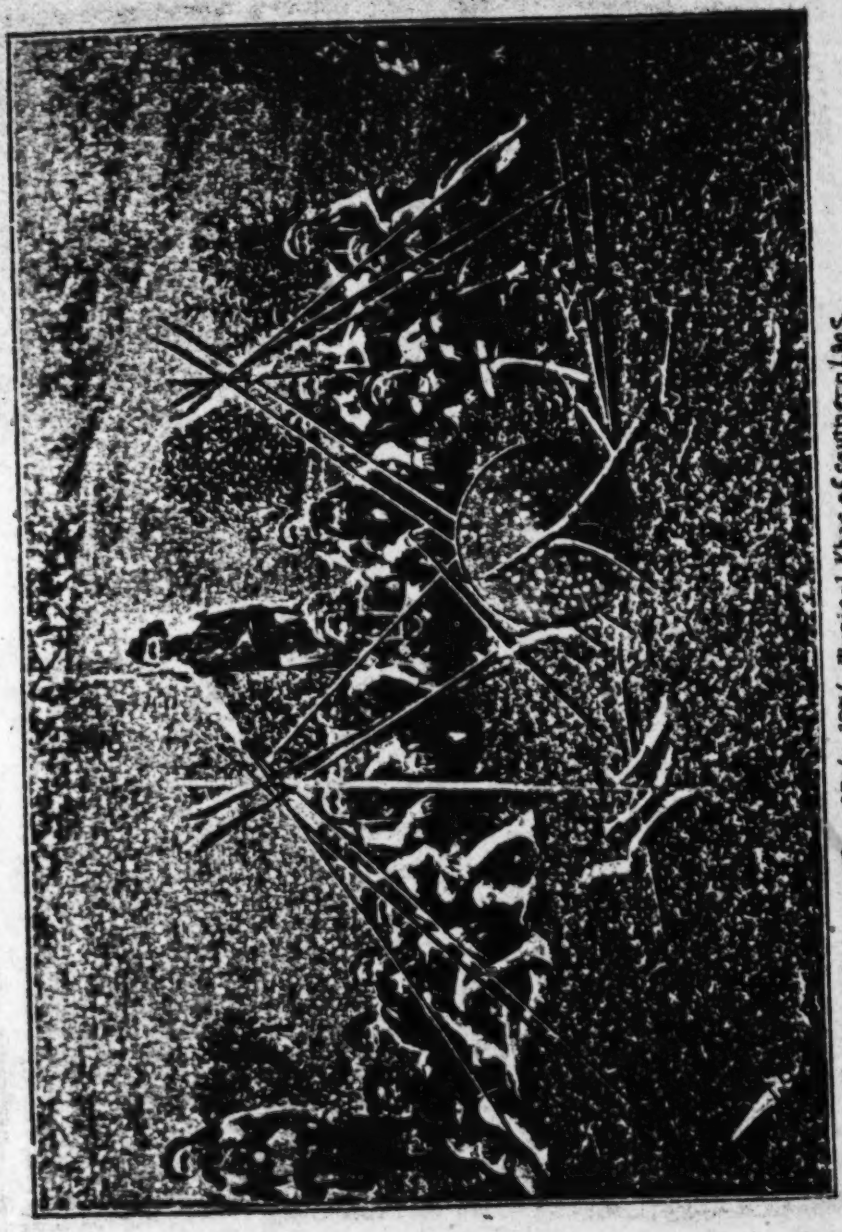

Fig. 87/p.187/ Typical Khas of southern Laos.

291 cover their bust with a small short jacket which is very close-fitting and bright in color. It has a heart-shaped opening on the chest and, like the men's jacket, is ornamented with galloons and passementerie. For celebrations and ceremonies Lu women wear a heavy turban on their head which is folded flat or pleated, shaped like a mitre and generally made of black silk spangled with gold.

301 Both men and women pierce the lobes of their ears [246] with a broad opening, into which they introduce hollow gold or silver cylinders which are sometimes as large as three centimeters in diameter.

306 Great lovers of jewelry, the Lus number skilled jewelers and goldsmiths among them who make hair coil plaques, ear cylinders, flat braided metal belts with wide chased and checkered buckles, bracelets, rings, hilts and sheaths for daggers and swords, etc. [Illustration alongside text here]

411 The Lus almost always wear daggers and swords. Each of them, so to speak, possesses a rifle, generally flintlock, which by the shape of
343 the stock, the length of the barrel and the many bands which adorn it greatly resembles the long Moukhala so dear to our Arabs in Algeria.

[361] Lu villages are clean, and the houses are arranged in a checkerboard pattern.

[231] The Lus have a high reputation as breeders of oxen and horses.

527 A great lover of celebrations and parades, this boisterous people sets off gunpowder at every opportunity, and there is no festival, private or public, so small that it is not accompanied by salvos and fireworks.

[77] From their contact with the Burmese the men have retained a [247] [Illustration] [248] [Blank page] [249] taste for dancing and for
535 sword fights mingled with dance steps in which they manifest a real grace and elegance.

"Among other forms of amusement, the men execute, with a truly remarkable suppleness and skill, sword dances which are perfectly elegant. Naked to the waist, with their trousers rolled up and bunched and a wooden sword in each hand whose cutting edge has been dipped in dye so that the thrusts will leave a mark, the two champions confront one another. Moulinets, parries and returns follow one another without apparent effort, and the movements are undulating and rapid but without any abruptness. The men seem to be caressing one another, not fighting, and yet the slashes leave their colored traces on the skin of the vanquished. Direct thrusts are forbidden, but the entire body from head to foot is fair game for the opponent. Thus during the

149: Reinach--186b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 70 /p. 259/ Khas of Xieng-Khong.

149: Reinach--188a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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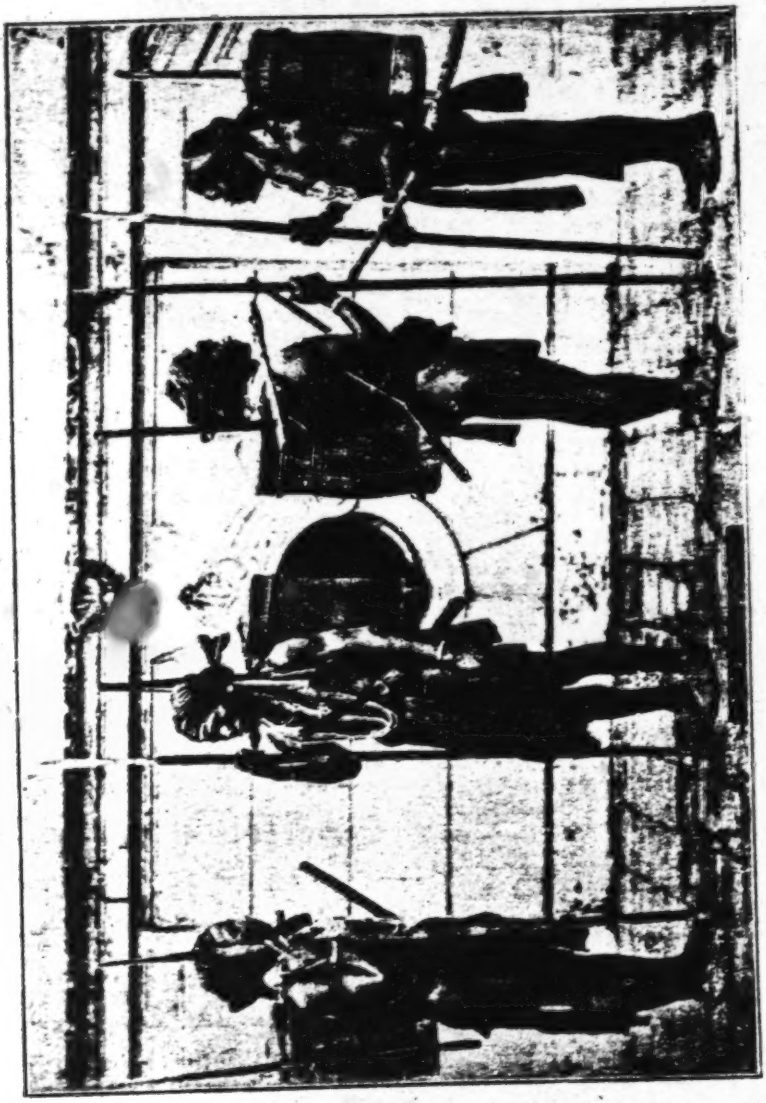

Fig. 71/p. 261/ Typical Khas of the province of Stung-Treng. (Photographed at Saigon in 1898.)

equipment.

●411 [264] "It should be noted that these folk do not have rifles. Their crossbows are quite large, and shoot pointed barbed arrows, which are poisoned in time of war, over great distances.

"The spears are of average length. The shafts are made of very beautiful barnboo, and the iron points are of varied shapes.

"The swords have long hilts ornamented with tin, and the blades are slightly curved.

"Among the Djarais bucklers are made of wood and shielded with tin. Among the Kasengs they are made of buffalo hide, and among the Cedangs of buckskin with the fleece left on.

"Among the Cedangs the bucklers take the shape of a shield, while their shape varies among the others." (Le Laos français.)

[Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos). "Notice sur le Laos français, " in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

563 619 Khas of mixed blood. In the section on races we have seen what mixtures were produced from crossings between Khas and other members of the great Thai family. Their distribution is as follows:

1. The Phou-Phays and Phou-Thengs are found scattered everywhere throughout northern Laos;

2. Sos and Seks are found in Luang-Prabeng, Tran-Ninh and Cammon;

3. The Soues inhabit the high valleys of the Se-Bang-Hien and the Sedone and the northern slopes of the plateau of the Bolovens.

The evolution of all these mixed blood varieties is not yet complete, and many have partly retained their original dialects. Certain tribes, however, have completely adopted the mores and languages of the dominant races to which they owe their existence, and these have pagodas, bonzes, etc.

RACES OF MONGOL ORIGIN

619 563 We know that individuals of Mongol origin inhabit northern Laos and are grouped in three principal varieties known as Hos, Meos and Yaos.

The Hos. The Hos are inhabitants of Yunnan who came to Laos either with the robber bands (1875-1888) or with caravans. [265] [Illustration] [266] [Blank page] [267]

They settled in Laos, abandoning their guns and packs to become farmers, hog breeders, tea planters, ect.

149: Reinach--251 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Hunting

224 Hunting, for the inhabitants of Laos, is another form of scavenging, since it procures them either live animals or the remains of the same without any great labor or expense.

●411 For the Laotian, time does not count. He makes his powder him-
224 self, and with the exception of firearms his hunting devices are also of his own fabrication. With the help of this far from perfect equipment he is nevertheless able to capture live elephants and to procure the ivory and remains of those which he kills, as well as the hide,
[438 262] talons, bones and horns of a multitude of other animals. All these products are so many trade commodities for him. The flesh of all these animals, moreover, makes a sizeable contribution to the diet of the Laotian hunter. It is a feast for him, for his family and for his entourage.

[325] [344] The natives have a perfect knowledge of the habits and
224 customs of all the representatives of the local fauna. Patient, adroit, endowed with excellent powers of hearing and sight which are further developed and sharpened by practice, they are not afraid to attack the tiger and other large animals despite their rudimentary weapons.

Lying hidden for hours at a time, motionless and silent and abstaining from smoking, the hunter waits for his victim without losing his self-control. When it approaches within a few meters of him, his sure eye and untrembling arm enable him to strike it dead with a bullet or with a poisoned arrow shot from a powerful crossbow.

One is astounded at the results achieved with weapons which are so imperfect, as much by their rudimentary construction as by their age, and which often lead one to fear more for the hunter's life than for the beast's. We must admire these men who, although reputed to be cowardly, brave danger with such primitive weapons and go in search of wild animals in their very lairs, killing them at almost point-blank range so that oftentimes the wad from the gun singes the animal's fur or the arrow goes in one side and out the other.

The firearms used by the Laotians are flintlock or muzzle-loading
411 rifles, some of which are of Siamese or Burmese manufacture. Others
439 are imported from Europe through trade or in private cargoes. There are also old regulation rifles, British and others, chiefly those which bear the image of a cock and the word "Tower" stamped on the lock or breech.

149: Reinach--252 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

The Laotian, as we have said before, makes his powder himself. 411
He also casts his bullets, which are usually only shapeless masses of lead or iron. In view of this fact it is not surprising, with such ammunition, that his guns do not have even a medium range. He is therefore forced to shoot from a very short distance, often less than five meters, if he wants not merely to hit his prey but to strike it in the right place so as to fell it on the spot and not risk becoming the victim of a wounded beast.

[345] European weapons tempt him because of their careful construction and long range, but if by chance he does try them they do not yield the same results in his hands as his own do, imperfect as they are. Thus he prefers his own weapons to ours, finding them better adapted to his eye and his arm.

For several years now, however, double-barreled hunting rifles [439]
of an inferior quality and Winchester muskets of the already outdated 1878 model have been imported into Laos through Siam and Burma. The careful maintenance which such weapons require, the high price of ammunition and the difficulty of obtaining new supplies are all reasons preventing their widespread use. Thus they are, so to [554]
speak, only luxury items possessed by a few fortunate Laotians who have acquired them out of ostentation rather than for use.

Firearms and crossbows are not the only hunting devices used in Laos. Indeed, there is no lack of ingenious instruments, some simple and some complicated, but always perfectly adapted to the particular purpose to which they are destined. They are made with perfect artistry and care, with a view towards capturing the most diverse forms of wild life, from the largest pachyderms such as the elephant down to the smallest bird. Traps, deadfalls, snares, springes, nets, birdcalls, etc. complete the Laotians' hunting equipment. All these devices are manufactured by them during the rainy season, when they are confined to their houses. They are like our peasants who profit from the long winter evenings to make all the little things which they will need during the course of the year.

Rifles and crossbows are used only in hunting the larger wild animals. The natives use special methods to capture elephants.

This pachyderm once lived in great herds in all the parts of 224
Laos which offered grassy plains, valleys and high plateaus, especially where certain varieties of bamboo, wild banana trees and graminaceous plants which were to its taste grew. Nowadays, because

323 The potters' methods and equipment do not differ from those which are in widespread use everywhere.

The method of firing depends on the nature of the article, and firing may be done either in kilns dug out of the clay soil, in the banks of watercourses, or under stacks of rice straw. Wood or rice straw is used to fire the kilns.

In some regions articles are given a shiny black patina resembling graphite by firing them for a second time in paddy husks.

326 778 411 415 Brass-founding. One has only to explore the pagodas of Laos in order to realize that brass-founding used to be held in honor. Religious statues can be found which are sometimes of great [458] weight and usually of quite fine workmanship and taste, taking into account, to be sure, the quite special manner in which they conceive esthetics.

Although the crucibles have not been fired for many long years for casting such large pieces, the industry of brass-founding continues to be exercised by a certain number of specialists who are content with producing religious statuettes, necessities for betel, bells for elephants and livestock, various kinds of vases, cuspidors, etc.

This industry is an extremely ancient one in the land. It was certainly practiced during the Bronze Age, as is attested by the spear-heads, daggers, hatchets and halberds which have been found in northern Laos and which can now be seen in the Saint-Germain museum.

[821 172] It is interesting to note that the inhabitants of Laos attribute a meteoric origin to objects of the Bronze Age, as also to those of the Age of Polished Stone. They believe that these objects fall from the sky when it thunders, and that they are produced by lightning.

The following are some of the methods used by Laotian founders. Casting is always done by the lost wax process.

325 532 Casting statues. On an initial rough clay model, the artist applies a layer of fine, soft and well-pugged clay which he shapes in a more careful manner. Then after covering the statue, which is already much more than a rough draft, with a layer of bees-wax of the proper thickness, he finishes modeling the statue on the wax, inserting all the details and all the ornaments which it is to include. Polishing a bit here, engraving there, setting precious stones or simply glass between the eyelids to represent eyes, and inserting gold lips where the mouth is to be located, he gives the

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659 it possible to draw up the tax rolls for the following year.

657 A head tax is owed by every able-bodied man between the ages of eighteen and sixty, except for bonzes, pagoda servants, the native authorities, men who have served for four years in the civil guard, militiamen on active duty, invalids and liberated slaves.

There are four categories of registered persons:

1. Those of the great Thai race, who pay five francs and also owe twenty days of service in kind in Upper Laos, and ten in Lower Laos. This service may be redeemed upon payment of five francs;

2. Those of the other races such as Khas, Meos, Yaos, etc., who pay 2.50 francs and owe ten days of service in kind, redeemable for 2.50 francs;

3. The Annamites, who pay a head tax of five francs and do not owe any service in kind;

4. Foreign Orientals, who pay a head tax of 12.50 francs per year and do not owe any statute labor. If they are merchants, they pay a license fee of five francs per shop.

[500] B. Indirect taxes

The indirect taxes include:

1. Travel permits and passports;
2. Permits for weapons;
3. Administrative fines;
4. Local taxes levied on products and animals exported from Laos.

[484] For travel permits, Laotians pay a fixed fee of 0.50 franc per person and per permit. Foreign Orientals pay 1.875 francs for a permit which is good for three months.

[411] Permits for weapons occasion the collection of a tax of 1.50 francs. Annual renewal of the permit is obligatory, and costs 0.75 franc.

[421] There are as yet no taxes on land in Laos. It would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to levy such a tax in view of the present state of the country, which has no land registry, and with the system of property (1) such as it exists at present.

423 (1) "As regards public domain, we have maintained the custom which is consecrated by the local laws and usages. By virtue of these usages and these laws, the State is sole proprietor of the land and everything under it, without any exception, no matter how it is being exploited or what establishments have been made there,

149: Reinach--142 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[157] 844

"When a woman feels her first pains she abstains from taking baths and swallows quantities of salt and spiced drinks. She summo a midwife and fastens a cotton thread from the bonzery around the latter's wrists. This precaution might be called the 'sanctification of hands.'

"The midwife comes to stay in the house of her client until after delivery. She is given the choicest food and commands the utmost respect. She may wash her hands only with water which has been perfumed (by means of a variety of mint). Finally, when labor pains begin, the woman sits down with her legs folded and spread wide apart. Her underskirt must be pulled down over her legs and taken in sharply at the waist by a belt. This last precaution is taken so that during the mother's efforts to deliver the child it will not go upwards towards her thorax. The midwife remains in front of the parturient woman, while relatives, friends or, more often, young men hold the woman up and try to divert her with extremely licentious remarks. Some of the young men bring musical instruments, and others bring phalli to which they address such witty reproaches that the patient, despite her pain, responds with an outburst of laughter. There is gambling, drinking and singing, and during all this time the work goes on and the woman gives birth in the midst of the gaiety.

[522]

"No one sees the actual delivery, not even relatives. Only the midwife passes her hands under the skirt and watches attentively so as to intervene if necessary. The child is taken from the mother on a mat, the midwife draws it gently towards her and makes ready to cut the umbilical cord. The latter is cut between two ligatures made with cotton threads, and the actual section made on a weaver's shuttle with a knife which may be more or less ornate depending on the state of the family's fortune (2). The foetal part (about eight

(2) In northern Laos the cord is cut on a cylinder of green bamboo, closed at one end by a joint. The knife is a strip of bamboo cut at a sharp angle so that the siliceous bark forms the cutting edge. All iron or steel instruments are strictly forbidden. (Author's note.)

[412]

centimeters in length) is rolled in leaves of an astringent variety and folded back on the abdomen. The child is then rubbed with slightly spiced oil.

incorporate into the teas which they send abroad. But they appeal to the Chinese and other Orientals, and part of the crop is even set aside and sent as tribute to the court of the Emperor in Peking. 245 [648]

The Shans, the Lus and the Youns use a masticatory called "Mieng" which is composed solely of tea leaves which have been preserved in brine. [276]

PIMENTOS. Since pimento is a much sought-after condiment, and one which is even indispensable to the people of Laos, as to those of neighboring countries, the cultivation of this product is quite widespread. [244 263]

This pimento is of the large, red variety. It is prepared by [378] drying and smoking it, thereby guaranteeing that it will keep. Its name in Laotian is "Mak-Phik." The price of dry pimento varies from 25 to 37 francs per hundred kilograms.

FARMING IMPLEMENTS AND TOOLS USED IN LAOS. We shall conclude this rapid listing of the chief crops grown in Laos by giving a list of the farming implements used in the country. These latter are just as primitive and just as rudimentary as the farming methods, and the Laotians do not make any more effort to improve the ones than to improve the others. 412 241

The plow (Thai). The plow is extremely simple and is the primitive swing-plow formed of a single piece of bent wood. A share or "Mak-Sob-Thai" is fitted to its front end. Sometimes the share is even supplanted by cutting the stick of wood diagonally and hardening it in a fire. Drawn by a buffalo, this tiny plow cannot break the soil to any great depth, and so is used in ricefields only when the soil has been sufficiently softened by the annual inundations.

The harrow (Khat). The harrow is a sort of wooden rake .9 meter long, the teeth of which are made of ironwood or any other very hard wood, "Mai-Lek" or "Mai-Khen-Hine." This rake forms one of the sides of a triangle, the peak of which is harnessed to a buffalo.

The roller (Ham). The roller is the trunk of some hardwood tree, "Mai-Khen-Hine" for example. It has pins over which two shafts fit, leaving space to harness a buffalo.

The sickle. There are sickles of several sizes, which are called either "Kio" or "Lek Kio" without distinction. Sickles are used to cut grasses and rice.

149: Reinach--278 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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The spade. Two kinds of spades are used. These are called "Siem" (this is more of a scoop) and "Tiok-Kout-Dine" or, literally, Pick for breaking ground. The first is formed by a narrow iron blade which is slightly concave lengthwise and is provided with a socket into which a handle is fastened. The second is made of wood, and the blade and handle are in one piece. The lower part is fixed into an iron frame which also binds both sides [379] [Illustration] [380] [Blank page] [381] for about two-thirds of their height. The spade is used to make holes and to turn over the soil.

The machete. The machete [coupe-coupe] or felling sword which is used for heavy work is called "Pha." It is composed of a solid, broad and rather short iron blade with a thick back which is fitted into a wooden hilt with an iron ferrule.

Another kind of knife, called "Mit-Tok" or "Mit-Noi," has a blade which is narrower but longer than the above. This tool is used for fine work, such as cutting and splitting bamboo, rattan, etc.

The ax (Khouane-Hone, Khouane-Mou, or Khouane-Bong, "hatchet"). The ax is formed of a narrow, two-edged and rather short blade. A hardwood shank .6 to .7 meter long is fitted into the head. This shank itself is held by wedges, a third of the way along its length and slightly above the blade, in a mortise which crosses the end of a handle .6 to .7 meter long. The ax is used to cut trees, to hew posts and planks, etc.

It is at the very least odd to note that, except the blade which is a modern innovation, this ax is similar in every respect to the kind used during the age of polished stone.

The other tools used are: the hammer or "Khone-Lek," the saw or "Lueui," the file or "Lek-Sambai," the wood chisel or "Siou," the awl or "Lek-Si," the pincers or "Kab-Lek," the anvil or "Thang-Ti-Lek," and finally the bellows or "Soub."

CROPS TO BE ENCOURAGED

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Most of the crops which are now grown in Laos can be improved and developed, and this must be done if we are either to increase exports of farming products or to provide more well-being for the inhabitants.

In a general way, the administration can perform a useful task by increasing the number of experimental farms, by distributing [382]

some of those present. If the places were set in the shape of a 000
cross, this was also considered a sign of bad luck. This /976/ belief, which still continues, especially in the rural areas, belongs in the realm of superstition. Do not take it seriously.

Nowadays the French consider the number 13 a lucky one. In France the jewelers manufacture pendants which have the number 13 inscribed on them and which are called "porte-bonheur", "luck-bringers").

The master of the house first pours a drop into his own glass when he serves something to drink; then he serves his guests. By this he shows that he would be prepared to die the first if the bottle were to contain poison. Such is French politeness.

At a banquet in the European manner one should observe the following rules of behavior: to keep erect; to put both one's hands on the table and not one one's knees; not to put one's elbows on the table while putting a hand to one's cheek; not to turn one's back on the neighbor to one's left while one is talking to the neighbor at the right and vice versa; not to make faces, not to use one's table napkin to wipe one's face; not to belch or to put a finger inside the nose or the ears; not to spit and not to blow one's nose too violently. If one is forced to leave the room for a moment, one excuses oneself with one's neighbors. It is impolite to speak all at one and the same time. Everybody should speak in his turn.

One does not cut one's piece of bread with a knife. One breaks it with one's fingers into small mouthfuls which one eats gradually as the meal progresses. When one has finished one's soup one places the spoon on the plate; one does not empty the plate by taking it in one's hands. When a dish of meat is served, one does not cut it up into little pieces in order to eat it then; that is what children do. A grown-up person eats his meat as he cuts it. He does not take the pieces with his hand. And one does not talk while one has one's mouth full.

The European does not cut a fruit in the same way the Laotian cuts it. The former places the knife underneath the fruit and pushes /412/
with his thumb while the Laotian on the other hand puts the knife on top of the fruit and then cuts from the top down.

French Customs

We often frequent French society. Therefore it is 000

23: Franck--331 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 262, 411, 415, 482 Ethnic subgroup

"These fellows [EJ: Kha] carried a slim ration of glutinous rice in little round baskets with a telescope cover, and some uncooked rice in a cloth at the back of the waist, just as do some South American Indians. At their sides hung a kind of machete, in a sheath made of half bamboo with wooden strips across it, much the sort of thing a Boy Scout turned loose in the woods might contrive. They were as small as upper grammar-school boys, and though they looked hardier than almost any tame people, they were really even less useful as carriers than the Pwun. They prefer to carry by a band across the forehead, but as my baggage was not arranged for that method most of them were forced to endure one end of the stiff whole-bamboo that takes the place of the wiser springy split-bamboo or hickory carrying-poles of the Chinese--because one of them alone cannot carry a real load. Yet on the whole the long file of silent, rather anemic fellows made better time, thanks perhaps to their lighter loads, than those of the day before."

23: Franck--343 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 243, 252, 415

"They hull their rice as it is needed, by stepping on the end of a long pole ending in a big wooden pestle, which falls monotonously into a wooden mortar, a hollowed section of large tree-trunk. These seem to be the chief occupations, but there are many others, as the traveler with time to watch their goings and comings during a few evenings will discover. As in southern China, the pan-basket in which rice is screened and prepared for cooking is made of bamboo splints, but they use clean water rather than any filth in which to wash it."

they at least preserved their individuality and the prerogatives of 648*
their government. 175*

/98/ Xieng-Khouang, the capital, was then a large and beautiful city whose numerous inhabitants were protected by an enclosure 633
of deep moats and by forts which crowned the surrounding hillocks. 175*
The immense stone jars scattered pell-mell over its plain in the 172
time when the Khas dominated the region (1) and "the wealth of

1. Legend has it that these jars were constructed by the /415/
aboriginal Khas. For what purpose? -- A mystery. They may originally have been storehouses which served to shelter provisions on a road which has been frequented in all periods by migrating peoples. Perhaps rather they were designed to collect rainwater. Perhaps, finally, these monumental vases were simply mausoleums in which offerings were piled up to the shades of the dead.

its sixty-two pagodas and of its shining Thats whose sides concealed treasures" had given it a renown which went far abroad.

Friendly relations were therefore resumed, as in the past, be- 648*
tween the two States. Lan-Xang was again preparing to live in 643*
peace in its rediscovered autonomy when Nokeo-Koumane died 175*
while still very young and without leaving any survivors, in 1596 after a five years' reign.

THAMMIKARATH (1582), KING 1596-1622.

New disorders were to be feared, /99/ /Page 99 is devoted to 643*
an illustration: "Tran-Ninh. The Plain of the Jars."--Translator/ 175*
/100/ and new competitions for the throne. Such was not the case, for the moment, thanks to the authority of Vongsa, a cousin by marriage of the dead king, who although was only fourteen years old was able to rally the suffrage of the court to his name. His mother was a sister of Setthathirath's last wife. The dynastic link was thus rather tenuous and the local chronicles do not fail to point out that on this date the power passed to the "junior" branch of the Khoun-Lo succession.

Vongsa reigned under the name of Thammikarath. In 1598 a 557
son Oupagnouvarath was born to him, who had scarcely reached 643*
man's age when he developed a keen interest in the administration 175*
of his country. By virtue of his intelligence and his precocious maturity of mind he soon acquired a genuine popularity both among

115: Le Boulanger--65 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8
172
415

Fig. 7 Tran-Ninh. The Plain of the Jars.

/Facing p. 98/

149: Reinach--247 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"What makes everything easy and is used for everything is this hollow wood, at once so solid and so light, the incomparable bamboo. In France we see it only in the form of pleasant but useless little articles of furniture. Here bamboo is sufficient to every task. It provides the whole house, frame as well as walls. The inner walls and floors are made of matted bamboo lathwork. Yet such a house, with its furniture, bed, tables, various accessories and its luxury objects, if you are a person of refinement, can be improvised for you in a space of two hours wherever you want. 313 341 352

"Has a bridge been washed out? In two hours, thanks to this wood which is easy to manage and to work, men will have made a new bridge. One is especially struck, at the beginning of this life which is so free and, more than any other, independent of men and things, by the great simplicity and ingenuity of all the procedures. Objects are rudimentary but practical, easy to make, soon ready and simple to repair. Everyone knows how to build ordinary furnishings, and no interruptions are caused here as they are when even the slightest damage occurs to one of our highly developed utensils, which only a specialist knows how to repair.

"A bamboo tube is a safe place for your maps and papers. It is a drinking glass, and it is also a pipe for smokers. On a larger scale, it is a bucket for carrying water, and the receptacle for all liquid and solid provisions. When provided with a handle it serves as a pot for the Laotians to cook their rice in, or to prepare syrup from the sugar palm. When torn into thongs it is used as rope and string. Ligatures of sapeks are threaded on kelates, or bamboo filaments, and this is what makes our new Indo-Chinese sou, with its round hole in the middle, so impractical. Those who preside over the striking of our coins are unaware that the kelate is square, a fact which the first comer from the interior could have told them. Baskets of all kinds are made with these same kelates for holding and transporting material. Hats are also made of them to provide shelter from the sun and rain. At night, when the stage of your journey is too long and you have to continue after nightfall even at the risk of meeting a tiger, setting fire to a bamboo branch is enough to frighten any off and to light your way. And not only is bamboo used to make torches, hats, string, dishes, furniture, houses and bridges, but it also serves as animal fodder and even as food for the natives, who eat the tenderest shoots as we would eat asparagus. 313 415 436 285 313 291 [372] [262] [231]

249 either in the natural state or in the form of black, pasty, molasses-laden sugar.

There are several varieties, the chief of which are the heavy, green cane which is highly cellulated, and the small violet-colored cane with joints closer together, which is fuller than the first.

Farming methods do not differ from those used in other countries. Cuttings are planted, and the plants are topped if they show a marked propensity to excessive leafy growth.

257 To manufacture sugar, the cane is crushed between two vertical cylinders driven by two wooden gears of a most ingenious construction.
407 A buffalo turns the whole by means of a crossbar or shafft, the end of which is attached to its neck and constitutes a whim. Sometimes the cane is crushed between two pieces of stone or hardwood, one of which rests on the ground while the other [364] is applied on top of it by means of a wooden lever. One or several persons work the other end of the lever with all their weight and move it up and down in a series of
[439] jerky motions. The juice extracted from the cane is placed in large
[415] cast iron cauldrons shaped like cupels, which are imported by Chinese merchants. Condensation takes place over an open fire laid in primitive hearths which are cut into the ground itself, if it is clayey. When the syrup reaches the desired degree of thickness the whole mass is poured into rectangular or circular molds made of wood or bamboo. After cooling the loaves of sugar which come from the molds, and which are from three to six centimeters thick, are wrapped in dry leaves. They are transported and sold in this form. The cane itself is called "Oi" and the sugar "Nam-Oi" or, literally, water of cane.

[276] The Laotians do not refine alcohol from the juice of sugar cane,
[101] and are even ignorant of the initial refining stage which the Annamites use and which produces brown sugar.

[435] The price of sugar on the markets of Laos varies from one point to another, and transactions involve small quantities only. Statistics do give evidence, however, from which market prices of 35 to 50 francs per hundred kilograms can be deduced.

249 INDIGO. We have seen above that the Laotians use the indigo-bearing properties of certain plants which grow wild in the forests in order to dye cloth goods blue. They also produce a variety of indigo, the Indigofera tinctoria, which is similar to the variety found in Bengal. The plant itself is called "Kok-Kame" and the extract or dye Nam-Kame

326 bracelets, necklaces, rings, long neck chains and chignon chains,
306 hairpins, buckles, buttons, earrings, etc., either of gold or of silver.

The purity of the metals used in this work varies widely, and is usually left to the choice of the person who commissions the work. In some cases gold is left free of any alloy, while often a fourth part of silver is used and sometimes even more.

Silver taken from coins is left as pure as it was originally, or else its purity is decreased by alloying it with copper and tin.

The precious stones used in jewelry include sapphires, rubies, quartz, crystal, onyx, glass and even basalts. Cutting facets on gems is unknown in Laos, and only cabochon cutting, which may be more or less regular, is practiced.

326 Ironmongery. The blacksmiths of Laos are quite skillful. Their extremely scant equipment includes a double-action bellows, one or two pairs of tongs, two or three hammers, a hot set and a small anvil. They use only wood charcoal.

By taking plenty of time they are nevertheless able, using bars of soft iron imported from Europe, deadheads, and "Duongs" which come from the high primitive furnaces [457] of the Koui region, to forge various tools and utensils such as machetes, swords, knives, scissors, spades, bits, elephant halters, carnac hooks, etc.

Each blacksmith has his own specialty. With the help of routinism and by virtue of constant repetition of the same forms, these artisans manage to acquire a real skill and to utilize every last scrap of iron. It should also be noted that iron is very expensive. It costs from 30 to 70 francs per hundred kilograms in Laos, and sometimes as much as 90 or even 110 francs.

A certain number of articles, such as plowshares, spade irons, axes, etc. are imported from China and Siam.

323 Pottery. The pottery industry is very active, and in spite
415 of the many imported pots made of wrought, enamel or cast iron or copper, the industry still makes a large number of pots and vases of every size and shape which are destined for various uses.

The potters of Laos produce glazed jars which serve as receptacles for alcohol and water, water coolers, flower vases, drinking mugs, oil lamps, cuspidors, smooth and rough mortars, tiles, brick, drains, ornamental modillions, etc. The products of this industry are mainly [439] destined for local consumption. Some of them, however, also find markets in nearby countries.

323 The potters' methods and equipment do not differ from those which are in widespread use everywhere.

The method of firing depends on the nature of the article, and firing may be done either in kilns dug out of the clay soil, in the banks of watercourses, or under stacks of rice straw. Wood or rice straw is used to fire the kilns.

In some regions articles are given a shiny black patina resembling graphite by firing them for a second time in paddy husks.

326 778 411 415 Brass-founding. One has only to explore the pagodas of Laos in order to realize that brass-founding used to be held in honor. Religious statues can be found which are sometimes of great [458] weight and usually of quite fine workmanship and taste, taking into account, to be sure, the quite special manner in which they conceive esthetics.

Although the crucibles have not been fired for many long years for casting such large pieces, the industry of brass-founding continues to be exercised by a certain number of specialists who are content with producing religious statuettes, necessities for betel, bells for elephants and livestock, various kinds of vases, cuspidors, etc.

This industry is an extremely ancient one in the land. It was certainly practiced during the Bronze Age, as is attested by the spear-heads, daggers, hatchets and halberds which have been found in northern Laos and which can now be seen in the Saint-Germain museum.

[821 172] It is interesting to note that the inhabitants of Laos attribute a meteoric origin to objects of the Bronze Age, as also to those of the Age of Polished Stone. They believe that these objects fall from the sky when it thunders, and that they are produced by lightning.

The following are some of the methods used by Laotian founders. Casting is always done by the lost wax process.

325 532 Casting statues. On an initial rough clay model, the artist applies a layer of fine, soft and well-pugged clay which he shapes in a more careful manner. Then after covering the statue, which is already much more than a rough draft, with a layer of bees-wax of the proper thickness, he finishes modeling the statue on the wax, inserting all the details and all the ornaments which it is to include. Polishing a bit here, engraving there, setting precious stones or simply glass between the eyelids to represent eyes, and inserting gold lips where the mouth is to be located, he gives the

532

325 model the appearance which it will have when cast.

[323] On this wax surface a very thin layer is first overlaid of clay which is finely pugged, well diluted with water and quite similar in appearance and consistency to the kaolin from which utensils of thin porcelain are molded. When this [459] [Illustration] [460] [Blank page] [461] first layer is dry, a second is applied which is made up of coarser clay, then a third which is still thicker. Finally, when the whole is no more than a mass which has the vague shape of the original model, a good thickness of fire clay which has been kneaded together with chopped straw, buffalo dung and paddy husks is applied by hand. The mold is then ready for pouring as soon as the outer layer dries.

At certain carefully chosen points in the less conspicuous parts of the model, wax plugs have been inserted at the correct angle through the different layers of clay so that they come out to the surface. Some of these will be vent holes to give passage to the vapors which will be emitted when the statue is cast, and the others are the spouts through which the molten metal will be poured from the crucibles.

The mold has been prepared in an excavation in the ground which is as deep as the statue is tall. When everything is ready, the excavation is filled with dry sand which is well tamped down. Finally the crucibles are arranged all around the mold, in greater or less numbers depending on the size of the object to be cast. Each of these has a bellows and sometimes two so as to be prepared for accidents, to hasten melting and to obtain perfect equality of fluidity and heat in the metal in all the crucibles.

When the time comes the metal is poured into all the spouts at once, and if the mold does not burst because of excess humidity, the bronze soon replaces the wax inside the walls of the mold. It is allowed to cool, then the mold is removed. If the operation is successful the statue then appears, smooth and pure and perfectly identical with the wax model. Only the junction points of the spouts and vent holes need any retouching, but the main parts usually come out admirably well.

325 415 Casting various utensils. Small utensils are cast in just the same way, except that the crucible containing the molten metal is connected to the mold and packed in a common covering--a mixture of buffalo dung, chopped straw and paddy husks. Between the mold and the crucible two small lateral openings have been carefully made, the purpose of which is both to allow vapors to escape and to permit judging the degree of fusion of the metal.

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When thus prepared the mold and the crucible, which form a single block, are placed on the furnace with the crucible undermost, amidst the charcoal which is given a forced draft with an alternating bellows. What happens then cannot be imagined. The wax melts with the first heat and falls into the crucible, leaving a void between the two walls of the mold which the metal will fill. As soon as the latter is ready, as can be seen by the color of the flames which come out through the lateral openings, the founder seizes the block with a pair of tongs and turns it upside down suddenly so as to pour the contents of the crucible automatically into the cavity of the mold. After the metal has cooled the clay envelope is broken like an egg shell, and the object appears with the shape and relief or chased ornaments which the wax model possessed.

The founders use various alloys, depending on whether the objects which they are making are statues, common utensils or bells. Some are made of brass, zinc and tin, others of red copper, silver and bronze from old gongs, etc. Sometimes, when the statue is a religious one, the faithful are impelled by their ardor to throw gold and silver jewelry and coins into the crucible.

[718]

The principal pieces of equipment of the founder are the bellows, crucibles, tongs, a series of sculptor's boasters, an alternating turn-bench, graving tools, scrapers, hammers, etc.

285

Basketry. The inhabitants of Laos, especially the Khas, are past masters in the art of basketry, and the objects which come from their hands have a finish, a delicacy, a seal of elegance and a purity of form which are surprising at first sight.

Rattan, certain kinds of bark and thin skins and strips of bamboo are the materials used in basketry.

The main articles produced by this industry include floor mats, bed mats, calibrated baskets for measuring grain, buckets for drawing water, large baskets, baskets for holding cooked rice, platter covers, trays with feet, boxes for betel necessities, baskets to carry on the back, bird cages, hats, etc.

[463] Most basketwork articles are delivered unfinished, although some are smoked or else lacquered black or red. Except for a few articles which find a market outside of the region of manufacture, but always within the limits of Laos, it may be said that the basketwork industry is an entirely local one.

The Khas, moreover, do not have a monopoly in this industry, and all the inhabitants of Laos are basket makers to a greater or less degree.

619 traditions and the annals which I have been able to consult, they are
643 the descendants of the last kings of the land before the Cham invasion.
[648] The kings of Cambodia have had to appeal to them for help on one
[175] or two critical occasions, and it was in return for services rendered
that the king of Cambodia, up until recent times, used to send them
563 presents every year (annual tribute, according to them, payment of which stopped only five years ago).

[726] They have never been willing to recognize our authority. The king of Pa-Tao-la, who is situated on the Laotian side, twice attacked the Government Commissioners of Stung-Treng when the latter were making a tour of inspection in this region, first in December 1894 and a second time in January 1897. They were given a severe lesson this second time, for the village was entirely destroyed and they suffered many losses. The Sadete Loum (the Master of water) settled on the Annamite side alongside the Master of fire after the affair, and since that time has given no further orders to our faithful Djarais.

[108]

APPENDIX XIX
NOTE ON THE MEOS

563 The Meo has a savage and distrustful character. He does not
609 like the presence of foreigners, or even of people of his own race.

Clinging to the side of a mountain, and always as high up as possible, he asks only to be allowed to live in peace in his wild solitude and bodes no ill to anyone provided he is left alone and independen

He is a great hunter of wild beasts and large game. More in-
433 dustrious than the Thais, he makes all his farming implements him-
241 self (picks and shovels), as well as his wooden buckets and mills for grinding maize and paddy. He raises fine poultry, pigs, oxen, goats
231 and horses with particular care and success. If he stays in one place for any length of time he also produces, in addition to the maize and rice which form the basis of his food supply and the opium which he smokes, very fine eggplants, gourds, sweet potatoes and non-sweetened batatas very much like the common potato, sorrel, green beans and all the French vegetables whose seeds are given him. On his heights he cultivates the fruit trees which merely vegetate in the plains, such as the peach tree, and the peaches which he harvests can compete without any fear with those of our own country.

516 The Meo climbs like a cat. Over sheer paths, up ladders com-
.417 posed of a single bamboo pole standing upright in which notches are cut at regular intervals which are large enough for two toes, the Meo

516 progresses at an even, elongated pace, carrying as much as 30 kilo-
•417 grams in his pack without even seeming to suspect the feats of strength,
[132] suppleness and balance which he accomplishes. As long as he remains on high ground his resistance to fatigue is very great indeed, but he cannot go down to the lowlands without danger, especially in the hot season.

101 Certain authors claim that the word "Meo" which, when pronounced with a certain intonation, means cat in several Indo-Chinese languages, was given to these folk by reason of their agility. However, we must note that in [109] Laotian the word "Meo" used to designate these mountainfolk is neither written or pronounced like the word meo which is used to designate cats. There is the same difference between these two words as there is in French between the words maitre and metre.

342 A Meo house is built at ground level on slightly leveled ground. The walls are made of puddled clay or of ill-fitting boards, and the house is roofed with thatch or crudely-squared wooden shingles. The doors are made of wood which has been shaped with an ax, and there
[592] are no windows. Often several families live in the same house, and then each has a fireplace to itself and a compartment which serves it as a bedroom. In the common room there is an oven and fireplaces above which objects are placed to dry on a bamboo framework. Behind the house a narrow passageway is left free separating the
[343] building from the sheer mountainside. In front there is a narrow veranda where the horses are kept when they are not housed in a stable built on piles and overhanging the mountainside, as are the animal barn and pig sty, the rice granary and the goat pen. This system has the advantage of protecting the animals from the dampness of the ground, since the planks which form the floor jut out over empty space on their solid piles.

[101] Inside the house there are a few furnishings, as among all peoples of Chinese origin. There are benches, tables, camp beds, dishes,
352 iron and copper cooking utensils and opium smoking accessories, all so repulsively filthy that even the least delicate would hesitate to
356 enter and stay in these hovels, where vermin swarm under the protection of the ancestors' altar.

Although amongh themselves and with their families the Meos
193 speak a rather unharmonious language, nearly all the men can understand and speak Qouane-hoa, the language of the Chinese mandarins,
212 which is the official language in Yunnan. They can neither read nor write Chinese characters, and have no system of writing of their own.

la Sainte-Chapelle, a la seconde boutique, a l'enseigne 175*
du Voyageur. 114
/127/

naivete, the work /111/ does not have the ring of sincerity which constitutes the merit of the Dutch account. It was probably written from the reminiscences of Father J. M. Leria (1) and is of value

1. Father Giovanni-Maria Leria, a Piedmontese Jesuit, left Cambodia in April 1642 accompanied by some Cochinchinese neophytes with a caravan of Laotian traders who were returning to their country. He remained in Laos for five years "despite the opposition and the intrigues of the bonzes" and did not leave Vientiane until December 2, 1647. (Cf. Fr. Garnier, 1871, and Father Alex. de Rhodes, 1651.)

only as a document at second hand. It will nevertheless be of some interest to extract the following passages:

"In the East it (the kingdom of the 'Langiens') has the kingdom 131
of Tonkin which stretches to the southwest towards Cochinchina, 175*
and further to the South that of Cambodia; in the southwest and the west the kingdom of Pegou; and in the north that of Ava and the province called U or Lu (2), and still further again to the north as

2. See below, p. 176, note 1.

far as the frontiers which limit it in this direction, where there are certain peoples who are called Gnai. . . .

"Because of its fertility and because the things necessary to life 421
are found there in abundance, the kingdom is so heavily populated 433
that only a little while ago in the census which was taken of per- 161
sons who were /112/ judged fit to serve the king at war and to bear arms, 500,000 were counted, not including the old people who are so numerous and so rubust that even of those who are a hundred years old a very large army might be formed for the defense of the kingdom if the need should arise. . .

"The chief city and the one in which the king ordinarily stays 633
is situated in the middle of the kingdom, eighteen degrees toward 174
our Arctic pole, and is called Langione. It has good moats and 344
extremely high walls on one side, and on the other the great river to defend it against the undertakings of enemies. . . . The royal palace, the structure and symmetry of which are admirable, can

657
659 it possible to draw up the tax rolls for the following year.

657 A head tax is owed by every able-bodied man between the ages of eighteen and sixty, except for bonzes, pagoda servants, the native authorities, men who have served for four years in the civil guard, militiamen on active duty, invalids and liberated slaves.

There are four categories of registered persons:

1. Those of the great Thai race, who pay five francs and also owe twenty days of service in kind in Upper Laos, and ten in Lower Laos. This service may be redeemed upon payment of five francs;

2. Those of the other races such as Khas, Meos, Yaos, etc., who pay 2.50 francs and owe ten days of service in kind, redeemable for 2.50 francs;

3. The Annamites, who pay a head tax of five francs and do not owe any service in kind;

4. Foreign Orientals, who pay a head tax of 12.50 francs per year and do not owe any statute labor. If they are merchants, they pay a license fee of five francs per shop.

[500] B. Indirect taxes

The indirect taxes include:

1. Travel permits and passports;
2. Permits for weapons;
3. Administrative fines;
4. Local taxes levied on products and animals exported from Laos.

[484] For travel permits, Laotians pay a fixed fee of 0.50 franc per person and per permit. Foreign Orientals pay 1.875 francs for a permit which is good for three months.

[411] Permits for weapons occasion the collection of a tax of 1.50 francs. Annual renewal of the permit is obligatory, and costs 0.75 franc.

[421] There are as yet no taxes on land in Laos. It would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to levy such a tax in view of the present state of the country, which has no land registry, and with the system of property (1) such as it exists at present.

423 (1) "As regards public domain, we have maintained the custom which is consecrated by the local laws and usages. By virtue of these usages and these laws, the State is sole proprietor of the land and everything under it, without any exception, no matter how it is being exploited or what establishments have been made there,

10: d'Orleans--374 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 422, 492

"Our elephants having been brought to us at an early hour, we load them immediately and set out.

Our convoy comprises seven animals, smaller than those we had in India. Ours carry only 100 tchangs (2 1/2 cwt.). They are owned by a few families and not by the villagers in common. An animal fifteen years old is worth from six to seven tchangs, or from about 480 to 560 rupees. The one I am riding is valued at 640 rupees. The elephants require much care, which is the more readily given them as they represent a fortune for their owners. They are liable to fall ill and suffer particularly from diarrhœa. They are then treated with indogo and sugar cane.

Each elephant has two men to tend it. They take turns in driving it, in riding on its neck and in walking behind it. The man who walks behind often lops off small branches for the animal to eat. At night, one of them sleeps near the aoudah, while the other remains with the elephant. Our saddles are attached to the animals, but changed several times a night to allow them to feed on the pastures.

I am pleased to find again these good big beasts with which I passed such a pleasant month in India. Although the keepers appear to me to be kinder here, the elephants are less intelligent, or rather not so well trained; for, as elsewhere, they were captured wild. They are not very prolific in India when domesticated, but in Cambodia, on the contrary, our interpreter says, they are more so. The father of Takiate who has owned two for the last fifteen years, has had a young one which he sold to the king."

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inside is lacquered red.

The pirogues are manned by forty or fifty oarsmen who half [225] [Illustration] [226] [Blank page] [227] crouch and half sit in pairs on what amount to thwarts made of bamboo and joined to a framework. The oarsmen face forward as they paddle, holding their blade in both hands and not supporting it on any point of the boat. A pirogue chief, usually a mandarin, is in the prow, and in the stern is the pilot, who jumps about and stimulates the whole crew with his shouts and gestures. Amidships there are sometimes musicians, with [831] kene, gong and tom-tom, and two or three trained men who, their [535] belts [Illustration here] adorned with enormous jointed "lingams," dance the "Phallic" standing up with their feet on the edges of the pirogue and declaim occasional odes and improvisations the terms of which are extremely crude.(1). In their songs they invite beings,

(1) In southern Laos the men who perform these dances hold grotesque masks in front of their faces with their hands.

plants and elements to unite, combine and fertilize one another so as to maintain "Life" in all its forms on the surface of the earth.

The crews of the different racing pirogues are clothed in different colors, like the jackets of our jockeys, and they vie ardently with one another, making the water fly to surpass their own efforts. The crew which reaches the finish line first manifests its enthusiasm by [228] standing up in the pirogue, uttering shouts of triumph and brandishing the oars. Oftentimes all these uncoordinated movements result in throwing everybody into the water, but the pirogue is soon righted and emptied to the accompaniment of roars of laughter and the crew members take up their posts again, ready for a new race.

Racing pirogues are not launched until the time when they are to be used. Ordinarily they are stored on sawhorses and under sheds on the grounds of certain pagodas whose bonzes are responsible for their upkeep, and for storing the oars and accessories and clothing of the oarsmen.

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Certain pirogues are held in common by the inhabitants of a village, while others are the property of particular rich men, muong chiefs or high mandarins who have had them built at their own expense and pay for their upkeep and for that of their crew of oarsmen. In Laos a man will become the owner of a racing pirogue as in France one might become the owner of a racing stable. The racehorse

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Tribal Tai
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s the long pirogue, and the jockeys are the oarsmen. Nor will it be in vain to remark that, as in our races, heavy wagers are often laid by the owners and the lovers of this kind of sport.

Thais or Phou-Thais. The Thais or Phou-Thais are divided into four distinct groups. These are:

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1. The Khao-Thais (white);
2. The Dam-Thais (black);
3. The Deng-Thais (red);
4. The Neua-Thais (northern).

The Khao-Thais are the result of marriages between Chinese men and Dam-Thai women, or vice versa, although the former case is the most frequent. They do not form large agglomerations, but only isolated family groups in the midst of the surrounding population. They are found only in the northern part of the Sib-Song-Chau-Thais, a territory which is dependent on Laos from the ethnographic point of view but administratively attached to Tonkin.

The following is what is known of their origin: [229] [Illustration] [230] [Blank page] [231]

"Around 1600 a rebel Chinese leader assembled a few partisans, set sail from Canton and landed at Haiphong. From there he went on to Bac-Ninh, continually increasing the number of his men. At Bac-Ninh the rebel leader received an envoy from the king of Annam, who asked him to help put down the Thais and the Muongs of the Black River. The Chinese leader accepted, and after leaving Bac-Ninh he went to Lao-Kay, from which point he soon entered the province of the Sib-Sing-Chau-Thais. After defeating the Thais and the Muongs he was given this province out of gratitude for his help. His troops, worn out by the campaign, settled in the country and lost no time in marrying Thai women. It was from such unions that the white Thais were born" (1).

(1) E. Picanon, op. cit. [Le Laos français, Paris, 1901.]

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Dam-Thais and Deng-Thais. These two varieties have a common origin and belong to the same family (2). The different names which

(2) Thais are found in nearly all of Laos, where they are scattered among the Laotian population. They are particularly numerous in the Hua-Pahn, where they are in the majority in certain muongs.

6; Goudal--192-193 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians
116, 241, 423

"In Laos and the Moi's districts, which are sparsely populated and where there is an abundance of unoccupied land, strict rules of land tenure were much less necessary than in the countries mentioned above. Every type of ownership is to be found: the [193] tiny holding cultivated successively by father and son, ownership being confirmed merely by custom; areas belonging to a community, certain parts being temporarily cleared by fire and then abandoned again (rays), strips of forest or of grassland which are roughly developed for a time as tribes migrate from place to place."

34: Thompson--174[3] J-4 (no date)1947 Laotians
116, 241, 423

"In Laos, where there has always been plenty of unoccupied arable land, every type of ownership may be found--family possession and cultivation, communal lands, and shifting agriculture."

633 be seen from a great distance. To be sure, it extends over a prodigi-
174 ous area and is so large that one would take it for a city... The king's
344 apartments, which are embellished with a superb and magnificent portico and a large number of beautiful rooms accompanied by a large parlor, are all made of wood which will not decay and ornamented inside and outside with excellent bas-reliefs so delicately gilded that they seem rather to be covered with flakes of gold than gold leaf.

"From that point one enters the courtyards which are extremely spacious, and one first sees a long line of houses built entirely of brick and roofed /113/ with tile in which the second wives usually stay, and outside another row of houses built alongside in the same symmetry for the mandarins' officers. I could write a whole volume if I undertook a minute description of all the other parts of the palace, the riches, the departments, the gardens and a number of other such things...

565 "The houses of the principal lords and of well-to-do persons are
342 very high and beautiful, and are all made of wood with a great deal
352 of artifice and a greater or lesser number of ornaments, depending on the expense to which the individuals are willing to go, but I must confess that the common people and the poor are housed extremely badly
/793/ and that their dwellings are cabins and huts rather than houses. Only the talapoins (bonzes), who are the priests of the idols, have permission to build their monasteries and houses out of brick and stone. Instead of rugs and other such furnishings, persons of quality use small reed mats in which the weave is so delicate and so highly ornamented with figures and various leaf patterns that, to my mind, there is nothing more beautiful nor more pleasing to the eye. They ordinarily use them to cover the walls of /114/ their rooms and houses inside and outside, which they keep very clean and of which they take particular care...

643* "The king is absolute and independent... all the land belongs to
/423/ him, and he disposes as absolute lord of all that his subjects possess...
631 offices, employment, honors and wealth depend absolutely on the
174 king, who raises those persons who please him most to the highest offices in the kingdom.... The principal dignities and offices of the kingdom are eight in number. The first is that of viceroy general... and because the kingdom is divided into seven provinces seven other viceroys are appointed... there are also other governments of less consequence which depend on the former both in respect to civil affairs and to those which concern war.... Each of these provinces has
/701/ its militia, which consists of infantry and cavalry.

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659 it possible to draw up the tax rolls for the following year.

657 A head tax is owed by every able-bodied man between the ages of eighteen and sixty, except for bonzes, pagoda servants, the native authorities, men who have served for four years in the civil guard, militiamen on active duty, invalids and liberated slaves.

There are four categories of registered persons:

1. Those of the great Thai race, who pay five francs and also owe twenty days of service in kind in Upper Laos, and ten in Lower Laos. This service may be redeemed upon payment of five francs;

2. Those of the other races such as Khas, Meos, Yaos, etc., who pay 2.50 francs and owe ten days of service in kind, redeemable for 2.50 francs;

3. The Annamites, who pay a head tax of five francs and do not owe any service in kind;

4. Foreign Orientals, who pay a head tax of 12.50 francs per year and do not owe any statute labor. If they are merchants, they pay a license fee of five francs per shop.

[500] B. Indirect taxes

The indirect taxes include:

1. Travel permits and passports;
2. Permits for weapons;
3. Administrative fines;
4. Local taxes levied on products and animals exported from Laos.

[484] For travel permits, Laotians pay a fixed fee of 0.50 franc per person and per permit. Foreign Orientals pay 1.875 francs for a permit which is good for three months.

[411] Permits for weapons occasion the collection of a tax of 1.50 francs. Annual renewal of the permit is obligatory, and costs 0.75 franc.

[421] There are as yet no taxes on land in Laos. It would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to levy such a tax in view of the present state of the country, which has no land registry, and with the system of property (1) such as it exists at present.

• 423 (1) "As regards public domain, we have maintained the custom which is consecrated by the local laws and usages. By virtue of these usages and these laws, the State is sole proprietor of the land and everything under it, without any exception, no matter how it is being exploited or what establishments have been made there,

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either on the surface or underneath.

"The inhabitants of the land are, in the last analysis, only usufructuaries who have the right of enjoyment of the land which they occupy and cultivate. The State may expropriate any occupant at any time by paying him a sum equal to the value of plantations or constructions made by him on the expropriated ground.

"The right of enjoyment of land is subject to certain conditions. The first of these is that the land occupied shall really be occupied and kept in a state of cultivation. Any property which has been abandoned or not cultivated for more than three years is defined as free ground and reverts to the State, which may cede it to any new usufructuary who is desirous of working it. Any inhabitant who clears free ground and places it under cultivation becomes the legitimate proprietor of the products and harvests which he obtains therefrom.

"What is true for individuals is equally true for the groups which certain races, living a patriarchal life, are accustomed to form. These groups which hold their work and their profits in common are regarded as a single civil person.

"Here there is, therefore, neither private domain, nor public domain nor reserve. There is only the domain of the State, which includes all."

(Le Laos français, op. cit.)

[Lieutenant-colonel Tournier, (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

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In the absence of a tax on land, local exit duties have been levied [501] [Illustration] [502] [Blank page] [503] to take the place of such a tax. They bear only on products of the soil and forest and on livestock, and consist of the following:

Tax on elephants

438 A duty equivalent to one-half the sale price, except in the case of exemptions granted by a decision of the superior resident.

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Tax on buffaloes, oxen, horses and pigs

Oxen, cattle	2.50 francs
Buffaloes and buffalo-cows	7.50 "
Pigs	2.00 "

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When he mounted the throne, the present king of Siam promulgated a generous law relative to slavery to celebrate his accession. This was the "Pi-Marong" law (that is to say, the law of the year "Pi-Marong," or 1880). If it had freed all the slaves in a block, it would have brought about recriminations and turned many wealthy Siamese, whose wealth lay mainly in troops of slaves, against the royal family. It therefore does not mention slaves for debt in the strict sense, and is concerned only with the status of their children and grandchildren. The former are declared to be free at the age of 21, and the latter at birth. As for the man who becomes a slave through debt, he cannot gain freedom through his work, since the latter is regarded as the equivalent of interest on the sum borrowed or the purchase price, if he should happen to change masters. If this sum is less than 56 ticals (1) in the case of men, and 48 ticals for

(1) The tical is worth 1.50 francs.

women, however, the slave is merely a debtor and can then redeem himself by his labor.

The reader will also note that this law makes no mention of slaves by capture. But the Siamese code does not recognize any such, and even levies extremely severe penalties on ravishers and sellers.

In 1893, when the Franco-Siamese treaty granted us the territory of Laos which was situated on the left bank of the Mekong, the conditions of slavery were therefore first of all what the "Pi-Marong" law, which was generally well applied, had made them, and secondly as determined by the ordinances of the code governing slave trading, which had partly failed to have any effect.

Our first concern was thus the radical suppression of the traffic [489] in human flesh, which was enriching a few Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian mandarins, and even some Burmese who were engaging in this sort of trade.

But this was not all. Once the slave trade was abolished, slavery for debt remained. It was left for our administration to regulate this question in a spirit of humanity and justice as soon as it felt sufficiently entrenched in the land and was able to begin the necessary investigations.

It is our pleasure here to pay homage to the generous sentiments and broad views of Lieutenant Colonel Tournier, then Superior Commandant of Lower Laos, [illegible] set forth the situation of slavery in Laos

567 as early as March of 1896, in a report which we believe it will be of
426 value to reproduce in part, as well as a code of rules as ingenious as they were just governing slavery for debt (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVIII.

567 Finally, there is a kind of serfdom in Laos which is applied to
563 certain Kha tribes. Thus in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang, subsequent to revolts, entire tribes of Khas were reduced to a state of serfdom and placed under the patronage of the king, of princes, or of the principal members of the nobility. In 1894 our administration undertook to liberate these Khas, who are completely free today. In southern Laos most of these latter are still the clients of a few nobles or Laotian officials, but the guardianship is a gentle one which they can abandon and resume at will.

2. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

178 Under our control, as has been noted above, the political
642 organization of Laos has remained what it was before 1893. We have respected the customs and local traditions, and we govern through the native administration in which all the machinery has been retained.
643 [490] The following is a nearly complete list of all the officials in a large Muong such as the kingdom of Luang-Prabang or of Bassac (1)

(1) The kingdom of Luang-Prabang is situated on both banks of the Mekong, but the king resides on the left bank at Luang-Prabang and is consequently dependent on the French authorities. The kingdom of Bassac is today wholly on the right bank, and the king of Bassac falls under Siamese domination. The title of king is sometimes given also to the "Tiao-Fa" or head of the province of Muong-Sing. The head of a muong in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na may be a "Tso-boua," a "Phya-Hua" or a "Sen-Houi-Fa," depending on his importance.

At the head are the Kings, two in number:

Somdet-Phra-Tiao or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Louang, first king, great master of existences.

Tiao-Maha-Oupahat or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Vang-Na, second king,
644 great master responsible for conservation of property. [Illustration here]

314 The bark of these varieties is lighter in color, with green, gray and red spots. The leaves are a duller green and the fruits heavier and longer.

[132] These lianas belong to the highlands of Laos and to the thick mountain forests. The Mac-ka-khay is very plentiful in Borikan; the two following ones are found in the region of Van-Vien and the Tang-tong, which is quite rare, has been found in the interior on the right bank of the Mekong, as well as in Paksan.

In the absence of botanical specimens, we can only suppose that all these varieties belong, according to the indications given as to their fruits, to the Apocyneae family.

As for the samples of rubber which we have from these plants, some in balls and others in rolls of small dimensions, they all seem to have been obtained by the method of coagulating latex with heat in a receptacle of a certain size. The gum has remained sticky, and today, after having been kept for a year, all of it except one or two samples has become soft and viscous.

I am nevertheless persuaded that two or three of these lianas will yield rubber which is as good in quality as that of Nghe-An, provided that the crop is harvested in "tears" or in threads, this being the best system for avoiding the inclusion of putrescible serum.

Moreover, the rubber produced by these lianas already constitutes a noteworthy trade commodity in the Hua-Phans. M. Chaussé, one of our countrymen, has been making sizeable purchases of rubber there for several years, and comparatively large amounts of this product are said to be marketed in Cho-Bo at the rate of 45 piasters per picul, that is to say at more than two francs per kilogram.

[426] M. Delineau, whose commercial ventures in rubber in Tran-Ninh have also been brought to light, has bought wax and rubber there and tried to make the population accept loans which would be repayable in rubber.

314 654 But disadvantages are already arising in these regions--disadvantage of which the cascarilleros, or seekers of cinchona trees, once set a bad example in Brazil. Since the elastic gum is coming more and more into demand in Upper Laos, in some places the natives have hacked and massacred the producing plants in order to obtain the coveted merchandise more easily and in larger quantities.

Since this habit shows a tendency to become widespread, in Muong-Son M. Montpeyrat has drawn up restrictive measures against these clumsy procedures. And in order at the same time to encourage cultivation of these plants which yield a desirable product, he has

567 must be specified in a special contract signed by them. In this case
656 their work will go toward payment of their parents' debt at the rate of six ticals per year for boys and four ticals for girls.

ART. 5. If a slave dies his debt is considered paid and is not transferable to any of his relatives.

[651] ART. 6. A master is held responsible for payment of the head tax on any dutiable slave.

If the latter cannot secure the necessary sum through his own labor the master shall pay, but any such sum shall be added to the principal debt and mention thereof shall be made on the contract of debt by the authorities responsible for collecting the head tax.

•426 ART. 7. Any individual who borrows money shall present him-
567 self with the lender to the highest native authority in his territory, who alone is empowered to certify debtor's notes.

656 The native authorities shall retain a duplicate of such debtor's notes; such notes shall be signed by both lender and borrower and invested with the seals of the authorities.

Notes shall be drawn up in ink and any crossings-out or additions approved.

ART. 8. For sums less than twenty ticals, the high authorities of a Muong may delegate their powers to the Tassengs or Phobans.

ART. 9. The provisions of this decree shall take effect immediately. Sons and grandsons of slaves for debt who have reached or passed the age of fifteen shall be regarded as free upon promulgation of these provisions. The same shall be true of persons under contract against their will, who shall have the right to have the contract which binds them revised in the presence of the French authorities.

and Intha-Som, who were too young to reign. The fact that they 643*
were underage opened the way to new competitions, to new inter- 175*
necine struggles and to new disorders which were to precipitate the 648*
kingdom's fall. Indeed, this confusion in the succession marks the beginning of the end of Laotian unity.

TIAN-THALA, KING 1694-1700

The prime minister Tian-Thala, arguing from his marriage 643*
with the second daughter of the dead king, then seized power (1). 175*

1. G. Maspero notes: "A curious thing is that the Dutch traveler (Van Wusthof) had foreseen (as early as 1641) this succession, for he wrote: 'It is a custom among the people /428/ of Laos that no child may inherit unless he is born of a wife who has been declared and adopted as legitimate. The others who are born of concubines do not enter into account, so that if this king who has no relative on the paternal side had just died, since he has no son born of his legitimate wife, Tevinia-Assen (Tian-Thala) might very well take the crown.' " (Op. cot. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930/). We must conclude that Tiao-Ratsabout had not yet been born in 1641 and that Tian-Thala must have been quite old in 1694.

NAN-THARAT, KING 1700.

Nan-Tharat, governor of Nakhone, /131/ at once disputed his 643*
succession, raised troops in the southern domains, defeated the 175*
royal army and dethroned Tian-Thala, who took poison (1700). Souligna's grandsons had fled to Luang-Prabang.

Sai-Ong-Hue's advance recognition of Annamite suzerainty 643*
over Lan-Xang. (1696). The reign of the new sovereign was to 648*
last only a few months, for as soon as news of the disorder reached 175*
Hue the son of Som-Phou (1) resolved to abandon his exile and

1. Sai-Ong-Hue, see p. 103, note 1.

come to Vientiane to claim the rights to the throne which he held through his father. As early as 1696 he had solicited an army from Le-Duy-Hiep, king of Annam, and his request was finally granted in exchange for recognition in advance of Annamite

643* capture later on in a return offensive (1).
175*

1. The Annals also state that two of his grandsons, Tia-Oun and Tiao-Thep, came and settled in Luang-Prabang during the wars which followed.

INTHA-SOM, KING 1727-1776.

643* Having attained his ends, Intha-Som had himself solemnly
587 crowned and married Khamone-Noi's wives. Only Thene-Sao seems
175* to have raised any objections to accepting her new husband. At first she refused categorically, then proposed the condition that the
/428/ first son whom she should bear should inherit the succession. Intha-Som agreed and all was arranged.

648* In the following year he received a mission from the Sip-Song-
643* Panas, whose leader, Pha-No-Muong of Muong-La, explained to
175* him that his master had to pay China a tribute of two elephants /189/
563 which he had not been able to procure in his territory and which he begged his neighbor to be so kind as to furnish him.

Intha-Som had too many obligations towards this prince not to present them to him gratis, but he profited by the occasion in order to inform the envoys of the trouble being caused him by his former allies, the "Mousseux," who, according to him, were mistreating the inhabitants of the region and against whom he was powerless precisely by reason of the services which they had rendered him before his accession to the throne. Could not the embassy from the Sip-Song-Panas ask the emperor of China to recall these people to their homes (1)?

1. Intha-Som's grounds for complaint against the "Mousseux" seem rather improbable if we may judge of them by their present-day descendants, who are gentle, out-going and hospitable. Patriarchal in their mores, they had fled the insurrections in Yunnan and were then seeking in Laotian territory only the tranquillity which they could not find in their own land. We are therefore justified in seeing in Intha-Som's accusations against them a mark of the spirit of ingratitude and duplicity which he manifested in many circumstances of his troubled life.

Pha-No-Muong agreed to transmit this wish to Pekin, but observed that ambassadors who could speak directly in the name of the

726 a few vestiges of his scattered troops and urged him to ask all his
648* neighbors for aid in order to make a supreme effort.
175* He addressed himself first to the king of Xieng-Mai, who gave him an out-and-out refusal. The king of Luang-Prabang offered him platonic consolation and a few officers whom he was never to receive. The emperor of Annam promised him an army, but without specifying any date or place of concentration. As for the king of Xieng-Khouang he preserved a prudent silence.

643* Chao-Noi, king of Xieng-Khouang. This latter, Chao-Noi, who
175* was to play a major role in the years which followed, has left the memory of a detestable prince. To be sure, he was confronted with a tragic situation and one fraught with difficulties which little by little caught him up in a close net from which he could not extricate himself, but he did nothing to force the hand of destiny and showed himself to be, if not cowardly, at least hesitant and without political sense at a time when events demanded decisiveness and courage.

He had succeeded, in 1791 at the age of twelve, his /171/ father Chao-Xieng who was a brother of Xom-Phou (1). He had soon freed

1. See above, p. 149,

/429/ himself from the guardianship of the counselor Phou-Ho-Xieng-Di whom the dignitaries of his kingdom had given him, and had at once manifested a brutal despotism towards his unhappy subjects whom he overburdened with taxes and vexations (repeated levies of first grade materials for the reconstruction of his palace, unjustified drafts of soldiers and continual abductions of children, for to expensive tastes he joined a passion for women).

/662/ Phou-Ho-Xieng-Di had dared to complain to King Anou, and the latter had summoned Chao-Noi to Vientiane, but there the clever fellow had charmed his suzerain with his talents as a horseman, by training a horse which was reputed to be unmanageable. He had returned to Xieng-Khouang laden with presents and honors and had lost no time in having his childhood mentor assassinated.

648* The results of the Siamese campaign of 1827 were not such as to
175* displease him, for hatred for Vientiane was a tradition in his family. At first he therefore turned a deaf ear to the appeals of the wandering king. In a second message, after Anou had called on him to fulfill his duties as a vassal, he announced that two thousand men were being sent, /172/ although he ordered them not to arrive "until after

68: Mouhot--154 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 431, 576, 556, 609

"I am literally pillaged by these petty mandarins and chiefs of villages, [HD: in southern Luang Prabang province] and have to give away guns, sabres, lead, powder, colours, pencils, and even my paper; and then, after having received their presents, they will not put themselves out of their way to do me the smallest service. I would not wish my most deadly foe, if I had one, to undergo all the trouble and persecution of this kind which I have encountered."

king of Luang-Prabang could make themselves heard more effec- 648*
tively than he himself could. 643*
175*

/190/ First mission to China (1729). Intha-Som recognized 563
the truth of this bit of advice and in 1729 charged Phya-Muong-
Khoua, Phya-Mune and Phya-Sivongsa to go to the emperor of /431/
China, deliver two elephants to him as a gift and ask him to recall
the Mousseux.

After a long voyage the mission reached Pekin without any untoward happening. They were welcomed most courteously and the Chinese government promised to give satisfaction, but only on condition that the king of Luang-Prabang should continue to send a pair of elephants every five years. An agreement was reached on this basis and the ambassadors brought back to Luang-Prabang the assurance that the Mousseux would be invited to return to their own country (1).

1. The viceroy of "Muong-Se-Luong" received orders to recall all the Mousseux to China. The orders must have been carried out rather ineffectively, for today the Mousseux still form an important group in the region of Muong-Sing.

Second mission to China (1734). A second mission also led by 648*
Phya-Muong-Khoua left five years later to deliver the promised 175*
tribute, but on their way encountered bands of robbers called /579/
"White Flags" who forced them to fall back /191/ on Muong-La.
Phya-No-Muong placed an escort of five hundred men at their disposition and sent word to the Chinese governor of Yunnan-Sen who also sent out a detachment at once to disperse the pirates. The latter's leaders were finally captured and handed over to the emperor's delegate. The ambassadors were then able to fulfill their mission and returned to Luang-Prabang laden with gifts for their king (1).

1. The Guimet Museum has the seal which was delivered by China to the "Sovereigns of Laos" when the Tartaro-Manchu dynasty acceded to the throne, "in exchange for the one which they held from the Ming dynasty." (Pavie, A la conquete des coeurs, p. 347.) Intha-Som was therefore reviving an age-old tradition. This seal, which was carried off by Deo-van-Tri when Luang-Prabang was sacked by his

Another version states, on the contrary, that there was no 726
treason and no marriage and that the gate was merely forced dur- 175*
ing an attack.

Whatever the case may be, Chao-Nan's troops entered the city, massacred a large number of inhabitants and took many families in captivity to Vientiane. Anourout had enough time to flee and to take refuge in Siam.

Loss of the Houa-Phan. Chao-Nan imposed his conditions on 648*
Luang-Prabang, but he did not dare to push his conquest as far as 175*
an annexation which the suzerain of the Menam would not have tolerated. He was content with annexing the cantons of the Houa-Phan and with forbidding all relations between the principality and Tran-Ninh (1).

1. Chao-Nan was not destined to enjoy his victory for long. We have seen elsewhere (p. 158) the fate held in store for him by Siam, which deposed him and assigned him Bangkok as his residence.

Anourout was held in Bangkok until 1793 and was liberated by 643*
the Siamese only after the intervention of the emperor of China. 175*
He rebuilt the ruins of his capital and constructed several pagodas, notably the Wat-Mai. Old and impotent, he abdicated in 1817 in favor of his /201/ son Mantha-Thourath and died two years later.

MANTHA-THOURATH (1775), KING 1817-1836.

Relations with Vientiane and Bangkok. Three years after his 648*
accession to the throne Mantha-Thourath received two envoys from 175*
Vientiane, Mun-Heua-Kham and Phalatsay, who proposed a secret treaty of friendship. King Anou, who was impatiently enduring his Siamese guardianship, suggested that they should forget past quarrels and unite their strength against the suzerain of the West whose power was increasing in an alarming fashion. Mantha-Thourath accepted the two racing pirogues which the two ambassadors /431/
brought him in behalf of their master, but was somewhat timorous and refused to enter into any agreement (1). The following year

1. One of these pirogues has been preserved in the Tioun-Khong pagoda.

643* On the occasion of his cremation the king of Siam sent the
648 mandarin Tiao-Khoun-Tholama with numerous ritual gifts (3)
175*
/431/ 3. 240 ticals, three hundred parasols, thirty bonzes' costumes, silk and calico goods, etc. (Annals).

in order to confirm both his sentiments of friendship and his rights of suzerainty over the principality which from then on was to constitute the last vestige of the great kingdom of Lan-Xang.

/205/ CHAPTER VI

THE SIAMESE EXPANSION IN THE MEKONG BASIN DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1836-1885)

175* It was after the downfall of Vientiane that Siam's star rose and that its leaders' ambitions were revealed in all their completeness. With Cambodia in complete decline, the Burmese thrown back and the Laotian principalities either destroyed or tamed, the reconstruction of a great Thai empire to the profit of Bangkok must naturally have haunted the minds of its kings. But in order to achieve this dream they still had to consolidate their recent conquests from the lands of the left bank of the Mekong and to extend them from north to south towards natural frontiers, and then finally to gain recognition of this hegemony by the neighboring States. In the accomplishment of so great a task they were to come up against a formidable adversary with whom they were already well acquainted for having encountered him along the way. This was the sovereign of Annam.

648* /206/ Siamo-Annamite rivalry in Cambodia. As a matter of
175* fact, the first contacts between the Siamese princes and the lords of Hue did not go back much beyond the end of the seventeenth century. Before this they had been separated not only by the great mountainous barrier to the east, but also by Champa and Lan-Xang. The destruction of the first and division of the second had favored the Annamite overflow towards the Mekong, and the total ruin of the Kmer kingdom (1) had accelerated the latters' gradual advance

1. On four occasions, in 1357, 1394, 1420 and 1460, the Siamese had sacked Angkor. In 1587 they had occupied the provinces of Tonle-Sap. At the beginning of the eighteenth

844 "In delivery of the afterbirth, which takes place just after the
846 cord has been severed, the midwife pulls on the cord with her right hand while with her left hand she presses [190] on the patient's abdomen so as to force out the placenta (1). When the latter offers

(1) The midwives of Upper Laos do not take any steps to free the placenta. This organ comes out by itself, although the time it takes may vary. After its expulsion it is placed (together with the strip of bamboo used as a knife to cut the cord and with the clots of blood) in the bamboo cylinder mentioned above. Then the whole is immediately buried under the threshold of the house or at the foot of one of the stringers of the ladder or staircase giving access to the house. (Author's note.)

too much resistance the parturient woman lies down on her stomach and presses heavily on the ground, while the midwife continues to pull on the cord and assists the patient's efforts with one hand.

"If a uterine hemorrhage does not ensue the vagina is bathed
846 with spiced water, the patient's legs are placed together and she is then laid in front of a fire of live coals where she must remain for nine days, her abdomen facing the heat (2). During these nine days

(2) Thirty days for primiparous women and from seventeen to twenty days for pluriparous women, in northern Laos. (Author's note.)

she must abstain from eating certain foods, and particularly from chewing betel because of this plant's astringent qualities. She swallows a certain amount of salt every day and drinks laxative tisanes which are often made with grapefruit rinds. The genitalia are bathed for the first five days after delivery, always with slightly spiced water.

"If a uterine hemorrhage occurs after delivery the parturient woman is made to swallow about fifty grams of urine to which a heavy dose of spiced oil has been added. The vagina is bathed with a decoction of highly astringent plants, among which the dried bark of the areca palm may be mentioned.

846 "At the end of confinement the midwife extinguishes the fire
431 herself and receives a few gifts (3) which vary with the condition of

(3) These gifts generally consist of a skirt, a scarf, small jewels,

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wax candles decorated with flowers, cigarettes and a sum of money. (Author's note) 431

the family from the hands of her patient.

"Two or three days after her confinement ends the mother must go to the pagoda and give a few presents to the bonzes, who give her in return a few cotton threads which she fastens to her wrists " (4). [751] [792]

(4) Dr. Estrade, 1895. Dictionnaire et Guide franco-laotien. [113]

Cases of dystocia and other childbearing difficulties are very rare in Laos, thanks to the physiological law which decrees that childbirth shall occur all the more naturally insofar as one comes closer to the primitive type and as one's body has not been deformed either by certain professional attitudes or by artifices of dress. [191] But when any difficulty of this type does occur the Laotian midwives are extremely skilful. Their hands take the place of the steel instruments in our gynecological and surgical arsenal, and their results are usually successful both for mother and child. 844

When the newly delivered mother is allowed to get up there occur traditional feasts and celebrations, the brilliance of which varies with the status of the young mother's parents. It is generally during these happy gatherings that the bonzes or sorcerers choose the name which the newborn child is to bear. They usually base their choice on some peculiarity of the coloring or eyes, or on a phase of the moon. The name will be replaced by another if the child falls sick, for in this case, as they say, the old name was unpleasing to his "Phis," that is to say to his personal tutelary spirits. [554] 846 527 551

Infanticide. Scarcely any cases of infanticide can be cited in Laos, and abortions are extremely rare or at least very well hidden. For when cases do occur it is among members of a class which, because of the rank it holds, is anxious to conceal its faults from the mass of the people. 847 [554]

In popular belief abortion, whether voluntary or natural, is regarded as a punishment of heaven or as a case of aberration which cannot fail to draw down the utmost scorn on the guilty parties and their accomplices.

Marriage. Marriage in Laos is made ready for long in advance, thanks to the liberty which young people of both sexes enjoy. The latter meet one another at every celebration and can communicate 584

314 Indeed scavenging, that is to say the gathering of forest products, hunting and fishing, is all that is needed besides rice and maize to supply the day to day needs of the native and even provide him with a comparatively important basis for trade.

Forest Products

1. Benzoin (Khab-Niane).

314 Benzoin is extracted from the tree called Styrax benzoin, by means
824 of incisions made on the trunk. The benzoin trees (Kok-Khab-Niane) are localized in Upper Tran-Ninh, the south of the Hua-Pahn and the north of the province of Luang-Prabang. They are not cultivated in
563 any way. The resin or gum is harvested at certain times of the year, generally by the Khas, at the foot of the trees and along the trunk, where it coagulates in masses or tears.

Benzoin is collected in its natural state, that is to say in tears of various sizes and in breakages. In the production centers it is separated into three grades: large and medium tears, medium and small tears, and small pieces and breakages. In the transit markets these three grades are sorted and screened and once more divided into six kinds or types, which are: large tears, medium tears, small tears, mixed large, mixed medium, and finally tiny fragments and dust.

431 A few years ago a chemical process was [329] discovered, it would seem, for extracting certain of the aromatic alkaloids contained in benzoin from coal, and the market value of this product suddenly
435 dropped by more than sixty percent. At the present time, depending on the grade, the market price in Luang-Prabang is from 90 to 115 francs per hundred kilograms (1), in Nong-Khay from 100 to 135

(1) We have deemed it preferable to give the price in francs and per hundred kilograms, since the reader may not be familiar with Laotian weights and currency.

788 francs, and in Korat from 120 to 160 francs.

314 Part of the benzoin production is consumed locally in the manu-
439 facture of sticks of incense for use in worship. All the rest is exported to Bangkok and from there to Europe. A very small proportion is sent to Tonkin by way of the Black River. Upon its arrival in Bangkok, benzoin from Laos is worth twice as much as in Luang-Prabang.

824 ### 2. Crimson lake or stick-lac (Khang-Deng).

314 This gum is produced by an insect of the "cochineal" type, the

7: Thompson--374 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 433

"Laotian industry, if such it may be called, aims only to satisfy local needs. It is almost exclusively a family affair in which primitive tools are used with inevitably crude results. Only in precious metals and ivory or wood carving has Laos an industry that merits the name. Weaving and boat-building are also excellent, but as yet the output is confined to the artisan's personal wants."

10: d'Orleans--363 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 433

"In short, trusting to what I saw and to the information supplied me, I arrive at the following conclusions. The Laos is not nearly so rich a country as has been generally asserted, the trade of Luang Prabang more especially being insignificant. There is not an opening for more than one or two French houses, who should make it their business to act as middlemen for an European stock of goods, to purchase the native products, to develop as far as possible among a people naturally inclined to be lazy local industries, to undertake, with Kas workmen, the extraction of minerals and the cutting of timber. But in order to establish our political and commercial influence in the Laos, it is not enough that we should speak our mind at Bangkok, we must make the most of the advantages which the proximity of the coasts of Annam give us."

la Sainte-Chapelle, a la seconde boutique, a l'enseigne 175*
du Voyageur. 114
/127/

naivete, the work /111/ does not have the ring of sincerity which constitutes the merit of the Dutch account. It was probably written from the reminiscences of Father J. M. Leria (1) and is of value

1. Father Giovanni-Maria Leria, a Piedmontese Jesuit, left Cambodia in April 1642 accompanied by some Cochinchinese neophytes with a caravan of Laotian traders who were returning to their country. He remained in Laos for five years "despite the opposition and the intrigues of the bonzes" and did not leave Vientiane until December 2, 1647. (Cf. Fr. Garnier, 1871, and Father Alex. de Rhodes, 1651.)

only as a document at second hand. It will nevertheless be of some interest to extract the following passages:

"In the East it (the kingdom of the 'Langiens') has the kingdom 131
of Tonkin which stretches to the southwest towards Cochinchina, 175*
and further to the South that of Cambodia; in the southwest and the west the kingdom of Pegou; and in the north that of Ava and the province called U or Lu (2), and still further again to the north as

2. See below, p. 176, note 1.

far as the frontiers which limit it in this direction, where there are certain peoples who are called Gnai. . . .

"Because of its fertility and because the things necessary to life 421
are found there in abundance, the kingdom is so heavily populated 433
that only a little while ago in the census which was taken of per- 161
sons who were /112/ judged fit to serve the king at war and to bear arms, 500,000 were counted, not including the old people who are so numerous and so rubust that even of those who are a hundred years old a very large army might be formed for the defense of the kingdom if the need should arise. . .

"The chief city and the one in which the king ordinarily stays 633
is situated in the middle of the kingdom, eighteen degrees toward 174
our Arctic pole, and is called Langione. It has good moats and 344
extremely high walls on one side, and on the other the great river to defend it against the undertakings of enemies. . . . The royal palace, the structure and symmetry of which are admirable, can

149: Reinach--7 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

SIAM'S VIOLATION OF THE 1889 ARRANGEMENT
VARIOUS INCIDENTS
OCCUPATION OF LOWER LAOS--NAVAL DEMONSTRATION AT PAK-NAM
ULTIMATUM AND TREATY OF OCTOBER 3, 1893

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The arrangement of 1889 was unfortunately much too lenient. Even several years after the fall of the great and clairvoyant patriot Jules Ferry, however, and as a consequence of the profound discredit into which the whole colonial idea and cause had fallen among us, our political situation made it impossible for us to take more effective measures and to assert the rights of our protégé, the emperor of Annam, in a more pressing way. [11] Nor could we give full satisfaction to the completely legitimate requests for protection which were made by the king of Luang-Prabang.

Our political difficulties were perfectly well-known to the Siamese government. Emboldened by our hesitation, it consented, in agreement with Great Britain, to arrangements and delimitations of frontiers in the Shan States which annihilated the plan conceived by Jules Ferry in 1883 and canceled all the results of the Deloncle treaty concluded in 1884 (1) with Upper Burma, which was then

(1) See Appendices VII and VIII.

independent. This treaty, in effect, recognized as limits of "French Tonkin the Mékong River, from the point where it leaves China as far as Xieng-Sèn," including the Pahn-Na on the left bank, the principality of Muong-Sing and the States of Pou-Kha, Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sèn to the west of Nam-Hou.

In exchange for this territory--a gracious gift which cost it all the less in that it did not belong to it--Great Britain obtained Karennée (or Karèng) from Siam. The latter territory was situated in the valley of the Salouen, and had been under Siamese domination for centuries.

The delimitation of the Anglo-Siamese frontiers, including those of the Shan States of Xieng-Maï, Lam-Poun and Muong-Haut, was completed only in 1892.

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In 1889 M. Pavie was sent on another mission and was accompanied by many civil and military assistants whose particular province was to be topography and the natural sciences. A

Colonial

commercial and industrial mission was attached to the former, and it was to study the question of means of communication by land and river, to create trading posts, to collect samples, to examine the commercial methods in use and to determine the nature and value of the products of the Mékong basin. Funds for this mission, which left France with an initial stock of fifteen tons of various kinds of merchandise, were provided by a syndicate which had just been formed, with an initial capital of 100,000 francs, under the name of French Syndicate [12] of Upper Laos. It included representatives of Parisian trade and industry who had united for the experiment thanks to the initiative of M. Léon Tharel, the president of the group.

175 654 433 439

All throughout 1890 and 1891 the missions fulfilled their tasks with ardor, not without constant struggle against the implicit hostility of the Siamese, which although occasionally concealed under an [Illustration here] affable outward mask nonetheless continued to manifest itself and created obstacles everywhere in the hope of discouraging the valiant explorers and causing their work to fail.

In spite of the difficulties which they encountered, the two missions were successful in their delicate enterprise and the results of the latter were most significant. From that point on we were in possession of precise information concerning the whole region extending from Yunnan to Cambodia.

What was more, by continuing the tradition begun by Mouhot, the [13] Lagrée mission, Harmand, Néis, etc. we had made contact with the Laotian people and made them know and love the French name. In us they saluted their future liberators and the ones who would come to free them from the brutal and detested Siamese yoke.

175 609 654

Finally--a fact of no less importance--thanks to the activities of the commercial mission, to the trading posts which it had established and to the contacts and arrangements which it had prepared, we were in possession from that time on of private commercial interests in the Mékong basin. Thus greater force was given to the rights which we already had to intervene in Laos against Siamese intrigues in the name of our protégés, the emperor of Annam and the king of Cambodia.

Frightened and surprised by the results which France had achieved in so short a time in the Mékong valley, despite the ambushes which it had laid on all sides and the hostile maneuvers which it had supported, Siam began to fear that France might invade its Laotian territories. It then invoked the friendship of Great Britain and

648 175

133 The market of Bassac owes its importance to the proximity of the plateau. It is therefore a storehouse for the Laotians of the whole
•433 region, a reservoir [51] from which they draw. The part which it
438 plays is obviously a fine one, and no more can be asked of it.

There has also been much discussion as to whether large-scale breeding of buffalo and oxen would be successful there, for at present livestock is found only in the villages situated near the Sédone, that is to say, quite far from the plateau. The question has not yet been settled, and sufficient tests have not yet been made.

At the southernmost corner of the plateau there is a conical
133 mountain about 800 meters in altitude which Francis Garnier baptized The Breast [le Téton] because of its shape, and to which he later gave the name Lagrée's Peak [Pic de Lagrée] in commemoration of the President of the Exploratory Commission of 1866.

[224] The elephant hunters of southern Laos go to the mountainous region of Saravane and Attopeu every year, and there they capture an annual quota of fifty to a hundred elephants.

133 To the east of Attopeu the mountains are inhabited by well-nigh independent Kha tribes--Cédangs, Djarais, Rognaos and
[177 Bahnars. The two latter tribes have almost been pacified, thanks
797] to the persevering efforts of the Christian missionaries of Kon-Toum. This point is the center of the mission, and through it passes the road from Attopeu to Qui-Nhon. It crosses the Annamitic Chain
563 between Kon-Xalam and Kon-Tiorak at an altitude of about 900 meters. Near Attopeu this same road goes up over Pou-Satièng (400 meters), the last ramification of the great chain, which separates the basin of the Sé-Souk from that of the Sé-Kémane.

[135] This region of Pou-Satièng, Sé-Souk and Sé-Kémane has long been known to be rich in gold deposits.

§ IV--HYDROLOGY

a.--THE MÉKONG--GENERALITIES

133 It has often been said, and rightly so, that the Nile constituted Egypt. In the same way it can be said that the Mékong makes Laos, for is it not the river which gives what vitality there is to these vast isolated regions? Is it not the river which, by its annual floods, helps the growth of rice? Does it not supply, with its fish, a large

Tribal Tai

291 the Deng-Thais, is applied to the edges of the gown. It is further
563 ornamented [233] on the outside edge opposite the buttonholes with colored silk embroidery which does not go down below the waist.

This garment is also folded in half lengthwise and worn rolled around the body with the sleeves left hanging.

302 The women wear their hair parted down the middle in front and rolled into a sort of long tassel behind which is contained within
301 the folds of a little turban. The latter is wound above the forehead and the free end inserted under the first turn, on the nape of the neck. This headdress is quite similar to that of the Annamite women in Tonkin.

In certain regions of Laos, Thai women wind their hair into a sort of coil which girls wear loosely down their neck and betrothed or married women wear on top of the head. Thai jewelry is made of heavy silver and is of the same type as Laotian jewelry. The men wear bracelets on their wrists.

262 Food. The Thai diet is like that of the Laotians, but they prefer non-glutinous white rice and use chopsticks like the Chinese and
264 Annamites.

The use of betel is quite widespread among the Thais, but in
276 contrast to the Laotians they keep their teeth white. The Thais smoke the oily, opiated tobacco of Tonkin and China in bamboo waterpipes whose tiny bowls only contain a small pinch of tobacco. They also smoke a local variety of tobacco, either in cigarettes or in pipes with a highly worked clay bowl into which a long stem ending in a glass or jade mouthpiece is inserted.

156 Character. Although serious and reflective, the Thais have a vivacious and friendly character. They are somewhat cold in appearance, but are sound friends and highly affable when one gets to know them better.

[701] Gentler and more timid than the Laotians, they have no taste for the art of war and it is difficult to get them to stay in the native militia.

• 433 They are very self-seeking and much more miserly than the Lao-
438 tians. [234] It should be noted, moreover, that since they produce everything themselves and are a people of farmers and livestock
156 breeders, they do not have, by virtue of their ever sedentary occupations, the opportunities which these latter have to enjoy fairly high profits resulting from commercial transactions, nor the special habits which contact with different races gives.

181 The Thais love pleasure and celebrations. Guaranteed their daily
461

Kha

result. But the Kha ideal is to possess a battery of gongs of different 533
sizes and timbres, and with these they manage to obtain quite perfect chords.

Industry. Withdrawn in their mountains where they live in small 433
isolated groups, the Khas use their leisure time to make many basket-work and hollow-ware products which have a mark of elegance and a great deal of delicacy. Other tribes make paper from wood pulp, weave mats from rattan and bamboo bark, etc. They use all these products in trade.

Finally, certain Khas exploit deposits of iron ore and transform 316
it into farming implements, while others wash gold-bearing sands.

In general, although the Khas are industrious they work only to 461
procure what is strictly indispensable. They cannot resign themselves to staying away from home for any length of time and dread any stay in the low country, which they say is unhealthy for them. Since they [313]
have particular aptitudes for woodcutting, however, they have been successfully employed to cut teak wood in the forests on the right bank of the Mekong which are situated in Siamese territory. But it must be admitted that there they are in mountainous country and in the midst of forests, as in their native region.

The Khas of southern Laos. In southern Laos Khas are found who differ very little from those of Upper Laos. We shall not concern ourselves with them, but shall deal briefly with the many more numerous ones who have particular mores and customs.

The Djarais, the Rades, the Bahnars, the Cedangs, the Peunongs, [619]
the Rognaos (1), etc. are the principal types of these Kha tribes,

(1) See Appendix XVIII.

which for the most part are still independent.

These people are proud, large and muscular, supple, trained in 181
all forms of bodily exercise, bold, warlike and brave.

These qualities, moreover, have been developed by their pe- 567
culiar way of [257] [Illustration] [258] [Blank page] [259] life.
Accustomed to hunting slaves from which they extracted large profits 721
by selling them on the banks of the Mekong, these Khas have had to resort to continual expeditions in order to obtain their human game.

For many long years, in fact, they could acquire [Illustration 567
here] the gongs, buffalo, metals, textiles, etc. which they needed only by selling captives, generally Annamites, whom they went and

436 It will perhaps be of some interest to note here that the peoples of Laos have no respect for European gold coins, [420] because their gold
822 is alloyed with copper! In this country, as in all of the Far East in
439 general, it is thought that gold is the noble metal par excellance, that it is polluted and diminished by alloying it with copper, which is un-
177 worthy of it, and that it can endure being made into an alloy only with silver.

The only "gold" coins in use, and still not at all currently in northern Laos, are books of gold leaf the thickness of tinfoil. They come from China and bear the official stamps of the country's banks which put them into circulation as "merchandise" in the same way as bars of silver.

Weighing instruments

405 The weighing instruments used in Laos include the "Ta-Dieng" or "Sing," a Chinese steelyard made of wood which has three rows of graduations. It may have a hook or a single platform, and is used for weights ranging from one "Sang" (1.23849 kilograms) up to several piculs.

For weights of less than a "Sang" the same kind of Chinese steelyard, with a hook or platform, is used, but it is smaller and made of ivory or bone.

A small pair of beam scales with platforms shaped like cupels, which is called "Sing-Dieng," is used mainly for weighing precious metals and gems.

There are several series of weights for balances. They are made of bronze, iron or copper and are most diverse in shape, representing elephants, imaginary birds, hexagons, pentagons, cones, pyramids, etc.

2. TRADE COMMODITIES AND PRODUCTS OF EXCHANGE

438 Since there is no industry to speak of in Laos, the local products which make up the basic commodities of interior trade and exports come
241 mainly from agriculture, livestock raising, scavenging, fishing and hunting. Mention may be made, however, of certain products of local, not to say familial, industry which enter into interior commerce and to some extent into the trade which goes on with neighboring countries.

438 [421] These include cloth goods of pure silk, either plain or spangled with gold, goods of silk blended with cotton, and wholly
433 cotton goods, then articles of jewelry and goldsmithing, and finally metals and ores from the still rudimentary mining industry and pottery goods, edge-tools, basketry, etc.

439 use the present tense (1)?

651 (1) The fact is actually occurring at the present time, and has motivated the canceling of the eighty percent exemption. (See p.430, note.)

The discrepancy between the officially recognized exports and imports is a sure indication that we are here approaching the truth.

The remedy for this state of things is to make Laos freely open, on equal terms and both entering and leaving, to all goods and to all merchants. It means reducing all the duties levied to the single three percent ad valorem rate both entering and leaving. It means, in a word, parity [452] with our neighbor Siam which, after having left us the land, the water and the wild beasts of the forest, will continue, unless we take care, to be the only one to profit from our colony of Laos.

It will be objected that the remedy which we recommend would not prevent the Treasury from being cheated, since foreign goods introduced into Laos might still, as is the case at present, come in through a back door into the other parts of the Indo-Chinese union. But we reply that the situation is not at all the same. The Mekong is open over more than 2000 kilometers, and there the frontier is entirely a moral one, whereas between Laos and the other lands of Indo-China there are mountainous obstacles with only a few passages, and it would be enough merely to guard these, with respect to customs, in order to prevent fraud.

[453] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER IX

INDUSTRY. ARTS AND TRADES.

433 The only purpose of industry and trades in Laos is to satisfy local
472 needs. Indeed, one cannot regard as export trade the sale of a few silk or cotton goods of Laotian origin in the nearby regions.

463 Mention must first be made of what we may call the products of family industry. With a very few exceptions, there are no specialized workers pursuing a given trade, as regards the construction of houses and the manufacture of various useful articles, hunting and fishing devices, as well as in spinning, dyeing and weaving cloth and, in a

433 word, as regards everything connected with housing, furnishings,
472 clothing, household articles, etc. Everyone--men, women and even
463 children-- [454] is able to make the ordinary necessary articles by means of very simple methods and rudimentary tools. Thus it may be said that each house and each family represents a village in miniature.

The only industries really worthy of the name are embroidering on cloth, jewelry-making and working with gold and silver, ironmongery, brass-founding, pottery, basketry, the manufacture of certain lacquered articles, paper-making, wood and ivory carving, fresco painting, gold-washing and especially the making of pirogues, in which the natives show remarkable skill.

286 Weaving. The weaving of certain kinds of silk goods with
386 various shaded effects and often spangled with gold, as well as embroidering on cloth, is practiced by a certain number of women in every locality which is of any importance.

The looms used for weaving are extremely simple, and yet brocaded stuffs are made in which the designs are obtained, as before the invention of the Jacquard loom, by isolating or alternatively raising certain woof threads by means of thin strips of bamboo.

Vegetable dyes are used, that is to say that they are produced by trees or plants which grow in the country. Dyeing methods are simple, yet despite this fact the colors last for a long time thanks to a mordant composed of alum or lemon juice. The fundamental colors are blue (indigo), red, yellow and black. With the aid of these dyes the women are able, either by suitably proportioned mixtures or by various juxtapositions on the threads or on the cloth, to obtain a great variety of shades.

For some fifteen years now tinctorial powders have also been used which have an aniline base and are of German origin. But these dyes fall far short of being as colorfast and long-lasting as the local dyes. Their colors do not merge as well, and with them it is impossible to obtain the harmonious shades which the tinctorial products of Laos give to cloth and to thread.

[455] For spangled cloth goods and embroidery, the gold thread
283 in most widespread use is the one made by the Chinese. It consists
386 of a strand of cotton on which a strip of paper gilded with fine gold a few tenths of a millimeter thick is wound in a spiral. Attempts have been made to introduce gold thread of European manufacture, but it has not met with favor on the part of the specialists, who have preferred the Chinese thread.

316 begun at judiciously chosen points [Illustration here] they can be
313 accommodated to the existing means of communication and transport
185 if necessary. As for the sums needed to engage in a commercial, mining or forest enterprise, it is difficult to determine these in any precise fashion for, depending on the region and the special conditions of the terrain, such matters may require more or less capital.

[518] For dealing in teak wood (1), for example, the sums needed

(1) A rigorous investigation made by a chief guardsman of the Laotian militia of the region of Xieng-Khong, on the left bank of the Mekong, has shown that the number of teak trees ready for cutting in the province of Muong-Sing is 4,975 in all, 2,000 of which are of exceptional size for the region, that is to say that their diameter varies between 0.3 and 0.6 meter. Counting the young shoots and young trees, the total number of teaks which we possess in Muong-Sing may be estimated at about 20,000.

Another group is situated on the right bank of the Mekong, in the vicinity of Pak-Lay and in the basin of the Nam-Poun. It includes from 10,000 to 12,000 teak trees ready for cutting, concessions for about half of which have been granted. (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900.)

for purchase and transport would depend on the quantity which it was desired to export. As an average indication, the sum of 40,000 francs might be given for operations on 1,000 teak trees.

From the point of view of mineral resources, certain deposits require capital in the millions for their exploitation, while others might be worked profitably with sums varying between 250,000 to 500,000 francs.

433 In the way of industries which may be started at the present time,
185 we may cite only the establishment of rice distilleries in southern Laos and of a mechanical sawmill at Khone.

[273 243] A distillery could be set up without any great expense at the mouth of the Mekong and the Sedone, for example. Thanks to the price of glutinous rice which is five or six times less expensive in this region than at Pnom-Penh, the alcohol from such a distillery would find a certain market in Cambodia.

185 For several years now there has been talk of establishing a
313 mechanical sawmill on the island of Khone which would obtain its motive power from the nearby waterfalls. Besides teak wood (2),
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(2) Teak is generally regarded, although wrongly, as the wood

619 traditions and the annals which I have been able to consult, they are
643 the descendants of the last kings of the land before the Cham invasion.
[648 The kings of Cambodia have had to appeal to them for help on one
175] or two critical occasions, and it was in return for services rendered
that the king of Cambodia, up until recent times, used to send them
563 presents every year (annual tribute, according to them, payment of
which stopped only five years ago).

[726] They have never been willing to recognize our authority. The king of Pa-Tac-Ia, who is situated on the Laotian side, twice attacked the Government Commissioners of Stung-Treng when the latter were making a tour of inspection in this region, first in December 1894 and a second time in January 1897. They were given a severe lesson this second time, for the village was entirely destroyed and they suffered many losses. The Sadete Loum (the Master of water) settled on the Annamite side alongside the Master of fire after the affair, and since that time has given no further orders to our faithful Djarais.

[108]

APPENDIX XIX
NOTE ON THE MEOS

563 The Meo has a savage and distrustful character. He does not
609 like the presence of foreigners, or even of people of his own race.

Clinging to the side of a mountain, and always as high up as possible, he asks only to be allowed to live in peace in his wild solitude and bodes no ill to anyone provided he is left alone and independe

433 He is a great hunter of wild beasts and large game. More in-
241 dustrious than the Thais, he makes all his farming implements him-
231 self (picks and shovels), as well as his wooden buckets and mills for grinding maize and paddy. He raises fine poultry, pigs, oxen, goats and horses with particular care and success. If he stays in one place for any length of time he also produces, in addition to the maize and rice which form the basis of his food supply and the opium which he smokes, very fine eggplants, gourds, sweet potatoes and non-sweetened batatas very much like the common potato, sorrel, green beans and all the French vegetables whose seeds are given him. On his heights he cultivates the fruit trees which merely vegetate in the plains, such as the peach tree, and the peaches which he harvests can compete without any fear with those of our own country.

516 The Meo climbs like a cat. Over sheer paths, up ladders com-
417 posed of a single bamboo pole standing upright in which notches are cut at regular intervals which are large enough for two toes, the Meo

115: Le Boulanger--140 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

000 If death had not placed a brutal term on his wanderings a few weeks later, the serious Mouhot might also have been the first man to question the impassive Buddhas on the mysterious past of this remote land, felt the infinite charm of its melodious nights when the khenes give voice to their moving chords, and -- who can say? -- sung the grace of the pretty girls with bare and gilded breasts who in their carefree way weave multicolored scarves under their flowered huts.

105 He contents himself with noting rapidly: "Fortunately this is not like Siam, and I can get help from the natives. . . . The /225/ Laotians are peaceable, submissive, patient, sober, trusting, credulous, superstitious, faithful, simple and naive. They naturally
/685/ hold robbery in horror. The story is told that one of their kings had thieves fried in a cauldron of boiling oil, but since the ravages of the last wars a certain number of thieves are beginning to be found among them who have been driven to rapine by poverty or by the spirit of vengeance.

/685/ "Besides cultivating rice and maize the Laotians grow batatas,
/241/ gourds, red peppers, melons and other vegetables. . . . They sell
/438 the Chinese ivory and pelts from tigers and wild animals. They
434/ also trade gold dust, silver and copper ore, gamboge, cardamom, lac, wax, dyeing wood, cotton, silk and all the products of their soil for heavy porcelain, small glassware and other small commodities of Chinese industry.

"The Laotians are not made for war. Ever since the beginning they have been subjected to the neighboring kings, and have never been able to shake off this heavy yoke.

"They seem to be more industrious than the Siamese and to
/101/ possess more of the spirit of adventure and trade. Although both peoples /226/ have many points of resemblance, both physical and moral, the Laotians can nevertheless be distinguished by their dialect and especially by their customs, which are simpler and more amiable.

533 ". . . Their music is very sweet, harmonious and sentimental.
101 Only three people are needed to make a melodious concert. One plays a bamboo organ, the second signs romances with the accent of a man inspired, and the third strikes strips of a sonorous wood together in rhythm, the clicking sounds of which have a striking effect" (1).

1. This praise of Laotian music should be compared with the

314 Indeed scavenging, that is to say the gathering of forest products, hunting and fishing, is all that is needed besides rice and maize to supply the day to day needs of the native and even provide him with a comparatively important basis for trade.

Forest Products

1. Benzoin (Khab-Niane).

314 824 Benzoin is extracted from the tree called Styrax benzoin, by means of incisions made on the trunk. The benzoin trees (Kok-Khab-Niane) are localized in Upper Tran-Ninh, the south of the Hua-Pahn and the north of the province of Luang-Prabang. They are not cultivated in [563] any way. The resin or gum is harvested at certain times of the year, generally by the Khas, at the foot of the trees and along the trunk, where it coagulates in masses or tears.

Benzoin is collected in its natural state, that is to say in tears of various sizes and in breakages. In the production centers it is separated into three grades: large and medium tears, medium and small tears, and small pieces and breakages. In the transit markets these three grades are sorted and screened and once more divided into six kinds or types, which are: large tears, medium tears, small tears, mixed large, mixed medium, and finally tiny fragments and dust.

[431] A few years ago a chemical process was [329] discovered, it would seem, for extracting certain of the aromatic alkaloids contained in benzoin from coal, and the market value of this product suddenly dropped by more than sixty percent. At the present time, depending [435] on the grade, the market price in Luang-Prabang is from 90 to 115 francs per hundred kilograms (1), in Nong-Khay from 100 to 135

(1) We have deemed it preferable to give the price in francs and per hundred kilograms, since the reader may not be familiar with Laotian weights and currency.

788 francs, and in Korat from 120 to 160 francs.

314 439 Part of the benzoin production is consumed locally in the manufacture of sticks of incense for use in worship. All the rest is exported to Bangkok and from there to Europe. A very small proportion is sent to Tonkin by way of the Black River. Upon its arrival in Bangkok, benzoin from Laos is worth twice as much as in Luang-Prabang.

824 314 2. Crimson lake or stick-lac (Khang-Deng). This gum is produced by an insect of the "cochineal" type, the

824
Coccus lacca, which secretes the lac to envelop its larvae.
In trade it appears in the form of half-cylindrical fragments, in 314
breakages (seed-lac), or else adhering to the branches of the tree on which it formed. The latter is lac on sticks, whence the English name stick-lac by which it is known in Far Eastern trading circles (2).

(2) Lac in its most widespread form--lac in shells (shellac)--is not found in Laos. It can easily be produced by boiling the preceding types in alkaline water.

This product is harvested by scavenging from trees which were seeded long ago and are scattered throughout the brush, and also by regular cultivation from a triennial tree, as will be seen below. The principal varieties of trees on which lac is found are the Ficus, the butées, the Croton, the Mimosa and the Acacia.
There are three kinds of lac: bright-colored lac (which colors a 314
moistened finger) in whole pieces, lac on wood and brown cellular 824
lac in more or less broken fragments. Throughout the country, how- 438
ever, it is sold mixed, and only at the transit markets are the three kinds separated.
[330] The price per hundred kilograms is from 35 to 42 francs [435]
at Luang-Prabang, from 45 to 48 francs at Pak-Lay, from 47 to 50 francs at Nong-Khay, 42 francs at Khong and Bassac, 62 francs at Pnom-Penh and Cholen, and from 72 to 85 francs at Korat.
Crimson lake is used for dyeing as well as in the preparation of certain colors and varnishes with an alcohol base. A small proportion remains in the country, but the greater part is exported.

3. Cardamom (Mak-Neng).

Cardamom is the fruit of the plant Ellateria cardamomum which 824
grows in the forests but which may be cultivated, as is the case on 314
the plateau of the Bolovens in Laos and in the region of Pursat in [245]
Cambodia. The variety common to all parts of Laos is the great cardamom or bastard cardamom, while that cultivated in Cambodia is the true cardamom or small cardamom, much superior to the first in quality and value.
The plant grows best in the humid forests, and is harvested in August or September. The plant has vast numbers of light seeds, and it takes about eighty or a hundred thousand seeds to make up the weight of one "mune" (about twelve kilograms). The price per

[435] The price per hundred kilograms is from 50 to 54 francs in Luang-Prabang, 62 francs in Pak-Lay, from 62 to 70 francs in Nong-Khay, 50 francs in Cammon, from 75 to 83 francs in Song-Khone, from 66 to 87 francs in Saravane, from 70 to 83 francs in Bassac, from 83 to 95 francs in Khong, 58 francs in Attopeu, from 50 to 83 francs in Stung-Treng, 133 francs in Pnom-Penh, 140 francs in Cholen (1) and from 80 to 120 francs in

824 314

(1) At this market cardamom from Pursat brings from 625 to 830 francs per hundred kilograms.

Korat.

4. Cinnamon (Cinnamomum zeylanicum. Kai-Hom in Laotian).

The cinnamon tree must have been cultivated at one time in the territory of Vien-Tiane. Then the inhabitants were driven out as a result of foreign incursions and abandoned their gardens, which were gradually invaded by brush. The harvesting of cinnamon has since become a scavenging operation without any form of cultivation. For several years now, doubtless in consequence of the many requests which were made when the Customs service tried to establish a monopoly of this product in Annam, [331] [Illustration] [332] [Blank page] [333] the inhabitants have once more begun to maintain the cinnamon trees and to give them some attention. Plantations have even been started, and this propitious initiative should be encouraged.

245

5. Indigo (Kok-Kam and Kok-Hom, depending on whether the Indigofera tinctoria or the Indigofera anil is designated).

824 314 [245]

These two plants are not always scavenging products, since the greater part of Laotian indigo comes from crops grown on the banks of the Mekong and its chief tributaries.

There is also an indigo-bearing liana which grows wild. The Laotians call this "Bouok-Khua".

386

In Laos the preparation of indigo is extremely simple. The fresh leaves and stalks of the different varieties of indigo plants are put to soak in wooden vats containing water and an acid element, usually the acid of lemons or limes. After a certain time the leaves are removed, then lime is precipitated in the water and the mixture is violently stirred. The lime fixes the dye and is deposited at the bottom of the vats, which are exposed to the air. When the clear water which rises to the surface has been completely evaporated, a hardened mass which is the indigo is left at the bottom of the vat. This product is not exported, but serves only for local consumption. Its price varies between 12 and 15 francs per hundred kilograms.

Its price varies between 12 and 15 francs per hundred kilograms. 000

6. Catechu (Sisiet). 824

Catechu is produced from a decoction of the bark of two varieties 314
of trees, the catechu acacia and the leafy butée.

This product, which is used in making the national masticatory 276
together with betel, betel nuts and lime, is consumed, in the large centers of Upper Laos, in the form of a dry residue obtained from a decoction of the bark. Generally, however, it is the bark itself which is consumed after it has been broken up into small pieces.

Natural sisiet takes the form of shreds of bark about a cubit (.45 meter) long by four centimeters wide and one centimeter thick. The shreds are tied together in packs of twenty-five or fifty, depending on the region.

The whole production is consumed locally. The natives [334] [438]
go into the forest at points where suitable trees are to be found, bundle up the pieces and load them on great rafts which go down from Pak-Lay and Vien-Tiane to Bassac and even to Khong.

At Pak-Lay sisiet is worth only 7 francs and 50 centimes per [435]
hundred pieces, but it naturally costs more the further away one goes from the centers of production.

7. Curcuma (Khi-Mine). 824

This plant, of the Zingiberaceae family, has a rhizome which 314
contains an orange-yellow coloring matter used for dyeing silk and 386
cotton.

Sometimes the inhabitants (chiefly the women and children) 302
rub their whole body with curcuma scrapings after a bath. The application of curcuma to the wet skin, which acquires a light yellow color, is said by the natives to ward off mosquitoes and keep the skin fresh.

Up to the present time this product has not formed the basis of [43]
any foreign trade. It is sold in small amounts on the markets of Laos.

8. Ginger. 263

The ginger which is called "Mak-Khing" in Laotian is the Zingi- 824
ber officinale or gray ginger. Used as a condiment by the entire 314
population, this product does not enter into trade. Its price varies [435]
between 12 francs and fifty centimes and 16 francs and fifty centimes per hundred kilograms.

9. Roucou. 824

The roucou, or fruit of the Roucouyer Bixia, is called "Kano- 314
Mak-Soum-Phou" in Laotian. Literally, this means Seed of an 386
acidulous mountain fruit. It is used to make red and orange dyes

824
314 when mixed with curcuma. The trees are found in the forest, and
386 sometimes in gardens.

10. Yams.

The yam is an edible tubercle of the Dioscorea family. It is
262 represented by two varieties, the white and the black, which are called
241 "Mane-Phuek-Khao" and "Mane-Phuek-Dam" in Laotian. These tubercles are the main standby when there is a scarcity of rice and [335] maize, but in ordinary times they are used only to supplement the usual diet.

11. Taro or cush-cush (Mane-Pa).

Taro is also a food plant of the Aroïdées caladiées genus (Caladium esculentum). Like the yam, it is one of the most useful edible tubercles in times of famine.

12. Medicinal plants.

824 Designated by the generic name "Ya" in Laotian, these plants
are represented by special types of orchids, roots, bark, berries,
278 leaves and even pieces of wood of different kinds, the whole forming an assortment of medicaments.

[438] The Khas are the ones who collect these various products from the depths of the forests, and they trade them either to Chinese or to Laotians for money or other goods.

[435] Certain of these plants and barks are used by the Laotians while others, such as the leaves from orchid plants, for example, are purchased by Chinese merchants at prices which vary between 33 and 62 francs per hundred kilograms.

13. Cloves.

The clove tree (Caryophyllus aromaticus. Kane-Phou in Laotian) is quite scarce in Laos. Cloves are mixed with various ingredients in masticatories or are taken as medicine.

Cultivation of the clove tree ought to be developed in Laos because of the high value of its flowers which, when dried on the tree, constitute the cloves of commerce.

14. Beeswax (Phung).

222 Beeswax is much sought-after in Laos, where a great deal of it is
[231] consumed. It is a scavenging product par excellence since, except in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na, the inhabitants do not practice apiculture and
314 are content to go into the forest and look for honeycombs in order to extract the wax. The latter is used for domestic needs and for worship
[438] ceremonies. It also forms the basis of quite an important trade.

314 The wax is not of uniform quality in Laos, but varies in color and texture depending on the region, the type of bees [336] which produce it, and also on the flowers on which the latter feed.

In this land there are hive hunters who have a rare skill and an extraordinary flair. They are able to find wild hives in the confusion of the forest foliage, in hollow trunks and in rocky crags where no one else could. The methods used to capture the swarms of bees and their hives differ little from those in use in Europe, and include noise, music and smoke.

[789] The Laotians claim that some bee hunters are able to get rid of the swarms of bees by attracting their queen by means of the sound of a kind of flageolet and by pronouncing certain cabalistic words.

435 The price of wax is quite high. A hundred kilograms cost 250 francs in Luang-Prabang, 219 francs in Nong-Khay, 290 francs in Cammon, 300 francs in Song-Khone and Saravane, 333 francs in Bassac, 208 francs in Attopeu, 312 francs in Stung-Treng, 500 francs in Korat, 250 francs in Pnom-Penh, and 300 francs in Cholen.

15. Rattan (Vai).

314 The rattan is a palm tree of the genus Calamus rudentum and Calamus petracus. There are several types in Laos, which are used
285 in accordance with their particular qualities.

The rattan industry is still in its early stages. A few Kha tribes of southern Laos traffic in rattan and supply the needs of local consumption, either in the form of crude rattan delivered in bundles, or in the form of mats and baskets, at a price of five francs per thousand or about sixty kilograms. It is present in great abundance throughout the whole land, and in northern Laos is even used for trade with Siam, which produces little rattan.

It is to be hoped that among the samples sent from Laos to France there will be some good ones which can be used abroad in the manufacture of all the wickerwork and esparto articles whose consumption is constantly increasing. This would provide an appreciable source of revenue for the land.

16. Bamboo.

313 There are some twenty varieties of bamboo. All [337] [Illustration] [338] [Blank page] [339] except one of these grow wild, the exception being the golden bamboo (Mai-So-Kham), which is chiefly cultivated in the enclosures of pagodas.

The following description of the many uses of bamboo is taken from the interesting work by Mme. Massieu:

314 plentiful by half than the first, yields a clear, sinewy, dry and elastic
824 rubber in threads and sheets.

Rubber from the second harvest has been submitted to competent individuals for examination, and it seems that it would bring a price of 8 to 10 francs per kilogram on the European market.

435 In April 1900 the purchase price of this product per hundred kilo-
314 grams was 137 francs in Vien-Tiane, from 166 to 208 francs in Muong-Son, 290 francs in Cho-Bo (Tonkin) and 550 francs in Vinh (Annam). Its resale price was 625 francs in Saigon, 700 francs in Singapore and from 800 to 1000 francs in Europe (1).

(1) This refers only to first grade rubber.

These figures suffice to show that Laotian rubber is a choice product in high demand, and a first-rate trade commodity holding the promise of sizeable profits.

439 The total amount of rubber exported from Laos in 1899 through
314 the ports of Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina is estimated at some fifty tons. For 1900 the figure would appear to be about eight times larger (2). This trade has only developed in Laos in the last two or

(2) See Appendix XXII.

three years, but now that the initial impulse has been given and the people are beginning to harvest the latex which they used to scorn because there were no outlets for it, the traffic will not cease to increase from one year to the next, since rubber finds an increasing demand on the European market.

Although the lianas are extremely plentiful in the Laotian forests, care should now be taken to spare them as they are exploited and to increase the number of plants so as to avoid any shortages in the future.

314 18. Pine resin (Khi-Kok-Phek or Niang-Phek).

Pine resin is used in Laos only when mixed with crimson lake. It is used for making a varnish and certain mastic compounds. It has a very low value, never more than 20 francs per hundred kilograms and [342] sometimes as low as 6 francs. None of this product is exported. It would be easy to introduce the regular cultivation of pines and the harvesting of their resin into the land, if sufficiently remunerative outlets were opened up.

149; Reinach--250 , G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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19. Miscellaneous resins.

Several trees, such as the "Kok-Mai-Niang, Kok-Mai-Tabeng, [Illustration here] Kok-Mai-Sak" (1), etc., yield an oleo-resin which,

(1) See Appendix XX.

when mixed with paddy husks, is used to make torches and a siccative, shiny extract which is called "Nam-Mane-Niang," and again a kind of pitch (Khi-Si) which is used to caulk pirogues and to smear various basketwork receptacles so as to make them watertight. It is similar to damarine.

The production of these resins is limited to local needs.

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20. Black lacquer.

The black lacquer of Laos is a natural black varnish, thick and [343] solid, which is called "Nam-Kieng." It is secreted by the "Kok-Mai-Nam-Kieng."

Nam-Kieng is used to lacquer racing pirogues, elephant palanquins, pagoda columns and statues, frames, receptacles of different kinds, sword sheaths, etc. The lacquer producing trees grow only in certain localities, and the varnish is not exported. Its price varies throughout the land between 62 and 75 francs per hundred kilograms.

435

It would be of interest to identify this lacquer with that of Japan, and to study the question as to whether it might not be possible to increase the number of trees which produce it with a view towards making it the basis of an export trade, at least to the countries bordering on Laos.

21. Cunao (the mock gambier, Mak-Soua in Laotian).

The cunao is a brownish tubercle used instead of catechu, the color of which it has, for dyeing cloth. It is found in Cammon, in a part of the Hua-Pahn and on the right bank of the Nam-Hou. This product is bought mainly by Annamites and Chinese, who use it in Annam and Tonkin for dyeing the peasants' work clothes.

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000 to a point where it is perfectly docile.

231 435 The sale price of elephants varies with their size, their sex, their age, and according to whether or not they have tusks and according to the quality and size of these latter. It also varies with the region.

At Outhai-Thani (Luang-Prabang) an elephant costs from 1,500 to 3,000 francs, and the cost is about the same at Vien-Tiane. In Lower Laos the price varies from 750 to 1,200 francs.

When an elephant dies it still leaves highly valuable remains, especially ivory.

237 438 435 1. Ivory.

A hundred kilograms of ivory sells for 1,800 francs at Outhai-Thani (Luang-Prabang), from 935 to 1,770 francs in Nong-Khay, from 750 to 1,250 francs in Song-Khone, from 750 to 1,670 francs in Saravane, from 1,000 to 1,670 francs in Bassac and from 1,500 to 1,670 francs in Khong, Stung-Treng and Attopeu. Its average cost in Cholen (Cochinchina) is 2,500 francs per hundred kilograms.

2. Bones.

The price of elephant bones is generally from 12 francs 50 centimes to 15 francs per hundred kilograms.

3. Hides.

Elephant hides cost from 60 to 70 francs per hundred kilograms.

The remains of other elephants furnish the markets of Laos with the following products: rhinoceros horns and hides, horns and hides from buffalo and oxen, horns and hides from all the deer tribe, hides, talons and bones from the cat family, bear and otter pelts, scales from anteaters, tortoises and caymans, etc. To this list should be added snake venom, bear gall and soft hartshorn, which are regarded as specific remedies against certain diseases.

The prices of some of these products are as follows:

Rhinoceros horns	111 to 137 francs per kilogram
Rhinoceros hides	60 to 70 francs per 100 kilograms
Soft hartshorn	1,666 to 2,200 francs per 100 kilograms or 18 to 40 francs per pair
[349] Horns of stags, elk and bucks (hard)	25 to 75 francs per 100 kilograms
Hides of stags, elk, bucks, goats	37 to 83 " " " "
Wild buffalo horns	50 to 60 " " " "
Wild buffalo hides	46 to 50 " " " "
Ox horns	50 to 58 " " " "

149: Reinach--256 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Ox hides	58 to 65 francs per 100 kilograms	237
Bones of tigers and other cats	58 to 75 " " " "	438
Pelts of tigers, panthers and other large cats	3 francs to 12 francs and 50 centimes apiece	435
Anteater scales (without the skin)	50 to 72 francs per 100 kilograms	
Anteater hides (with scales)	46 to 50 " " " "	
Skins of various monkeys	83 to 88 " " " "	
Tortoise shells	37 francs and 50 centimes per 100 kilograms.	

Fishing, preserved fish

Laos, with its extensive hydrological network and its water-courses of all sizes, is a fishing land par excellence. We have already noted the chief varieties of fish which populate its rivers, and have seen that most of them are represented by large-sized specimens. 226

Since the produce of fishing makes a considerable contribution to the food supply of the inhabitants, it has been necessary to create devices and combine various means for capturing this prey.

The methods, primitive at first, have been increasingly perfected, and each one has been modified so that it is adapted to some particular feature either of the watercourses or of the fish.

The devices used today are wholly made by the inhabitants. 226 They vary greatly in form and--the fact is worth noting--are much 227 like those used in Europe. Indeed, the floating line is common, but in its most rudimentary form, with a thorn for a hook and then the ground-line and long-line. There are also nets in great abundance, and they are identical with the ones found among our fishermen. The most common ones are the seine, the cast-net, the square dipping-net, the shrimping-net, the hoop-net, the landing-net and the large trammel. All this equipment is supplemented with bottles, [350] single and double bow-nets and traps. The Laotians also build large barrages across watercourses and provide them with corridors leading to bow-nets or hoop-nets.

Hiding places in the form of fixed huts on the watercourses are used for spear fishing. A light in these huts attracts the fish and the native, who is armed with a hardwood fork, spears it as soon as it comes within range. [Illustration here]

149: Reinach--258 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"Pa-Niang," formed of slices from a large fish which have been smoked. 226

"Pa-Heng," or a small dried fish. 262

"Pa-Khem" corresponds fairly closely to our salted and dried fish of the sardine type known as Nantes, which are left in salt for only a few days.

Finally, "Pa-Dek" is the form in which most of the large varieties of fish are preserved, and is an almost indispensable part of the native food supply. To prepare Pa-Dek the meat is cut into small pieces and ground in a mortar with salt and pepper so as to produce a kind of paste which is then put in jars with salt. The resulting brine helps to preserve the product (1). 263

(1) The price of Pa-Dek varies between 18 and 25 francs per hundred kilograms. This is the "Mam" of the Annamites.

The price of fish is subject to fluctuations, depending on the scarcity of it. The large fish of which we have just been speaking sell at prices between one and forty francs, depending on their weight and their abundance on the market. 226 435

Eels, shrimp of the prawn type and crabs are also found in the ponds and rivers of Laos during the rainy season, and in the water-courses there are various edible shellfish [358] such as the river mussel and small winkle. The ponds and swamps shelter several varieties of frogs, some of which reach an enormous size. All of them are edible, and are caught with a red ribbon on the end of a line fastened to a long bamboo pole. 226 [227]

II

PRESENT-DAY CROPS

Together with an enumeration of the crops grown in Laos we should like to be able to give the area which each occupies and the cultivable surfaces with the nature of the soil and the type of crops which would be suited to them, but as the Superior Resident states in his report for 1899: 241 311

"We have been in the colony for too short a time to have been able to set up a cadastral registry service. In view of the large area of the territory (267,000 square kilometers), the small and sparse population which inhabits it (2.7 inhabitants per square kilometer in

249 is that grown in the regions which we have just mentioned. Because of its origin and the name of the two main distribution markets of the trade, it is called Nong-Khay or Vien-Tiane tobacco.

We do not have exact data on the annual production of tobacco in Laos, because of the excessive fragmentation of the plantings and the absence of a crop registry. But information gained from commercial statistics enables us to say that in 1898 exports from the Paklay-Pone-Pissay region reached more than 42 tons. Also, if we attribute to each [276] inhabitant two grams of tobacco per day (this is not an excessive figure) or ten grams per family of five, we find that total consumption in Laos would be from 340 to 345 tons annually, or a total production of about four hundred tons (1).

(1) See Appendix XXIII.

[435 439] The export sale price varies from fifty to a hundred francs per hundred kilograms, depending on the quality.

248 COTTON. Cotton, a herbaceous and annual plant, is cultivated almost everywhere in Laos for local consumption, and particularly in 439 northern Laos for export to Yunnan. In fact, this product is almost the only return cargo for the mule and horse caravans which come in each year from Yunnan-Fou, Tali, S'semao, etc. with tea, furs, iron and copper pots, knick-knacks, etc.

248 The farming methods in northern Laos are as follows. Seeds are placed in pairs in holes which are about ten centimeters deep and spaced at varying distances depending on the region. Stony ground is preferred, on which the brush has been burned away both to clear the land and also [362] to fertilize the soil. No other fertilizer is used except the ashes of the vegetation which covered it.

The seeds are sowed in April or May and usually germinate a few days later. The plantings are harrowed and weeded twice each season, and harvesting is usually finished in November. The cotton is of a mediocre quality, with short staples, but despite this defect it is highly sought-after, as we have seen above, by the Chinese caravans which buy all of the available supply each year at the chief local markets. The height of the plant at full yield does not exceed sixty centimeters, and the yield per kilogram of bolls averages thirty percent or about 300 grams.

248 In southern Laos the cotton fields are small in extent, widely 311 scattered and formed chiefly of narrow strips of alluvial terrain on the

banks of the Mekong and its larger tributaries. 248

It is also grown on former rais in the highlands of southern Laos. 311

The climate of the Mekong valley is essentially favorable to the production of cotton, but the extent of the plantings has so far been limited, because of the lack of outlets, to what is strictly necessary to satisfy current local consumption.

Farming methods, in the lowlands of Lower Laos as well as in the highlands, are extremely primitive. The brush is cleared from the piece of land chosen, then without either weeding or fertilization the seeds are sowed in holes made with a dibble. 248

Two varieties are grown:

1. The large-flowered variety (Fai-Dok-Niai), which is preferred as being more productive and having fewer seeds. It is sowed at the end of the rainy season, usually in October, and harvested in March. This variety is cultivated only on the banks of watercourses. Its average height is one meter.

2. The small-flowered variety (Fai-Dok-Noi). It is cultivated only on higher ground, on former rais or in mountainous regions and is similar to the variety found in northern Laos. [363] It is sowed and harvested at about the same times as the above, that is to say from May to July for sowing and November or December for harvesting. Its average height is .7 meter.

It is difficult to determine the yield per hectare, in view of the fact that the cotton fields are irregular and variable in shape and size. On the basis of results in a certain number of fields which were measured separately, however, we may hazard the approximate figure of 200 to 400 kilograms of raw cotton per hectare, depending on the type of soil and its disposition.

On-the-spot purchase prices vary appreciably between the two parts of Laos. In the northern part, for example, the second-grade cotton bought by the Chinese sells for 35 to 40 francs per hundred kilograms. [435]

This crop should be developed further, and in a later paragraph we shall outline the steps which might be taken (1).

(1) Based on the reports of the Superior Commandants of Upper and Lower Laos. [113]

SUGAR CANE. Sugar cane is cultivated everywhere, both in the hills and on the low prairies. It is used only for local consumption, 249

249 either in the natural state or in the form of black, pasty, molasses-laden sugar.

There are several varieties, the chief of which are the heavy, green cane which is highly cellulated, and the small violet-colored cane with joints closer together, which is fuller than the first.

Farming methods do not differ from those used in other countries. Cuttings are planted, and the plants are topped if they show a marked propensity to excessive leafy growth.

257 To manufacture sugar, the cane is crushed between two vertical cylinders driven by two wooden gears of a most ingenious construction.
407 A buffalo turns the whole by means of a crossbar or shaft, the end of which is attached to its neck and constitutes a whim. Sometimes the cane is crushed between two pieces of stone or hardwood, one of which rests on the ground while the other [364] is applied on top of it by means of a wooden lever. One or several persons work the other end of the lever with all their weight and move it up and down in a series of jerky motions. The juice extracted from the cane is placed in large
[439] cast iron cauldrons shaped like cupels, which are imported by Chinese
[415] merchants. Condensation takes place over an open fire laid in primitive hearths which are cut into the ground itself, if it is clayey. When the syrup reaches the desired degree of thickness the whole mass is poured into rectangular or circular molds made of wood or bamboo. After cooling the loaves of sugar which come from the molds, and which are from three to six centimeters thick, are wrapped in dry leaves. They are transported and sold in this form. The cane itself is called "Oi" and the sugar "Nam-Oi" or, literally, water of cane.

[276] The Laotians do not refine alcohol from the juice of sugar cane,
[101] and are even ignorant of the initial refining stage which the Annamites use and which produces brown sugar.

[435] The price of sugar on the markets of Laos varies from one point to another, and transactions involve small quantities only. Statistics do give evidence, however, from which market prices of 35 to 50 *francs per hundred kilograms can be deduced.*

249 INDIGO. We have seen above that the Laotians use the indigo-bearing properties of certain plants which grow wild in the forests in order to dye cloth goods blue. They also produce a variety of indigo, the Indigofera tinctoria, which is similar to the variety found in Bengal. The plant itself is called "Kok-Kame" and the extract or dye "Nam-Kame

248 There are three harvests each year. In the first the shoots are .9 meter high, in the second 1.4 meters and in the third 1.6 meters. They yield, respectively, for an area of 14 square meters, 18, 20 and 24 kilograms of fiber.

At harvest time the shrub is split and left to soak in water for three hours, for the fiber is difficult to tear off. The work of decortication takes a long time, and this drawback has so far prevented the cultivation of this crop from spreading although it is an easy one on the whole and not at all exhausting for the soil, since it is possible to grow it twenty years in succession on the same plot of ground.

438 Exports from the provinces of southern Laos were more than fifty tons in 1899. A great deal is used locally, since all the nets used for
248 hunting and fishing are made with this fiber.

Prices are as follows (1):

248 (1) In view of the price at Bassac (37 francs), it would be ad-
435 vantageous to export this product to Cambodia, where it sells for twice as much.

	Per hundred kilograms
Plateau of the Bolovens	25 to 35 francs
Bassac	37 "
Saravane	60 "
Khong	60 to 80 "
Attopeu	30 "
Stung-Treng	54 to 62 "
Pnom-Penh	60 to 80 "

248 [367] HEMP. Hemp is grown in Upper Laos, but only for local consumption. It is used in making string, light rope, nets, etc. A very strong and fairly good-tasting alcohol is also extracted from its seeds. It is called "Pane" or "Nhia-Pane."

241 BATATAS. Various kinds of batatas which are more or less sweet are grown each year on the banks of the watercourses and in the still
[262] moist sandy alluvia. These tubercles are chiefly consumed by the
[231] inhabitants, although small quantities are used to fatten certain animals, particularly pigs. The large variety of batata which is round and not very sweet is called "Mane-Phao" and the one which is elongated and sweeter is called "Mane-Keo."

245 Here, as a sample, is a table showing cardamom production on the
435 plateau of the Bolovens during the last few years, with purchase and sale prices:

Year	Production in kilograms	Price per hundred kilograms: On the plateau, Purchase	Price per hundred kilograms: At Pnom-Penh, Sale
		francs	francs
1895	120,000	37.50 to 50	66.20 to 85.60
1896	48,000 to 60,000	50 to 58.30	70 to 93
1897	96,000 to 108,000	50 to 62.50	77.80 to 97.30
1898	270,000	50 to 66.60	85.60 to 136.
1899	216,000	54.10 to 75	77.80 to 136

249 [375] MULBERRY TREES. There are two kinds of mulberry trees
for feeding silkworms in Laos: the annual mulberry and the shrub or
231 perennial mulberry (1). In Laotian the latter is called "Kok-Mone,"

(1) It is no doubt to be identified with the multicauline mulberry and the white or Chinese mulberry.

which may be translated literally as silkworm tree.

[311] The mulberry is grown near villages, on the banks of watercourses. Oftentimes the foot of an arborescent mulberry will even be inundated during the rainy season, and it has been noted that the worms which devour the leaves of these trees are more subject than other worms to the diseases of the species and produce less silk. It is therefore probabl that excess humidity is harmful to the mulberry. But if at the present time most of these shrubs are planted in humid regions, this is due to the fact that in many places the higher ground has been abandoned and the inhabitants have settled in the bottoms of valleys. It will be understood that the natives like to have the gardens of mulberry trees

249 The amount of paper produced is hardly significant, and is limited to
289 local needs.

245 TEA. Tea is the most important crop of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na
311 and the Burmo-Shan States on both banks of the Mekong. The regions of production are included between 21° 30' and 22° 30' N. latitude and between 97° 30' and 99° 40' E. longitude.

175 The greater part of these regions, that is to say those situated on the left bank of the Mekong, belonged to us by the terms of the 1887
648 Franco-Chinese treaty of Tien-Tsin. But because of our slowness to occupy these territories England inherited the rights of Upper Burma and ceded them to China, and finally only the two Muong-Hou remained in our possession.

563 Unfortunately, the small tea-growing region left to us is not only the least productive, but also the one in which tea-growing has degenerated and is no longer practiced except by the Khas.

[377] Yet the climate of the Muong-Hou is similar to that of Man-La, which is located thirty kilometers to the west and whose tea has the same reputation as those of I-Hou, I-Bang, Muong-Hing, Muong-Pang and Muong-Yang, all of which are known as "S'semao and Pou-Eurl Teas." Furthermore, the altitude and configuration of the soil, the nature of the terrain and the varieties of tea plants are all similar in our territory of Muong-Hou and in that of Man-La. But as a consequence of various circumstances and especially of a long interruption in cultivation between 1884 and 1893, most of the tea plants have not been pruned. They have reached a height of more than six meters and the tea which they produce is almost valueless (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVI.

The average production of the whole tea-growing region has been estimated at from 600 to 660 tons. This tea is exported to China, to Burma, to Laos, to Tonkin and to Siam. In 1891 and 1892 France imported a trial shipment of 6,000 kilograms, but the transaction was not repeated because of a rise in transport costs and customs duties which did not leave a large enough profit for the importer.

435 In the regions of production prices vary, depending on quality, between 75 and 150 francs per hundred kilograms.

The teas which come from this region meet with little approval in Europe, because they lack the various aromas which the Chinese

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selected seed to the natives, and by giving them advice and, if necessary, orders.

The reader will doubtless be struck by the fact that we shall often reiterate, in speaking of the crops which should be encouraged or introduced, that the administration's role should be to make trials of such and such a plant. This is nevertheless the case. It must not be imagined that individual initiative will suffice, for the comparatively large capital investment which any agricultural enterprise requires will not be made until after any given crop has proved to be successful. It is therefore incumbent on the administration to make these first trials. Was it not the Government which set up the first plantations of tea in Assam, of cinchona in Java, and of tobacco and coffee in Sumatra? The colonists did not come until later, when the period of groping and failure was over, and they were then able to act with assurance almost everywhere.

Rice. The cultivation of glutinous rice should most particularly be developed in southern Laos, with a view towards the manufacture of alcohol.

We have seen above how small a proportion of the cultivable land has heretofore been utilized. Much land suitable for making ricefields has not yet been cleared. In spite of the remunerative price offered them for the produce of the soil, and in spite of the encouragement which they have received from all quarters, the natives do not yet understand all the advantages which they would gain from developing their crops. It is nevertheless easy to see that since our arrival in Laos the inhabitants have realized that the regime of terror and exactions has disappeared and that an era of prosperity and justice is opening up before them, and they are increasingly devoting themselves to the work of the fields. Ricefields have appreciably increased in extent, either because new land has been cleared or because abandoned fields have been brought back under cultivation.

Glutinous rice is assured of a certain and profitable sale on the markets of Cambodia and Cochinchina (1). It may be anticipated

(1) At the present time, with the existing means of transport, exporting rice from Bassac to Pnom-Penh yields an average net profit of 13 francs per ton.

[435]

249 Chinese and Laotian middlemen and even the few European merchants--
263 have found that it brings in rewarding profits. Indeed, by exporting
438 this product the latter are assured of an almost certain gain of 20 to 30 percent.

248 [387] Ramie. There is also much to be gained from increasing
439 the production of ramie or Chinese nettle. It is assured of an outlet in Cambodia, where it sells for as much as 80 francs per hundred kilograms.

249 Cinnamon. The extension of the plantations and gardens of
185 cinnamon trees already in existence in the province of Vien-Tiane deserves serious encouragement. The bark of these trees is a valuable product which is much sought-after in China and in Europe.

276 Opium poppies. The Government of Indo-China, which is
656 both the preparer and seller of chandoo or opium for smoking, is the party which would gain most from obtaining the raw drug on French territory. It is, indeed, still dependent on British India for this product, and can acquire it only on extremely disadvantageous terms.

Since much time must still pass, however, before the Meos and the Yaos give up their age-old methods, it would be essential for the intensive cultivation of the opium poppy to be undertaken by Europeans on behalf of the administration. This would be possible if there were a guaranteed labor supply in the form of Chinese coolies, who would be enlisted primarily for the greater part of the work, and of native specialists who would deal only with scarification of the capsules, harvesting the opium and the first stage of its preparation.

These delicate operations are the ones which the Meos and the Yaos like best, but they dislike plowing, fertilizing, weeding and irrigation, all of which tasks are indispensable for obtaining a high yield of capsules and consequently of the raw drug. It would therefore be best to entrust this heavy work to foreign coolies, and it is probable that after a certain time they too would be capable of extracting the opium. Impelled by their example, the natives would doubtless then be seen to break with their prejudices and devote themselves also to intensive cultivation so as to reap its full benefits.

The role of the administration would then be at an end, and it would gradually diminish its intervention as free cultivation of the poppies increased.

[435 Raw opium which is produced locally or which comes from [388] neighboring countries is worth 22 francs, 50 centimes to 32 francs, 25 centimes per kilogram, depending on quality, in northern Laos.

centimes per kilogram, depending on quality, in northern Laos.

Betel nuts. It is a well-known fact that commerce in betel nuts is quite extensive in the Far East, since the number of consumers runs into several millions. It is therefore a crop to be developed and encouraged, all the more so because the climate, soil and temperature of Laos are perfectly suited to plantations of this type. 24 185 435

In Laos the harvest from about three trees sells for one tical (1 franc, 50 centimes). In Cochinchina the produce of a single tree is worth about one piaster (2 francs, 50 centimes). It is therefore evident that it would be profitable to export this nut in large quantities.

PRUNING AND GRAFTING FRUIT TREES. The natives in Laos, as a consequence of ignorance, lack of initiative, carelessness and also lack of the necessary means, do not give sufficient care to fruit trees. The result is that the latter, at least in the case of most varieties, bear only degenerate fruits. 24 185

It is to be desired that these trees should no longer be abandoned in this manner, without being pruned, trimmed or grafted. Thought might then be given not only to improving the natives' diet in the way of fruit, but perhaps also to creating new resources by preparing certain kinds of preserves, fruits with juice, compotes and jams.

Again it is the administration alone, with the means of action at its disposition and the authority in its possession, which could act in an effective manner.

The colonial and botanical gardens, etc., should be able to provide administrators with precise information on the care to be given to the various fruit trees, both in order to improve their fruit and to increase their yield.

The obvious middlemen between the administration and the population are the bonzes. The latter, if they were the possessors of industrial knowledge, would be listened to and imitated above all others when they provided an example by giving their care to the numerous varieties of fruit trees which they keep up within the enclosures of pagodas or nearby.

149: Reinach--298 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

231 178 Attopeu; slopes of the plateau of the Bolovens; plains of the Se-Kampho and of the Se-Pien (2); plains of the upper Sebang-Khan and of the

(2) I have never crossed these great and beautiful plains which stretch as far as the eye can see between these two rivers which have water all year long, intersected here and there by wooded hills whose slopes provide the herds with a refuge and with a guaranteed food supply during the inundation of the lowlands--an inundation lasting three or four months--without regretting that no European colonist has ever thought of taking advantage of this situation. (Report of the Superior Commandant of Lower Laos, April 1897.)

Ia-Drang.

231 435 The sale prices for buffalo and oxen vary from one point to another and are also subject to fluctuations due to the age, stature, abundance or scarcity of the stock, the law of supply and demand, etc.

In 1899 livestock exports from Lower Laos only were 2,184 oxen valued at 54,600 francs, 362 cows valued at 5,430 francs and 3,144 buffalo valued at 235,800 francs, or a total of 6,690 head with a value of 295,830 francs.

In Lower Laos buffalo sold for from 50 to 112 francs in 1899, and oxen for from 20 to 30 francs. In Upper Laos the prices for [406] buffalo varied from 60 to 110 francs. Oxen may cost more or less there, depending on whether they are trained as draft and pack animals or fattened for export. In the first case they bring from 40 to 70 francs and in the second from 10 to 15 francs.

231 262 Pigs. Pigs are used mainly for food by the natives, who consume a great many. The meat of this animal enjoys great favor among the population, and it is pork which, prepared either alone or with fish, enters most often into the composition of meals. [Illustration here]

[563] The Lus, the Meos, the Chinese and the Khas are past masters at raising pigs, and their stock might figure successfully in our regional competitions. They fatten them in closed compartments, after first castrating them.

231 The most common variety is the one known as "Cochinchinese or Tonkinese pig." It is gray with white spots and sometimes almost black, and bears on its back a mane of long, stiff bristles similar to those of the wild boar. Even when domesticated these pigs have

439 The following table shows the considerable discrepancy between
435 purchase prices within the country and sale prices on transit and European markets.

In the last seven years Laos has become a French possession, but
[505] the interior conditions of trade and exchange have not varied. A single modification has been the fruit of our occupation, the creation of a line of steam transport on the Mekong. This service, although still not perfect, nonetheless constitutes [427] [Illustration] [428] [Blank page] [429] the most economical route from Luang-Prabang or Nong-Khay to Cambodia and the sea. Unfortunately, the customs barrier is there to stop the products which our industries do not yet manufacture but which our merchants could import into Laos in competition against those brought in through Siam, Burma and Yunnan.

Markets	Sticklac per 100 kilograms	Benzoin per 100 kilograms	Cardamom per 100 kilograms	Rubber per 100 kilograms
	francs	francs	francs	francs
Hua-Pahn (Laos)				1st quality 166 to 208 2nd quality 85 to 115
Nong-Khay, Vien-Tiane (Laos)	50 to 60	150 to 250	55 to 60	1st quality 250 to 280
Bassac (Laos)	38 to 40		92 to 100	
Pnom-Penh and Cholen (Cambodia & Cochinchina)	54 to 70		133 to 165	1st quality 540 to 625
Korat (Siam)	75 to 95	250 to 280	85 to 110	
Bangkok (Siam)	125 to 135	300 to 350	140 to 180	
London (England)	220 to x	500 to 700	250 to 310	1st quality 750 to 835
Hamburg (Germany)				1st quality 800 to 1000 2nd quality 450 to 600

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A. MERCHANDISE

Total exports from Lower Laos during 1898

Name of merchandise	Average purchase price per picul of 60 kilograms	Average sale price		Number of piculs exported	Total value of purchases made in the country	Observations
		at Pnom-Penh	at Saigon			
Cardamom	22$00	32$00	40$00	4,675	102,850$00	Including 829 piculs exported to the right bank
Decorticated rice	2.00	?	?	72	144.00	" 12 " id.
Paddy	0.40	1.80	2.20	12,469	4,987.60	" 408 " id.
Chinese nettle	9.00	14.00	?	904	8,136.00	" 115 " id.
Lac	9.00	15.00	?	228	2,052.00	" 22 " id.
Betel nuts	5.00	9.00	?	72	360.00	
Tamboyan	1.50	25.00	33.00	24	36.00	
Wax	60.00	85.00	90.00	94 1/2	5,670.00	" 24 1/2 " id.
Ivory	400.00	470.00	?	9 1/2	3,800.00	" 45 k. " id.
Elephant bones	4.00	6.00	7.00	2	8.00	
Tiger bones	16.00	23.00	24.00	1 1/2	24.00	
Pirogues (single units)	30.00	60.00	?	601	18,030.00	" 2 " id.
Hides and horns	11.00	17.00	22.00	2,814	30,954.00	" 51 " id.
			Totals	21,365 1/2 piculs and 601 pirogues	177,051$60	

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B) MERCHANDISE

Total exports from Lower Laos during 1899

Name of merchandise	Average purchase price in piasters per picul of 60 kilograms	Quantities exported		Total value of purchases made in the country
		piculs	kilograms	
Pimento	9	4	240	36$
Cotton	3 to 4.50	4	240	16
Ginger	3	2.12	132	7
Tobacco	18 to 24	2.80	168	60
Basketry	Unit price 1	40 baskets		40
Elephant fat	5		13	1.20
Anteater hides	11 to 12	11 2/3	690.30	136.20
Tiger pelts	4 to 7 apiece	one		6.60
Monkey hides	20	1 1/2	90	30
Lime	0.50 to 0.60	150	9,000	82
Domestic cotton goods	0.10 per meter	80 meters		8
Tortoise shell	9	2	120	18
Anteater scales	12	1/2	30	6
Tin	36	75	4,500	2,700
Buffalo horns	7 to 12	403 2/3	5,912.40	3,412
Ox horns	7 to 11	21	1,260	228
Buffalo hides	8 to 12	576	34,631	6,422
Ox hides	10 to 14	417	12,137.80	5,035
Wax	60 to 80	102 1/2	6,141.80	7,804.50
Cardamom	12 to 23	4,451	267,117.70	84,089
Ivory	180 to 400	6	353	2,065.78
Buckskin	9 to 20	638	38,260	9,305
Gum lac	9 to 11	244 1/3	14,669.80	2,439
Rhinoceros hides	17	5 1/2	321	93
Palm fibers	3	6	360	18
Chinese medicine	15	9	540	135
Gold dust	unit price in ticals	12$70	21 ticals	268
Elephant bones	3	2.10	130	6.50
Tiger bones	15 to 18	2 1/6	130	35.30
Betel nuts	9 to 10	3	180	29
Chinese nettle	7 to 20	706.50	50,242	10,607.87

149: Reinach--322 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

439 Total exports from Lower Laos during 1899 (cont.)

435 Pirogues	Depending on size	number	552	22,076
Hartshorn	9 to 15	194	11,630	2,577.20
Soft hartshorn	200		24	112
Rhinoceros horns	About 55 per kilogram		38.500	2,118
Spun silk	120	3	180	360
		General total		162,383$15

149: Reinach--323 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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A) ANIMALS

Total exports from Lower Laos during 1898

Kind	Average purchase price of animal	Average sale price outside Lower Laos	Number of animals exported	Total value of animals exported. Average purchase price in country	Total value of animals exported. Average sale price	Observations
Elephants	350$	1,200$	192	67,200$	230,400$ (1)	(1) Prices offered in teak yards along the Menam.
Horses	20	45	103	2,060	4,635	
Buffalo	20	36	4,721	94,420	169,956	
Steers	9	20	1,056	9,504	21,120	
Pigs	3	6	500	1,500	3,000	
		Totals	6,572	174,684$	429,111$	

149: Reinach--324 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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B) ANIMALS

Total exports from Lower Laos during 1899

Kind	Average purchase price of animal	Average sale price outside Laos	Number of animals exported	Total value of animals exported. Average purchase price in country	Total value of animals exported. Average sale price	Observations
Pigs	2 to 4$	4 to 8$	6,038	12,226$	24,452$	
Steers	8 to 12	10 to 24	2,184	21,840	43,680	
Cows	4.80 to 8	6 to 10	362	2,172	2,896	
Buffalo	20 to 45	35 to 80	3,144	94,320	157,200	
Horses	12 to 50	35 to 90	185	5,550	11,100	
Mares	12 to 30	16 to 38	14	280	400	
Elephants	300 to 450	12 to 1600	115	40,300	172,200	
		Totals	12,042	176,688$	411,928$	

149: Reinach--325 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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II UPPER LAOS

Total exports from Upper Laos during 1898

Name of article	Average purchase price in country, in piculs	Average sale price in nearby countries	Number of piculs or units exported	Value of purchases made in country	Observations
A. From Luang-Prabang (various merchandise)					
	$	$	piculs	$	
Cardamom (piculs)	18.00	27.00	150	2,700.00	All to the right bank.
Benzoin "	54.00	68.00	500	27,000.00	
Lac "	10.00	14.00	2,000	20,000.00	
Wax "	54.00	60.00	20	1,080.00	
Resin "	2.00	3.50	10	20.00	
Ramie "	18.00	21.00	50	900.00	
Raw silk "	125.00	150.00	45	5,625.00	
Hemp "	18.00	21.00	15	270.00	
Mats, per hundred	9.00	15.00	18,000 u	1,620.00	
Scarves and skirts	Variable		900 u	3,500.00	
Rhinoceros horns (piculs)	2,000.00	2,500.00	1	2,000.00	
Ivory "	360.00	430.00	3	1,080.00	
Horns "	7.00	9.00	40	280.00	
Hartshorn "	10.00	14.00	10	100.00	
Soft hartshorn "	2,500.00	3,000.00	1 1/2	3,[illegible].00	

149: Reinach--328 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina Laotians AM8

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Total exports from Upper Laos during 1898 (continued)

Name of article	Average purchase price in country, in piculs	Average sale price in nearby countries	Number of piculs or units exported	Value of purchases made in country	Observations
Anteater scales (piculs)	32.50	45.00	58	1,885.00	
Tobacco "	8.00	12.00	150	1,200.00	
Animal remains "	8.00	11.00	700	5,600.00	
Miscellaneous (pottery and forest products)				8,500.00	
				87,160.00	
		B. From the other commissionerships			
Approximate total			3,000 piculs	50,000$00	
		C. Miscellaneous animals			
Steers	7.00	12.00	300 head	2,100$00	Epizootic disease halted this trade.
Buffalo	10.00	20.00	700 "	7,000.00	
			1,000 head		
Upper Laos ..... Grand Total			7,553 1/2 piculs	146,260$00	

489 [447] Current transport costs are generally as follows:

Land Routes						francs
435 By human bearer, per hundred kilograms and per day:						1.90 to 2
439 By elephant,	"	"	"	"	" "	1.60 to 1.80
By pack-horse,	"	"	"	"	" "	1.90 to 2
By pack-ox,	"	"	"	"	" "	0.70 to 0.80

By referring to what has been said above, we may deduce, for each of these methods of transport, the following average cost per ton or per kilometer:

By human bearer: 0.76 to 0.80 francs
By elephant: 1.07 to 1.20 "
By pack-horse: 0.76 to 0.80 "
By pack-ox: 0.70 to 0.80 "

Boatmen. Boatmen may be hired by the day or by contract for a given journey. The current prices are 0.375 franc per man per day without rice, and 0.30 franc with food.

Coolie bearers. Coolie bearers are generally paid 0.25 franc per man and per day without food, or 0.20 franc with rice.

Chief coolies and chief pirogue boatmen. The chief coolies and chief pirogue boatmen, pilots, etc. are always paid higher than their men. The amount of increase will vary, depending on conditions, by fifty to a hundred percent.

Pirogue rental. Renting a pirogue usually costs the same price per day as hiring a boatman. Thus the cost of renting a pirogue and hiring four boatmen is reckoned on the basis of five units.

B) Comparative transport costs on various trade routes from Laos to the sea.

We have thought that it might be of interest to sum up, in the comparative table given below, the courses and costs per ton and per kilometer of transports on ten of the principal trade routes of Laos.

149: Reimach--338 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

489
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[448] COMPARATIVE TABLE OF TRANSPORT COSTS ON VARIOUS TRADE ROUTES FROM LAOS TO COCHINCHINA, ANNAM, TONKIN AND SIAM (AND VICE VERSA)

Courses	Means of transport	Distance in kilometers	Number of days		Price in francs		Observations
			upstream	downstream	Total per metric ton of 1000 kilograms	Per ton and per kilometer (ton-kilometer)	
I. Luang-Prabang to Saigon	By River Merchant Fleet. Steamships and pirogues	2300	50-60	30-35	162.50	0.0705	The average rate for cotton goods is taken as a basis.
II. Nong-Khay to Saigon	Same	1840	27-35	18-22	122.25	0.0664	Same.
III. Nong-Khay to Bangkok by way of Korat	Oxcarts	603	34 to 36		260 to 300	0.414 to 0.497	On this route prices vary from one year to the next, depending on the abundance of draft oxen, which are often decimated by epizootic disease.

149: Reinach--339 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina Laotians AM8

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COMPARATIVE TABLE OF TRANSPORT COSTS ON VARIOUS TRADE ROUTES FROM LAOS TO COCHINCHINA, ANNAM, TONKIN AND SIAM (AND VICE VERSA) [continued]

III. (continued)							In case of a rise, the prices given here should be increased by about 15 percent.
IV. Luang-Prabang to Nong-Khay	1. By River Merchant Fleet. Pirogues and rafts.	460	15 - 25	10 - 12	40	0.0861	The average rate for cotton goods is taken as a basis. Usual prices, whatever the merchandise.
	2. By free rafts. Upstream by pirogue.		18 - 25	9 -12	250	0.543	
V. Nong-Khay to Pak-Hin-Boun	1. By River Merchant Fleet. Steamships.	335	2	1-1/2	22.50	0.0673	Average rate for cotton goods taken as basis. Usual prices, for all merchandise.
	2. By rafts and free pirogues.		8-14	4-5	100	0.298	

149: Reinach--340 G-8 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

489
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COMPARATIVE TABLE OF TRANSPORT COSTS ON VARIOUS TRADE ROUTES FROM LAOS TO COCHINCHINA, ANNAM, TONKIN AND SIAM (AND VICE VERSA) [continued]

VI. Pak-Hin-Boun to Haiphong via Ben-Thuy (Annam	By pirogue, elephant, sampan and steamships belonging to the Correspondances fluviales du Tonkin.	570	15-17	15-16	130 to 150	0.228 to 0.263	By pirogue from Pak-Hin-Boun to Keng-Kiet. By elephant from Keng-Kiet to Hatrai (Annam). By sampan from Hatrai to Ben-Thuy. By steamship from Ben Thuy to Haiphong.

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(A49) COMPARATIVE TABLE OF TRANSPORT COSTS ON VARIOUS TRADE ROUTES FROM LAOS TO COCHINCHINA, ANNAM, TONKIN AND SIAM (AND VICE VERSA) (continued)

Courses	Means of Transport	Distance in kilometers	Number of days up-stream	Number of days down-stream	Price in Tonkinese cents per ton of 1000 kilograms kilometer	Francs Perrin and per kilometer (ton-kilometer)	Observations
VII. Luang-Prabang to Haiphong via Ban-Khay and Ban-Thay (Vinh).	1. By River Merchant Fleet, pirogues and steamships. By elephant, pirogue and sampan. By steamships belonging to the Correspondances fluviales du Tonkin.	1115	35-42	28-31	198.50 to 212.50	0.273 to 0.390	By pirogues, rafts and steamships of the River Merchant Fleet from Luang-Prabang to Nam-Beum. The rest as above.
	2. By rafts or free pirogues. By elephant and sampan. By steamships belonging to the Correspondances fluviales du Tonkin.	1115	40-48	33-35	480 to 500	0.43 to 0.448	By rafts and free pirogues from Luang-Prabang to Nam-Beum. As above for the rest of the journey.
VIII. Luang-Prabang to Bangkok. 1st section. Luang-Prabang to Pak-Lay	1. Pirogues, half-loaded going upstream.	230	12-17	4-7	36	0.156	*For all three sections, the total price per ton and per kilometer with 1,050 kilometers.
	2. Rafts going downstream.				18	0.078	
2nd section. Pak-Lay to Takit (Outaradit)	1. By elephant, horse and ox in both directions.	220	7-9	10	180	0.818	
	2. By human bearer, in both directions		20-22	23			
3rd section. Takit to Bangkok (Siam).	1. Pirogues, fully loaded, towed by steamships going upstream (August to October inclusive).	600	12-14	4	54.16	0.90	
	2. Pirogues, half-loaded going upstream (November to February).		20-24	—	96	0.160	
	3. Pirogues, fully loaded going downstream.		—	8	50	0.0833	
		1050	Average		Upstream: 366.16 Downstream: 249	0.349 0.236	Towards Luang-Prabang Towards Bangkok

[Table continued over]

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II. Bassac to Bangkok via Oubone and Korat.	1. Steamship from Bangkok to Pekin. 2. Carts from Pekin to Oubone. 3. Pirogues from Oubone to Bassac.	750	36	36	26.65 245 19	290.65	0.388	
I. Bassac to Saigon.	Pirogue and steamship.	1110	14	30	57.20		0.0515	

439 [450] A mere glance at the table is enough to show the enormous
489 difference between transport costs towards Siam, and those towards
Annam, Tonkin and Cochinchina. And even so, we have not
435 reckoned with the various interior local taxes which shippers have
to pay on the roads of Siam, nor evaluated the worries and bothers
to which they are subject or the robberies which they must fear.
[Illustration here]

We have already expressed the opinion that if these routes continue to win favor with merchants, this is because they end at points and at markets where the latter can be sure not only of marketing their products, but also of finding at low prices all the merchandise, no matter what its source, which is necessary to the inhabitants of Laos.

Let our markets in Cochinchina, Cambodia, Annam and Tonkin be supplied in the same way and offer the merchants of Laos the same advantages in the way of reduced prices; let trading posts or factories be established on the Mekong at Stung-Treng, [451] Bassac, Lakhone, Hin-Boun, Vien-Tiane, Pak-Lay and Luang-Prabang, and the roads leading to Siam will rapidly be forsaken for our own. Indeed, all the merchants know that security now reigns in Laos. One pays what is due only once, the distances are shorter, and transport costs are lower than those paid from the Mekong to Siam.

7. CUSTOMS SYSTEM TO BE ADOPTED

439 The valley of the Mekong, of which we occupy one side, remains
651 open in fact whereas the coasts of Indo-China are closed by the customs. If we were to close this valley as well by a customs barrier we should then have contracted enormous expenditures without any hope of compensating receipts. From still another point of view, is it not to be feared that the present state of things will bring about the following result? Today, foreign merchandise is halted on our coasts by customs duties. Since such merchandise is, moreover, indispensable to our nationals, there can be no doubt but that it is coming into our possessions by a back door, despite the long distances, the high costs and the difficulties of all kinds which the roads from Siam to the Mekong offer. After flooding this basin first, it will penetrate into Cambodia, Annam and Tonkin without any profit either for the Treasury or for our nationals.

We speak in the future tense, but who can deny that we might

396 is also cut out with a hatchet so as to decrease the thickness of the walls and render them more elastic.

When the pirogue is as wide as is desired, or else as wide as the wood being used will allow without any danger of splitting or bursting, strong rectangular crossbraces are set at regular intervals and tailed into the sides of the pirogues a few centimeters below the gunwales. When it has reached this state the pirogue is virtually finished. It has its final shape, and looks like the elongated half of a fish which has been split lengthwise.

All that remains is to finish the work by giving the bottom and sides the requisite thickness, by polishing the wood, smoothing the curves, etc.

Finally comes the moment of launching. It must be said, to the honor of the builders' sure eye and skill, that it is always successful and that once put into water the pirogue behaves well in its element, with a light and graceful balance.

396 The price of pirogues varies depending on their dimensions and
[466] the region, and can therefore not be fixed in any absolute
439 fashion. A new pirogue, in fact, costs from 50 to 300 francs. In
435 Cambodia a pirogue from Laos costs twice what it cost in its land of origin. Thus it may readily be imagined that pirogues are exported from Lower Laos in fairly large numbers. The statistics for 1899 show exports of 552 pirogues of various dimensions, with a [illustration here] total value of 55,195 francs, or an average purchase price of 100 francs apiece.

398 Cartwrights. The construction of carts, wagons, pack-saddles for oxen and elephant palanquins is a specialized industry only on the right bank and in Siam. In French Laos carts are little used because of the nature of the terrain, and there are no cartwrights. Pack-saddles for oxen and elephant palanquins are made by nearly everyone, particularly by drovers and carnacs.

317 Lime. Lime is made in Laos, primarily for inclusion in betel masticatories.
276 [467] The kilns are dug in the clay on banks of watercourses, near calcareous masses from which limestone is taken.

272 Alcohol. The distillation of grain--rice, maize and hemp-seed--is not an industry in the strict sense, for every village and every family makes alcohol on occasion.

693 than of the rights of the parties. Our administration is making praiseworthy efforts to halt these abuses. Those who sell justice in this way are removed from their posts, and it is to be hoped that within a few years' time most, if not all, of the Laotian judges will be upright and disinterested. As a means toward stopping these deplorable habits and informing the parties in lawsuits of the legal costs which they will regularly be asked to pay, Lieutenant-colonel Tournier took a very useful first step in April 1898, by setting up a schedule of court costs in accordance with the laws and customs of Vien-Tiane (1).

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(1) The following, for example, are the court costs to be paid in a case of theft of domesticated animals:

Legal costs.....	15.00 francs	to be paid by each accused person.
Clerk.....	3.75 "	
Archivist.....	2.25 "	
Court roll.....	1.50 "	
Prison costs.....	11.25 "	

The legal costs are divided as follows:

Tiao-Muong.....	5.00 francs	15 francs.
Oupahat.....	2.50 "	
Judge hearing the case..	7.50 "	

The prison costs are divided as follows:

Jailer.....	5.00 francs	11.25 francs.
Upkeep for food for prisoners whom their families cannot feed or who do not work outside.....	6.25 "	
Lighting and upkeep of prison.....		

It goes without saying that, in addition to court costs, the guilty parties are liable to a fine, which, in the present case, would be 24 francs per person.

[499]

4. THE TAX STRUCTURE

a. Direct taxes

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The direct taxes include the head tax, the optional redemption of statute labor and the licenses for Foreign Oriental merchants.

A census taken before the end of each year by the native authorities and checked by the administrators who are heads of provinces makes

316 Pou-Khao-Tong.

The gold is found in fine gravel including miscellaneous rock debris which has been covered by the recent alluvia of the water-courses, at a depth varying from a few decimeters to a meter and a half.

In 1899, as samples resulting from trial prospecting, we provided the local organizing committee for the Exposition of 1900 with gold, with black schlichs, with untreated gold-bearing gravel and with superposed sterile alluvia.

The fifteen and a half grams (15-1/2 grams) of gold in the form of grains and dust which was supplied represented the supervised production of a single gold-washer, in visible gold, for thirty days work at the rate of 20 wash-troughs per day which weighed 3.5 kilograms each on the average.

The gold content of the black schlichs which resulted from the washing and which we collected can be determined only by analysis (1).

(1) They were sent for analysis to the Saigon laboratory, but the results have not yet been published.

On the average, a ton of treated gravel represented a weight of about 300 grams of black schlichs, and a volume of 113 cubic centimeters.

Thus, with the rudimentary methods used in this prospecting operation, without amalgamation and despite the inevitable losses, the fifteen and a half grams of gold collected, using local procedures and labor, cost 30 francs, or 1.935 francs per gram and 1,935 francs per kilogram (2).

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(2) Here, by way of comparison, are the cost prices of gold at several points of the globe:

Saint-Elie (French Guiana), 1619 francs
Siberia 2170 francs
California, 1500 to 1700 francs
Australia, 1600 to 1900 francs

This, of course, by using the most advanced methods which reduce losses of the precious metal to almost nothing.

The respective densities of the schlichs, of the gold-bearing gravels and of the sterile alluvia [129] were 2.6 for the schlichs, 1.82 for the gravels and 1.49 for the sterile alluvia.

654 What is more, according to the economic report for the months of February and March 1900 in Upper Laos, which has just reached the
314 Indo-China Department of Agriculture and Commerce, 3,250 kilo-
grams of rubber were exported during this period, or, to be precise,
439 this was the verified figure at Vien-Tiane. The storehouses in this center also contained a large supply which would probably go down-
435 river at the first rises of the Mekong. [139] The sale price by natives at Vien-Tiane was said to be one piaster per kilogram.

Tran-ninh, which had not yet been able to supply any statistics, even approximate ones, indicated exports of 1,500 kilograms to Tonkin for the same period and at the same price as being the amount of export rubber which represented purchases from Vien-Tiane.

These prices, which are reasonable ones in view of the present value of money in Laos and the needs of the inhabitants, leaves the exporters sufficient profits. On the other hand, we have had occasion to note the entirely abnormal price of 5.50 francs per kilogram which rubber reached at Vinh towards the end of March 1900, a price which, when the cost of freight, transhipment and handling, insurance and losses in weight along the way is added, leaves only a small profit for the export trade.

IV

314 339,400 kilograms of rubber were exported from Indo-China
during 1900, as against 52,813 in 1899. Of this amount, 300,400
439 kilograms went out through Tonkin, and 39,000 kilograms through Saigon. The greater part of this rubber comes from Annam, and especially from Tran-Ninh (Laos).

By these figures we see how greatly the rubber trade has grown in Indo-China, and what a factor this raw material promises to be in the economic development of the colony.

The sale price in 1899 was one piaster per kilogram. Since that time it has risen appreciably in consequence of a rising demand from all quarters. In the province of Vien-Tiane the average price is two piasters per kilogram, and in the forests where the rubber is grown it costs 90 piasters per picul.

314 The rapid rise in the price of rubber has encouraged the natives to engage in excessive exploitation of the product, and without any care for the future they have destroyed large quantities of extremely productive lianas. The Laotians do not know how to collect the sap of the rubber plant and still spare the plant itself, and they thereby

10: d'Orleans--300-301 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 436, 455, 525, 651, 177.52 Siam
636.52

"In addition to the forced labour, there is, the capitation tax, the opium tax, and the monopoly of the tchoum-tchoum, but the monopoly of gaming, which is the source of large revenue in Siam itself, has been suppressed here by the Siamese as being immoral. It is the same with the speculation upon the money exchange, which is not yet resorted to in Luang Prabang. In the valley of Ménam, more especially, the money in use is composed of earthenware counters, the circulation of which is suspended or the value altered by a Government decree, large profits being thus secured in very arbitrary fashion. Another source of profit [301] for the treasury of Luang Prabang is the produce of the customs, there being a tax of three per cent. upon the merchandise and of a basket of salt upon each canoe, which comes up from the south with a load of it."

10: d'Orleans--329-330 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 173, 436

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "The money in circulation is the English rupee, the Siamese tical, the piastre, native coins in copper and silver, shaped like canoes, and cowries strung together like chaplets, these latter coming by way of Burmah [330] or Siam from the Gulf of Bengal. I am told a curious story about one piece of money formerly coined in the Principality of Nan; the legend is that a queen who formerly ruled over the country, was so ugly that she could not find any one to fall in love with her, and that, in order to show that, however beautiful their features may be, all women are alike, she had a certain part of her body represented on this coin."

149: Reinach--247 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"What makes everything easy and is used for everything is this hollow wood, at once so solid and so light, the incomparable bamboo. In France we see it only in the form of pleasant but useless little articles of furniture. Here bamboo is sufficient to every task. It provides the whole house, frame as well as walls. The inner walls and floors are made of matted bamboo lathwork. Yet such a house, with its furniture, bed, tables, various accessories and its luxury objects, if you are a person of refinement, can be improvised for you in a space of two hours wherever you want. 313 341 352

"Has a bridge been washed out? In two hours, thanks to this wood which is easy to manage and to work, men will have made a new bridge. One is especially struck, at the beginning of this life which is so free and, more than any other, independent of men and things, by the great simplicity and ingenuity of all the procedures. Objects are rudimentary but practical, easy to make, soon ready and simple to repair. Everyone knows how to build ordinary furnishings, and no interruptions are caused here as they are when even the slightest damage occurs to one of our highly developed utensils, which only a specialist knows how to repair.

"A bamboo tube is a safe place for your maps and papers. It is a drinking glass, and it is also a pipe for smokers. On a larger scale, it is a bucket for carrying water, and the receptacle for all liquid and solid provisions. When provided with a handle it serves as a pot for the Laotians to cook their rice in, or to prepare syrup from the sugar palm. When torn into thongs it is used as rope and string. Ligatures of sapeks are threaded on kelates, or bamboo filaments, and this is what makes our new Indo-Chinese sou, with its round hole in the middle, so impractical. Those who preside over the striking of our coins are unaware that the kelate is square, a fact which the first comer from the interior could have told them. Baskets of all kinds are made with these same kelates for holding and transporting material. Hats are also made of them to provide shelter from the sun and rain. At night, when the stage of your journey is too long and you have to continue after nightfall even at the risk of meeting a tiger, setting fire to a bamboo branch is enough to frighten any off and to light your way. And not only is bamboo used to make torches, hats, string, dishes, furniture, houses and bridges, but it also serves as animal fodder and even as food for the natives, who eat the tenderest shoots as we would eat asparagus. 313 415 436 285 313 291 [372] [262] [231]

149: Reinach--303 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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[262]

Tamlung-Si-Bate	1/1000 picul or	0.061924	kilogram
Khanane-Lao (daily ration)	1/100 picul or	0.61924	"
Khanane-Khao	1/10 picul or	6.19245	kilograms
Boung-Koite (or Mune)	2/10 picul or	12.3849	"
Bok-Noi	3/10 picul or	18.5873	"
Bok-Niai (one man's load)	4/10 picul or	24.7698	"

[482]

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Coins and measurements of weight for silver

1. Sub-multiples of the Bak (or Salung) 1 Fuang=0.001876 kilogram
2. Multiples of the Bak (or Salung)

	1 Bak or 2 Fuangs=0.003753	"
Tep (Rupee)	or 3 Baks=0.011259	"
Bate (Tical)	or 4 Baks=0.015012	"
Piaster (Mane or Kib)	or 7 Baks=0.026271	"
Tael (Bia)	or 10 Baks=0.03753	"
Barre (Hang or Khane)	or 10 Bias or 100 Baks=0.3753	"
Sang or Cattie (silver pound)	or 33 Bias or 330 Baks=1.23849 kilograms	

805 [412] Measures of length for cloth, wood, etc.

		meters
	1 Niou (finger breadth) or 1/96 Fathom	=0.01895
1 Kam (closed fist) or 6 Nious	or 1/16 Fathom	=0.11375
1 Kheup (span) or 12 Nious	or 1/8 Fathom	=0.2275
1 Sok (cubit) or 2 Kheups	or 1/4 Fathom	=0.4550
1 Wa or 4 Soks or 8 Kheups	or 1 Fathom	=1.82

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1 Sok Luong (royal cubit)	or 1/4 Royal Fathom	=0.5
1 La Luong (1 Yard and a few centimeters)	or about 1/2 Royal Fathom	=1
1 Wa Luong	or 1 Royal Fathom	=2

436 Coins. The old Laotian silver and copper coins in the shape of a pirogue which used to be used in the principalities of Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang can no longer be found today and have become curiosities. As a result of the Siamese incursions, the coins of Siam and India (Tical and Rupee) replaced the native coins. Finally, since Laos has become a French possession, the only officially recognized coinage is the French piaster of commerce (1) and its subdivisions.

(1) As well as the Mexican piasters of Hong-Kong and Singapore and the Japanese yen.

However, the Siamese and Hindu coins continue to circulate alongside this official coinage, and are in fact indispensable for transactions by reason of their weight, which bears a direct relation to the system in force in the land (2).

(2) The scale of equivalence between weights and coins is based on the standard of the "Salung" or tenth part of the Hong-Kong "Tael," which weighs 37.53 grams. This Tael is recognized as official for weighing opium. One might nevertheless just as well take as a basis the tenth part of the Shanghai Tael, which weighs 38.88 grams. This would give the picul a theoretical weight of 62.222 kilograms instead of 61.924 kilograms.

Silver in Laos, whether in the form of coins, bars, ingots, pieces of jewelry, etc., is regarded as merchandise and is bought and sold by weight without taking into account the agio which causes fluctuations in the market price. This is due to the fact that the Laotians, since they do not yet have direct trade and banking relations with neighboring countries, have no remittances to make in the trade centers where the agio [415] [Illustration] [416] [Blank page] [417] is felt and are ignorant of its effects on the conventional value of specie.

438 But in the last few years the middlemen of Laotian trade circles--
439 the Chinese and Burmese--who are in direct relation with the centers where the agio prevails have been feeling its effects, and the latter have had repercussions on the great mass of Laotian producers through progressive increases in the price of imported merchandise.

In certain regions the absence of small coins obliges people to cut up pieces of silver, jewelry, bracelets and necklaces, or else to melt down the silver from fragments and jewelry and cast them in the

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form of hemispherical masses, adding a proportion of copper which, as a consequence of successive remeltings, may become as high as fifty percent of the total weight.

The silver fragments and pieces of jewelry are cut up in the Hua-Paan, the north of Luang-Prabang, and Tran-Ninh. Melting silver of all descriptions and alloying it with copper is done in the Muong-Hou, in Vien-Poukha and in Xieng-Khong, where the inhabitants have frequent relations with the Shan and Youn regions. Our administration is making laudable efforts to prevent these practices by accepting in its treasuries only current coins which are whole and of the requisite degree of purity. But it must be admitted that the absence of a French system of coinage based on the "Sahung" as the standard unit of weight is a serious obstacle to the complete disappearance of such practices.

It would indeed seem, at first glance, that the piaster of commerce which represents seven "sahungs" in weight and in value is too large for a small coin, and too small for money of account if it be compared to the "Barre" or the Chinese "Tael." It does not lend itself readily to small operations, and its subdivisions into fifty, twenty and ten hundredths, that is to say in accordance with our decimal system, do not agree with the country's weights and measures. The piaster does indeed correspond in value and in weight to seven "sahungs," but its decimal subdivisions do not in any way agree either with the multiples or the sub-multiples of the "sahung." The result, in sum, is losses on the exchange and a very real inconvenience in many transactions.

149: Reinach--308 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotian AM8

436

COINS IN CURRENT USE

Metal	Denomination	Legal Weight in grams	Pure silver content	Value in francs at par	Value in francs at discount	Rate of exchange (francs)	Remarks
	1. French Coins						
Silver	Piaster of commerce	27	.9	5.40	5.35	2.50	Varies with the agio
Silver	50 cent piece	13.5	.9	2.70	2.68	1.25	Varies with the agio
Silver	20 " "	5.4	.9	1.08	1.072	0.50	Varies with the agio
Silver	10 " "	2.7	.9	0.54	0.535	0.25	Varies with the agio
Bronze	1 " "	10					
	2. Coins of British India						
Silver	Rupee	11.259	.91666	2.38	2.36	1.129	The rupee counts for .45 piaster or, exactly, for 0$.42855
Silver	1/2 rupee	5.6295	.91666	1.19	1.18	0.564	The rupee counts for .45 piaster or, exactly, for 0$.42855
Silver	1/4 rupee	2.8147	.91666	0.59	0.589	0.284	The rupee counts for .45 piaster or, exactly, for 0$.42855
Silver	1/8 rupee	1.407	.91666	0.30	0.29	0.142	The rupee counts for .45 piaster or, exactly, for 0$.42855

COINS IN CURRENT USE (continued)

Metal	Denomination	Legal Weight in grams	Pure silver content	Value in francs at par	discount	Rate of exchange (francs)	Remarks
			3. Siamese Coins				
Silver	Tical	15.912	x	3.078	x	1.50	The Tical counts for .6 piaster ex. exactly, for 66.67215
	Salung	3.752		0.7695	x	0.375	
	Fuang	1.8752		0.38475	x	0.1875	
Bronze	Fuang	45					
	Two atts	11.25					
	One att	5.625					
	1/2 att	2.8125					
			4. Chinese Coins				
Silver	Tael (Hong-Kong)	38.888	x		6.47 (1896)	4.02	Exchange varies
	Tael (Shanghai)	37.53			7.18 (1896)	4.62	
	Barre (10 Taels)	388.88			x		

[419]

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5. Laotian Coins

a) Copper coins

The "Lat" is worth from 1/200 to 1/400 piaster (1). This coin is

(1) The exchange varies as follows:
128 to the Tical at Bassac.
80 to the Tical at Kham-Thong-Niai.
24 to the Tical at Ban-Phone.
This "lat" was imported by Chinese from Oubone and Korat and is a base alloy of copper and zinc.

shaped like a pirogue.

b) Iron coins

"The 'Duong,' a small bar of iron which is flattened down to a sharp edge at both ends, weighs about 120 grams and, depending on the supply, is worth from four to five hundredths of a piaster. This coin is in wide use among the Khas of the south, where it is much sought-after. It is manufactured in Cambodia, at Kompong-Soai, and it is also called 'Leklin.'"

c) Shell coins

"A string of 'Vene' of these shells, which are called 'Bias,' is worth two atts. Since there are a hundred shells in each string, each one is therefore worth 0$.0002. They are current only in Luang-Prabang" (2).

(2) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

d) Miscellaneous coins

The bar of pure silver weighing 482 grams is worth from 15 to 16 piasters, depending on the exchange.

The old bar, which was made of silver and had rounded ends, is rare and is used only in ceremonies, as a marriage coin.

There are no gold coins in Laos nor, moreover, in the other countries of the Far East. Japan, however, has just adopted bimetallism by creating a gold standard for its coins, the "Gold Yen."

436 It will perhaps be of some interest to note here that the peoples of Laos have no respect for European gold coins, [420] because their gold 822 is alloyed with copper! In this country, as in all of the Far East in 439 general, it is thought that gold is the noble metal par excellance, that 177 it is polluted and diminished by alloying it with copper, which is unworthy of it, and that it can endure being made into an alloy only with silver.

The only "gold" coins in use, and still not at all currently in northern Laos, are books of gold leaf the thickness of tinfoil. They come from China and bear the official stamps of the country's banks which put them into circulation as "merchandise" in the same way as bars of silver.

Weighing instruments

405 The weighing instruments used in Laos include the "Ta-Dieng" or "Sing," a Chinese steelyard made of wood which has three rows of graduations. It may have a hook or a single platform, and is used for weights ranging from one "Sang" (1.23849 kilograms) up to several piculs.

For weights of less than a "Sang" the same kind of Chinese steelyard, with a hook or platform, is used, but it is smaller and made of ivory or bone.

A small pair of beam scales with platforms shaped like cupels, which is called "Sing-Dieng," is used mainly for weighing precious metals and gems.

There are several series of weights for balances. They are made of bronze, iron or copper and are most diverse in shape, representing elephants, imaginary birds, hexagons, pentagons, cones, pyramids, etc.

2. TRADE COMMODITIES AND PRODUCTS OF EXCHANGE

438 Since there is no industry to speak of in Laos, the local products which make up the basic commodities of interior trade and exports come 241 mainly from agriculture, livestock raising, scavenging, fishing and hunting. Mention may be made, however, of certain products of local, not to say familial, industry which enter into interior commerce and to some extent into the trade which goes on with neighboring countries.

438 [421] These include cloth goods of pure silk, either plain or spangled with gold, goods of silk blended with cotton, and wholly 433 cotton goods, then articles of jewelry and goldsmithing, and finally metals and ores from the still rudimentary mining industry and pottery goods, edge-tools, basketry, etc.

10: d'Orleans--272 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 304, 437, 855

[LSS: in the village of Ban Sop Huan] "The children often wear a silver collar round the neck, and sometimes a bracelet on the ankles. Some of them are tattooed yellow, and a horse is represented upon the leg of one child. Men, women and children come to visit us whilst we eat; they bring us some rather pretty stuff for sale, and prefer money to payments in kind. The women consider our stock very attractive, but they could not sell it again. They accept some pictures as a present (these are easily carried and very well received in these regions), but their husbands take most of them away again."

10: d'Orleans--320 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 437, 443, 551

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "... We were overrun by a troop of female hawkers, who settled themselves down in our quarters and spread out their wares for sale. These women all wear the same sort of dress, namely a silk petticoat with a scarf to match, some of them having their hair cropped close after the Siamese fashion, which is a very ugly one. After a few days we get quite familiar and call these young ladies by their proper names. They either have some name which indicates their sex, followed by the qualification of small, pretty, or what not; or else they bear the name of some good quality, such as peace, happiness, prosperity, jewel. The same saleswomen came back every day, asking an exorbitant price for every article and not showing any inclination to rebate it. However, they are very good-natured in the bargaining which follows, and seem as well pleased if they do not effect a sale as when, after a long discussion, we end by making a purchase."

68: Mouhot--140 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 162, 437

"The Chinese and Indians alone traffic here; [HD: i.e. in the area between Loeui and Kenne Thao south of Pak Lai] it requires a day's journey to conclude the smallest bargain, and a whole village is assembled to make sure that the money is not spurious. On my route here I have not met a single Siamese, but in every village have seen Birmans, Kariens, and people from Western Laos. I have found men in Lao-Pouene moulded like athletes and of herculean strength, and thought that the King of Siam might raise in this province a fine regiment of grenadiers. In all the villages I have visited, the inhabitants, including even the priests, set to work to collect insects for me, glad to receive in return a few copper buttons, glass beads, or a little red cloth."

10: d'Orleans--320-321 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 411, 438, 443, 778

"They [LSS: women merchants in Luang Prabang] have a very diversified stock of goods to choose from, including gold embroidered shirts made by the Lus, Siam brocaded vests, old silver, bracelets made of Kas bronze, and hatchets and other weapons in old bronze; these latter are very scarce and difficult to buy, as they are preserved with superstitious reverence by the families to which they belong. The hatchets, some of which are straight while others are curved, are very characteristic, while the ivory-handled knives represent yaks, the genii of the Buddhist religion, [321] similar to those which are found in the interior of Borneo."

10: d'Orleans--321 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 438, 777, 831, 842

[LSS: in the market of Luang Prabang] "There are amulets, wild boar tusks, pyrites, and fossils rolled up in thin silver thread, some of these latter being supposed to possess the power of fecundation, while others are obscene."

10: d'Orleans--321 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 328, 438

"The industries special to the country are represented by silver work, cups for the temples, tobacco jars, apparatus for crushing the betel nut, and knife handles. These articles are made of gold for personages of very high standing, but only to order."

10: d'Orleans--339 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 274, 438, 491

"Going up the stream as far as the point where the two rivers meet, we came to the movable bridge built upon piles, which leads to the village of Pan Luong and beyond that, quite at the south of the village, the manufactory of tchoum-tchoum. This liquor is obtained by putting water and rice into earthenware jars, and letting it ferment for a fortnight; at the end of that time the contents of the jars are placed, together with a little yeast, into wooden casks surmounted by a large vat full of water. By a somewhat complicated process, the liquor known as tchoum-tchoum is obtained and sold at the rate of two ticals per gallon."

10: d'Orleans--368 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 241, 262, 438

"... The village of Muong Liep (Diap on the map), once important, now possesses only a few houses. The gardens are full of fruit trees, cocoa trees, areca nut trees, oranges, bananas, and the mak tan la late, (1) which are eaten with a spoon.

1. In French, cœur-de-bœuf.

We cannot buy any rice, the inhabitants having very little. They got it from Nam Ou, or certain villages especially given to its growth."

115: Le Boulanger--140 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

000 If death had not placed a brutal term on his wanderings a few weeks later, the serious Mouhot might also have been the first man to question the impassive Buddhas on the mysterious past of this remote land, felt the infinite charm of its melodious nights when the khenes give voice to their moving chords, and -- who can say? -- sung the grace of the pretty girls with bare and gilded breasts who in their carefree way weave multicolored scarves under their flowered huts.

105 He contents himself with noting rapidly: "Fortunately this is not like Siam, and I can get help from the natives. . . . The /225/ Laotians are peaceable, submissive, patient, sober, trusting, credulous, superstitious, faithful, simple and naive. They naturally
/685/ hold robbery in horror. The story is told that one of their kings had thieves fried in a cauldron of boiling oil, but since the ravages of the last wars a certain number of thieves are beginning to be found among them who have been driven to rapine by poverty or by the spirit of vengeance.

/685/ "Besides cultivating rice and maize the Laotians grow batatas,
/241/ gourds, red peppers, melons and other vegetables. . . . They sell
/438 the Chinese ivory and pelts from tigers and wild animals. They
434/ also trade gold dust, silver and copper ore, gamboge, cardamom, lac, wax, dyeing wood, cotton, silk and all the products of their soil for heavy porcelain, small glassware and other small commodities of Chinese industry.

"The Laotians are not made for war. Ever since the beginning they have been subjected to the neighboring kings, and have never been able to shake off this heavy yoke.

"They seem to be more industrious than the Siamese and to
/101/ possess more of the spirit of adventure and trade. Although both peoples /226/ have many points of resemblance, both physical and moral, the Laotians can nevertheless be distinguished by their dialect and especially by their customs, which are simpler and more amiable.

533 ". . . Their music is very sweet, harmonious and sentimental.
101 Only three people are needed to make a melodious concert. One plays a bamboo organ, the second signs romances with the accent of a man inspired, and the third strikes strips of a sonorous wood together in rhythm, the clicking sounds of which have a striking effect" (1).

1. This praise of Laotian music should be compared with the

133 The market of Bassac owes its importance to the proximity of the
433 plateau. It is therefore a storehouse for the Laotians of the whole region, a reservoir [51] from which they draw. The part which it
•438 plays is obviously a fine one, and no more can be asked of it.

There has also been much discussion as to whether large-scale breeding of buffalo and oxen would be successful there, for at present livestock is found only in the villages situated near the Sédone, that is to say, quite far from the plateau. The question has not yet been settled, and sufficient tests have not yet been made.

At the southernmost corner of the plateau there is a conical
133 mountain about 800 meters in altitude which Francis Garnier baptized The Breast [le Téton] because of its shape, and to which he later gave the name Lagrée's Peak [Pic de Lagrée] in commemoration of the President of the Exploratory Commission of 1866.

[224] The elephant hunters of southern Laos go to the mountainous region of Saravane and Attopeu every year, and there they capture an annual quota of fifty to a hundred elephants.

133 To the east of Attopeu the mountains are inhabited by well-nigh independent Kha tribes--Cédangs, Djarais, Rognaos and
[177 Bahnars. The two latter tribes have almost been pacified, thanks to the persevering efforts of the Christian missionaries of Kon-Toum.
797] This point is the center of the mission, and through it passes the road from Attopeu to Qui-Nhon. It crosses the Annamitic Chain
563 between Kon-Xalam and Kon-Tiorak at an altitude of about 900 meters. Near Attopeu this same road goes up over Pou-Satièng (400 meters), the last ramification of the great chain, which separates the basin of the Sé-Souk from that of the Sé-Kémane.

[135] This region of Pou-Satièng, Sé-Souk and Sé-Kémane has long been known to be rich in gold deposits.

§ IV--HYDROLOGY

a.--THE MÉKONG--GENERALITIES

133 It has often been said, and rightly so, that the Nile constituted Egypt. In the same way it can be said that the Mékong makes Laos, for is it not the river which gives what vitality there is to these vast isolated regions? Is it not the river which, by its annual floods, helps the growth of rice? Does it not supply, with its fish, a large

503 predict. It has therefore been decided that, for the moment at least, no more attention should be given to these rapids and that our concern should be restricted to accomplishing the labors necessary to facilitate steam navigation during the low water period in the following reaches:

"1. from Kratié to Stung-Treng and Khône;

"2. between Khône and Pak-Moun;

"3. between Savannakhèt and Sam-Pan-Na."

It might perhaps be understandable that the plan to make these rapids navigable should have been abandoned, if haste were made to build a railway joining the middle Mékong to some port in Annam, when the rapids would become an absolute barrier which we should no longer think of overcoming. But such is not the case, and many long years will still have to pass before the products of the markets of Luang-Prabang and Nong-Khay can reach the Annam coast in any practical way. Moreover, if the work on the navigability of the Mékong continues to go forward at the same slow rate and if we do not take greater advantage of this "moving highway," we shall continue to play into the hands of the Siamese and the market in Bangkok, thanks to the Korat railway, will continue to absorb the Laotian products which should have no other outlets than Saigon, Tourane and Vinh.

[138]

d.--DESCRIPTION OF THE DIFFERENT REACHES

1. The Upper Reach

133 505 The Mékong enters Laos where it is joined by the Nam-La, at 21° 40' N. latitude, slightly downstream from Xieng-Hong which is on the 22nd parallel. As far as Xieng-Sèn it flows in an approximately northeast and southwest direction between two ranges of peaks which constrict its bed and make it a torrent rather than a river. In this narrow corridor it has dug a channel which varies, during the high water period, from 150 to 300 meters in width and which sometimes grows as narrow as 50 meters during the low water period. Its bed is generally encumbered with shoals and [79] rocks, and the whirlpools, eddies, currents and counter-currents make navigation impossible. Thus Lieutenant Commander Mazeran's bold and successful venture deserves mention here, for he succeeded in taking the gunboat La Grandière as far as Xieng-Kok, that is to say nearly to the 21st

149: Reinach--69 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

3. The Inner Reach

505 133 361 438

After being joined by the Moun, the largest tributary on its right bank, the Mékong turns back eastward. As it leaves the narrow gorge of Pak-Moun where its course narrows to as little as 200 meters in width between sheer cliffs, it resumes a general north-northwest and south-southeast direction and spreads out over rich plains as far as the mouth of the Sédone.

Korat (1), the largest market in Siamese Laos, also belongs to the

(1) The Moun passes about 25 kilometers to the southeast of Korat.

Mékong basin through the Ta-Krong. The importance of this center is well-known, and today it is directly connected with Bangkok by a railway. Oubône (2), the other market town which is the storehouse

(2) Korat and Oubône are the seats of two French consulates.

of Lower Laos for Korat and Bangkok, as Nong-Khay is the storehouse of Upper Laos, is situated on the banks of the Moun about 300 kilometers from Korat, and only sixty from the Mékong. Communication between Korat and Oubône is achieved mainly by land, by means of ox-carts. We have seen in the foregoing that [93] steam navigation had been attempted on the Moun during the high water period as early as 1891, and that the Siamese were then planning to send their steamships out on the Mékong in the hope of getting there ahead of us. The launches provide a highly irregular service between Oubône and Tha-Phan-Sang, which is about 25 kilometers downstream from Korat. The trip takes from eight to ten days going upriver, and four to five coming down.

[492]

In its lower course, that is to say between Oubône and Pak-Moun, the Moun is barred near its mouth by shelves which make navigation extremely difficult, even for pirogues, during part of the year. The Chinese merchants of Oubône, however, who go by pirogue to Bassac or out on the Sédone, go up and down the Moun in all seasons. Because of the particular service for which they are used, their pirogues are known by the special name of Hua-Moun, or pirogues of the Moun (1)

(1) See table, Chapter VIII.

of the Moun (1). 000

(1) See table, Chapter VIII.

The most difficult rapid to negotiate is the Keng-Tanah, situated only three kilometers from Pak-Moun. During the low water period it is necessary to unload them completely and transport them by hand across dry land over extremely rough sandstone rocks. It has been negotiated during the high water period by the single-wheeler the Haiphong, and since the current beyond the rapids is weak and the width sufficient (300 meters), steam navigation is possible as far as Oubône for perhaps two or three months. 505 133

Francis Garnier describes this region as follows (2):

(2) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

"From Pi-Moun on the river is once more unobstructed. A very weak current, straight banks and a uniform width give it, in certain spots, the appearance of a canal dug by man."

At Pak-Sédone the Mékong is joined on its left bank by another important tributary, the Sédone. This river, which is about 200 kilometers in length, rounds the northern part of the plateau of the Bolovens. All the roads which descend from this mountain mass end in its valley, and all the products of the region leave it by way of the Sédone. Cardamom, which is the most important of these, is [94] an item much dealt in at the temporary market of Champi. The latter is the terminus of the convoys which come down from the plateau, and from this point on merchandise goes by river to Bassac or Oubône. 438 361 241

The market of Champi had to be established fairly near the mouth of the Sédone, for just upriver and less than thirty kilometers from Pak-Sédone the river is barred by insurmountable waterfalls [Illustration here] fifteen meters in height. From the point of view of navigation the Sédone is therefore divided into two sections: the part situated above the falls and the part situated below. 505 133

To the north of the falls the Sédone has a reach some thirty kilometers in length which can be navigated in all seasons by pirogues

4. The Maritime Reach

505 133 Below Khône the Mékong is encumbered by islands, islets and shelves which are more or less difficult to negotiate. During the high water period the river covers most of these hazards. Only the crests of the trees are left above water, and one navigates in a veritable submerged forest which reminds one of an inundation.

361 438 Stung-Treng is an important center, especially by reason of its site, for the city is located at the junction of the Mékong and the Sé-Khong, somewhat below the point where the latter joins the Sésane, which is itself swelled near its mouth by the Ton-Lé-Srépok. The produce of the region of Attopeu naturally finds its way to Stung-Treng, for it is the commercial intermediary between this region and Cambodia.

505 133 At Thboung-Kla, thirty kilometers below Stung-Treng, the Mékong enters Cambodian territory. Then begins a long series of rapids which impede its course and make it difficult [99] [Illustration] [100] [Blank page] [101] to negotiate, but which do not constitute an insurmountable obstacle for steam launches which have sufficient speed. The first important post in Cambodia is at Kratié, and steamships can go up as far as this point in all seasons.

The Sékhong, the Sésane and the Srépok form a basin which is noteworthy for its extent, being equal in area to all of Cochinchina. Unfortunately, the population density and importance of trade in the basin are not in proportion to so considerable an area. The valleys are sparsely populated and traffic there is, in consequence, quite limited. Finally, these watercourses are difficult to negotiate.

The Sékhong is a river whose course stretches over about 400 kilometers. Its sources lie near the 16th parallel, some hundred kilometers to the southwest of Hué, in the orographic nucleus of the Annamitic Chain which also gives rise to one of its large tributaries, the Dak-Poyo.

The upper course of the Sékhong bears the name of Dak-Mout. This river crosses an extremely rough region where towering rocks hem in its torrential bed. Beyond Koum-Kang the valley of the Sékhong widens out and small pirogues can navigate there.

At Muong-Mai, that is to say somewhat below the 15th parallel, the Sékhong is joined by the Sé-Kémane, an important tributary which, under the name of the Dak-Poyo, has its origin in the same mountain mass as the Dak-Mout. After it, like the Sékhong, flows past steep

[114] of what has been observed, and because no better expression of the facts could be hoped for.

THE THAI RACE

142 "Laotians. Of all the Thais, the Laotian is the one who has
144 remained the purest, although he has a much higher proportion of Aryan blood than the other varieties, with the exception of the Lus. Fairly tall in stature, his hair cut short, elegant in his movements and more refined than all the other inhabitants of the land, he is the aristocratic type of Laos. His upbringing, his education, his religion and even his vices have a mark of distinction which make
438 them stand out above those of his neighbors. An excellent boatman,
505 and a trader rather than a farmer, he is the one who seems the master of the land, as much by virtue of his commercial aptitudes as by the
484 ease with which he ranges the country. Mounted on his long and narrow shaped pirogue, made in one piece of a tree trunk hollowed out by fire, he goes great distances to visit peoples of the most varied races [175] [Illustration] [176] [Blank page] [177] and serves as a link between all the human varieties which populate Laos. He is at home and at his ease everywhere, standing out clearly above all his countrymen in this respect.

[361] "The Laotian prefers to settle along navigable watercourses and
[241] in proximity to plains of ricefields. He is glad to have his land
[567] worked by mercenaries or by dependents of inferior race, and sometimes by slaves (at least before our arrival). He himself, with quite an extensive knowledge of the needs and resources of the other inhabitants of the land, particularly likes to traffic in all kinds of merchandise. He it is who goes to buy forest products and cereal grains on the spot from the mountainfolk or from sedentary farmers, and sells them cloth, salt, tobacco, earthenware, farming implement
[439] etc. in exchange. He it is who exports the products of Laos to neighboring countries and brings back the things which Laotian industry cannot produce. His business as a commercial traveler, which he likes and which gives him a good standard of living, occupies him for only a few months of the year but brings him into contact with all the neighboring peoples and also with the Europeans and Chinese in the Siamese, Annamite and Cochinchinese trading posts. Thence arises his veneer of civilization which strikes one at first glance.

149: Reinach--147 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Polygamy. Although polygamy is not the rule in Laos, it is sanctioned by custom, and the only limits as to the number of wives one man may possess are the extent of his resources and his personal taste for becoming the husband of a greater or lesser number of wives. 595 554

Since infertile unions are regarded as a punishment of [194] heaven, and since physiological defects are beyond the comprehension of the Laotians, a husband who has no children has two courses between which he can choose:

1. To repudiate his sterile wife. He must then leave her all their property gains since their marriage and half of their common property; [586]

2. To keep this wife and take a second one.

Recourse is preferably had to the last solution in most cases. By acting thus the husband avoids making restitutions which would often be difficult for him. Moreover, his first wife often persuades him to take a second wife who will be under her orders and almost become her slave.

This is what does happen if the husband has enough money for several wives. They are all under the domination of the first, never sit at the same rank as she and may not wear jewels or clothes which are as rich and sumptuous as hers. They are, in a way, legal concubines.

These secondary wives are ranked in accordance with their date of entry into the polygamous household and are designated as the first wife, second wife, third wife, fourth wife, etc. In the house, except for the times when the husband or master keeps them with him, they are employed as servants for all the household tasks, farming, spinning cotton, weaving cloth, etc.

In the case the first wife should die, and according to the will of the husband, the second wife takes her place and the others advance one notch.

There is also another very curious type of polygamy which is encouraged by the nomadic habits of the Laotian traveler or trader and which, "utile dulci," yields him profit, security and pleasure. Some natives are, in fact, married at several different places, often quite far from one another and generally situated at the spots where periodic markets are held. 438 595 485

The advantages of this type of polygamy--from the Laotian point of view, of course--are that the husband can have an associate

438
595 in each center who will represent him, handle business in his absence,
485 collect at leisure the stock of trading merchandise needed for the next [195] trip, and also provide a home for him where he is sure to find a smiling face and a warm welcome in the course of his wanderings.

554 Among the nobility and the so-called princely families polygamy
595 is the rule and is almost obligatory for the sake of prestige, which demands a greater or lesser number of concubines depending on the husband's rank. It may sometimes happen, for various reasons, that there are two wives whose progeniture enjoy a higher rank and inherit the titles and duties of the father. It also happens, in this social milieu, that the first wife or wives will see that their husband is growing old, worn out and morose, and will seek to distract him during his last years by making him marry quite young girls for whom he is more of a father than a husband but who give him the illusion of rejuvenation and bring joy and gaiety into the house with the light of their youth (1).

(1) Thanks to the docile character of Laotian women in general, and also to the atavistic imprint of custom which makes them regard polygamy as an entirely natural status, peace and harmony are rarely troubled in such households. A hierarchy naturally arises among the various wives and concubines. Each of them remains in the place assigned to her by the date of her entry into the household and enjoys any special favors which may be conferred on her by their common husband without arousing any jealousy.

Quarrels between wives are so rare that when one does by chance occur the corporal punishments decreed by ancient custom are unhesitatingly applied. The situation is of such a nature as to preserve among Laotian wives a spirit of conciliation and amiability which is not the least of their charms.

832 Kissing. Punishment for amatory offenses. Like most of the
834 peoples of the Far East, the Laotians do not indulge in kissing, at least not in the European manner. They rub their noses against the skin of their children or wives and sniff more or less noisily.

Although the morals of the Laotians seem excessively free to us and their remarks, songs and gestures often border on what we would describe as obscenity, we should not conclude that the Laotians are deliberately lewd or cynical. They are instinctively careful to be

291 the Deng-Thais, is applied to the edges of the gown. It is further
563 ornamented [233] on the outside edge opposite the buttonholes with colored silk embroidery which does not go down below the waist.

This garment is also folded in half lengthwise and worn rolled around the body with the sleeves left hanging.

The women wear their hair parted down the middle in front
302 and rolled into a sort of long tassel behind which is contained within
301 the folds of a little turban. The latter is wound above the forehead and the free end inserted under the first turn, on the nape of the neck. This headdress is quite similar to that of the Annamite women in Tonkin.

In certain regions of Laos, Thai women wind their hair into a sort of coil which girls wear loosely down their neck and betrothed or married women wear on top of the head. Thai jewelry is made of heavy silver and is of the same type as Laotian jewelry. The men wear bracelets on their wrists.

Food. The Thai diet is like that of the Laotians, but they prefer
262 non-glutinous white rice and use chopsticks like the Chinese and
264 Annamites.

The use of betel is quite widespread among the Thais, but in
276 contrast to the Laotians they keep their teeth white. The Thais smoke the oily, opiated tobacco of Tonkin and China in bamboo waterpipes whose tiny bowls only contain a small pinch of tobacco. They also smoke a local variety of tobacco, either in cigarettes or in pipes with a highly worked clay bowl into which a long stem ending in a glass or jade mouthpiece is inserted.

Character. Although serious and reflective, the Thais have a
156 vivacious and friendly character. They are somewhat cold in appearance, but are sound friends and highly affable when one gets to know them better.

[701] Gentler and more timid than the Laotians, they have no taste for the art of war and it is difficult to get them to stay in the native militia.

They are very self-seeking and much more miserly than the Lao-
433 tians. [234] It should be noted, moreover, that since they produce
• 438 everything themselves and are a people of farmers and livestock breeders, they do not have, by virtue of their ever sedentary occupations,
156 the opportunities which these latter have to enjoy fairly high profits resulting from commercial transactions, nor the special habits which contact with different races gives.

181 The Thais love pleasure and celebrations. Guaranteed their daily
461

Tribal Tai

619 The Neua-Thais. The Neua-Thais differ very little, in all
361 respects, from their fellows. They generally live on higher ground than the other Thais, but they change the location of their village quite frequently. [241] [Illustration] [242] [Blank page] [243]

291 The women knot their skirts under their armpits, above their breasts, and always wear a very short jacket made of cotton, silk or velvet, depending on the season.

231 They engage in sericulture, and with the silk spin and weave brocaded cloth with harmonious colors.

779 At the same time as ancestor worship, the Neu-Thais practice an attenuated form of Buddhism. Pagodas are rare and the bonzes, few in number, serve several centers in turn.

461 Their character is docile. They do not have a very marked taste for trade and are content to be excellent farmers and livestock breeders.
276 Unfortunately, they are inclined to be opium smokers. This is doubtless due to the proximity of the Meos and Yaos who are the producers of the drug.

619 The Phou-Eunes. This branch of the Thai family is very close to
101 the Laotians in mores and customs.

There are only a few modifications in costume and language, modifications due to the age-old proximity of the Annamites and the continuous relations which have existed between the two peoples.
[438] These latter may be explained by the fact that the territory long inhabited by the Phou-Eunes in the east and southeast of Tran-Ninh is situated on the Tonkin Gulf side, and that their produce naturally flows towards the ports on the Annamite coast (1).

(1) To be sure, there are several groupings of Phou-Eunes in the Mekong basin, in Tran-Ninh, to the northeast of Vien-Tiane and in Camkeut-Cammon.

361 The Phou-Eunes prefer to live in high valleys and on high plateaus where the climate is quite severe during the winter. They are more reserved in character than the Laotians, more industrious and less inclined to celebrations and festivities of all kinds.

779 Their religion is Buddhism, but the bonzes are less numerous than elsewhere. It is probable that the little taste which Phou-Eunes have for the religious life is due to the influence of nearby Annam, where the bonzes are a long way from being venerated and coddled as they are in Laos.

Se-Bang-Fai. But studies are not yet sufficiently advanced for us to be able to give any useful information. 316

We have nevertheless felt that we should mention these deposits, in order to establish the importance of all this part of Laos from the point of view of mineral wealth.

[327] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER VII

I

SCAVENGING

We have seen that the inhabitants of Laos are apathetic and little inclined to work. They nevertheless find, although they go to scarcely any trouble, enough to supply their needs easily. 461 241

Indeed, with the exception of a few annual crops such as tobacco, cotton and indigo which are grown on the ever-renewed alluvia of the watercourses, the production of rice and of maize are the only occupations which require--and even then during a relatively short time--any degree of work or perseverance. We may mention the opium poppy, ramie, hemp and the mulberry tree merely as a reminder, for only a small part of the population devotes its time to these crops, which are still not at all extensive. [249]

Yet, it may be objected, the native has an easy life, dresses adequately, [328] lives in a house which is solid and comfortable from his point of view, has various tools and utensils, weapons, and sometimes even valuable cloth goods, jewels, etc. He spends money for celebrations and for offerings to the bonzes and pagodas. He pays taxes, he supports court costs which are often large with respect to the question at issue, and he is subject to the exactions of his mandarins to a greater or less degree. Finally, the commercial transactions of Laos involve quantities and sums which are quite high in comparison to the sparse population. 511 [438]

How are we to reconcile all these factors, and how is it that the Laotian, who produces so little with his labor, nevertheless has all he needs to get along on?

This is due to the fact that Laos is above all else a scavenging country. 314

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Coccus lacca, which secretes the lac to envelop its larvae.

In trade it appears in the form of half-cylindrical fragments, in breakages (seed-lac), or else adhering to the branches of the tree on which it formed. The latter is lac on sticks, whence the English name stick-lac by which it is known in Far Eastern trading circles (2).

(2) Lac in its most widespread form--lac in shells (shellac)--is not found in Laos. It can easily be produced by boiling the preceding types in alkaline water.

This product is harvested by scavenging from trees which were seeded long ago and are scattered throughout the brush, and also by regular cultivation from a triennial tree, as will be seen below. The principal varieties of trees on which lac is found are the Ficus, the butées, the Croton, the Mimosa and the Acacia.

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There are three kinds of lac: bright-colored lac (which colors a moistened finger) in whole pieces, lac on wood and brown cellular lac in more or less broken fragments. Throughout the country, however, it is sold mixed, and only at the transit markets are the three kinds separated.

[435]

[330] The price per hundred kilograms is from 35 to 42 francs at Luang-Prabang, from 45 to 48 francs at Pak-Lay, from 47 to 50 francs at Nong-Khay, 42 francs at Khong and Bassac, 62 francs at Pnom-Penh and Cholen, and from 72 to 85 francs at Korat.

Crimson lake is used for dyeing as well as in the preparation of certain colors and varnishes with an alcohol base. A small proportion remains in the country, but the greater part is exported.

3. Cardamom (Mak-Neng).

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[245]

Cardamom is the fruit of the plant Ellateria cardamomum which grows in the forests but which may be cultivated, as is the case on the plateau of the Bolovens in Laos and in the region of Pursat in Cambodia. The variety common to all parts of Laos is the great cardamom or bastard cardamom, while that cultivated in Cambodia is the true cardamom or small cardamom, much superior to the first in quality and value.

The plant grows best in the humid forests, and is harvested in August or September. The plant has vast numbers of light seeds, and it takes about eighty or a hundred thousand seeds to make up the weight of one "mune" (about twelve kilograms). The price per

Its price varies between 12 and 15 francs per hundred kilograms. 000

6. Catechu (Sisiet). 824

Catechu is produced from a decoction of the bark of two varieties 314
of trees, the catechu acacia and the leafy butée.

This product, which is used in making the national masticatory 276
together with betel, betel nuts and lime, is consumed, in the large centers of Upper Laos, in the form of a dry residue obtained from a decoction of the bark. Generally, however, it is the bark itself which is consumed after it has been broken up into small pieces.

Natural sisiet takes the form of shreds of bark about a cubit (.45 meter) long by four centimeters wide and one centimeter thick. The shreds are tied together in packs of twenty-five or fifty, depending on the region.

The whole production is consumed locally. The natives [334] [438]
go into the forest at points where suitable trees are to be found, bundle up the pieces and load thm on great rafts which go down from Pak-Lay and Vien-Tiane to Bassac and even to Khong.

At Pak-Lay sisiet is worth only 7 francs and 50 centimes per [435]
hundred pieces, but it naturally costs more the further away one goes from the centers of production.

7. Curcuma (Khi-Mine). 824

This plant, of the Zingiberaceae family, has a rhizome which 314
contains an orange-yellow coloring matter used for dyeing silk and 386
cotton.

Sometimes the inhabitants (chiefly the women and children) 302
rub their whole body with curcuma scrapings after a bath. The application of curcuma to the wet skin, which acquires a light yellow color, is said by the natives to ward off mosquitoes and keep the skin fresh.

Up to the present time this product has not formed the basis of [438]
any foreign trade. It is sold in small amounts on the markets of Laos.

8. Ginger. 263

The ginger which is called "Mak-Khing" in Laotian is the Zingi- 824
ber officinale or gray ginger. Used as a condiment by the entire 314
population, this product does not enter into trade. Its price varies [435]
between 12 francs and fifty centimes and 16 francs and fifty centimes per hundred kilograms.

9. Roucou. 824

The roucou, or fruit of the Roucouyer Bixia, is called "Kene- 314
Mak-Soum-Phou" in Laotian. Literally, this means Seed of an 386
acidulous mountain fruit. It is used to make red and orange dyes

824
314 when mixed with curcuma. The trees are found in the forest, and
386 sometimes in gardens.

10. Yams.

The yam is an edible tubercle of the Dioscorea family. It is
262 represented by two varieties, the white and the black, which are called
241 "Mane-Phuek-Khao" and "Mane-Phuek-Dam" in Laotian. These tubercles are the main standby when there is a scarcity of rice and [335] maize, but in ordinary times they are used only to supplement the usual diet.

11. Taro or cush-cush (Mane-Pa).

Taro is also a food plant of the Aroïdées caladiées genus (Caladium esculentum). Like the yam, it is one of the most useful edible tubercles in times of famine.

12. Medicinal plants.

824 Designated by the generic name "Ya" in Laotian, these plants
278 are represented by special types of orchids, roots, bark, berries, leaves and even pieces of wood of different kinds, the whole forming an assortment of medicaments.

[438] The Khas are the ones who collect these various products from the depths of the forests, and they trade them either to Chinese or to Laotians for money or other goods.

[435] Certain of these plants and barks are used by the Laotians while others, such as the leaves from orchid plants, for example, are purchased by Chinese merchants at prices which vary between 33 and 62 francs per hundred kilograms.

13. Cloves.

The clove tree (Caryophyllus aromaticus. Kane-Phou in Laotian) is quite scarce in Laos. Cloves are mixed with various ingredients in masticatories or are taken as medicine.

Cultivation of the clove tree ought to be developed in Laos because of the high value of its flowers, which, when dried on the tree, constitute the cloves of commerce.

14. Beeswax (Phung).

222 Beeswax is much sought-after in Laos, where a great deal of it is
[231] consumed. It is a scavenging product par excellence since, except in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na, the inhabitants do not practice apiculture and
314 are content to go into the forest and look for honeycombs in order to extract the wax. The latter is used for domestic needs and for worship
[438] ceremonies. It also forms the basis of quite an important trade.

149: Reinach--251 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Hunting

224 Hunting, for the inhabitants of Laos, is another form of scavenging, since it procures them either live animals or the remains of the same without any great labor or expense.

411 For the Laotian, time does not count. He makes his powder himself, and with the exception of firearms his hunting devices are also
224 of his own fabrication. With the help of this far from perfect equipment he is nevertheless able to capture live elephants and to procure the ivory and remains of those which he kills, as well as the hide, talons, bones and horns of a multitude of other animals. All these
[438 262] products are so many trade commodities for him. The flesh of all these animals, moreover, makes a sizeable contribution to the diet of the Laotian hunter. It is a feast for him, for his family and for his entourage.

[325] [344] The natives have a perfect knowledge of the habits and customs of all the representatives of the local fauna. Patient, adroit,
224 endowed with excellent powers of hearing and sight which are further developed and sharpened by practice, they are not afraid to attack the tiger and other large animals despite their rudimentary weapons.

Lying hidden for hours at a time, motionless and silent and abstaining from smoking, the hunter waits for his victim without losing his self-control. When it approaches within a few meters of him, his sure eye and untrembling arm enable him to strike it dead with a bullet or with a poisoned arrow shot from a powerful crossbow.

One is astounded at the results achieved with weapons which are so imperfect, as much by their rudimentary construction as by their age, and which often lead one to fear more for the hunter's life than for the beast's. We must admire these men who, although reputed to be cowardly, brave danger with such primitive weapons and go in search of wild animals in their very lairs, killing them at almost point-blank range so that oftentimes the wad from the gun singes the animal's fur or the arrow goes in one side and out the other.

The firearms used by the Laotians are flintlock or muzzle-loading
411 rifles, some of which are of Siamese or Burmese manufacture. Others
439 are imported from Europe through trade or in private cargoes. There are also old regulation rifles, British and others, chiefly those which bear the image of a cock and the word "Tower" stamped on the lock or breech.

224 this animal has been hunted to excess and because of [346] the value of ivory, it has disappeared from certain regions. It is scarcely ever found now except in the valleys of the Sesane, the Se-Ia-Drang and the Srepok and in the Muong of Maha-Say in Lower Laos, and in Vien-Tiane, Tran-Ninh, the Hua-Pahn, the Sib-Song-Chau-Thai, etc., in Upper Laos.

313 For the last ten years or so the working of the teak forests in the Siamese and Shan territories of the basin of the Upper Menam (1) has

224 438 (1) Elephants are used in Siam to carry teak logs from the place where they are felled to nearby watercourses.

necessitated the use of an ever-increasing number of these pachyderms, among which overwork and accidents claim many victims. Thus to fill the gaps elephants have to be sought where there are still some left, and it is precisely in French Laos, on the left bank of the Mekong, that a few wild herds are still found.

Since there is no shortage of buyers, it is to the interest of the hunters to capture as many of these valuable animals each year as possible and to train them with a view towards selling them. Since demand even greatly exceeds supply, an inflationary tendency has resulted which has caused prices to rise by sixty to eighty percent. Besides the sum paid to the sellers, the purchasers have to pay an exit duty amounting to half of the purchase price. This tax, like other similar ones of which we shall speak later on, is levied to compensate for the real estate tax which Laos does not yet have.

224 The methods now used to capture wild elephants are identical, except for minor details, in all parts of Laos. In order to summarize 231 them and to provide a description of an elephant hunt, we shall have recourse to the interesting account which Captain Gosselin (2) has given.

(2) Le Laos et le Protectorat français, op. cit. [Paris, 1900.]

"At the beginning of the dry season, the owners of tame elephants make ready for the great beats which take place in the mountains near the Annam frontier. They train their elephants to run, so that they will develop speed, and manufacture immense ropes forty to fifty meters long, made from strands of buffalo hide [347] and rattan and strengthened with copper wire. A collar is fitted at one end of each rope which is large enough to be put around an elephant's neck, while a ring about sixty centimeters in diameter is fitted to the other end.

000 to a point where it is perfectly docile.

231 435 The sale price of elephants varies with their size, their sex, their age, and according to whether or not they have tusks and according to the quality and size of these latter. It also varies with the region.

At Outhai-Thani (Luang-Prabang) an elephant costs from 1,500 to 3,000 francs, and the cost is about the same at Vien-Tiane. In Lower Laos the price varies from 750 to 1,200 francs.

When an elephant dies it still leaves highly valuable remains, especially ivory.

231 438 435 1. Ivory.

A hundred kilograms of ivory sells for 1,800 francs at Outhai-Thani (Luang-Prabang), from 935 to 1,770 francs in Nong-Khay, from 750 to 1,250 francs in Song-Khone, from 750 to 1,670 francs in Saravane, from 1,000 to 1,670 francs in Bassac and from 1,500 to 1,670 francs in Khong, Stung-Treng and Attopeu. Its average cost in Cholen (Cochinchina) is 2,500 francs per hundred kilograms.

2. Bones.

The price of elephant bones is generally from 12 francs 50 centimes to 15 francs per hundred kilograms.

3. Hides.

Elephant hides cost from 60 to 70 francs per hundred kilograms.

The remains of other elephants furnish the markets of Laos with the following products: rhinoceros horns and hides, horns and hides from buffalo and oxen, horns and hides from all the deer tribe, hides, talons and bones from the cat family, bear and otter pelts, scales from anteaters, tortoises and caymans, etc. To this list should be added snake venom, bear gall and soft hartshorn, which are regarded as specific remedies against certain diseases.

The prices of some of these products are as follows:

Rhinoceros horns	111 to 137 francs per kilogram
Rhinoceros hides	60 to 70 francs per 100 kilograms
Soft hartshorn	1,666 to 2,200 francs per 100 kilograms or 18 to 40 francs per pair
[349] Horns of stags, elk and bucks (hard)	25 to 75 francs per 100 kilograms
Hides of stags, elk, bucks, goats	37 to 83 " " " "
Wild buffalo horns	50 to 60 " " " "
Wild buffalo hides	46 to 50 " " " "
Ox horns	50 to 58 " " " "

Ox hides	58 to 65 francs per 100 kilograms 237
Bones of tigers and other cats	58 to 75 " " " " 438
Pelts of tigers, panthers and other large cats	3 francs to 12 francs and 50 centimes apiece 435
Anteater scales (without the skin)	50 to 72 francs per 100 kilograms
Anteater hides (with scales)	46 to 50 " " " "
Skins of various monkeys	83 to 88 " " " "
Tortoise shells	37 francs and 50 centimes per 100 kilograms.

Fishing, preserved fish

Laos, with its extensive hydrological network and its watercourses of all sizes, is a fishing land par excellence. We have already noted the chief varieties of fish which populate its rivers, and have seen that most of them are represented by large-sized specimens. 226

Since the produce of fishing makes a considerable contribution to the food supply of the inhabitants, it has been necessary to create devices and combine various means for capturing this prey.

The methods, primitive at first, have been increasingly perfected, and each one has been modified so that it is adapted to some particular feature either of the watercourses or of the fish.

The devices used today are wholly made by the inhabitants. 226 They vary greatly in form and--the fact is worth noting--are much 227 like those used in Europe. Indeed, the floating line is common, but in its most rudimentary form, with a thorn for a hook and then the ground-line and long-line. There are also nets in great abundance, and they are identical with the ones found among our fishermen. The most common ones are the seine, the cast-net, the square dipping-net, the shrimping-net, the hoop-net, the landing-net and the large trammel. All this equipment is supplemented with bottles, [350] single and double bow-nets and traps. The Laotians also build large barrages across watercourses and provide them with corridors leading to bow-nets or hoop-nets.

Hiding places in the form of fixed huts on the watercourses are used for spear fishing. A light in these huts attracts the fish and the native, who is armed with a hardwood fork, spears it as soon as it comes within range. [Illustration here]

248 There are three harvests each year. In the first the shoots are .9 meter high, in the second 1.4 meters and in the third 1.6 meters. They yield, respectively, for an area of 14 square meters, 18, 20 and 24 kilograms of fiber.

At harvest time the shrub is split and left to soak in water for three hours, for the fiber is difficult to tear off. The work of decortication takes a long time, and this drawback has so far prevented the cultivation of this crop from spreading although it is an easy one on the whole and not at all exhausting for the soil, since it is possible to grow it twenty years in succession on the same plot of ground.

438 Exports from the provinces of southern Laos were more than fifty tons in 1899. A great deal is used locally, since all the nets used for
248 hunting and fishing are made with this fiber.

Prices are as follows (1):

248 (1) In view of the price at Bassac (37 francs), it would be ad-
435 vantageous to export this product to Cambodia, where it sells for twice as much.

	Per hundred kilograms
Plateau of the Bolovens	25 to 35 francs
Bassac	37 "
Saravane	60 "
Khong	60 to 80 "
Attopeu	30 "
Stung-Treng	54 to 62 "
Pnom-Penh	60 to 80 "

248 [367] HEMP. Hemp is grown in Upper Laos, but only for local consumption. It is used in making string, light rope, nets, etc. A very strong and fairly good-tasting alcohol is also extracted from its seeds. It is called "Pane" or "Nhia-Pane."

241 BATATAS. Various kinds of batatas which are more or less sweet are grown each year on the banks of the watercourses and in the still
[262] moist sandy alluvia. These tubercles are chiefly consumed by the inhabitants, although small quantities are used to fatten certain animals,
[231] particularly pigs. The large variety of batata which is round and not very sweet is called "Mane-Phao" and the one which is elongated and sweeter is called "Mane-Keo."

249 segments, together with its envelope, while still green. The segments
276 are threaded in groups of sixteen on plant thongs and then gathered in packets of fifty or a hundred thongs. The packets are hung up at home near the hearth, and the smoke gives them a brownish color, dries out the nut completely and soon makes it insect-proof.

• 438 Since every Laotian, with only a few exceptions, has betel palms around his house, trade in betel nuts takes place only in the large mar-
276 kets, where there are packets of dried nuts which a few small merchants have collected. Within the country these packets are sold according to their number of nuts, and yet statistics give sale prices by weight, at figures varying between twenty and forty francs per hundred kilograms. It is probable that the latter figure applies to whole nuts, and the former to packets of nut segments.

249 BETEL. The betel leaf, which gives its name to the well-known masticatory, is a product of the Piper Betel which is grown everywhere in Laos and for which the trunks of betel palms generally serve as a support. It is to the cultivation of this plant that the Laotians devote the most attention. The soil is manured and weeded, the foot of the plant is surrounded by an earth mound, and the plant itself is protected against animals by a wooden enclosure. The betel palms around which the betel plants climb and twine profit from the care given the latter and generally produce a better harvest than trees which have been left alone. In order to water the betel plants, which often reach a height of seven or eight meters, the natives have devised a bamboo syringe, one end of which has a rounded nozzle pierced by small holes.

245 LAC. The tree on which the insects which secrete sticklac grow is called "Kok-Mak-Thoua-He." It is a biennial of the leguminous family and Acacia genus. Its fruit is a small edible bean, rounded and veined, which is contained [370]in groups of five or six in a soft, semi-parchmented pod. During its two years of life each shrub produces more than a million beans or seeds. A few of these are kept for seed, and the rest are consumed on the spot.

The cultivation of the shrub and of sticklac comprises two operations: seeding the "Kok-Mak-Thoua-He" and inducing colonies of coccus lacca to settle on its branches. The aphids of this insect produce the tinctorial matter called "Khang-Deng" or, literally, Red wax.

Sugar cane. The production of sugar cane, which is still not very significant in Laos, deserves to be encouraged. Later on when this crop had been developed, the Laotians might be trained in the methods of the first stage of refinement. They would then be able to produce gray muscovado and sugar candy, which are easily exportable. 241 185

Southern Laos is the part of our possession which would lend itself [386] best to the extension of this crop. Although of secondary importance, it is nonetheless deserving of attention.

Benzoin trees. Increasing the number of trees which are producers of this precious resin is again a task for the administration. After a serious study of the conditions of growth of the plant in Laos, of its habitat and of the nature of the terrain best suited to it, it would be possible to set up seed gardens designed to supply young plants either to the natives or to Europeans who settled in the country and were interested in this crop. It yields a rich product, which brings a high price on the market. Benzoin is, in fact, widely used in perfumes and in the manufacture of varnishes.

Lac trees. All who are acquainted with Laos are unanimous in agreeing that increasing the production of sticklac is one of the main factors in increasing the country's wealth. What, indeed, could be more simple, thanks to the easy and rapid multiplication of the "Kok-Toua-He," the tree which grows almost without care and lends itself so well to the establishment of colonies of coccus lacca, the producers of a superior quality of gum lac?

Cardamom. It would seem that experiments with growing true cardamom, as it is grown in Cambodia in the province of Pursat, might be attempted in Laos. The natives would have everything to gain from giving up the cultivation of wild cardamom for that of true cardamom, since the latter brings from five to ten times more than the former on the market of Pnom-Penh. 249 263 438

Until such time as this precious seed is introduced into Laos, it will be well to extend and encourage the cultivation of the present variety of cardamom. All those who have engaged in the production and commerce of this seed (1)--the mountainfolk who grow it, the

(1) It is much sought-after by the Chinese, who use it as a condiment as well as in pharmaceutical preparations.

249 Chinese and Laotian middlemen and even the few European merchants--
263 have found that it brings in rewarding profits. Indeed, by exporting
438 this product the latter are assured of an almost certain gain of 20 to 30 percent.

248 [387] Ramie. There is also much to be gained from increasing
439 the production of ramie or Chinese nettle. It is assured of an outlet in Cambodia, where it sells for as much as 80 francs per hundred kilograms.

249 Cinnamon. The extension of the plantations and gardens of
185 cinnamon trees already in existence in the province of Vien-Tiane deserves serious encouragement. The bark of these trees is a valuable product which is much sought-after in China and in Europe.

276 Opium poppies. The Government of Indo-China, which is
656 both the preparer and seller of chandoo or opium for smoking, is the party which would gain most from obtaining the raw drug on French territory. It is, indeed, still dependent on British India for this product, and can acquire it only on extremely disadvantageous terms.

Since much time must still pass, however, before the Meos and the Yaos give up their age-old methods, it would be essential for the intensive cultivation of the opium poppy to be undertaken by Europeans on behalf of the administration. This would be possible if there were a guaranteed labor supply in the form of Chinese coolies, who would be enlisted primarily for the greater part of the work, and of native specialists who would deal only with scarification of the capsules, harvesting the opium and the first stage of its preparation.

These delicate operations are the ones which the Meos and the Yaos like best, but they dislike plowing, fertilizing, weeding and irrigation, all of which tasks are indispensable for obtaining a high yield of capsules and consequently of the raw drug. It would therefore be best to entrust this heavy work to foreign coolies, and it is probable that after a certain time they too would be capable of extracting the opium. Impelled by their example, the natives would doubtless then be seen to break with their prejudices and devote themselves also to intensive cultivation so as to reap its full benefits.

The role of the administration would then be at an end, and it would gradually diminish its intervention as free cultivation of the poppies increased.

[435 Raw opium which is produced locally or which comes from [388] neighboring countries is worth 22 francs, 50 centimes to 32 francs, 25 centimes per kilogram, depending on quality, in northern Laos.

805 **Weights.** The initial basis of weight is the "Bak" or "Salung," which is subdivided into three "Fones" or "Fines" and into thirty "Lis."

1 Bak or Salung = 3 Fones or 30 Lis = 0.003753 kilogram
1 Fone or 10 Lis = 0.001251 "
1 Li = 0.0001251 "

The multiples of the "Bak" or "Salung" are:

		kilograms
The Tael	= 10 Baks (10 Salungs) or 30 Fones	= 0.03753
The Sang (or Cattie or Hoi)	= 33 Baks (33 Salungs) or 99 Fones	= 1.23849
The Mune (or 10 Hois)	= 330 Baks (330 Salungs) or 990 Fones	= 12.3849

The multiples of the "Mune" are:

			kilograms
The Sen	= 10 Munes	=	123.849
The Lane	= 10 Sens	= 100 Munes	= 1,238.49
The Kot	= 10 Lanes	= 100 Sens = 1,000 Munes	= 12,384.9
The Tu	= 10 Kots = 100 Lanes	= 1,000 Sens = 10,000 Munes	= 123,849.

438 [411] The picul (Hap in Laotian) weighs 61.924 kilograms in theory, but it is currently counted at 60 kilograms or else at 60.4 kilograms in trade between Europeans and Chinese.

The sub-multiples of the picul are:

The Mune	= 12.3849 kilograms	or 1/5	of a picul
The Sang (or Cattie or Hoi)	= 1.23849 "	or 1/50	" " "
The Nane	= 0.619245 "	or 1/100	" " "

The multiples of the picul are:

The Sen	=	2 piculs or	10 Munes
The Lane	=	20 piculs or	100 Munes
The Kot	=	200 piculs or	1,000 Munes
The Tu	=	2,000 piculs or	10,000 Munes
The Ha-Song-Khai	=	20,000 piculs or	100,000 Munes

Measures of volume and weight for grain and liquids (1)

(1) These measurements are represented by gourds, halves of coconuts, bamboo tubes or carefully calibrated baskets.

436 **Coins.** The old Laotian silver and copper coins in the shape of a pirogue which used to be used in the principalities of Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang can no longer be found today and have become curiosities. As a result of the Siamese incursions, the coins of Siam and India (Tical and Rupee) replaced the native coins. Finally, since Laos has become a French possession, the only officially recognized coinage is the French piaster of commerce (1) and its subdivisions.

(1) As well as the Mexican piasters of Hong-Kong and Singapore and the Japanese yen.

However, the Siamese and Hindu coins continue to circulate alongside this official coinage, and are in fact indispensable for transactions by reason of their weight, which bears a direct relation to the system in force in the land (2).

(2) The scale of equivalence between weights and coins is based on the standard of the "Salung" or tenth part of the Hong-Kong "Tael," which weighs 37.53 grams. This Tael is recognized as official for weighing opium. One might nevertheless just as well take as a basis the tenth part of the Shanghai Tael, which weighs 38.88 grams. This would give the picul a theoretical weight of 62.222 kilograms instead of 61.924 kilograms.

Silver in Laos, whether in the form of coins, bars, ingots, pieces of jewelry, etc., is regarded as merchandise and is bought and sold by weight without taking into account the agio which causes fluctuations in the market price. This is due to the fact that the Laotians, since they do not yet have direct trade and banking relations with neighboring countries, have no remittances to make in the trade centers where the agio [415] [Illustration] [416] [Blank page] [417] is felt and are ignorant of its effects on the conventional value of specie.

438 439 But in the last few years the middlemen of Laotian trade circles--the Chinese and Burmese--who are in direct relation with the centers where the agio prevails have been feeling its effects, and the latter have had repercussions on the great mass of Laotian producers through progressive increases in the price of imported merchandise.

In certain regions the absence of small coins obliges people to cut up pieces of silver, jewelry, bracelets and necklaces, or else to melt down the silver from fragments and jewelry and cast them in the

436 It will perhaps be of some interest to note here that the peoples of Laos have no respect for European gold coins, [420] because their gold
822 is alloyed with copper! In this country, as in all of the Far East in
439 general, it is thought that gold is the noble metal par excellance, that
177 it is polluted and diminished by alloying it with copper, which is unworthy of it, and that it can endure being made into an alloy only with silver.

The only "gold" coins in use, and still not at all currently in northern Laos, are books of gold leaf the thickness of tinfoil. They come from China and bear the official stamps of the country's banks which put them into circulation as "merchandise" in the same way as bars of silver.

Weighing instruments

405 The weighing instruments used in Laos include the "Ta-Dieng" or "Sing," a Chinese steelyard made of wood which has three rows of graduations. It may have a hook or a single platform, and is used for weights ranging from one "Sang" (1.23849 kilograms) up to several piculs.

For weights of less than a "Sang" the same kind of Chinese steelyard, with a hook or platform, is used, but it is smaller and made of ivory or bone.

A small pair of beam scales with platforms shaped like cupels, which is called "Sing-Dieng," is used mainly for weighing precious metals and gems.

There are several series of weights for balances. They are made of bronze, iron or copper and are most diverse in shape, representing elephants, imaginary birds, hexagons, pentagons, cones, pyramids, etc.

2. TRADE COMMODITIES AND PRODUCTS OF EXCHANGE

438 Since there is no industry to speak of in Laos, the local products which make up the basic commodities of interior trade and exports come
241 mainly from agriculture, livestock raising, scavenging, fishing and hunting. Mention may be made, however, of certain products of local, not to say familial, industry which enter into interior commerce and to some extent into the trade which goes on with neighboring countries.

438 [421] These include cloth goods of pure silk, either plain or spangled with gold, goods of silk blended with cotton, and wholly
433 cotton goods, then articles of jewelry and goldsmithing, and finally metals and ores from the still rudimentary mining industry and pottery goods, edge-tools, basketry, etc.

degree.

289 Paper. The manufacture of paper using the bark of a tree called "Kok-Sa" (1) is limited to a single region of northern Laos.

(1) See Chapter VII.

It is not of any great importance, since it does not even suffice for local consumption.

The manufacturing processes are those familiar to everyone as being used in China, in Japan, in Annamite lands and in Burma.

321 531 Wood and ivory carving. Here we no longer have to deal with an industry, but with an art. The men who practice it are few in number, are highly paid, work slowly and are generally inveterate opium smokers.

Like the goldsmiths and jewelers, the wood and ivory carvers of Laos reproduce, ad infinitum, immutable models which their predecessors have handed down. They are, however, able to execute motifs from any given design. To be sure, they are inferior to their Burmese, Annamite, Malay, Chinese and especially Japanese colleagues as regards the movement, harmony, purity of form and finish of their work.

532 Fresco painting. The pagodas of Laos, which have been left untended for many long years, contain curious fresco paintings set off with gold, but lack of care and exposure to the weather have partly destroyed them. This art has very few practitioners in Laos, and it should be added that most of the existing frescoes are mainly the work of Burmese, Cambodians and Chinese of whom the native artists are only the pupils.

396 [438] Pirogue carpenters. Nearly all the inhabitants who [464] live on the banks of the big river or its principal tributaries are able to carve out a pirogue. Certain villages, however, have a monopoly in this industry.

When it is a matter merely of hewing out a pirogue which is to be used only for crossing the river, fishing or agricultural service, everyone does a fairly good job. But for the large pirogues which are reserved for regattas, voyages and commercial transports, recourse must be had to specialists. Only they know how to give their products

653 [480] Construction of this line was authorized by the law of
496 December 25, 1898, but its extension to the Mekong, and that is to
185 say the means of entrance into Laos, is classified among the lines of
third-degree urgency for which routes have scarcely been outlined.

Another railway has also been planned from Binh-Dinh to
438 Attopeu, with the same third-degree urgency classification as the
633 line from Savannakhet to Quang-Tri. It seems astonishing that anyone should have thought, even as a line of third-degree urgency, of a line which would start from the sea and end in a cul-de-sac, crossing one of the most mountainous regions which is inhabited by Kha tribes who are still partly unpacified. It may be that there is some thought of facilitating, by means of such a line, the exploitation of the gold and copper-bearing deposits in the region of Attopeu, even though it has now been established that the best deposits are located on the Se-Sane, more than 50 kilometers to the south of this point as the crow flies. It is also to be feared that by reason of the nature of the terrain this line may cost as much as 200,000 francs per kilometer, if the conditions of its route be compared with those of the lines estimated at 125,000 francs.

The projected Savannakhet-Quang-Tri railway does not seem to be the best solution for creating an entry into Laos and an outlet to the sea.

In the first place, it is not the shortest and most economical, despite the low elevation of the ridge of Ai-Lao, which is only 410 meters in altitude.

Besides, Savannakhet has never been a trade center and market of distribution and transit like Luang-Prabang, Pak-Lay, Nong-Khay and Bassac.

To be sure, it is an administrative center situated opposite the market of Ban-Mouk and the seat of the main office of the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [Compagnie des Messageries Fluviales], which has storehouses, a depot, workshops, etc. there. But this center was built up from nothing scarcely six years ago. The market of Ban-Mouk is an unimportant one, and the office of the River Merchant Fleet is inaccessible to its steam launches during a large part of the year.

[481] If Nong-Khay, instead of Ban-Mouk, were located opposite Savannakhet, there would be an advantage to capturing this great market in which the major part of the trade of Upper and Middle Laos is centered, and to turn this trade away from Bangkok to the profit of Tourane. But one must surrender to the evidence, for Nong-Khay

653 is no further from Vinh than Savannakhet is from Tourane. In fact,
496 the distance by steamship to Hin-Boun (or Tha-Kek) and from there
185 to Ben-Thuy [Illustration here] (port of Vinh) by way of Nape, the
•438 ridge of Tram-Mua and Ha-Trai by railway is only 500 kilometers,
whereas it is also 500 kilometers from Savannakhet to Tourane.
633 It has been objected that the ridge of Tram-Mua, the highest
496 point on the line in question, is at an altitude of more than 1,200
meters, that many calcareous peaks encumber the route, and that
185 the port of Ben-Thuy has a sand bar (that of Cua-Hoi) which leaves
a depth of water of only 1.5 to 4.5 meters, depending on the tide.

All of this information is correct, although somewhat exaggerated. The ridge of Tram-Mua is not an insurmountable obstacle, and the road which crosses it leaves the Mekong at the 250 meter level and manages to reach it by rounding the [482] peaks of Pou-Hak and Pou-Kha-Sak and by rising gradually, ascending 1000 meters over a distance of about 140 to 150 kilometers.

Ha-Trai, moreover, which is situated on the river of Ngan-Pho, is at approximately the 100 meter level, and the descent from the ridge requires half a day on elephant back. The slope is very steep, without any doubt, on the Annamite side, since it represents the hypotenuse of a right triangle with a base 15 kilometers long and an altitude of 1,100 meters. It is not such, however, as to make the establishment of a railroad impossible, and cog-railways could also be used, as in Switzerland, at the steepest parts of the route.

Finally, the bar of Cua-Hoi is only an imaginary obstacle. Indeed, it would be sufficient merely to extend the railway beyond the bar, where the foundation is everywhere solid enough, or else to dredge a channel.

From the financial point of view the advantage also lies with the Hin-Boun-Ben-Thuy project, which will cost 30 millions instead of 61. Indeed, expenditures of 24 millions are anticipated for the Quang-Tri-Tourane section, to which 37 millions must be added for the Quang-Tri-Savannakhet section (about 300 kilometers at 125,000 francs per kilometer), whereas if we assume a cost of 150,000 francs (1) per kilometer for the Hin-Boun-Ben-Thuy line (about 200 kilometers),

(1) Cost anticipated for the Vietri-Lao-Kay and Saigon-Qui-Nhon lines.

we are confronted with an expenditure of 30 millions. The difference between 30 and 61 millions is so great that it would even be possible

505 Large quantities of nep (rice suitable
438 for making alcohol), hides, horn, cardamom, wax, benzoin, various gums, etc. were shipped from Bassac, from Pakse, from Savannakhet, from Vien-Tiane and from other Laotian centers which had formerly traded exclusively with Bangkok by way of the Nongkay-Outaradit route on the Menam and by the Korat route on the Se-Moun.

505 "Passenger traffic, which was almost nil when the new services
484 were established, is increasing every day. The natives are beginning to become familiar with this rapid, convenient and inexpensive manner of traveling which the steamship represents and they are making more frequent use thereof, a fact which can only contribute to the broadening of relations between the various posts scattered along the great river and increase trade in their products of all kinds" (1).

(1) See, in Appendix XXX, the transport rates between France and Indo-China and between Saigon and Laos.

[487] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER XI

1. SOCIAL STATUS. SLAVERY

[565] Upon our arrival in Laos, we found a hierarchial society com-
567 prised of nobles, commoners and slaves. We could not do better than to preserve all features of the political, social and administrative
178 organization just as it had been. In this respect we took our inspira-
177 tion from our predecessors the Siamese, leaving our new subjects the utmost liberty and respecting their traditions, customs and mores insofar as these were compatible with our own institutions.

Thus we were at times forced to recall certain native officials who had compromised themselves with the Siamese, or who through their exactions had made themselves unworthy of their office. Moreover, we have always acted tactfully and mildly, [488] leaving the choice of officials to election, in accordance with custom.

But above all, we took radical measures by completely suppressing the slave trade and by regularizing a very mild form of slavery for debt.

[556] There used to be slavery in Laos, as in Siam, in the form of slavery by capture, by purchase and for debt. It yielded high profits for those who engaged in the traffic, for the children and grandchildren of slaves were slaves themselves at birth, a fact which increased the fortunes of their masters to that extent.

423

either on the surface or underneath.

"The inhabitants of the land are, in the last analysis, only usufructuaries who have the right of enjoyment of the land which they occupy and cultivate. The State may expropriate any occupant at any time by paying him a sum equal to the value of plantations or constructions made by him on the expropriated ground.

"The right of enjoyment of land is subject to certain conditions. The first of these is that the land occupied shall really be occupied and kept in a state of cultivation. Any property which has been abandoned or not cultivated for more than three years is defined as free ground and reverts to the State, which may cede it to any new usufructuary who is desirous of working it. Any inhabitant who clears free ground and places it under cultivation becomes the legitimate proprietor of the products and harvests which he obtains therefrom.

"What is true for individuals is equally true for the groups which certain races, living a patriarchal life, are accustomed to form. These groups which hold their work and their profits in common are regarded as a single civil person.

"Here there is, therefore, neither private domain, nor public domain nor reserve. There is only the domain of the State, which includes all."

(Le Laos français, op. cit.)

[Lieutenant-colonel Tournier, (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

651

In the absence of a tax on land, local exit duties have been levied [501] [Illustration] [502] [Blank page] [503] to take the place of such a tax. They bear only on products of the soil and forest and on livestock, and consist of the following:

Tax on elephants

438

A duty equivalent to one-half the sale price, except in the case of exemptions granted by a decision of the superior resident.

651

Tax on buffaloes, oxen, horses and pigs

Oxen, cattle	2.50 francs
Buffaloes and buffalo-cows	7.50 "
Pigs	2.00 "

438
651

Tax on rice, paddy, horns, hides, etc.

	Per picul (francs)	Per hundred kilograms (francs)
Paddy	0.25	0.416
Rice	0.50	0.832
Gum lac	2.50	4.16
Chinese nettle	2.50	4.16
Buffalo horns and hides	2.50	4.16
Buck horns and hides	3.75	6.25
Anteater scales	3.75	6.25
Cardamom	5.00	8.32
Elephant and tiger bones	3.75	6.25
Benzoin	12.50	20.82
Rubber	12.50	20.82
Wax	12.50	20.82
Ivory	50.00	83.20
Pirogues	ten percent ad valorem.	

Also to be added are certain incidental receipts, such as those arising from chancery fees or those collected by the native tribunals in conformity with the rates scheduled by the code of Vien-Tiane.

701 557 558 The royal treasury of Luang-Prabang subsidizes certain expenses, such as the upkeep of the kingdom's militia, of the native hospital in Luang-Prabang, of the Franco-Laotian school in Luang-Prabang, etc. [504]

652 Finally, the general budget of Indo-China pays out a variable sum annually for the purpose of balancing the receipts and expenditures of Laos.

C. Opium

651 One of the most important sources of Laotian revenue is provided by the sale of opium. The administration is responsible for the sale 276 of this substance, which it manufactures itself and which is marketed 655 by licensed merchants acting as middlemen.

Before 1900, Laos sold on its own behalf the opium which was allotted to it by the Cochinchina Customs and Excise Office (1).

(1) This was true only for Lower Laos. The opium sold in Upper Laos came from the Luang-Prabang distillery, which is no longer in operation today.

3: Robequain--260 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 135, 316, 439, 471

"For the past several years the production of tin in the Nam Patène basin in Laos has exceeded that at Pia Ouac. The Nam Patène River is a left hand tributary of the Nam Hin Boun, which itself flows into the Mekong at Pak Hin Boun, north of Thakhek. Cassiterite has been mined here from time immemorial by the Laotians who dug small shafts a few meters deep into the alluvium. Native mining continues today on the European concessions, the ore being purchased by the companies. Formerly, after careful sorting, the richest particles were crushed, washed in cradles and reduced in Chinese charcoal-furnaces. But about 1920 production was still a mere ten to fifteen tons a year; it was exported to Thailand where it was used only as ballast for fish nets."

3: Robequain--262 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 135, 316, 439

"More or less argentiferous lead ores are found together with zinc ores in most beds, and it was these for which the Chinese sought particularly. French companies have attempted to reopen the mines, particularly that at Ngan Son south of Pia Ouac, but without success. The Compagnie Minière et Métallurgique de l'Indochine exports a few tons of lead ore and some tens of kilograms of silver, mere by-products of the company's zinc mining."

7: Thompson--374-375 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 439, 654

"When the French first occupied Laos, a number of investigations were undertaken to learn the country's commercial possibilities. The difficulties which the agents of the Commercial Syndicate encountered in the way of obstacles created by nature and by the Siamese, forced the government to grant it powers which gave a hybrid politico-commercial character to its activities. In spite of its semi-official support the Syndicate was doomed to failure, for a number of excellent reasons. [375] It was hampered by inadequate capital and knowledge of the country. Moreover, Upper Laos is an extremely unhealthy region, where even Asiatic merchants refused to go. The Syndicate's isolated efforts were concentrated on selling imports, which were more expensive than the Siamese and not so well adapted to the people's needs, and not on developing Laotian exports. The latter, to be sure, were food products, and hence very perishable. French industry simply did not produce articles essential to the Laotians, and what they sent to Laos was too high priced, not only as to original cost, but in heavy freight charges."

10: d'Orleans--264 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, ~~439~~, 463

"As a rule, the inhabitants appear careless and idle; but probably they need not work to obtain a living, for commerce is the usual occupation in this district. I meet some merchants selling salt that has come from Hong Hay by Luang Prabang. The commodity is in small packets wrapped in banana leaves. Its price is agout one rupee for six pounds. In return they export chiefly rice and silk."

10: d'Orleans--319 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 439, 563 Chinese

"With regard to the few Chinese, they form a colony apart at Luang Prabang, devoting their energies to the trade in rice, salt and European fancy goods brought from Bangkok, no caravans from the Yunnam coming this far."

10: d'Orleans--322-325 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 226, 228, 255, 439

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "A good deal of net fishing goes on in the river itself, but it is not till later in the season that the prabeuc, a fish resembling the sturgeon, is caught. At fixed [pages 323 and 324 contain illustration] [325] periods, this fish ascends the river as far as the confluent of the Nam Ou, and its capture is a source of great profit for the inhabitants, as its eggs (which make excellent caviar when fresh) are sent as far as Xieng Mai, while the fish itself is canned and isinglass is obtained from its skin."

10: d'Orleans--326-329 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 439, 443

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "The shops and booths contain the various products of the country, such as articles of food, strong condiments, rice cakes, jam, and all that is required to make the quids of betel-nut, barks of red wood, native shirts, scarves, flowers for the pagodas, earthenware pans, iron implements, small pigs of lead (from Ban Lathane, one or two days' sail up the Mekong), and a variety of other local goods. In addition to these, there are the articles imported either [pages 327 and 328 contain illustration] [329] from the North or the South. From China come opium, musk, tea, vermicelli, and the felt carpets with a white pattern which are brought from Tali, and which I had seen before when travelling in Thibet; from Burmah green and red boxes of lacker work such as one sees in India; from Bangkok and Xieng Mai European shoddy goods, muslins and stuffs, red silks with the mark, 'Manufactured in Lyons, France,' with calicoes sold for about sixpence a yard, imitation jewellery, sleeve links, garters, thread, needles, Japanese matches (sold for fourpence or fivepence per ten boxes), scribbling paper, condensed milk and a host of other articles, all either of English or of German make, the only French articles which I came a cross are a few bottles of ink and buttons."

10: d'Orleans--329 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 439, 458, 563

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "It is the Chinese who import and sell the goods from Siam or the Western Shan States, there being four traders in European articles. One of these is a French protégé, who tells me that he has brought his stock of goods from Bangkok by Pitchaï. When he goes down, he takes with him from Luang Prabang ivory, for which he pays about 5s. a pound, and benzoin which costs him about a rupee per lb. Last year, the price of these articles was very nearly double, and the trader tells me that a pair of fine stag's horns is worth about thirty rupees, a smaller pair fetching a third of that price. He adds that business is very bad, and that it is as much as he can do to make both ends meet."

10: d'Orleans--357 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 137, 241, 439

"At the present time two vegetable products are exported from Luang Prabang, one being cardamome and the other benzoin, the latter having recently decreased 50 per cent. in value on the Bangkok market, doubtless because this perfume is now extracted from hippuric acid and other matters by chemical processes, while in time the flora of the country, which is very rich in other wild plants highly perfumed, will doubtless lend itself to fresh sources of industry.

In addition to the native products it will be easy to introduce fresh cultivations, such as the pepper tree, which already thrives in Annam, the vine, which grows wild on the plateau of the Poûon, and fruit trees of various kinds."

10: d'Orleans--358-360 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 439, 489, 177. 43

"Though the natural products of Luang Prabang are so varied, the cost of transport over so long a distance from the coast would reduce the profits very considerably, though I think that the complaints of the Chinese traders as to business being carried on at a loss must be an exaggeration, for if so why do they carry it on?

In any event, it is difficult to form a precise estimate of the commerce of the principality. According to the Siamese the exports from the Laos region, which includes the country between Strung Treng and Xiangsen in one direction, and Xieng Mai and Attopen in the other, amount to about £900,000, and if this estimate is correct the proportion of Luang Prabang must be very small. Macey gives the exports of benzoin at £40,000, but if this was so at one time the total must have decreased very much.

But trifling as the commercial movement of Luang Prabang may be, it is of interest to us, because of the situation of the town upon the Mekong, nearly in the centre of the Laos and in the vicinity of Tonkin, to see what share we may hope to have in it and what profit can be derived from it. Opinions vary very much upon the subject, and Mr. Archer, the British Consul, whose statistical reports as to the trade of this region are well worth careful study, is of opinion that there is little to fear from French competition, the cost of transport being too great, and with regard to steam navigation, he does not deem it possible upon the Mekong, on account of the rapids upon the other [359] hand. I have read several articles in the Bangkok Times to the effect that the French have great facilities for getting into their hands all trade upon the Mekong, and that to guard against this

Siam ought to push on the construction of railways with all speed. Then, again, Mr. Macey and Captain Devrez assert that the Tonkin routes are much shorter, easier, and less expensive than those leading to Bangkok.

Whatever the truth may be, of one thing I can speak positively, and that is that the greater part of the commercial current of Luang Prabang either comes from or goes to Bangkok. This current follows one of two routes. It either proceeds from Luang Prabang to Paklay by the Mekong; Paklay to Pitchai or Ontaradit by land and from thence to Bangkok down the Menam (this being the way by which we returned), a voyage of twenty-six days going down and fifty-two coming up. The second route is from Luang Prabang to Nong Kay by the Mekong; from Nong Kay to Korat and from Korat to Bangkok, this being rather the longer of the two. These routes, though shorter than that which brings Luang Prabang and Tonquin within a month of each other, have the advantage of being safer both by water and by land, there being no rapids on the Menam, while the roads are wide enough for elephants to travel easily along them and might easily have rails laid down. Owing to the facility of the communications, the cost of transport between Luang Prabang and Bangkok is if not cheaper, at all events not dearer than those via the Black River, and as I have been over the two routes myself I am in a [360] position to make the comparison. M. Massie, moreover, has arrived at the same conclusion."

I0: d'Orleans--362-363 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 276, 439, 655, 177.27 Siam
636.27

"... The opium monopoly has been set up in Luang Prabang by the Siamese. Not content with having, during the past century, ruined and depopulated the valley of the Mekong, and with weighing it down with taxation, they now seem anxious to crush its trade and arrest its growth. From our point of view, it is a matter of indifference to us if the relations between Luang Prabang and China become less close and friendly, and we may even turn this change to our profit, for the caravans which were wont to bring opium down the routes parallel with the Mekong, will find it answer [sic] their purpose to branch off in the direction of the Black River, and to effect their exchanges with Upper Tonkin.

I can answer for the fact that during the past year only one caravan reached Luang Prabang from the north, this consisting of sixty mules from Xieng [363] Hong, which took a month upon the journey by short stages, eight being loaded with iron, four with tea, and the rest with Chinese groceries, sugar, opium and a little silk."

23: Franck--350 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 439

"For centuries the Siamese and Chinese had most of the trade with Laos, which came and went by way of Siam; now the French are gradually diverting it, illustrating another of the advantages of protecting backward countries. No small amount of smuggling still goes on, especially in opium, and mainly engineered by the wily Chinese."

25: Brodrick--104 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 439

"A few miles after Pak-Hou is the mouth of the Nam Hou, from whose upper reaches and from the banks of its tributary, the Nam Pak, comes the finest and most prized benzoin in the world. This is the incense that is not much used in the Farthest East, but still is shipped down to Bangkok whence it reaches Europe as 'Siamese benzoin.' In the olden days, at least, the bulk of this precious perfume was sold into Russia for use in the ceremonies of the Orthodox Church. During the First World War, we British, as guardians of the blockade and as masters of the sea-route to the East, had to give a high priority to shipments of benzoin into Russia. And, of course, quasi-magical substances have ever been as potent as more immediately useful ones. What would the faithful have experienced in Old Russia had their nostrils suddenly been startled with the odour of frankincense or just the vulgar resin of the Norwegian Christmas tree? Probably the faithful have, in the last few years, got accustomed to substitutes, though I have been told that the Soviet Government still authorizes the import of Laotian benzoin."

26: Brodrick--60[5] S-3 (1939) 1944 Laotians
116, 439, 563

"What trade exists is in the hands of Shan and Chinese merchants who are also middlemen for the hill-rice and other products of the 'Khas' or 'savage' tribes of the jungle."

26: Brodrick--60-61 S-3 (1939) 1944 Laotians
116, 439

"The exports of the Laos country are interesting. It is one of the principal regions where benzoin is found (most of the so-called 'Siamese' benzoin was in reality Laotian, for in the olden days the Laotian trade moved down by Paklai and the Menam valley to Bangkok)--considerable quantities of beeswax, rubber, silk, sticklac, cutch, cardamoms, ebony, cinnamon, indigo, ivory, fish roes and rhinoceros and deer horns (for use in Chinese medicine) [61] come out of these strange hills and have done so for many centuries past-- Laotian products used to find their way to China through the Tongking highlands."

68: Mouhot--134-135 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 439, 314

"Little commerce is carried on in this part of Laos. [HD: i.e. in the territory between Loeui and Pak Lai] The Chinese inhabiting Siam do not come as far, owing to the enormous expense of transporting all their merchandise on elephants. Nearly every year a caravan arrives from Yunnan and Quangsee, composed of about [135] a hundred persons and several hundred mules. Some go to Kenne Thao, others to M. Nâne and Chieng Maï. They arrive in February, and leave in March or April.

The mulberry does not thrive in these mountains; but in some localities this tree is cultivated for the sake of furnishing food to a particular insect which lives upon its leaves, and from which is obtained the lague or Chinese varnish.

All the gum-benzoin which is sold at Bangkok comes from the northern extremity of the state of Louang Prabang, and from a district tributary both to Cochin China and Siam, and peopled rather by Tonquinites than Laotians."

68: Mouhot--276 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 439

"Want of means for the easy and advantageous removal of merchandise, causes Korat to be the central market for all the eastern part of the country. There they bring all the silk of Laos, langoutis, skins, horns, ivory, peacocks' tails, &c., which the active Chinese merchants sell again at a good profit at Bangkok, notwithstanding all the taxes they have to pay, having brought from thence cotton and other useful articles of Chinese and European manufacture for the use of the natives. Thus there passes daily through the forest of Dong Phya Phia, on the average, a caravan of from 100 to 150 oxen. With protective instead of restrictive laws, and an enlightened and civilized government, this commerce would increase threefold in a very short time."

663 Thais of the Menam, on the other hand, who were rid of the Cam-
175* bodians in the south but were pressed by the Burmese in the north, were
633 coming there in increasing numbers in search of gum lac and benzoin,
/439/which they took back with them and sold to the Dutch navigators who had been sailing the waters of the Indian Ocean ever since the sixteenth century.

643* War against Ayuthya (1536). Phothisarath had just settled in
721 Vientiane when he received a visit from Ekaracha, the prince of
175* Ayuthya, who had been driven out and was being pursued by his relative the Phaya-Attit. He welcomed the fugitive and refused to give him up, and war was the result. The king of Ayuthya was halted at Muong-Khuk (1) by the Lan-Xang troops before he could even cross

1. On the right bank, a little way downstream from Vientiane.

the river and had to beat a retreat. He died when he reached home from a wound received in the course of the battle.

643* Relations with Annam. Phothisarath confirmed his peaceful in-
648* tentions with respect to the king of Annam. Relations between the
175* two peoples had become more frequent since their violent /75/ contact in 1479, and quite a few Annamites had remained in Lan-Xang after the retreat of Lê-Thanh-Tôn's troops. The two sovereigns exchanged presents and established neighborly relations between their States which were marked by a cordiality heretofore unknown, even before Lê-Loi and Lane-Kham-Dèng. This was true to such a degree that Lan-Xang became the refuge of the partisans of the Lê while the Mac usurpers held sway. One of these partisans, Nguyễn-Câm, who was the ancestor of the present royal family, came to seek asylum there around 1530.

Succession of Xieng-Mai. In 1546 the throne of Lan-Na (Xieng-Mai) became vacant, and Phothisarath claimed the succession rights which he held through his mother, a princess of that kingdom. To establish his claim he sent the governor Sene-Si-Mun-Muong with a sizeable armed force which dispersed the local pretenders and rapidly overcame any hesitation on the part of the latters' partisans. The chief of the bonzes came in person to offer the crown of Lan-Na to the king of Lan-Xang, and the king accepted it in behalf of his eldest son,

175* inhabitants and especially the songs and laughter of the beautiful
114 girls bedecked with flowers. . . . It nevertheless follows from his re-
/771 marks that Lan-Xang was then the veritable holy land of Buddhism
792/ and that it possessed the most highly venerated sanctuaries where priests from Siam and Cambodia "came to spend ten or twelve days to study and receive their grades."

● 439 For a long time now the rich traders of Holland had been sending
175* ships into the waters of the Indian Ocean in search of cloves, /106/ nutmeg, pepper, silk goods, gold dust and porcelain. In 1641 the mother country had made settlements in Java, Sumatra, Borneo, the Celebes and the Moluccas, and its flag was known as far as the seas of China and Japan. Several mercantile establishments had sent out "sub-traders" from Batavia to Siam and to Cambodia. In July 1641 the governor general of Java, Van Diemen, ordered a mission which was operating in Pnom-Penh on behalf of the East India Company to send out a caravan to "the land of gum lac and benzoin." Under the direction of Van Wustof and his assistants William de Gover and Hubert Boudewinsz, the caravan entered the Mekong. The voyage was a long and difficult one, and often dangerous where rapids had to be passed. These men left Phom-Penh on July 20 and reached Vientiane on November 3 after 106 days of effort. They brought a good-sized packet of cloth and cottonstuffs, a casket of emeralds set in rings and small gifts such as brightly colored sampots (?), mirrors which closed like a book, etc... (1).

1. Cf. Cabaton, Le Laos et les Neerlandais au dix-septieme siecle (1913).

A few kilometers out of Vientiane a /107/ messenger from the king came to find out what the foreigners' intentions were and was shown a letter from Van Diemen to the "sovereign of Laos." He was fully satisfied and took them to the outskirts of the city to dwellings which had been prepared for them on the banks of the river. On the following day, November 4, the merchandise and gifts were unloaded. On the 5th the Dutch were received by the king "a quarter of an hour's
/576/ march away from the capital." They knelt down most humbly, their feet bare, striking the ground three times with their foreheads and holding a large candle in each hand, and were welcomed in a tumultuous camp of soldiers, horses and elephants caparisoned with

gilt and jewels. The wily merchants accepted all these kindnesses 439
in the hope of extracting great profits from their packet (1). 175*

1. Cf. Cabaton, op. cit. /Le Laos et les Neerlandais au dix-septieme siecle (1913). /

The audience took place near the pyramid of That-Luong which was entirely covered with gold plate. The king, surrounded by all his court, stood in a great temple and had the newcomers sit on mats under the gallery. The following day danses, combats and /574/
water jousts were given in their honor on the river bank. Souligna-Vongsa was present, carried on a golden chair, and came and sat on a /108/ balcony erected over the river. In the evening more than two hundred fiery pirogues went down the Mekong. "The river seemed to be on fire."

As time passed the merchandise sold well, thanks to the gifts distributed to the king, the princes, the princesses and the officers. The Dutch cleverly disparaged the Siamese of Ayuthya as traders of little faith, offered to settle a misunderstanding which had arisen between the sovereigns of Lan-Xang and Cambodia, and obtained the Laotians' promise to deliver them enormous quantities of benzoin and gum lac. They finally left on December 24, "profoundly impressed with the wealth and splendor" of the kingdom of Vientiane (1).

1. Van Wusthof left without his two assistants, whom he left with the king to await the gifts destined for Van Diemen and the Laotian "ambassador" who was to accompany them. (Francis Garnier, Bulletin de la Societe de geographie, 1871.)

If we are to believe Van Wusthof, this city then had a huge 174
population, while Luang-Prabang was nothing more than a deserted 164
city. A terrible cholera epidemic had decimated its population, 369
and those who were left had come to life in Vientiane.

He also confirms the kingdom's frontiers as stated by the Annals and the perfect relations which /109/ Lan-Xang maintained with all its neighbors.

On the other hand he does not shed any light -- rather the con- 439
trary -- on the obscure period which preceded Souligna's accession 643*
to the throne. Indeed he writes with perfect serenity: "the present 175*
king inherited the crown three years ago from his brother, who died

439 after a ten year reign without leaving any sons." He thus explicitly
643* contradicts the native documents which recount the many competitions
175* for the throne which had divided the royal family, and according to which the "present king" succeeded his uncle (Visai).

He adds that the government of the country was divided, under the
175* high authority of the king, between three great officials:
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645 1. The head of the army who was "governor of the province which produces benzoin" and commander of the city of Vientiane. He doubtless refers to the prime minister Tian-Thala, the son-in-law of Souligna whom he calls Tevinia-Assen;

2. The governor of Nakhone or viceroy, who commanded the whole southern part of the kingdom, including Attopeu, as far as the Cambodian frontier. This was the Nan-Tharath of the Annals, whom he calls Lachaen;

3. The minister of the Palace who is in charge of relations with ambassadors.

These three high officials "were given /110/ an audience only every two or three months, unless there were some necessity or the king had them summoned expressly."

/693/ Next to the king there was a "tribunal in charge of civil and criminal affairs" which was composed of five of his relatives who had daily access to the sovereign.

/651 Finally, Van Wusthof estimates the king's income at "two piculs"
643/* per year of gum lac, benzoin and gold (1).

1. Cf. Georges Maspero, op. cit. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./ A picul was equal to 61 kilograms.

175* The Account of Father Marini (1666). This evocation of the
114 Laotian kingdom in the seventeenth century does not differ appreciably, on the whole, from two travel accounts published in Italian at about the same time by the Jesuit fathers Martini (quoted p. 104, note 2) and Marini. A translation of the latter's accounts was placed on sale in Paris in 1666 (2). No matter how picturesque it may be in its

/127/ 2. Relation nouvelle et curieuse des royaumes de Tonquin et de Laos, traduite de l'italien du P. Marini Romain, par L.P.L.C.C. (F. Lecomte; cel.), a Paris, chez Gervais Clouzier, au Palais, sur les degres, en montant pour aller a

648 an administrator. "Whence did this gigantic river come? What
175* regions did it water? To what peoples did it give access?... France
654 owed it to science and to its own interest to try in its turn to pierce the thick veil which had stretched over Indo-China for so long a time" (3).

3. Cf. P. Legendre, Nos gloires coloniales.

In 1866 Admiral de La Grandiere decided "to send out a mission to explore the course of the Mekong over as long a distance as possible /232/ from its mouth." It was placed under the command of Doudart de Lagree, who chose as his companions Francis Garnier, Ensign de Laporte, the naval doctors Thorel and Joubert and the young embassy attache de Carne.

The expedition left Saigon on June 5, 1866 on gunboats Nos. 32 and 37, visited the ruins of Angkor, went upriver as far as Kratie and then continued in pirogues. On September 10 it reached Bassac and after a thousand and one difficulties in the rapids of Kemmarat passed by Nong-Khay (1), an important trading center

1. Nong-Khay, built on the right bank some forty kilometers
/439/ (by the river) downstream from Vientiane, controlled the greater part of the traffic from Upper Laos -- benzoin, cardamom, salt, tobacco, pelts and lac. It is still an active market today, and is joined to Vientiane by a highway frequented by numerous trucks.

created by the Siamese to replace Vientiane, the impressive ruins of which the expedition saw, swallowed up as they were by the vegetation. It finally reached Luang-Prabang on April 20, 1867.

The explorers did not remain there for any length of time. After erecting Mouhot's mausoleum and exploring the region they decided to entrust all the instruments which were no longer absolutely indispensable to them, as well as their maps and their botanical and geological collections, to /233/ King Tiantha-Koumane who sent them to Saigon "with scrupulous fidelity." Then they set out again, "escorted by a throng of functionaries and of young women who cried for some kind of souvenir of their guests. Uniform buttons and the smallest galloons were given to them" (1).

1. Cf. P. Legendre, op. cit. /Nos gloires coloniales/

648* edition), Paris, 1911./, p. 9.
175*
654 the name French Syndicate of Upper Laos, which placed a first ship-
/439/ ment of fifteen tons of merchandise at the expedition's disposal.

Pavie set sail again on November 17 for /293/ Bangkok, where he stayed for only two weeks, just long enough to make contact again with our representative in Siam and to reopen negotiations with the Siamese foreign minister, who was specially appointed for the purpose by King Chulalongkorn.

On January 23, 1890 he reached Hanoi and rejoined his old and his new companions (including, among the latter, the embassy attache Lefevre-Pontalis, the vice-consul Lugan, the trader Macey, Professor Counillon, the Postal Commissioner de Coulgeans, the naturalist Le Dantec and the officers Riviere, Friquegnon, de Malglaive, Dugast and Cogniard). He divided them into several groups of operators who scattered on February 3 throughout Tran-Ninh, Cammon and the region of Stung-Treng, while he himself set out for Luang-Prabang with a last group of "fervent disciples," where he arranged to meet all the members of the mission six months later so that they could coordinate their first labors over the winter months.

Duly provided, through the intermediary of Governor General Piquet, with the authority of the king of Cambodia and that of the emperor of Annam for settling questions of frontier delimitation, and with a passport from the Chinese government /294/ which would eventually allow him to explore the Yunnanese frontiers, he first
/624/ went to Muong-Lai where Deo-van-Tri was waiting for him. Faithful to his promise, now that all his brothers had all been freed Cam-Sinh's son awaited his arrival so that he could offer himself to the French authorities, "placing all his pride in giving himself up to that man who had restored calm to his land" (1).

1. Cf. Mission Pavie, "Geographie et Voyages," Vol. II, p. 12.

Pavie had an enchanted voyage. Although the magnificent valley of the Black River no longer held for him the powerful attraction of the unknown, still he felt a profound joy as he daily noted the changes for the better which had occurred since his last trip among
/727/ these peoples. "The influence of Pennequin (who had accompanied
/178/ him with Vacle and Lefevre-Pontalis) was there, clearly marked at each step... no more Flags in the well-known colors, all had

Question of the Sip-Song-Panas (Anglo-French commission, 648*
January-April 1895). On January 1, 1895 he met the British mission 175*
in Muong-Sing, as he had agreed with its leader, the Resident Minister Scott, during his recent trip to Bangkok.

Because he had explored them in 1891 with Deo-Van-Tri, Pavie was not ignorant of the fact that the twelve principalities which lay in a line on both banks of the river and which formed what was called /332/ the confederation of the Sip-Song-Panas had always been more or less tributary to Burma, but he also knew that the British conquest of this latter country had detached several princes from it and that these princes had deemed it well to place themselves under Chinese protection. The prince of Xieng-Kheng, in particular, who was a descendant of the old "Chao-Fa" of Muong-Sing and was established on the right bank at Muong-You (1), had transferred his

1. See above, p. 176, note 1.

capital to the plain of Muong-Sing in 1885 "in order to put the Mekong between himself and the invaders." This prince, who was "a sage /563/
and perspicacious old man, a scholar whose speech was rich in /439/
images, and a man greatly superior to the average mandarin," was endeavoring to create harmony among the extremely varied populations with different origins, customs and languages -- Lues, Younes, Yaos, Meos, Mousseux, Khas, etc., who had settled on this verdant plateau, an age-old crossroads on the great caravan route. With his profound good sense he was the first to realize that it was impossible to create an intermediate zone "and that a partitioning of the country was the probable solution. He gradually came to accept the idea of giving up the right bank and, yielding to his liking for us, he even made /333/ preparations to emigrate towards Luang-Prabang (1) in

1. See above the relations of Luang-Prabang with the Sip-Song-Panas in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, pp. 129, 133, 180 ff.

case no part of his country should be awarded to us by the terms of the decision" (2).

2. Mission Pavie, "Geographie et Voyages," Vol. II, p. 341.

642 Indo-Chinese Federation.

The commercial agencies on the right bank, whose number had
439 reached ten, were fully functioning in 1895, but the duties of their
655 directors had been so ill defined /340/ /Page 340 is devoted to a map: "Laos in the Indo-Chinese Federation."--Translator/ /341/ that these posts did not render any real service. No one dared to suppress them officially, however, for fear that Bangkok's agents
/648/* might find an argument in such suppression for aggravating still further their maneuvers among the populace of the restricted zone. France was content merely with removing the directors and placing control of the agencies in the hands of the nearest government commissioners.

Further Franco-Siamese negotiations. Indeed, the Siamese governors did not cease to act in contravention of the provisions of the agreement appended to the treaty of 1893. They particularly endeavored, by intimidation, to prevent the former inhabitants of the left bank who had been transferred to or detained on the right bank from leaving the restricted zone and having recourse to the French agents for help. In Bangkok itself the trial of the Pra Yott had resulted in an acquittal, and an appeal by Attorney General Ducos (1), who was sent to Siam specially to draw up the indictment,

1. Attorney General in Hanoi. Later he was lieutenant-governor of Cochinchina (1896-1897) and superior resident in Cambodia (1897-1901).

and the formation of a mixed tribunal had been needed to obtain conviction of the guilty party. As for the incident /342/ of Tong-Xieng-Kham, criminal proceedings in the case were always suspended! Yet in the course of a voyage to Europe King Chulalongkorn had had a long conversation in Paris in 1897 about the consequences of the treaty with Foreign Minister Hanotaux, to whom he had given the most reassuring promises. In 1899 Governor General Doumer had returned this visit in Bangkok and, by the terms of the extremely cordial talks which he had with the chief officials, he had believed as he left Siam that a final agreement was imminent. All these courteous gestures, however, had not been followed by any change in the attitude of the Siamese agents on the Mekong, and Minister Defrance continued to formulate constant claims...

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Colonial
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Thus the agreement of July 14, 1870, regulated fishing conditions on the Great Lake [Grand Lac] (3). In 1882 it was decided to set up [206]

(3) See Appendix III.

a telegraph line between Bangkok and Pnom-Penh (4). And finally, [439]

(4) See Appendix IV.

on May 23, 1883, an agreement was reached which regulated the commerce and sale of French wines and spirits in Siam (5).

(5) See Appendix V.

This fine state of affairs soon took a turn for the worse at the time of the Tonkin expedition.

The agents of Great Britain in Siam were afraid that our penetration into the valley of the Red River and into Upper Laos [5] [Illustration] [6] [Blank page] [7] would hinder British plans for commercial establishments in Yunnan and would prevent British predominance in the two Kouang. Since they were bent on preserving their influence in this region, they induced the Siamese sovereign to act first on the Chinese frontiers, where he was to bar our progress, and then in Laos with Annam as the objective, in the hope that he might create difficulties for us and perhaps succeed in concluding some form of alliance against us.

The king's pride was flattered by his foreign advisers. Feeling that he was to play the part of the sovereign of a "great nation," he abandoned his prudent reserve, no longer kept the balance equal between the rival nations, and began his adventurous course. These were his first steps towards great disappointments, and also towards territorial losses such as those resulting from the treaty of 1893 and the London convention of 1896.

Circumstances at the time, moreover, seemed to favor Siam's action and even to excuse its behavior in some measure.

The invasion of Laos by the Hôs (1) enabled the sovereign of

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(1) Chinese bandits from Yunnan.

commercial and industrial mission was attached to the former, and it was to study the question of means of communication by land and river, to create trading posts, to collect samples, to examine the commercial methods in use and to determine the nature and value of the products of the Mékong basin. Funds for this mission, which left France with an initial stock of fifteen tons of various kinds of merchandise, were provided by a syndicate which had just been formed, with an initial capital of 100,000 francs, under the name of French Syndicate [12] of Upper Laos. It included representatives of Parisian trade and industry who had united for the experiment thanks to the initiative of M. Léon Tharel, the president of the group.

175 654 433 [439]

All throughout 1890 and 1891 the missions fulfilled their tasks with ardor, not without constant struggle against the implicit hostility of the Siamese, which although occasionally concealed under an [Illustration here] affable outward mask nonetheless continued to manifest itself and created obstacles everywhere in the hope of discouraging the valiant explorers and causing their work to fail.

In spite of the difficulties which they encountered, the two missions were successful in their delicate enterprise and the results of the latter were most significant. From that point on we were in possession of precise information concerning the whole region extending from Yunnan to Cambodia.

What was more, by continuing the tradition begun by Mouhot, the [13] Lagrée mission, Harmand, Néis, etc. we had made contact with the Laotian people and made them know and love the French name. In us they saluted their future liberators and the ones who would come to free them from the brutal and detested Siamese yoke.

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Finally--a fact of no less importance--thanks to the activities of the commercial mission, to the trading posts which it had established and to the contacts and arrangements which it had prepared, we were in possession from that time on of private commercial interests in the Mékong basin. Thus greater force was given to the rights which we already had to intervene in Laos against Siamese intrigues in the name of our protégés, the emperor of Annam and the king of Cambodia.

Frightened and surprised by the results which France had achieved in so short a time in the Mékong valley, despite the ambushes which it had laid on all sides and the hostile maneuvers which it had supported, Siam began to fear that France might invade its Laotian territories. It then invoked the friendship of Great Britain and

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648 surrounded itself with official advisers from that nations.
175 In a short time, and with remarkable rapidity, it organized an army and navy which were trained and commanded by European officers. It reinforced all its detachments in Laos, levied additional troops, and after providing supplies of arms and munitions it constructed forts. In a word, it prepared for war. It announced to the people that all these steps had been taken in order to "drive out the French and extend the Thai kingdom into Annam."

726 The 1889 arrangement establishing a status quo was then violated
175 Siamese troops and commissioners advanced towards the Annamitic Chain and crossed it at several points, particularly at Hatraf and Al-Lao, and thus reached a point only forty kilometers from Hué. In the course of their forward march various incidents occurred which obliged the French Government to abandon the reserve which it had heretofore maintained when confronted with the intrigues of the court of Bangkok. At last it made ready to act vigorously.

175 In January 1892 the greater number of the members of [14]
648 the Pavie mission had returned to France. Only three of them had remained in Laos, two in Luang-Prabang and one in Stung-Treng.

439 It was at this time that the French Syndicate of Upper Laos, which had become the French Syndicate of Laos and had doubled its capital, sent out a new six-man mission as well as a large stock of merchandise. Its purpose was to reoccupy the old trading posts in Luang-Prabang and Nong-Khay and to found new ones at Bassac, Outhène and Xieng-Hong in a line along the Mékong. Its activity would thus extend from Cambodia to Yunnan. The Syndicate's new mission was to support and strengthen the commercial interests already in existence in the Mékong basin. It also placed vigilant agents in all the posts who would be able to keep an eye on the maneuvers of the Siamese and instil confidence in the people by showing them that in spite of Siam's threats and warlike preparations we should not abandon them. The Laotians were thus conscious of our support at a time when their invaders were becoming harsher and more arrogant and were threatening to extract reprisals from them as a punishment for having placed their trust in us and solicited our protection.

In these critical circumstances the Government decided to place a consul general in Bangkok so as to render France's political action in Siam more effective. It chose M. Pavie to occupy this high post,

149: Reinach--10 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

both for his special knowledge of the country and the questions at issue and as a reward for the exceptional service which he had rendered to France in the course of his previous missions. Shortly thereafter, so as to place our chief agent in Siam on the same level as those of other nations, the title of Resident Minister of France was conferred on him.

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At the same time, in order to extend our activity in the Mékong basin, the Government discontinued the vice-consulate in Luang-prabang, which had always remained without Siam's "exequatur", and replaced it with a commercial agency. Three other agencies of the same type were established in Outhène, Bassac and Stung-Treng.

The first three of these posts were managed by the agents, [15] [Illustration] [16] [Blank page] [Unpaged map inserted between pp. 16 and 17] [17] who were heads of trading posts in the French Syndicate, and the last was managed by a chief clerk in the Posts and Telegraphs. They were given the title of commercial agents of the Government and, even while they continued to carry on commercial operations, they received salaries from the Colonies budget. They corresponded directly with the Governor General of Indo-China and the Resident Minister in Bangkok, to whom they sent telegrams and official reports.

Meanwhile the Siamese, thinking that they were to be permitted to do anything and secretly impelled by the British agents, continued to advance eastward terrorizing the people and mistreating our subjects, protégés and nationals in Siam as well as in Laos and in Cambodia, in the region of Great Lake [Grand Lac].

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Their audacity reached its climax in a serious offense to our flag in Tong-Kieng-Kham, and the accumulation of all these grievances drove the French Government to vigorous action. Following an interruption and a patriotic speech by M. Deloncle, a deputy, the Chamber decided to safeguard the rights of our protégés and to recall Siam to respect for the treaties and arrangements which had been agreed on. The following are the terms in which M. Deloncle placed the question before Parliament on February 4, 1893.

[C.A.M. Translator's note. The following speech (through p. 17, line 5 in this translation) is presumably taken from French legislative records. It is set in small, contrasting type in the source.]

[114] of what has been observed, and because no better expression of the facts could be hoped for.

THE THAI RACE

142 "Laotians. Of all the Thais, the Laotian is the one who has
144 remained the purest, although he has a much higher proportion of Aryan blood than the other varieties, with the exception of the Lus. Fairly tall in stature, his hair cut short, elegant in his movements and more refined than all the other inhabitants of the land, he is the aristocratic type of Laos. His upbringing, his education, his religion and even his vices have a mark of distinction which make
438 them stand out above those of his neighbors. An excellent boatman,
505 and a trader rather than a farmer, he is the one who seems the master of the land, as much by virtue of his commercial aptitudes as by the
484 ease with which he ranges the country. Mounted on his long and narrow shaped pirogue, made in one piece of a tree trunk hollowed out by fire, he goes great distances to visit peoples of the most varied races [175] [Illustration] [176] [Blank page] [177] and serves as a link between all the human varieties which populate Laos. He is at home and at his ease everywhere, standing out clearly above all his countrymen in this respect.

[361] "The Laotian prefers to settle along navigable watercourses and in proximity to plains of ricefields. He is glad to have his land
[241] worked by mercenaries or by dependents of inferior race, and some-
[567] times by slaves (at least before our arrival). He himself, with quite an extensive knowledge of the needs and resources of the other inhabitants of the land, particularly likes to traffic in all kinds of merchandise. He it is who goes to buy forest products and cereal grains on the spot from the mountainfolk or from sedentary farmers, and sells them cloth, salt, tobacco, earthenware, farming implements
[439] etc. in exchange. He it is who exports the products of Laos to neighboring countries and brings back the things which Laotian industry cannot produce. His business as a commercial traveler, which he likes and which gives him a good standard of living, occupies him for only a few months of the year but brings him into contact with all the neighboring peoples and also with the Europeans and Chinese in the Siamese, Annamite and Cochinchinese trading posts. Thence arises his veneer of civilization which strikes one at first glance.

149: Reinach--188 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

101 [261] [Illustration] [262] [Blank page] [263] As far as marriages, deaths, etc. go, we find practically the same customs among the Kha tribes of southern Laos as among their fellows in northern Laos.

231 It should be noted that the Rades breed a variety of small horses which are highly prized in Annam, Laos and Siam.

•439 "These Khas love music and dancing. Their favorite instruments
[533] are gongs and bells.

"A set of gongs consists of seven, nine or twelve single ones.
534 Made of copper and often very beautiful, these gongs take the shape of a cylinder from forty to eighty centimeters in diameter, only one end of which is closed by a vibrating plate. The cap worn by our judges and professors, although on a smaller scale, gives a fairly clear idea of the shape of these instruments. A few of the instruments are artfully cast and ornamented with much elegance. There is a solid ring about a third of the way along the gong's length which is part and parcel with the rest of the gong and makes it possible to hang it up on a side of the house, at about the height of a man's head, by means of a rattan thong fastened to the frame.

"The performers stand facing the battery and pummel it with their fists, taking care to strike the vibrating plate in the center so that it will emit a true tone. This procedure produces perfect musical notes, which are accompanied by the dull resonances of the tom-toms and the sharp sonorities of the bells made of a copper and tin alloy. The gongs bring a high price, and when it is a fine one a complete series is worth from 1,200 to 1,500 francs.

"In some villages the performers each take an instrument and hold it in a sling fastened to their shoulder, then form a column in single file. This Indian-style procession marches from the center of the house towards one of its extremities, striking more and more gently as it moves away from its point of departure. Then it returns to the center, unleashing a compensating crescendo. The maneuver begins again towards the other end of the house, and the musical promenade continues until the musicians are exhausted.

535 "When the Khas begin to play and perform the Kimlang (a very
272 stirring war dance) and the warriors grow excited from dancing and from drinking rice wine, it is wise to make them stop as soon as they
579 begin to pick up their weapons, for when drunk with alcohol and enflamed with ardor they are no longer masters of themselves.

714 "War dress includes feathers in the hair and a sort of cross of Saint Andrew formed of cloth rolled and crossed on the chest. Weapons, quivers, arrows, crossbows, bucklers, spears and swords complete their equipment.

Finally, the Ao-Tchaine Yaos owe their name (bearing sapeks) 291
to the fact that the men's jacket, which is shorter than that of the other Yaos, is ornamented in front with several rows of flat copper or silver buttons which resemble sapeks (Annamite and Chinese coins).

The women fasten a pad of compact, gummed hair on their coil 302
by means of sticks made of ivory, of bone or simply of wood.

Like the Meos, the Yaos inhabit the peaks of mountains in 364
northern Laos where they grow poppies. They are confirmed opium [276]
smokers.

[270] [Blank page] [271] [Illustration at top]

CHAPTER V

1. ORGANIZATION

Consulate and Commercial Agencies. Before 439
the treaty of October 3, 1893, we already had a consul at Luang-Prabang in the Mekong basin, on the right bank of the river. In 1892 175
the vice-consulate was closed and commercial agencies were set up at Luang-Prabang, Outhene and Bassac on the right bank, and then 648
at Stung-Treng on the left bank. The first three agencies were directed by representatives of the French Syndicate of Laos, and the last by a clerk of Posts and Telegraphs. The commercial agents performed the functions of consular agents. Later on in 1894 and 1895 when we actually took possession of Laos, that is to say of the territory on the left bank of the Mekong, two additional agencies were established at Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen. [272] Then in 1895 the agencies of Pak-Lay, Xieng-Khan, Nong-Khay, Lakhone, Ban-Mouk-Dahan and Kemmarat were created on the right bank, bringing the total number to ten, for those of Stung-Treng and Luang-Prabang had been raised to the status of commissionerships.

These new agencies were directed by "commercial agents" specially appointed for the purpose. In addition to the delegates of the French Syndicate of Laos who continued to hold office, these agents included a few inspectors of the Tonkin native guard.

The duties of these officials were poorly defined, and their chief role was to assert our presence. They were mere information agents. For this reason official circles soon decided to abolish these posts, an action made possible chiefly by the establishment of two new vice-consulates in Siam, one at Oubone and one at Ban-Dua-Makeng.

648 "However, since it did not appear advisable to sanction the abandon-
439 ment of the commercial agencies by an official act, which might
175 have been regarded by the Laotian people and by the Court of Bangkok as a modification of the policy followed in the Mekong valley by the French Government," the positions were not discontinued, but only the officials who had held them.

It is thus that today the ten commercial agencies are directed by the administrators of neighboring provinces or by chief clerks or chief guards who perform the functions of commercial agents.

631 Temporary organization. Government com-
175 missionerships. Missions. As soon as the terms of the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, became known, various missions originating in Annam and Cochinchina were sent to Laos to reconnoiter, and set up a temporary organization for the territories on the left bank of the Mekong to which Siam had abandoned its claims.

In Upper Laos our agents, who were already established on the right bank at Luang-Prabang, took possession of the territory bearing this name. Then in the course of the first half of 1894, when the government commissioner M. Vacle had arrived, they settled in the former Annamite phus of Tran-Bienh and Tran-Ninh and in the territory of [Map, unpaged, inserted here] [273] Vien-Tiane. Somewhat later the assistant commissioner of the French Republic in Laos (1) and

(1) The general commissioner of the French Republic in Laos, M. Pavie, was the chief of two frontier delimitation missions which operated in the basin of the Red River, the Black River and the Mekong. His assistant commissioner was M. Lefèvre-Pontalis.

one of our former commercial agents in Luang-Prabang went to reconnoiter and organize the territories of Xieng-Khong (left bank), Poukha and Muong-Sing (2).

(2) A newly appointed government commissioner went out to take possession of the territory of the two Muong-Hou and settled at Muong-Ha-Hine to await the impending delimitation of the territory.

In middle Laos, two administrative agents delegated by the

[301] COMMERCIAL AGENCIES
(on the right bank of the Mekong)

439.

1. Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sene (residence at Xieng-Khong).
2. Pak-Lay and Xieng-Khan (residence at Pak-Lay).
3. Nong-Khay (residence at Vietn-Tiane).
4. Outhene (residence at Pak-Hin-Boun).
5. Lakhone.
6. Ban-Mouk-Dahan, Kemmarat (residence at Savannakhet).
7. Bassac (residence at Ban-Mouang).

It will perhaps be of interest to compare some of the data contained in these tables with information which we have cited previously (1).

(1) Chapters II and IV.

161

Thus, by adding the figures given in the above tables, we find 259,750 square kilometers for the total area of Laos instead of 267,000, including 139,250 for northern Laos instead of 155,000, and 120,500 for southern Laos instead of 112,000. These differences may seem large, but in view of the fact that no complete triangulation has yet been carried out in Laos the figures 259,750 and 267,000 are close enough to one another so that they need occasion no observation.

The same cannot be said for the population. The figure 470,000 (including 170,000 for Upper Laos and 300,000 for Lower Laos) given by the Superior Resident seems to be a minimum. We [302] believe that the figure of 517,100 (199,500 for Upper Laos and 317,600 for Lower Laos) which results from adding together the figures in the tables more closely approaches reality. It is given, moreover, by the most recent notices published on each province.

In sum, it may be said today that the total population varies between these two figures and that it is approximately 500,000 inhabitants. What is more, the population of Laos is tending to increase with each passing day.

The figure 49,221 for registered persons in Lower Laos, or approximately one registered person for every six inhabitants, seems fairly correct. That for Upper Laos (65,452) is much too high and should certainly be decreased by half. It is to be supposed, moreover,

13. Sources of Sulphur

316 Sources of sulphur have been noted in the provinces of Cammon, Saravane and Darlac.

As a supplement to this list, the reader is referred to Appendix XXI, in which several goldbearing deposits are noted which have been prospected, but for which concessions have not yet been granted and which are not being worked by any European enterprise. We shall now continue with a consideration of the conditions under which various other deposits, such as iron and salt, occur.

Iron. The various iron deposits which exist in Laos are alluvial deposits caused by the erosion of rocks under the action of rain water and water courses. They occur sometimes in hills from two to three hundred meters high, and sometimes in hillocks of a lesser height which do not exceed fifty or sixty meters.

The ore is found scattered throughout the mass of reddish clay alluvia, in flint nodules and isolated blocks of small dimensions. The richest ores are formed of irregular masses of a reddish cellular rock somewhat similar to millstone rock, but softer.

The ore is extracted in furnaces provided with alternating blowers. These are first loaded with a layer of crushed and washed ore, then a layer of charcoal, and the layers are thus repeated several times. When the process has been completed a bloom of spongy iron is left at the bottom of the furnace, and this iron is reheated and puddled. When the molten mass is sufficiently homogeneous, blacksmiths take it and transform it into farming implements--axes, machetes, etc.--all of which are sold locally.

[326]

[439] Production from the iron deposits in Laos is not sufficient for the needs of local consumption, since [319] [Illustration] [320] [Blank page] [321] iron is imported from Europe in small bars and sold for from 1 franc 30 centimes to 1 franc 50 centimes per kilogram.

It is unlikely that the country's iron deposits, at least those which have so far been discovered, will ever justify exploitation by European methods, because of their insufficient size.

317 Salt. The same is true in the case of salt, and the country's production is insufficient for local consumption.

The salt mines, or, to use the proper term, saltbearing deposits are of three different kinds:

314 Indeed scavenging, that is to say the gathering of forest products, hunting and fishing, is all that is needed besides rice and maize to supply the day to day needs of the native and even provide him with a comparatively important basis for trade.

Forest Products

1. Benzoin (Khab-Niane).

314 Benzoin is extracted from the tree called Styrax benzoin, by means
824 of incisions made on the trunk. The benzoin trees (Kok-Khab-Niane) are localized in Upper Tran-Ninh, the south of the Hua-Pahn and the north of the province of Luang-Prabang. They are not cultivated in
[563] any way. The resin or gum is harvested at certain times of the year, generally by the Khas, at the foot of the trees and along the trunk, where it coagulates in masses or tears.

Benzoin is collected in its natural state, that is to say in tears of various sizes and in breakages. In the production centers it is separated into three grades: large and medium tears, medium and small tears, and small pieces and breakages. In the transit markets these three grades are sorted and screened and once more divided into six kinds or types, which are: large tears, medium tears, small tears, mixed large, mixed medium, and finally tiny fragments and dust.

[431] A few years ago a chemical process was [329] discovered, it would seem, for extracting certain of the aromatic alkaloids contained in benzoin from coal, and the market value of this product suddenly
[435] dropped by more than sixty percent. At the present time, depending on the grade, the market price in Luang-Prabang is from 90 to 115 francs per hundred kilograms (1), in Nong-Khay from 100 to 135

(1) We have deemed it preferable to give the price in francs and per hundred kilograms, since the reader may not be familiar with Laotian weights and currency.

788 francs, and in Korat from 120 to 160 francs.

314 Part of the benzoin production is consumed locally in the manufacture of sticks of incense for use in worship. All the rest is exported
439 to Bangkok and from there to Europe. A very small proportion is sent to Tonkin by way of the Black River. Upon its arrival in Bangkok, benzoin from Laos is worth twice as much as in Luang-Prabang.

824 ### 2. Crimson lake or stick-lac (Khang-Deng).

314 This gum is produced by an insect of the "cochineal" type, the

314 plentiful by half than the first, yields a clear, sinewy, dry and elastic
824 rubber in threads and sheets.

Rubber from the second harvest has been submitted to competent individuals for examination, and it seems that it would bring a price of 8 to 10 francs per kilogram on the European market.

435 In April 1900 the purchase price of this product per hundred kilo-
314 grams was 137 francs in Vien-Tiane, from 166 to 208 francs in Muong-Son, 290 francs in Cho-Bo (Tonkin) and 550 francs in Vinh (Annam). Its resale price was 625 francs in Saigon, 700 francs in Singapore and from 800 to 1000 francs in Europe (1).

(1) This refers only to first grade rubber.

These figures suffice to show that Laotian rubber is a choice product in high demand, and a first-rate trade commodity holding the promise of sizeable profits.

439 The total amount of rubber exported from Laos in 1899 through
314 the ports of Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina is estimated at some fifty tons. For 1900 the figure would appear to be about eight times larger (2). This trade has only developed in Laos in the last two or

(2) See Appendix XXII.

three years, but now that the initial impulse has been given and the people are beginning to harvest the latex which they used to scorn because there were no outlets for it, the traffic will not cease to increase from one year to the next, since rubber finds an increasing demand on the European market.

Although the lianas are extremely plentiful in the Laotian forests, care should now be taken to spare them as they are exploited and to increase the number of plants so as to avoid any shortages in the future.

314 18. Pine resin (Khi-Kok-Phek or Niang-Phek)

Pine resin is used in Laos only when mixed with crimson lake. It is used for making a varnish and certain mastic compounds. It has a very low value, never more than 20 francs per hundred kilograms and [342] sometimes as low as 6 francs. None of this product is exported. It would be easy to introduce the regular cultivation of pines and the harvesting of their resin into the land, if sufficiently remunerative outlets were opened up.

Hunting

224 Hunting, for the inhabitants of Laos, is another form of scavenging, since it procures them either live animals or the remains of the same without any great labor or expense.

411 For the Laotian, time does not count. He makes his powder himself, and with the exception of firearms his hunting devices are also
224 of his own fabrication. With the help of this far from perfect equipment he is nevertheless able to capture live elephants and to procure the ivory and remains of those which he kills, as well as the hide, talons, bones and horns of a multitude of other animals. All these
[438 262] products are so many trade commodities for him. The flesh of all these animals, moreover, makes a sizeable contribution to the diet of the Laotian hunter. It is a feast for him, for his family and for his entourage.

[325] [344] The natives have a perfect knowledge of the habits and customs of all the representatives of the local fauna. Patient, adroit,
224 endowed with excellent powers of hearing and sight which are further developed and sharpened by practice, they are not afraid to attack the tiger and other large animals despite their rudimentary weapons.

Lying hidden for hours at a time, motionless and silent and abstaining from smoking, the hunter waits for his victim without losing his self-control. When it approaches within a few meters of him, his sure eye and untrembling arm enable him to strike it dead with a bullet or with a poisoned arrow shot from a powerful crossbow.

One is astounded at the results achieved with weapons which are so imperfect, as much by their rudimentary construction as by their age, and which often lead one to fear more for the hunter's life than for the beast's. We must admire these men who, although reputed to be cowardly, brave danger with such primitive weapons and go in search of wild animals in their very lairs, killing them at almost point-blank range so that oftentimes the wad from the gun singes the animal's fur or the arrow goes in one side and out the other.

411 The firearms used by the Laotians are flintlock or muzzle-loading
439 rifles, some of which are of Siamese or Burmese manufacture. Others are imported from Europe through trade or in private cargoes. There are also old regulation rifles, British and others, chiefly those which bear the image of a cock and the word "Tower" stamped on the lock or breech.

149: Reinach--252 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

The Laotian, as we have said before, makes his powder himself. 411
He also casts his bullets, which are usually only shapeless masses of lead or iron. In view of this fact it is not surprising, with such ammunition, that his guns do not have even a medium range. He is therefore forced to shoot from a very short distance, often less than five meters, if he wants not merely to hit his prey but to strike it in the right place so as to fell it on the spot and not risk becoming the victim of a wounded beast.

[345] European weapons tempt him because of their careful construction and long range, but if by chance he does try them they do not yield the same results in his hands as his own do, imperfect as they are. Thus he prefers his own weapons to ours, finding them better adapted to his eye and his arm.

For several years now, however, double-barreled hunting rifles [439] of an inferior quality and Winchester muskets of the already outdated 1878 model have been imported into Laos through Siam and Burma. The careful maintenance which such weapons require, the high price of ammunition and the difficulty of obtaining new supplies are all reasons preventing their widespread use. Thus they are, so to [554] speak, only luxury items possessed by a few fortunate Laotians who have acquired them out of ostentation rather than for use.

Firearms and crossbows are not the only hunting devices used in Laos. Indeed, there is no lack of ingenious instruments, some simple and some complicated, but always perfectly adapted to the particular purpose to which they are destined. They are made with perfect artistry and care, with a view towards capturing the most diverse forms of wild life, from the largest pachyderms such as the elephant down to the smallest bird. Traps, deadfalls, snares, springes, nets, birdcalls, etc. complete the Laotians' hunting equipment. All these devices are manufactured by them during the rainy season, when they are confined to their houses. They are like our peasants who profit from the long winter evenings to make all the little things which they will need during the course of the year.

Rifles and crossbows are used only in hunting the larger wild animals. The natives use special methods to capture elephants.

This pachyderm once lived in great herds in all the parts of 224
Laos which offered grassy plains, valleys and high plateaus, especially where certain varieties of bamboo, wild banana trees and graminaceous plants which [illegible] to intaste grew. Nowadays, because

243 262 In reality, this is neither always nor everywhere the case. There are bad years when, because of a shortage of water, production in the ricefields falls by 30 or 40 percent, and the natives are then obliged to turn for their food to the roots, yams and taros which they find in the forest.

[311] [356] It is the northern part of Laos which mainly suffers from this sad state of things, as a result of its hydrological régime, the particular disposition of its farming land, and the fragmentation of the latter into relatively small plots which are remote from one another.

312 In southern Laos the vaster plains and a more complete natural irrigation which can easily be increased as the need arises make it possible not only to satisfy local needs but also to provide paddy and threshed rice for export. Thus in 1898 900 tons of paddy were exported to Cambodia and Cochinchina (1). [439]

(1) These exports, which seem rather slight, will certainly increase provided that crops are good.

243 439 Here, by way of indication, are some current prices per hundred kilograms of paddy and decorticated rice:

Northern Laos	Paddy	4 francs 10 centimes to 9 francs
	Rice	8 francs 30 centimes to 10 francs 60 centimes
Southern Laos	Paddy	1 franc 65 centimes to 3 francs
	Rice	8 francs 30 centimes to 12 francs 50 centimes

243 In the figures given above as representing the amount of cereal grains needed to feed the population, we should include a certain quantity of maize. We do not have sufficient information to be able to show its importance with respect to the total production of cereals and consequently to say by how many tons the total figure for the paddy crop ought to be reduced in order for this difference to be applied to maize.

Nevertheless, if we take as a basis the total number of inhabitants who grow this crop, we may estimate that in northern Laos the ratio of maize production to that of paddy is about one to five. In southern Laos this crop is much less extensive.

the plants are replanted a few centimeters [360] apart in a second seed-garden for growth. This procedure increases the plant's productivity quite appreciably. 243

Since the nature of the terrain and the richness of the soil vary from one point to another, it follows that the yield from the ricefields is not uniform. By reason of these conditions and the varying amount of water which falls on the fields or is piped in, this yield varies from 40 to 90 parts for one part of seed, and from 15 to 25 piculs per hectare (1). The rice is harvested about four or five months after 243 312

(1) In Cochinchina the average yield is from 28 to 30 piculs, and in Tonkin 44 piculs. But one should not lose sight of the fact that Cochinchina and Tonkin are much better favored than Laos from the point of view of irrigation, and that the Annamites are past masters in the art of farming. [101]

transplanting.

2) Terraced ricefields. The soil is worked in the same way in these ricefields, except that in some cases the land is turned over with a spade instead of plowed. 243

3) Mountain rais. In the year following the one when the land was cleared, the soil of the rais is cleaned and weeded. Then in June the rice is sowed, either broadcast or else by dropping a few grains at a time into holes made with a kind of bamboo dibble.

The rais are harvested in October and even in September in some localities. In general the yield from rais is from 90 to 120 parts for one part of seed and from 10 to 20 piculs per hectare.

Maize is sowed directly in straight furrows about March or April, and is harvested in July.

TOBACCO. Tobacco (Ia-Doute) is widely consumed in Laos, where everyone smokes. It is also an excellent commodity for trade and export. It is cultivated on a large scale on the banks and islands of the Mekong from Pak-Lay to a point below Pone-Pissay. Production from the tobacco fields in these regions not only supplies local needs, but also those of all of Upper Laos and part of Lower Laos and provides tobacco for export to Siam and Cochinchina. 249 [439]

[361] In addition to the foregoing, almost the whole population along the banks of the Mekong and the lower reaches of its tributaries also grows tobacco for its own use and for the inhabitants of the interior. The tobacco which is most prized for its high quality, however,

249 is that grown in the regions which we have just mentioned. Because of its origin and the name of the two main distribution markets of the trade, it is called Nong-Khay or Vien-Tiane tobacco.

We do not have exact data on the annual production of tobacco in Laos, because of the excessive fragmentation of the plantings and the absence of a crop registry. But information gained from commercial statistics enables us to say that in 1898 exports from the Paklay-Pone-Pissay region reached more than 42 tons. Also, if we attribute to each [276] inhabitant two grams of tobacco per day (this is not an excessive figure) or ten grams per family of five, we find that total consumption in Laos would be from 340 to 345 tons annually, or a total production of about four hundred tons (1).

(1) See Appendix XXIII.

[435 439] The export sale price varies from fifty to a hundred francs per hundred kilograms, depending on the quality.

248 COTTON. Cotton, a herbaceous and annual plant, is cultivated almost everywhere in Laos for local consumption, and particularly in 439 northern Laos for export to Yunnan. In fact, this product is almost the only return cargo for the mule and horse caravans which come in each year from Yunnan-Fou, Tali, S'semao, etc. with tea, furs, iron and copper pots, knick-knacks, etc.

248 The farming methods in northern Laos are as follows. Seeds are placed in pairs in holes which are about ten centimeters deep and spaced at varying distances depending on the region. Stony ground is preferred, on which the brush has been burned away both to clear the land and also [362] to fertilize the soil. No other fertilizer is used except the ashes of the vegetation which covered it.

The seeds are sowed in April or May and usually germinate a few days later. The plantings are harrowed and weeded twice each season, and harvesting is usually finished in November. The cotton is of a mediocre quality, with short staples, but despite this defect it is highly sought-after, as we have seen above, by the Chinese caravans which buy all of the available supply each year at the chief local markets. The height of the plant at full yield does not exceed sixty centimeters, and the yield per kilogram of bolls averages thirty percent or about 300 grams.

248 In southern Laos the cotton fields are small in extent, widely 311 scattered and formed chiefly of narrow strips of alluvial terrain on the

249 either in the natural state or in the form of black, pasty, molasses-laden sugar.

There are several varieties, the chief of which are the heavy, green cane which is highly cellulated, and the small violet-colored cane with joints closer together, which is fuller than the first.

Farming methods do not differ from those used in other countries. Cuttings are planted, and the plants are topped if they show a marked propensity to excessive leafy growth.

257 To manufacture sugar, the cane is crushed between two vertical cylinders driven by two wooden gears of a most ingenious construction.
407 A buffalo turns the whole by means of a crossbar or shaft, the end of which is attached to its neck and constitutes a whim. Sometimes the cane is crushed between two pieces of stone or hardwood, one of which rests on the ground while the other [364] is applied on top of it by means of a wooden lever. One or several persons work the other end of the lever with all their weight and move it up and down in a series of
[439] jerky motions. The juice extracted from the cane is placed in large cast iron cauldrons shaped like cupels, which are imported by Chinese
[415] merchants. Condensation takes place over an open fire laid in primitive hearths which are cut into the ground itself, if it is clayey. When the syrup reaches the desired degree of thickness the whole mass is poured into rectangular or circular molds made of wood or bamboo. After cooling the loaves of sugar which come from the molds, and which are from three to six centimeters thick, are wrapped in dry leaves. They are transported and sold in this form. The cane itself is called "Oi" and the sugar "Nam-Oi" or, literally, water of cane.

[276] The Laotians do not refine alcohol from the juice of sugar cane,
[101] and are even ignorant of the initial refining stage which the Annamites use and which produces brown sugar.

[435] The price of sugar on the markets of Laos varies from one point to another, and transactions involve small quantities only. Statistics do give evidence, however, from which market prices of 35 to 50 francs per hundred kilograms can be deduced.

249 INDIGO. We have seen above that the Laotians use the indigo-bearing properties of certain plants which grow wild in the forests in order to dye cloth goods blue. They also produce a variety of indigo, the Indigofera tinctoria, which is similar to the variety found in Bengal. The plant itself is called "Kok-Kame" and the extract or dye "Nam-Kame

249 Chinese and Laotian middlemen and even the few European merchants--
263 have found that it brings in rewarding profits. Indeed, by exporting
438 this product the latter are assured of an almost certain gain of 20 to 30 percent.

248 [387] Ramie. There is also much to be gained from increasing
439 the production of ramie or Chinese nettle. It is assured of an outlet in Cambodia, where it sells for as much as 80 francs per hundred kilograms.

249 Cinnamon. The extension of the plantations and gardens of cinnamon trees already in existence in the province of Vien-Tiane
185 deserves serious encouragement. The bark of these trees is a valuable product which is much sought-after in China and in Europe.

276 Opium poppies. The Government of Indo-China, which is both the preparer and seller of chandoo or opium for smoking, is the
656 party which would gain most from obtaining the raw drug on French territory. It is, indeed, still dependent on British India for this product, and can acquire it only on extremely disadvantageous terms.

Since much time must still pass, however, before the Meos and the Yaos give up their age-old methods, it would be essential for the intensive cultivation of the opium poppy to be undertaken by Europeans on behalf of the administration. This would be possible if there were a guaranteed labor supply in the form of Chinese coolies, who would be enlisted primarily for the greater part of the work, and of native specialists who would deal only with scarification of the capsules, harvesting the opium and the first stage of its preparation.

These delicate operations are the ones which the Meos and the Yaos like best, but they dislike plowing, fertilizing, weeding and irrigation, all of which tasks are indispensable for obtaining a high yield of capsules and consequently of the raw drug. It would therefore be best to entrust this heavy work to foreign coolies, and it is probable that after a certain time they too would be capable of extracting the opium. Impelled by their example, the natives would doubtless then be seen to break with their prejudices and devote themselves also to intensive cultivation so as to reap its full benefits.

The role of the administration would then be at an end, and it would gradually diminish its intervention as free cultivation of the poppies increased.

[435 Raw opium which is produced locally or which comes from [388] neighboring countries is worth 22 francs, 50 centimes to 32 francs, 25 centimes per kilogram, depending on quality, in northern Laos.

231 elephants in particular.
[439] Exports of elephants from Lower Laos in 1899 numbered 115 animals worth 100,754 francs.

Horses. Most regions of Laos lend themselves to the raising of horses, although these animals do not occupy the prominent place which they might. On the contrary, an appreciable decrease in the number of horses has occurred, and it is difficult today to obtain suitable mounts in the immediate locality. The causes underlying this decrease seem to be the following:

[398] 1. The many purchases made in southern Laos for Cochinchina, Cambodia, Annam and Siam;

2. The high prices offered to breeders, leading them to get rid of their stud-horses and their mares.

As a consequence, mares have become rare in the country. As for stud-horses, it is difficult to obtain any, since horses find buyers as soon as they reach the age of two and are taken out of the [Illustration here] country. Most of the finest stallions have disappeared, and practically nothing but old horses, scarcely worthy of the name of stallions, are left.

651 It was to remedy this state of affairs that the Governor-general of Indo-China, acting on a proposal by the Superior Resident, created
231 depots of stallions.

Premiums are also paid to breeders who put up mares for covering, and during three consecutive years a premium is also awarded to the issue if it is in good condition.

It would seem that the establishment of these depots has not yielded all the results which might have been expected.

[399] The stud-horses have not always been chosen with all the care desirable, and as for the Laotians, despite the premium which is paid them, they do not seem at all eager to put up their mares for covering.

Under present conditions, horse breeding cannot give good results. As long as the heads of province do not have chief guardsmen in their service who not only have a sufficient knowledge of horses, but above all have an interest in the matter, they will have to give up all hope, except for a few exceptions, of improving the breed of horses. Moreover, the pecuniary resources placed at their disposition seem to be insufficient. Nor can too much reliance be placed on the natives, for whom the bait of premiums is not an effective stimulus.

231 Horses and mares live in the utmost liberty, and no selection is made for covering. The latter occurs completely at random, and mares are covered by the first old nag which is so inclined.

Nor is any greater supervision given to the young colts. They get their food where and as they can, for except for a few rich mandarins the natives never give paddy to their horses.

Furthermore, they are broken much too young. Most of the time they are soon wounded on the back, and since they are never bandaged their injuries often turn into great wounds which soon render them incapable of any service.

In sum, the first improvement ought to consist in the following: feeding and bandaging horses well, eliminating all specimens in covering which are inferior with respect to age and stature, and supervising the growth of offspring.

Once this first step has been taken, and when an improvement has been noted in the breed, a few Tarbes or Arabian stallions can be introduced into the land. Such a depot of stallions should be placed under some European who belongs to the French Stud-farm Department [Administration des Haras de France]. Under him as stablemen he should have Annamites [402] or better still Malays from Cambodia, who have special aptitudes for work as grooms and who are known as Sais (1) in Indo-China. For the present it will be of no use to employ

(1) Sais, donkey drivers in Egypt, coachmen and grooms in the Far East.

Laotians, until such time as they acquire more of the taste and habit for horses.

The establishment of this initial stud-horse depot would enable only a few commissionerships to regain a good stock of horses, and even then only animals at least four years old should be released. Thus no thought need be given for some time as yet to the commercial question, that is to say the exporting of fine horses.

As to the establishment in the principal commissionerships of depots of Tarbes or Arabian stud-horses, no thought need be devoted to this possibility either, since the resources of Laos are too scanty and can be utilized in a more useful fashion.

231 439 Here are the figures for exports of horses, in southern Laos only, for 1898 and 1899, together with their domestic prices and their sale prices at the outlet markets:

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Years	Number of animals exported	Average purchase price in Laos	Sale price at outlet markets
		francs	francs
1898	103 Horses	50	112.50
1899	185 Horses	From 30 to 125	From 88.50 to 225
	14 Mares	From 30 to 75	From 40 to 95

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Finally, we recommend the introduction of donkeys into Laos, with a view toward producing mules by coupling the donkeys with Laotian mares. The mules of Yunnan, which are highly reputed, reach heights as great as 1.32 meters. Extremely sturdy, they can readily carry a net weight of ninety kilograms of merchandise, not counting the saddle and pack-saddle. It is obvious that much use might be made of these animals in Laos for all kinds of transport.

654
231
[527]
[182]

Buffalo. Buffalo breeding is much in honor throughout all of Laos. It supplies the needs of agriculture and of food consumption, which [403] absorbs a large number of these animals, particularly young ones. Many of them, in fact, are sacrificed on the occasion of celebrations and various ceremonies, while others are used daily for food in some of the larger centers.

It may truly be said that buffalo are raised everywhere, and since this animal is extremely hardy it can always find enough to eat, even in the forests.

The administration is encouraging the raising of buffalo in a most effective way, and since our arrival in Laos the work has grown by such proportions that exports of buffalo to nearby regions has assumed genuine importance. (4,721 head in 1898 and 3,144 in 1899.) When we entered into possession of Laos, however, the land had been largely depopulated of its animals. They had been removed by the Siamese, and it is nothing short of miraculous that the herds have been restored in so short a time despite the considerable losses caused by periodic outbreaks of epizootic disease, often extremely violent.

These favorable results have been achieved thanks to the wise foresight of the higher authorities, who prohibited all exports and imports as long as the bovine plague lasted.

231 654 It is much to be desired that the work of our physiologists may finally be successful and place at the disposal of everyone serums which will be capable of fighting the epizootic diseases which are decimating horned animals. In the meantime our administrators can only recommend to the natives a few rules of veterinary hygiene, a feeble protective measure against the epidemic. They should be particularly careful to see that dead carcasses are not thrown into watercourses.

231 492 Oxen. In Laos, oxen are raised mainly for use in transport or for export as animals for slaughtering. In the far north they are also harnessed to carts.

262 825 The Laotians have an instinctive repugnance for beef meat, and eat it only when an animal dies by accident or has to be killed as the result of a wound or broken bone. There are even certain prejudices and certain customs in this matter, which are doubtless vestiges of another age when the ancestors of the present-day inhabitants were pastoral people among whom slaughtering [404] oxen for food was prohibited under penalty of a fine.

231 Whereas the buffalo in Laos are sturdy and of a fine height, the oxen often leave much to be desired. This is due to the fact that the natives raise oxen as they do buffalo, that is to say by leaving it to forage for itself. Although the buffalo, a hardy and autochthonous animal, requires almost no care in breeding, the ox, which is a cross-bred animal, imported and not so tough, requires a great deal of care and management. But when ox raising is treated like buffalo raising, the result is an inferior product and thence a progressive degeneration of the breed.

The Youns, the Lus and the Burmese are the only ones who have a complete mastery of raising oxen as draft and pack animals, and who produce individuals of comparatively tall stature which are sturdy, courageous and resistant to fatigue. They are even able, thanks to suitable treatment and care, to condition and train the often puny specimens which they sometimes go great distances to buy, even into southern Laos.

231 The oxen of Song-Khone (1) and of the Kham-Thong-Niai-Saravane

439 (1) In 1898 the presence of about 1,500 oxen and cattle was reported in this province.

region are destined mainly to be sold for meat in Cambodia and in Cochinchina, and this is quite a lucrative trade.

436 **Coins.** The old Laotian silver and copper coins in the shape of a pirogue which used to be used in the principalities of Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang can no longer be found today and have become curiosities. As a result of the Siamese incursions, the coins of Siam and India (Tical and Rupee) replaced the native coins. Finally, since Laos has become a French possession, the only officially recognized coinage is the French piaster of commerce (1) and its subdivisions.

(1) As well as the Mexican piasters of Hong-Kong and Singapore and the Japanese yen.

However, the Siamese and Hindu coins continue to circulate alongside this official coinage, and are in fact indispensable for transactions by reason of their weight, which bears a direct relation to the system in force in the land (2).

(2) The scale of equivalence between weights and coins is based on the standard of the "Salung" or tenth part of the Hong-Kong "Tael," which weighs 37.53 grams. This Tael is recognized as official for weighing opium. One might nevertheless just as well take as a basis the tenth part of the Shanghai Tael, which weighs 38.88 grams. This would give the picul a theoretical weight of 62.222 kilograms instead of 61.924 kilograms.

Silver in Laos, whether in the form of coins, bars, ingots, pieces of jewelry, etc., is regarded as merchandise and is bought and sold by weight without taking into account the agio which causes fluctuations in the market price. This is due to the fact that the Laotians, since they do not yet have direct trade and banking relations with neighboring countries, have no remittances to make in the trade centers where the agio [415] [Illustration] [416] [Blank page] [417] is felt and are ignorant of its effects on the conventional value of specie.

438 439 But in the last few years the middlemen of Laotian trade circles--the Chinese and Burmese--who are in direct relation with the centers where the agio prevails have been feeling its effects, and the latter have had repercussions on the great mass of Laotian producers through progressive increases in the price of imported merchandise.

In certain regions the absence of small coins obliges people to cut up pieces of silver, jewelry, bracelets and necklaces, or else to melt down the silver from fragments and jewelry and cast them in the

436 It will perhaps be of some interest to note here that the peoples of Laos have no respect for European gold coins, [420] because their gold
822 is alloyed with copper! In this country, as in all of the Far East in
439 general, it is thought that gold is the noble metal par excellance, that
177 it is polluted and diminished by alloying it with copper, which is unworthy of it, and that it can endure being made into an alloy only with silver.

The only "gold" coins in use, and still not at all currently in northern Laos, are books of gold leaf the thickness of tinfoil. They come from China and bear the official stamps of the country's banks which put them into circulation as "merchandise" in the same way as bars of silver.

Weighing instruments

405 The weighing instruments used in Laos include the "Ta-Dieng" or "Sing," a Chinese steelyard made of wood which has three rows of graduations. It may have a hook or a single platform, and is used for weights ranging from one "Sang" (1.23849 kilograms) up to several piculs.

For weights of less than a "Sang" the same kind of Chinese steelyard, with a hook or platform, is used, but it is smaller and made of ivory or bone.

A small pair of beam scales with platforms shaped like cupels, which is called "Sing-Dieng," is used mainly for weighing precious metals and gems.

There are several series of weights for balances. They are made of bronze, iron or copper and are most diverse in shape, representing elephants, imaginary birds, hexagons, pentagons, cones, pyramids, etc.

2. TRADE COMMODITIES AND PRODUCTS OF EXCHANGE

438 Since there is no industry to speak of in Laos, the local products which make up the basic commodities of interior trade and exports come
241 mainly from agriculture, livestock raising, scavenging, fishing and hunting. Mention may be made, however, of certain products of local, not to say familial, industry which enter into interior commerce and to some extent into the trade which goes on with neighboring countries.

438 [421] These include cloth goods of pure silk, either plain or spangled with gold, goods of silk blended with cotton, and wholly
433 cotton goods, then articles of jewelry and goldsmithing, and finally metals and ores from the still rudimentary mining industry and pottery goods, edge-tools, basketry, etc.

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Goods are imported in the northern part of the land by the Hos, the Burmese and the Ngieous, in the form of merchandise from Yunnan, Tibet, China, India and even Europe. They include furs, iron and copper pots, tin, cotton and silk clothing, small wares, tea, articles for opium smokers, horses, silk, cotton and light wool goods, lacquered boxes, swords, machetes, rifles, etc.

In the middle region and the south, Chinese, Cambodians, Siamese, Annamites and Europeans import the following articles: salt, cloth goods, thread, hats, knit wear, blankets, umbrellas, petroleum, matches (1), worship articles, dyes, bars of iron, porcelain bowls,

(1) Of Japanese manufacture imported through Bangkok and Moulmein, and of Annamite or Tonkinese manufacture imported through Saigon and Vinh.

perfumes, clocks and watches, glassware, paper goods, hardware, copper goods, nails, locks, drugs, a few Chinese staples, etc.

Since Laos has no direct access to the sea, it has no maritime outlets. It gives up its export products to middlemen established in Siam, Yunnan, Annam, Cambodia or Cochinchina, and these middlemen re-export Laotian products to various overseas markets or resell them on the spot for local consumption.

3. PRESENT-DAY COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS. COMMERCIAL PROCEDURES.

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Just about everyone engages in trade in Laos, in highly variable proportions, to be sure, and each according to his resources. There are, however, real merchants, [422] businessmen and traders who are the middlemen between the native producers and the exporters in neighboring countries or on the coast. The greater number of these, and also the most active ones, are the Chinese, then come the Hos and the Burmese. They may act either on their own account, or in behalf of a small local syndicate, or again as representatives of Chinese or European houses established in the ports.

The Laotians are more likely to operate individually or in family groups financed by nobles, officials of high rank or wealthy men who use this means of putting to work the capital which business has already brought them.

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Europeans are beginning to come to Laos for the purpose of engaging in commerce. They generally settle on the banks of the Mekong.

Large business houses in Cambodia and Cochinchina support various enterprises with their money. They provide an outlet for the natural products which they assemble, and supply their agents with merchandise for exchange. The latter operate in the following manner. They have touts who range over the interior of the country with a stock of imported articles which they sell or exchange, in whole or part, for local products. At certain times of the year, generally after the waters go down, temporary markets spring up at fixed points, generally at the Mekong's junctions with its chief tributaries. The middlemen set up their merchandise, and the producers come from the interior to make trades, purchases or sales and to acquire the objects which they need and which neither the country nor local industry can supply. Oftentimes also the producers do not have to move about, and the buyers come and find them in their villages.

In addition to these small markets there are larger ones such as those of Luang-Prabang, Paklay, Vien-Tiane, Nong-Khay, Oubone, Bassac, etc., where the touts and small tradesmen bring their regional products. It is in these centers that merchandise accumulates, and it is from here that it leaves for the great markets in neighboring countries and for [423] [Illustration] [424] [Blank page] [425] the ports. Here too the small retailers lay in new supplies of imported products which will be sold in the course of the year for daily consumption in the muongs and villages.

The present organization of commerce in Laos is harmful to the interests of the producers, in the sense that the temporary markets where exchanges are effected are highly scattered, with no link between them, and are often quite remote from the larger centers. The result is that a few import traders lie in wait at the crossroads to the interior or else go into the interior and dictate to the natives, who are ignorant of the value of the trade commodities as well as of that of the country's products in the larger centers. They profit from this state of affairs in order greatly to increase the prices of imported merchandise while at the same time undervaluing local products among the natives. At the present time the latter are therefore at the mercy of these small ambulating merchants, who are in league to fleece them.

Measures should consequently be taken to remedy these conditions, that is to say to defend the economic position of Laotian producers, our nationals, against the rapacity of the merchants--

439 almost all Chinese, the masters of the markets--who scour the country
441 and leave behind none or almost none of the profits which they ex-
tract from it.

443 Might not the administration establish, for example, periodic fairs under its supervision which would be held in certain suitably chosen spots? Under its direction market prices would be posted and placed within everyone's ken, and the daily market price could be found of import and export commodities on the nearest large markets and even on coastal markets. Producers would thus gain correct information on the value of their merchandise and would be in a position to decide whether it was to their advantage to operate locally or to go further on before making their transactions.

The question would still remain of giving strong encouragement to private initiative with a view toward the establishment of repositories or emporiums equipped to handle the natural products of the country in wholesale or retail quantities. Such [426] trading posts or factories could compete with the present-day traveling merchants by offering higher prices and also supplying imported goods on more favorable terms.

175 The French Syndicate of Laos [Syndicat français du Laos] made a be-
441 ginning in this direction as early as 1890 and 1891 by establishing its factories at Luang-Prabang, Nong-Khay and Xieng-Hong and later on, in 1892, at Bassac and Outhene, thus distributing factories spaced along the great river over an extent of nearly 2000 kilometers. The guiding idea of the promoters and stockholders of the Syndicate was that its agents should above all else be precursors and pioneers of a fertile idea, just as its counters should be landmarks for future and lasting establishments to be created after their example and beyond their initiative. Once this task had been accomplished, however, the pioneers dispersed and the landmarks so successfully placed were not utilized.

439 Yet isolated attempts made in recent years by several of our
441 countrymen have not always, it must be confessed, been crowned with
443 success. Without special commercial aptitudes, without either the necessary capital or credit and consequently not able to supply themselves at first hand, and restricted by the system of customs now in force in Indo-China, they have not succeeded in all their operations despite their real efforts and their unquestioned good will. Neither should we lose sight of the fact that commerce in Laos should not seek its chief profit in the sale of imported products, but rather in the exportation of a few selected natural products such as sticklac, benzoin, cardamom and rubber, among others.

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435 The following table shows the considerable discrepancy between purchase prices within the country and sale prices on transit and European markets.

In the last seven years Laos has become a French possession, but
[505] the interior conditions of trade and exchange have not varied. A single modification has been the fruit of our occupation, the creation of a line of steam transport on the Mekong. This service, although still not perfect, nonetheless constitutes [427] [Illustration] [428] [Blank page] [429] the most economical route from Luang-Prabang or Nong-Khay to Cambodia and the sea. Unfortunately, the customs barrier is there to stop the products which our industries do not yet manufacture but which our merchants could import into Laos in competition against those brought in through Siam, Burma and Yunnan.

Markets	Sticklac per 100 kilograms	Benzoin per 100 kilograms	Cardamom per 100 kilograms	Rubber per 100 kilograms
	francs	francs	francs	francs
Hua-Pahn (Laos)				1st quality 166 to 208 2nd quality 85 to 115
Nong-Khay, Vien-Tiane (Laos)	50 to 60	150 to 250	55 to 60	1st quality 250 to 280
Bassac (Laos)	38 to 40		92 to 100	
Pnom-Penh and Cholen (Cambodia & Cochinchina)	54 to 70		133 to 165	1st quality 540 to 625
Korat (Siam)	75 to 95	250 to 280	85 to 110	
Bangkok (Siam)	125 to 135	300 to 350	140 to 180	
London (England)	220 to x	500 to 700	250 to 310	1st quality 750 to 835
Hamburg (Germany)				1st quality ~800 to 1000 2nd quality 450 to 600

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In spite of the disadvantageous conditions governing any commercial undertaking in Laos, two young merchants of foreign origin have not hesitated to resume part of the program of the French Syndicate. Financed and supported by one of the large Saigon business houses, they founded a similar trading post or factory at Vien-Tiane in 1898 (1).

(1) Two companies, one the Company of French Factories, the other the Company of Laotian Factories, have just been formed in Tonkin. It is their intention to do business in Laos.

They set to work courageously, sparing no effort and working themselves at the various handling operations with a view toward reducing their overhead expenses.

For nearly three years they have tried everything in the way of importing and exporting, without any particular bias, their ideal being to traffic in French products using commercial routes and a port which was also French.

[430] According to them, the status of their undertaking is as follows.

Although they benefit, like other importers, from the privilege of an eighty percent exemption from customs duties levied at Saigon on imported merchandise of foreign origin (1), they cannot compete

(1) It would seem that this exemption has just been suppressed on imports into French Laos, that is to say into the territories on the left bank of the Mekong.

One feature has resulted which is odd to say the least. Foreign merchandise coming from Saigon or Pnom-Penh, for example, and destined for Siamese Laos, that is to say for the territories on the right bank, benefits from an eighty percent exemption from duties levied on merchandise in transit through French Indo-China. On the other hand, merchandise destined for the left bank, which is French territory, pays the full duty without any reduction.

It is therefore to the advantage of merchants established in Laos to cross over to the right bank, that is to say from France to Siam! This is also an inducement to fraud, for the exempt merchandise on the right bank can cross over to the left bank without difficulty.

with the products of the same kind which come in through Bangkok.

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The only French goods which do succeed, but in which traffic is too light for sufficient trade, are red cotton blankets (de Cours-Rhône) which sell for three francs in Laos, spirits, syrups, soap, perfume (low-priced), glass pearls, white sugar, cigarettes, smoking articles, etc.

Forced to give up importing French and foreign cloth goods, they do only a few rare exchange transactions with soap, pearls and a few small items. The rest of their transactions have to be in the form of purchases because of a lack of exchange products.

From the point of view of exports, rubber, horn and hides are the only articles which occasion any transactions.

Unfortunately exit duties, as well as local taxes, are exorbitant, and the port of Saigon is closed by customs both going in and coming out.

Cardamom in particular, of which there are great quantities, could form the basis for a certain amount of trade, but any movement in this direction is impeded by the comparative slowness of communications between Vien-Tiane [431] and Saigon, and by the requirements of the buyers, who want deliveries at fixed dates on this product.

Operations have been attempted in exporting lac, gums, cocoons, scrap silk, pierced cocoons and silk thread, but these have only ended in failure.

The benzoin of Upper Laos, which these gentlemen claim to be the best in the world, is too expensive. Furthermore, exit duties force the price up so high that it is unsaleable in Europe. They have had to abandon trade in this product to the Orientals who go to Bangkok. [Illustration here]

To sum up, the following are the causes which, according to them, are hindering the progress and development of their trading post in Vien-Tiane:

1. The impossibility of obtaining on the markets of French Indo-China the French exchange products which are needed in Laos, since our industry does not produce them. Recourse must therefore be had to foreign articles. Now, certain of these are not to be had, and those which can be found are taxed with such high customs duties that they cannot compete with similar articles imported into Vien-Tiane by way of Bangkok, where they are taxed with only a slight three percent ad valorem duty.

2. The impossibility of selling cloth goods of French origin because of their high price, and those of foreign importation because of the customs duties levied on them.

489 [432] 3. The excessive distance to be traversed before any port is reached, and the consequent impossibility of effecting transactions on time in natural products with a variable market price, such as cardamom, among others.

4. Excessive customs exit duties and local taxes.

The above is an impartial exposé of the situation of the commercial trading post of Vien-Tiane, according to the very statements of the men who founded it. Yet in spite of everything these young traders have not lost courage. They hope for a better future which can perhaps be anticipated the day when some of the innovations of which we shall speak in what follows have become an accomplished fact (1).

(1) See same chapter, Art. 7 and Chapter X, Art. 4.

4. EXPORTS

439 Although the various products which constitute the exportable merchandise of Laos have already been examined, we present them here once again with certain complementary information on their value, importance, origin and destination. The figures contained in the following tables are to be regarded as a minimum (2) for exports

(2) In fact, many products are exported from Laos without their exit being officially recognized.

in 1898 and 1899.

I LOWER LAOS (3)

(3) We refer here only to exports from Lower Laos, since there is not sufficient information to be able to establish similar tables for Upper Laos. Further on, however, we shall give the total exports from Upper Laos for 1898.

A) Merchandise

		1898	1899
Total exports	Weight	1,281T	498,415T
	Value	442,629F	405,942F

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			1898	1899
Break-down of exports	To Siam	Weight	81T	149.051T
		Value	45,892F	113,985F
	To Annam, Cambodia, ... Cochinchina	Weight	1,200T	349.364T
		Value	396,737F	291,957F

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B) Animals

		1898	1899
Total exports.....	Number	6,572	12,042
	Value	436,710F	441,720F
Break-down of exports: To Siam.....	Number	2,292	3,128
	Value	133,735F	267,200F
To Annam, Cambodia,... Cochinchina	Number	4,280	8,914
	Value	302,975F	174,520F

C) Recapitulation

		1898	1899
Total exports: merchandise and animals	Value	879,339F	847,662F
Share of Siam in total exports	Value	179,627F	381,18[illegible]
Share of Indo-China in total exports	Value	669,712F	466,477F

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A. MERCHANDISE

Total exports from Lower Laos during 1898

Name of merchandise	Average purchase price per picul of 60 kilograms	Average sale price		Number of piculs exported	Total value of purchases made in the country	Observations
		at Pnom-Penh	at Saigon			
Cardamom	22$00	32$00	40$00	4,675	102,850$00	Including 829 piculs exported to the right bank
Decorticated rice	2.00	?	?	72	144.00	" 12 " id.
Paddy	0.40	1.80	2.20	12,469	4,987.60	" 408 " id.
Chinese nettle	9.00	14.00	?	904	8,136.00	" 115 " id.
Lac	9.00	15.00	?	228	2,052.00	" 22 " id.
Betel nuts	5.00	9.00	?	72	360.00	
Tamboyan	1.50	25.00	33.00	24	36.00	
Wax	60.00	85.00	90.00	94 1/2	5,670.00	" 24 1/2 " id.
Ivory	400.00	470.00	?	9 1/2	3,800.00	" 45 k. " id.
Elephant bones	4.00	6.00	7.00	2	8.00	
Tiger bones	16.00	23.00	24.00	1 1/2	24.00	
Pirogues (single units)	30.00	80.00	?	601	18,030.00	" 2 " id.
Hides and horns	11.00	17.00	22.00	2,814	30,954.00	" 51 " id.
			Totals	21,365 1/2 piculs and 601 pirogues	177,051$60	

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B) MERCHANDISE

Total exports from Lower Laos during 1899

Name of merchandise	Average purchase price in piasters per picul of 60 kilograms	Quantities exported		Total value of purchases made in the country
		piculs	kilograms	
Pimento	9	4	240	36$
Cotton	3 to 4.50	4	240	16
Ginger	3	2.12	132	7
Tobacco	18 to 24	2.80	168	60
Basketry	Unit price 1	40 baskets		40
Elephant fat	5		13	1.20
Anteater hides	11 to 12	11 2/3	690.30	136.20
Tiger pelts	4 to 7 apiece	one		6.60
Monkey hides	20	1 1/2	90	30
Lime	0.50 to 0.60	150	9,000	82
Domestic cotton goods	0.10 per meter	80 meters		8
Tortoise shell	9	2	120	18
Anteater scales	12	1/2	30	6
Tin	36	75	4,500	2,700
Buffalo horns	7 to 12	403 2/3	5,912.40	3,412
Ox horns	7 to 11	21	1,260	228
Buffalo hides	8 to 12	576	34,631	6,422
Ox hides	10 to 14	417	12,137.80	5,035
Wax	60 to 80	102 1/2	6,141.80	7,804.50
Cardamom	12 to 23	4,451	267,117.70	84,089
Ivory	180 to 400	6	353	2,065.78
Buckskin	9 to 20	638	38,260	9,305
Gum lac	9 to 11	244 1/3	14,669.80	2,439
Rhinoceros hides	17	5 1/2	321	93
Palm fibers	3	6	360	18
Chinese medicine	15	9	540	135
Gold dust	unit price in ticals	12$70	21 ticals	268
Elephant bones	3	2.10	130	6.50
Tiger bones	15 to 18	2 1/6	130	35.30
Betel nuts	9 to 10	3	180	29
Chinese nettle	7 to 20	706.50	50,242	10,607.87

439 Total exports from Lower Laos during 1899 (cont.)

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Pirogues	Depending on size	number	552	22,076
Hartshorn	9 to 15	194	11,630	2,577.20
Soft hartshorn	200		24	112
Rhinocezos horns	About 55 per kilogram		38.500	2,118
Spun silk	120	3	180	360
		General total		162,383$15

149: Reinach--323 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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A) ANIMALS

Total exports from Lower Laos during 1898

Kind	Average purchase price of animal	Average sale price outside Lower Laos	Number of animals exported	Total value of animals exported. Average purchase price in country	Total value of animals exported. Average sale price	Observations
Elephants	350$	1,200$	192	67,200$	230,400$ (1)	(1) Prices offered in teak yards along the Menam.
Horses	20	45	103	2,060	4,635	
Buffalo	20	36	4,721	94,420	169,956	
Steers	9	20	1,056	9,504	21,120	
Pigs	3	6	500	1,500	3,000	
		Totals	6,572	174,684$	429,111$	

149: Reinach--324 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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B) ANIMALS

Total exports from Lower Laos during 1899

Kind	Average purchase price of animal	Average sale price outside Laos	Number of animals exported	Total value of animals exported. Average purchase price in country	Total value of animals exported. Average sale price	Observations
Pigs	2 to 4$	4 to 8$	6,038	12,226$	24,452$	
Steers	8 to 12	10 to 24	2,184	21,840	43,680	
Cows	4.80 to 8	6 to 10	362	2,172	2,896	
Buffalo	20 to 45	35 to 80	3,144	94,320	157,200	
Horses	12 to 50	35 to 90	185	5,550	11,100	
Mares	12 to 30	16 to 38	14	280	400	
Elephants	300 to 450	12 to 1600	115	40,300	172,200	
		Totals	12,042	176,688$	411,928$	

149: Reinach--325 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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II UPPER LAOS

Total exports from Upper Laos during 1898

Name of article	Average purchase price in country, in piculs	Average sale price in nearby countries	Number of piculs or units exported	Value of purchases made in country	Observations
A. From Luang-Prabang (various merchandise)					
	$	$	piculs	$	
Cardamom (piculs)	18.00	27.00	150	2,700.00	All to the right bank.
Benzoin "	54.00	68.00	500	27,000.00	
Lac "	10.00	14.00	2,000	20,000.00	
Wax "	54.00	60.00	20	1,080.00	
Resin "	2.00	3.50	10	20.00	
Ramie "	18.00	21.00	50	900.00	
Raw silk "	125.00	150.00	45	5,625.00	
Hemp "	18.00	21.00	15	270.00	
Mats, per hundred	9.00	15.00	18,000 u	1,620.00	
Scarves and skirts	Variable		900 u	3,500.00	
Rhinoceros horns (piculs)	2,000.00	2,500.00	1	2,000.00	
Ivory "	360.00	430.00	3	1,080.00	
Horns "	7.00	9.00	40	280.00	
Hartshorn "	10.00	14.00	10	100.00	
Soft hartshorn "	2,500.00	3,000.00	1 1/2	3,[illegible].00	

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Total exports from Upper Laos during 1898 (continued)

Name of article	Average purchase price in country, in picals	Average sale price in nearby countries	Number of picals or units exported	Value of purchases made in country	Observations
Anteater scales (picals)	32.50	45.00	58	1,885.00	
Tobacco "	8.00	12.00	150	1,200.00	
Animal remains "	8.00	11.00	700	5,600.00	
Miscellaneous (pottery and forest products)				8,500.00	
				87,160.00	
		B. From the other commissionerships			
Approximate total			3,000 picals	50,000$00	
		C. Miscellaneous animals			
Steers	7.00	12.00	300 head	2,100$00	Epizootic disease halted this trade.
Buffalo	10.00	20.00	700 "	7,000.00	
			1,000 head		
Upper Laos ..... Grand Total			7,553 1/2 picals	146,260$00	

439 178 [437] The conclusion to be drawn from the preceding tables is not favorable toward orienting Laotian trade towards the ports of French Indo-China. It is evident that the export trend of animals and products shows a marked tendency to move towards Oubone and Siam. Indeed, Siam's share of total exports from Lower Laos (merchandise and animals), which was 179,627 francs in 1898, rose to 381,185 francs in 1899. This was an increase of more than double.

On the other hand, we see that the share of Annam, Cochinchina, and Cambodia in this same traffic, which was 699,712 francs in 1898, fell to 466,477 francs in 1899, representing an approximate decrease of one-third.

[496] The causes of this persistent and increasing orientation of Laotian trade towards Siam are perhaps to be sought in the opening of the railroad from Bangkok to Korat (1) as well as in the customs system of

(1) The king of Siam inaugurated this line on December 21, 1900.

French Indo-China.

439 497 505 There is no question but that the railroad constitutes a considerable improvement over the old means of transport, as much by virtue of the lower costs and shorter travel time as by the suppression of the dangers and bothers of the cart road from Korat to Bangkok (domestic duties, exactions of the local authorities, robberies, etc.). But are these reasons sufficient to explain or justify the admitted fact?

The River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales] service is, as we have previously noted, the most rapid and least expensive means of transporting merchandise from Luang-Prabang to Saigon. Why then is this service, which is superior even in its present imperfection, scorned by exporters in general and used mainly by importers for products destined for the Europeans in Laos? The answer is a simple one. Exporters would not hesitate to use the Mekong route and to transport their products to Pnom-Penh or to Saigon-Cholon if, as they can do at Moulmein, at Xieng-Mai, at Nong-Khay, at Bassac, at Oubone, at Korat and at Bangkok, they could obtain [438] supplies there of imported merchandise from various sources to make up the counterpart of their exports. But, besides the fact that they would not be able to find certain special merchandise which is indispensable to them in the French marketplaces, they could not obtain the rest except at an increase of fifty or sixty percent or even more over the ordinary prices in the markets of Siam and Burma which we have just cited.

439 The experiment has been made, moreover, and we ask the reader's permission to give an account of it here.

"The business houses of Saigon (1), of Pnom-Penh and of Hué,

(1) Report of the Superior Commandant of Lower Laos (1897).

which do not enjoy the eighty percent exemption, cannot compete against imports by Siam.

"From another viewpoint, there is as yet no business house in Laos which can directly import all the articles necessary to it and which, in consequence, can claim the benefits of this exemption.

"The result is that the merchants and small middlemen through whose hands all export trade passes in Laos are unable to find most of the current merchandise which they need either at Pnom-Penh, at Saigon, at Vinh, at Hué or at Tourane. In addition, since that which they can find sells at extremely high prices because of the customs duties, it is to their every advantage to go to Bangkok, Khorat, Oubone, Nong-Khay or Outaradit to obtain their supplies on favorable terms, and to transport them by the long, costly and perilous land route even though that of the Mekong is rapid, sure and inexpensive!"

Thus thirty-five merchants of Vien-Tiane who had formed an association for the purpose of trade placed one of their members named Pho-Mouk, in January 1897, in charge of a convoy of natural products including eighteen large rafts of bamboo. The value of the cargo at local prices was about 38,000 francs, and represented at least twice this sum on the coast.

The convoy reached Saigon and the merchandise was sold at a considerable profit, but after having spent a month in Saigon the leader of the convoy had to go back up to Vien-Tiane, importing only the following merchandise (destined mainly for Europeans):

[439] 100 boxes of soap, 50 drums of petroleum, 20 kegs of nails, 2 cases of paper, 1 case of crockery, 50 barrels of steel, 12 cases of absinthe, 10 cases of Amer Picon [Translator's note. A brand of bitters.], 12 cases of various kinds of syrup, 12 cases of cognac, 10 cases of vermouth, 8 cases of matches, 3 cases of glassware and 2 strongboxes.

As for other import goods, our Laotians could not obtain any either in Saigon or Pnom-Penh, either because they were not to be had or else because the price was excessive. They were therefore forced to go to Bangkok to complete their return cargo and to pay the Siamese customs exit duties upon leaving (3 percent ad valorem),

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the interior "Likin" duties and, in a word, higher transport costs than along the Mekong.

Here again it will be seen that the obstacle arises out of the customs duties which are levied on products entering Indo-China which our industries do not manufacture. These inexpensive objects, mostly trash (1), can be obtained only in Bangkok, where they sell

(1) The greater part of these articles bear the mark Made in Germany.

at a low price because only a 3 percent ad valorem entrance duty is levied on them. This fact explains why they are flooding Siam and Laos. It is to be hoped that the general government of Indo-China will remedy this state of affairs, if it has the least concern for preventing French Laos from being a colony of exploitation by foreigners, both Europeans and Orientals, without any hope of profit or material improvement for our nationals.

To sum up, the measures which should be taken in the interest of trade include the establishment of trading posts or factories; the creation of regional markets and the publication of daily price lists; an ad valorem exemption not exceeding three percent for foreign merchandise in transit for Laos; and the establishment of a single three percent ad valorem exit duty for Laotian products.

5. IMPORTS

The official information which we possess on import trade in Laos is highly incomplete.

[440] Imports of merchandise into Lower Laos are estimated at about 300 tons annually, as a maximum (1).

(1) Information on imports into Upper Laos is lacking.

The official statistics show that imports into Lower Laos rose to 92,017.65 francs in 1899.

They were distributed as follows:

Imports to Attopeu.....	4,916.50 francs
" " Cammon.....	15,273.25
" " Song-Khone....	24,449.50
" via Khone.....	47,378.40
	92,017.65

439 These imports chiefly involve the following goods: spun cotton, spun silk, native cotton goods, printed sampots, absinthe, salt, copper pots, etc.

One should also remember the imports by way of the River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales] which are destined for the administration or for Europeans, and which amount to 9,233 cases of goods weighing about 300 tons.

In addition to the foregoing, salt is imported into southern Laos by the Cochinchina excise office at three depots, Stung-Treng, Khong and Ban-Monang. Between October 1898 and February 1899, 120 tons of salt were sold to the inhabitants at a price lower than that which they ordinarily paid.

If we compare the figure for imports with that for exports, we note that in 1899 imports amounted to 92,017 francs as against exports of 847,662 francs, or a figure nearly ten times greater.

This discrepancy is even greater than is indicated, for the total value of exports is reckoned on the average purchase price in the country of origin, and should surely be doubled to obtain the average sale price on the nearby markets of Siam, Cambodia and Cochinchina. This difference between imports and exports results from the fact that the greater part of the imported merchandise does not enter Laos by [441] French routes, but comes in through the back door by way of Bassac, Oubone, Lakhone, Nong-Khay, Paklay, Xieng-Khong, Luang-Prabang, etc.

To sum up, we cannot with any certainty give any figure for overall trade in all of Laos. If, however, we take as a basis the averages obtained in various provinces, it may be presumed that this trade represents somewhat more than two million francs, to wit:

Exports.....1,244,989 francs (1)

(1) A figure obtained by adding the total exports of Upper and Lower Laos for 1898, according to the above tables.

Imports (3/4 of exports).... 933,741 francs
2,178,730 francs

439 489 6. MEANS OF TRANSPORT USED. COMPARISON BETWEEN TRANSPORT COSTS ON VARIOUS TRADE ROUTES FROM LAOS TO THE SEA.

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A) Means of transport used

1. BY LAND. The means of transport used on land routes include men, elephants, horses, mules, oxen and oxcarts.

482 Men. A man serving as a bearer may carry his burden in three different ways, depending on the race to which he belongs and the route he must follow, whether over plains or mountains.

a) On the back. This manner of carrying burdens is used by all mountainfolk in general, Thais, Khas and others. Women and children as well as men carry burdens which are naturally in proportion to their strength. In transports, the average load for one bearer is thirty kilograms.

b) With a bamboo pole, the load being distributed at both ends. Two baskets, two packs or two cases are fastened to the extremities of a light, fairly thick bamboo pole which is about 1.5 meters long. The bearer places the middle of the pole on his shoulder and balances the load with his hand. The weight of the load thus carried will vary between 24 and 30 kilograms. This way of carrying loads is used by the [442] Burmese, the Lus, the Youns, the northern Laotians and some Khas.

c) With a bamboo pole, the load being suspended in the middle. This method of transport requires two men, one at each end of a bamboo pole about two meters long. It is difficult by this means to carry a load greater than 15 to 20 kilograms per man, or 30 to 40 kilograms per pole. This method of transport is used in the plains regions by the Laotians, Thais and other inhabitants of valleys and plateaus. A bearer can cover an average distance of 25 kilometers per day in level country, and from 15 to 20 in mountainous regions.

Carrying loads on one's head, which meets with such favor in Africa, is not a method used in Laos.

492 Elephants. Depending on its age, size and energy, an elephant can carry loads varying between 100 and 190 kilograms. But it is a delicate animal and requires great care and rather frequent rest periods.

On the other hand, it can go anywhere, even in spots where horses and even men would be halted. The elephant's step is regular on uneven terrain as well as in flat regions. The average distance covered in a day is from 18 to 25 kilometers, depending on the nature of the terrain and the temperature.

489 [447] Current transport costs are generally as follows:

Land Routes		francs
435 By human bearer,	per hundred kilograms and per day:	1.90 to 2
By elephant,	" " " " " "	1.60 to 1.80
439 By pack-horse,	" " " " " "	1.90 to 2
By pack-ox,	" " " " " "	0.70 to 0.80

By referring to what has been said above, we may deduce, for each of these methods of transport, the following average cost per ton or per kilometer:

By human bearer: 0.76 to 0.80 francs
By elephant: 1.07 to 1.20 "
By pack-horse: 0.76 to 0.80 "
By pack-ox: 0.70 to 0.80 "

Boatmen. Boatmen may be hired by the day or by contract for a given journey. The current prices are 0.375 franc per man per day without rice, and 0.30 franc with food.

Coolie bearers. Coolie bearers are generally paid 0.25 franc per man and per day without food, or 0.20 franc with rice.

Chief coolies and chief pirogue boatmen. The chief coolies and chief pirogue boatmen, pilots, etc. are always paid higher than their men. The amount of increase will vary, depending on conditions, by fifty to a hundred percent.

Pirogue rental. Renting a pirogue usually costs the same price per day as hiring a boatman. Thus the cost of renting a pirogue and hiring four boatmen is reckoned on the basis of five units.

B) Comparative transport costs on various trade routes from Laos to the sea.

We have thought that it might be of interest to sum up, in the comparative table given below, the courses and costs per ton and per kilometer of transports on ten of the principal trade routes of Laos.

149: Reinach--338 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina Laotians AM8

489
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[448] COMPARATIVE TABLE OF TRANSPORT COSTS ON VARIOUS TRADE ROUTES FROM LAOS TO COCHINCHINA, ANNAM, TONKIN AND SIAM (AND VICE VERSA)

Courses	Means of transport	Distance in kilometers	Number of days		Price in francs		Observations
			upstream	downstream	Total per metric ton of 1000 kilograms	Per ton and per kilometer (ton-kilometer)	
I. Luang-Prabang to Saigon	By River Merchant Fleet. Steamships and pirogues	2300	50-60	30-35	162.50	0.0705	The average rate for cotton goods is taken as a basis.
II. Nong-Khay to Saigon	Same	1840	27-35	18-22	122.25	0.0664	Same.
III. Nong-Khay to Bangkok by way of Korat	Oxcarts	603	34-34 to 36		260 to 300	0.414 to 0.497	On this route prices vary from one year to the next, depending on the abundance of draft oxen, which are often decimated by epizootic disease.

149: Reinach--339 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina Laotians AM8

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COMPARATIVE TABLE OF TRANSPORT COSTS ON VARIOUS TRADE ROUTES FROM LAOS TO COCHINCHINA, ANNAM, TONKIN AND SIAM (AND VICE VERSA) [continued]

III. (continued)							In case of a rise, the prices given here should be increased by about 15 percent.
IV. Luang-Prabang to Nong-Khay	1. By River Merchant Fleet. Pirogues and rafts.	460	15 - 25	10 - 12	40	0.0861	The average rate for cotton goods is taken as a basis. Usual prices, whatever the merchandise.
	2. By free rafts. Upstream by pirogue.		18 - 25	9 -12	250	0.543	
V. Nong-Khay to Pak-Hin-Boun	1. By River Merchant Fleet. Steamships.	335	2	1-1/2	22.50	0.0673	Average rate for cotton goods taken as basis. Usual prices, for all merchandise.
	2. By rafts and free pirogues.		8-14	4-5	100	0.298	

149: Reinach--340 G-8 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

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COMPARATIVE TABLE OF TRANSPORT COSTS ON VARIOUS TRADE ROUTES FROM LAOS TO COCHINCHINA, ANNAM, TONKIN AND SIAM (AND VICE VERSA) [continued]

VI. Pak-Hin-Boun to Haiphong via Ben-Thuy (Annam	By pirogue, elephant, sampan and steamships belonging to the Correspondances fluviales du Tonkin.	570	15-17	15-16	130 to 150	0.228 to 0.263	By pirogue from Pak-Hin-Boun to Keng-Kiet. By elephant from Keng-Kiet to Hatrai (Annam). By sampan from Hatrai to Ben-Thuy. By steamship from Ben Thuy to Haiphong.

[A48] COMPARATIVE TABLE OF TRANSPORT COSTS ON VARIOUS TYPES RATES FROM LAOS TO CONSTANTINA, ANNAM, TONKIN AND SIAM (SEE FIG. MAPS) (CONTINUED)

Courses	Means of Transport	Distance in kilometers	Number of days up-stream	Number of days down-stream	Price in Tikal-Cat sprite ton of 2000 kilometers	Piaster per ton and per kilometer (TON-KILOMETER)	Observations
VII. Luang-Prabang to Haiphong via Hung-Hoa and Son-Tay (Tinh).	1. By River Kornkok Tinh, pirogues and steamships. By elephant, pirogue and camels. By steamships belonging to the Compagnie Française de Tonkin.	1115	35-40	20-21	192.50 to 312.50	0.173 to 0.280	By pirogues, rafts and steamships of the River Kornkok Tinh from Luang-Prabang to Hin-Boun. The rest as above.
	2. By rafts or free pirogues. By elephant and camels. By steamships belonging to the Compagnie Française de Tonkin.	1125	40-45	22-25	180 to 300	3.43 to 0.160	By rafts and free pirogues from Luang-Prabang to Hin-Boun. As above for the rest of the journey.
VIII. Luang-Prabang to Bangkok. 1st section. Luang-Prabang to Pakday	1. Pirogues, half-loaded going upstream.	230	22-27	4-7	36	0.156	After all these sections, the total price paid for and per kilometer only 1,000 kilometers.
	2. Rafts going downstream.				18	0.078	
2nd section. Pak-Lay to Takli (Cambodia)	2. By elephant, horse and on in both directions.	220	7-9	10	180	0.818	
	2. By human beasts, in both directions		20-22	25			
3rd section. Takli to Bangkok (Siam).	1. Pirogues, fully loaded, towed by steamships going upstream (August to October inclusive).	600	22-24	4	54.16	0.90	
	2. Pirogues, half-loaded going upstream (November to February).		20-24	—	96	0.160	
	3. Pirogues, fully loaded going downstream.		—	8	30	0.0750	
•	•	2000	Average		Upstream: 364.16 Downstream: 216	0.3-9 0.216	Towards Luang-Prabang Towards Bangkok

(Table continued over)

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IX. Bassac to Bangkok via Oubone and Korat.	1. Steamship from Bangkok to Pekin. 2. Carts from Pekin to Oubone. 3. Pirogues from Oubone to Bassac.	750	36	36	26.65 245 19	290.65	0.388	
X. Bassac to Saigon.	Pirogue and steamship.	1110	14	30	57.20	0.0515		

439 [450] A mere glance at the table is enough to show the enormous
489 difference between transport costs towards Siam, and those towards
Annam, Tonkin and Cochinchina. And even so, we have not
435 reckoned with the various interior local taxes which shippers have
to pay on the roads of Siam, nor evaluated the worries and bothers
to which they are subject or the robberies which they must fear.
[Illustration here]

We have already expressed the opinion that if these routes continue to win favor with merchants, this is because they end at points and at markets where the latter can be sure not only of marketing their products, but also of finding at low prices all the merchandise, no matter what its source, which is necessary to the inhabitants of Laos.

Let our markets in Cochinchina, Cambodia, Annam and Tonkin be supplied in the same way and offer the merchants of Laos the same advantages in the way of reduced prices; let trading posts or factories be established on the Mekong at Stung-Treng, [451] Bassac, Lakhone, Hin-Boun, Vien-Tiane, Pak-Lay and Luang-Prabang, and the roads leading to Siam will rapidly be forsaken for our own. Indeed, all the merchants know that security now reigns in Laos. One pays what is due only once, the distances are shorter, and transport costs are lower than those paid from the Mekong to Siam.

7. CUSTOMS SYSTEM TO BE ADOPTED

439 The valley of the Mekong, of which we occupy one side, remains
65 open in fact whereas the coasts of Indo-China are closed by the customs. If we were to close this valley as well by a customs barrier we should then have contracted enormous expenditures without any hope of compensating receipts. From still another point of view, is it not to be feared that the present state of things will bring about the following result? Today, foreign merchandise is halted on our coasts by customs duties. Since such merchandise is, moreover, indispensable to our nationals, there can be no doubt but that it is coming into our possessions by a back door, despite the long distances, the high costs and the difficulties of all kinds which the roads from Siam to the Mekong offer. After flooding this basin first, it will penetrate into Cambodia, Annam and Tonkin without any profit either for the Treasury or for our nationals.

We speak in the future tense, but who can deny that we might

149: Reinach--344 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

439 use the present tense (1)?

651 (1) The fact is actually occurring at the present time, and has motivated the canceling of the eighty percent exemption. (See p.430, note.)

The discrepancy between the officially recognized exports and imports is a sure indication that we are here approaching the truth.

The remedy for this state of things is to make Laos freely open, on equal terms and both entering and leaving, to all goods and to all merchants. It means reducing all the duties levied to the single three percent ad valorem rate both entering and leaving. It means, in a word, parity [452] with our neighbor Siam which, after having left us the land, the water and the wild beasts of the forest, will continue, unless we take care, to be the only one to profit from our colony of Laos.

It will be objected that the remedy which we recommend would not prevent the Treasury from being cheated, since foreign goods introduced into Laos might still, as is the case at present, come in through a back door into the other parts of the Indo-Chinese union. But we reply that the situation is not at all the same. The Mekong is open over more than 2000 kilometers, and there the frontier is entirely a moral one, whereas between Laos and the other lands of Indo-China there are mountainous obstacles with only a few passages, and it would be enough merely to guard these, with respect to customs, in order to prevent fraud.

[453] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER IX

INDUSTRY. ARTS AND TRADES.

433 The only purpose of industry and trades in Laos is to satisfy local
472 needs. Indeed, one cannot regard as export trade the sale of a few silk or cotton goods of Laotian origin in the nearby regions.

463 Mention must first be made of what we may call the products of family industry. With a very few exceptions, there are no specialized workers pursuing a given trade, as regards the construction of houses and the manufacture of various useful articles, hunting and fishing devices, as well as in spinning, dyeing and weaving cloth and, in a

326 bracelets, necklaces, rings, long neck chains and chignon chains,
306 hairpins, buckles, buttons, earrings, etc., either of gold or of silver.

The purity of the metals used in this work varies widely, and is usually left to the choice of the person who commissions the work. In some cases gold is left free of any alloy, while often a fourth part of silver is used and sometimes even more.

Silver taken from coins is left as pure as it was originally, or else its purity is decreased by alloying it with copper and tin.

The precious stones used in jewelry include sapphires, rubies, quartz, crystal, onyx, glass and even basalts. Cutting facets on gems is unknown in Laos, and only cabochon cutting, which may be more or less regular, is practiced.

326 Ironmongery. The blacksmiths of Laos are quite skillful. Their extremely scant equipment includes a double-action bellows, one or two pairs of tongs, two or three hammers, a hot set and a small anvil. They use only wood charcoal.

By taking plenty of time they are nevertheless able, using bars of soft iron imported from Europe, deadheads, and "Duongs" which come from the high primitive furnaces [457] of the Kouï region, to forge various tools and utensils such as machetes, swords, knives, scissors, spades, bits, elephant halters, carnac hooks, etc.

Each blacksmith has his own specialty. With the help of routinism and by virtue of constant repetition of the same forms, these artisans manage to acquire a real skill and to utilize every last scrap of iron. It should also be noted that iron is very expensive. It costs from 30 to 70 francs per hundred kilograms in Laos, and sometimes as much as 90 or even 110 francs.

A certain number of articles, such as plowshares, spade irons, axes, etc. are imported from China and Siam.

323 Pottery. The pottery industry is very active, and in spite
415 of the many imported pots made of wrought, enamel or cast iron or copper, the industry still makes a large number of pots and vases of every size and shape which are destined for various uses.

The potters of Laos produce glazed jars which serve as receptacles for alcohol and water, water coolers, flower vases, drinking mugs, oil lamps, cuspidors, smooth and rough mortars, tiles, brick, drains, ornamental modillions, etc. The products of this industry are mainly [439] destined for local consumption. Some of them, however, also find markets in nearby countries.

396 is also cut out with a hatchet so as to decrease the thickness of the walls and render them more elastic.

When the pirogue is as wide as is desired, or else as wide as the wood being used will allow without any danger of splitting or bursting, strong rectangular crossbraces are set at regular intervals and tailed into the sides of the pirogues a few centimeters below the gunwales. When it has reached this state the pirogue is virtually finished. It has its final shape, and looks like the elongated half of a fish which has been split lengthwise.

All that remains is to finish the work by giving the bottom and sides the requisite thickness, by polishing the wood, smoothing the curves, etc.

Finally comes the moment of launching. It must be said, to the honor of the builders' sure eye and skill, that it is always successful and that once put into water the pirogue behaves well in its element, with a light and graceful balance.

396 The price of pirogues varies depending on their dimensions and [466] the region, and can therefore not be fixed in any absolute
439 fashion. A new pirogue, in fact, costs from 50 to 300 francs. In
435 Cambodia a pirogue from Laos costs twice what it cost in its land of origin. Thus it may readily be imagined that pirogues are exported from Lower Laos in fairly large numbers. The statistics for 1899 show exports of 552 pirogues of various dimensions, with a [Illustration here] total value of 55,195 francs, or an average purchase price of 100 francs apiece.

398 Cartwrights. The construction of carts, wagons, pack-saddles for oxen and elephant palanquins is a specialized industry only on the right bank and in Siam. In French Laos carts are little used because of the nature of the terrain, and there are no cartwrights. Pack-saddles for oxen and elephant palanquins are made by nearly everyone, particularly by drovers and carnacs.

317 Lime. Lime is made in Laos, primarily for inclusion in betel masticatories.
276 [467] The kilns are dug in the clay on banks of watercourses, near calcareous masses from which limestone is taken.

272 Alcohol. The distillation of grain--rice, maize and hemp-seed--is not an industry in the strict sense, for every village and every family makes alcohol on occasion.

316 begun at judiciously chosen points [Illustration here] they can be
accommodated to the existing means of communication and transport
313 if necessary. As for the sums needed to engage in a commercial,
mining or forest enterprise, it is difficult to determine these in any
185 precise fashion for, depending on the region and the special conditions
of the terrain, such matters may require more or less capital.

[518] For dealing in teak wood (1), for example, the sums needed

(1) A rigorous investigation made by a chief guardsman of the Laotian militia of the region of Xieng-Khong, on the left bank of the Mekong, has shown that the number of teak trees ready for cutting in the province of Muong-Sing is 4,975 in all, 2,000 of which are of exceptional size for the region, that is to say that their diameter varies between 0.3 and 0.6 meter. Counting the young shoots and young trees, the total number of teaks which we possess in Muong-Sing may be estimated at about 20,000.

Another group is situated on the right bank of the Mekong, in the vicinity of Pak-Lay and in the basin of the Nam-Poun. It includes from 10,000 to 12,000 teak trees ready for cutting, concessions for about half of which have been granted. (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900.)

for purchase and transport would depend on the quantity which it was desired to export. As an average indication, the sum of 40,000 francs might be given for operations on 1,000 teak trees.

From the point of view of mineral resources, certain deposits require capital in the millions for their exploitation, while others might be worked profitably with sums varying between 250,000 to 500,000 francs.

433 In the way of industries which may be started at the present time,
185 we may cite only the establishment of rice distilleries in southern
Laos and of a mechanical sawmill at Khone.

[273 A distillery could be set up without any great expense at the
243] mouth of the Mekong and the Sedone, for example. Thanks to the
price of glutinous rice which is five or six times less expensive in
this region than at Pnom-Penh, the alcohol from such a distillery
would find a certain market in Cambodia.

185 For several years now there has been talk of establishing a
mechanical sawmill on the island of Khone which would obtain its
313 motive power from the nearby waterfalls. Besides teak wood (2),

439 (2) Teak is generally regarded, although wrongly, as the wood

313 185 439

with the greatest value on European markets, but woods which are very common in Indo-China are often just as highly esteemed. Among others we may cite the "Mai-Niang," the "Mai-Thon" (mock walnut), the "Mai-Deng" (rosewood), the "Mai-Dou" (thuja), the "Mai-Lang-Dam" (ebony), etc.

a great many other varieties of trees could be used to feed the saw-mill and, like alcohol, find an easy outlet in Cambodia and Cochinchina.

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[519] Finally, one other enterprise might be attempted. This is livestock breeding and particularly the raising of oxen, which sell in Cambodia and Cochinchina for double their value in their country of origin. We have previously mentioned some of the points which would be particularly well-suited to undertakings of this nature. The greatest hazard to be feared is the appearance of epizootic epidemics such as the ones which occur almost periodically and against which there is no weapon. The Pasteur Institute of Nha-Trang does not send out [illustration here] anti-plague serum as is done with cow-pox vaccine, for as yet its incoulation must be left in the hands of specialists.

We believe that the system of livestock leasing would perhaps yield good results with the Laotian peasants.

241 185

Since no serious attempt has as yet been made in Laos, it is difficult to treat of agricultural enterprises which Europeans might undertake. Nor must we forget that affairs of this sort require comparatively large sums of capital and professional knowledge which takes a long time to acquire. It is, moreover, up to the administration to provide the initial impetus, for it has the necessary means, equipment and personnel. When plantations have succeeded it [520] will easily find colonists to continue the work which has been begun, and capital will then find its way into Laos.

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Speaking for ourselves, we are persuaded that this land will soon be open to colonization. Only the coast of Indo-China is well-known, and on the day when it has been demonstrated that the mountains as well are a source of wealth, the fortune of Laos will be made. There is a blank page on which it is up to us, by profiting from the gropings and errors of the past, to trace the principles of true colonization, which provides well-being for the population and creates outlets for our industry and our commerce.

A very high official of Laos recently wrote, speaking of the development of this land: "Once everything was for Tonkin and

Kha

563 in a few particulars. They all inhabit the peaks of mountains, where they generally engage in the cultivation of poppies and maize.

[439 241] Hos. The Hos are genuine Chinese who came in with the caravans from Yunnan and settled in the land to engage in trade or to grow cotton (1).

(1) According to a monograph by Government Commissioner Grand.

[105] APPENDIX XVIII

NOTE ON THE EASTERN REGION OF LOWER LAOS (1)

[113] (1) Extract from a report by Colonel Tournier, Superior Commandant of Lower Laos. (Bulletin Economique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900, No. 19.)

PRESENT STATUS OF THE DIFFERENT KHA TRIBES

563 TRIBES LIVING ON THE GREAT ANNAMITIC CHAIN. 1. The tribe of Tha-Hoi may be regarded as being entirely pacified. It is a dependency of both Annam and Laos, but the spheres of influence of the two lands were perfectly delimited at the time of the establishment by Annam of the administrative post in Lao-Bao.

2. The Khon-Tou-Khas, the Ve-Khas and the Alak Khas are completely pacified and extremely tranquil. They are dependencies of Saravane.

Between the high valleys of the Se-Kemane and the Sesane (where the word Legnau, which is unknown in the region, is found on the Pavie map), there is an absolutely deserted region which serves as a buffer between the abovementioned tribes and the Cedangs.

[316] 3.The great tribe of the Cedangs, so far unconquerable. It occupies both sides of the chain, and its villages are situated in extremely
563 difficult positions. The land is very poor, and until the last few years, besides the iron deposits which they work, their real commerce
567 was the slave trade. All the Annamite slaves of the Mekong valley, both on the left bank and the right, came from raids made by these tribes in Annamite territory, even down as far as the sea. The abolition of slavery in Laos was a great blow to them, but since it is absolutely necessary for them to procure buffalo and oxen in order to live and especially for their superstitious practices, they still continue to make occasional captures in Annam and find a market for

316 Pou-Khao-Tong.

The gold is found in fine gravel including miscellaneous rock debris which has been covered by the recent alluvia of the water-courses, at a depth varying from a few decimeters to a meter and a half.

In 1899, as samples resulting from trial prospecting, we provided the local organizing committee for the Exposition of 1900 with gold, with black schlichs, with untreated gold-bearing gravel and with superposed sterile alluvia.

The fifteen and a half grams (15-1/2 grams) of gold in the form of grains and dust which was supplied represented the supervised production of a single gold-washer, in visible gold, for thirty days work at the rate of 20 wash-troughs per day which weighed 3.5 kilograms each on the average.

The gold content of the black schlichs which resulted from the washing and which we collected can be determined only by analysis (1)

(1) They were sent for analysis to the Saigon laboratory, but the results have not yet been published.

On the average, a ton of treated gravel represented a weight of about 300 grams of black schlichs, and a volume of 118 cubic centimeters.

Thus, with the rudimentary methods used in this prospecting operation, without amalgamation and despite the inevitable losses, the fifteen and a half grams of gold collected, using local procedures and labor, cost 30 francs, or 1.935 francs per gram and 1,935 francs per kilogram (2).

[439 435] (2) Here, by way of comparison, are the cost prices of gold at several points of the globe:

Saint-Elie (French Guiana), 1619 francs
Siberia 2170 francs
California, 1500 to 1700 francs
Australia, 1600 to 1900 francs

This, of course, by using the most advanced methods which reduce losses of the precious metal to almost nothing.

The respective densities of the schlichs, of the gold-bearing gravels and of the sterile alluvia [129] were 2.6 for the schlichs, 1.82 for the gravels and 1.49 for the sterile alluvia.

314 which range from the size of a nut to the size of a billiard ball. These specimens are not sticky, do not deteriorate very much and are far superior to the preceding ones. I believe that it was a specimen of this last category which M. de Reinach, the government commissioner in Laos, sent to Paris, where it was valued at 7 francs per kilogram.

Since this specimen was sent we have sent two others for trial and evaluation to the business house Michelin et Cie., a large rubber manufacturer in Clermont-Ferrand.

The Superior Resident in Laos informs us that the Khua-nhut-niai, the liana which produces rubber, is found in all the thick forests along the banks of the Mekong. It grows in great numbers in the forests of the Bolovenes massif and on the sides of the great chain in the provinces of Saravane, Song-Khone and Cam-Muon. M. Tournier estimates that it can reproduce easily, [134] either by seeds or by cuttings. He believes it would also be easy to induce the natives in these regions to engage in the regular exploitation of the plant whenever they found a certain and remunerative market for the product.

To sum up the above observations, we have noted that Indo-China possesses at least two plant varieties which can yield rubber of excellent quality. These two varieties are the Parameria glandulifera in Cochinchina and the south of Cambodia, and an as yet undetermined species of Apocynaceae in Annam and Laos. Both the one and the other grow in such numbers that they hold forth hope of a veritable source of wealth for the colony. Up to the present time, only the lianas of the second variety have been exploited, and I should like to call attention to those of the first variety.

439 The customs statistics for exports from Tonkin for the whole of 1898 show that France received from this country 1,545 kilograms
314 of crude rubber with a value estimated at 2,020 francs, and that other countries received 619 kilograms with a value estimated at 947 francs, making a total of 2,164 kilograms with a value of 2,967 francs (1).

[505] (1) It should be noted that the greater part of this product leaves Vinh, in Annam, by coastal vessels, and that Hai-Phong is given as the port of embarcation on the Tonkin export lists.

For the first quarter alone of the current year, we find the following exports from Tonkin: to France, 13,623 kilograms with a value

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of 40,869 francs; to Hong Kong warehouses, 1,271 kilograms with an estimated value of 2,458 francs; making a total of 14,894 kilograms valued at 43,227 francs.

Thus while the customs statistics for the years previous to 1898 do not even mention the export figures for this product, we find that the 1898 figure, which is a little more than two tons, has more than sextupled in the first quarter of the following year, which is the current one.

This amount of progress gives us every right to conceive real hopes for the future.

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The general government of Indo-China (Department of Agriculture and Commerce) recently sent to the business house Michelin et Cie. (Clermont-Ferrand, and 7 Rue Gounod, Paris), for the purpose of analysis and evaluation, specimens of rubber which were collected in Laos through the offices of the superior resident.

According to the report of the superior resident in Laos, these specimens were produced by a liana, the Khua-nhut-niai of the Laotians, which is quite widespread in the thick forests on the banks of the Mekong and on the Bolovenes massif, as well as on the sides of the Annamitic Chain. One of the specimens submitted for analysis (No. 1) comes from a variety of rubber which is found particularly in Saravane. The other (No. 2) is the ordinary rubber harvested by the natives, with no further processing.

[135] An expert chemist sets forth in the following terms the results of the examination to which these specimens were subjected at the rubber factory of Michelin et Cie. at Clermont-Ferrand (August 5, 1899):

"The rubber in both boxes has the outer appearance of rubber from the Dutch East Indies of the kinds known in trading circles as 'Java,' 'Penang' or 'Préanger.' Like the latter, it probably comes from plants of the Ficus family. This presumable identity of origin is confirmed, moreover, by the characteristics of the isolated gum and resin of these specimens, as well as by the nature of the bark fragments which the specimens contained.

"We purified this rubber mechanically by the usual shredding processes. The thin leaves thereby obtained were dried in a drying-cabinet at a temperature of 25°-28° C.

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	No. 1 Saravane	No. 2
Weight of specimen	.608 kilog.	1.86 kilog.
Weight of purified gum	.58 kilog	1.54 kilog.
Yield of purified gum	95.39%	82.79%

Proximate analysis of the product yielded:

Moisture at 105°	1.06	1.4
Fixed ashes	1.3	1.4
Resins	3.4	9.76
Rubber	89.24	87.44

For comparison, the following is an analysis of Java rubber:

	Type 1[a]	Type 2[a]
Moisture	.75	
Ash	.8	1.3
Resins	4.48	7 to 9%
Rubber	93.97	
	100.00	

Indo-Chinese rubber, if in accordance with the specimens examined, would be likened on the market to Java type 2[a] rubber, which is graded and regulated as follows:

First quality Java rubber includes sound gums, without resinified parts (parts which have turned oily), of a fine light color, and without bark fragments.

Darker gums containing some fragments, but which are still sound on the whole are classified as second quality.

The third quality includes rubber which has been harvested with less care or in the wrong season, which has been poorly preserved, is more or less resinified and laden with foreign matter, ligneous debris, bark, sand, etc.

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The following figures, taken from the daily price lists on the markets of Antwerp, Hamburg, Liverpool and London, will give some idea of the commercial value of these types of rubber.

PRICE QUOTED ON "JAVA" OR "PENANG" ON THE VARIOUS EUROPEAN MARKETS

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Source	Date	Grade 1st	2nd	3rd
Hamburg	7-30-1899		6.95	
"	7-8	8.95	6.95	
"			7.55	
"	6-28		7.55	
London	6-1	8.98		
Antwerp	3-14			3.00
Amsterdam	4-10		7.59	
Antwerp	3-3			3.00
Le Havre	11-18-1898	8.40	5.85	
Hamburg	11-9	8.45	6.55	
"	11-2	8.55	5.55	
Antwerp	10-25			3.00
Hamburg	10-11	8.80	6.25	
"	9-9	8.80	6.25	
"	9-9	8.75	6.30	

(Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine. Report of the Director of the Indo-China Department of Agriculture and Commerce, October 1, 1899.)

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In August 1900 the Indo-China Department of Agriculture and Commerce sent to the Colonial Office, for purposes of analysis, specimens of rubber extracted from the bark of rubber lianas by simple grinding processes using native crushers and successive washings.

These specimens were prepared under the auspices of M. Gaillard, government commissioner in Khong. The crushed bark came from the liana called Khua-nhut-nhai which is found throughout all Laos.

The Colonial Office has published the results of the analysis of the specimens sent from Khong. The analysis was carried out under the direction of Dr. Heim, head of the Laboratory of the National Office for Foreign Trade [Office national du Commerce extérieur].

The following are the results of a comparison made between the rubber which was extracted from the liana Khua-nhut-nhai [137] by coagulation of the latex, according to this report, and the rubber extracted by grinding from the dry bark.

It is of particular interest to compare the rubber extracted from

654 What is more, according to the economic report for the months of
314 February and March 1900 in Upper Laos, which has just reached the
Indo-China Department of Agriculture and Commerce, 3,250 kilo-
•439 grams of rubber were exported during this period, or, to be precise,
this was the verified figure at Vien-Tiane. The storehouses in this
435 center also contained a large supply which would probably go down-
river at the first rises of the Mekong. [139] The sale price by natives
at Vien-Tiane was said to be one piaster per kilogram.

Tran-ninh, which had not yet been able to supply any statistics, even approximate ones, indicated exports of 1,500 kilograms to Tonkin for the same period and at the same price as being the amount of export rubber which represented purchases from Vien-Tiane.

These prices, which are reasonable ones in view of the present value of money in Laos and the needs of the inhabitants, leaves the exporters sufficient profits. On the other hand, we have had occasion to note the entirely abnormal price of 5.50 francs per kilogram which rubber reached at Vinh towards the end of March 1900, a price which, when the cost of freight, transhipment and handling, insurance and losses in weight along the way is added, leaves only a small profit for the export trade.

IV

314 339,400 kilograms of rubber were exported from Indo-China
during 1900, as against 52,813 in 1899. Of this amount, 300,400
439 kilograms went out through Tonkin, and 39,000 kilograms through
Saigon. The greater part of this rubber comes from Annam, and
especially from Tran-Ninh (Laos).

By these figures we see how greatly the rubber trade has grown in Indo-China, and what a factor this raw material promises to be in the economic development of the colony.

The sale price in 1899 was one piaster per kilogram. Since that time it has risen appreciably in consequence of a rising demand from all quarters. In the province of Vien-Tiane the average price is two piasters per kilogram, and in the forests where the rubber is grown it costs 90 piasters per picul.

314 The rapid rise in the price of rubber has encouraged the natives
to engage in excessive exploitation of the product, and without any
care for the future they have destroyed large quantities of extremely
productive lianas. The Laotians do not know how to collect the sap
of the rubber plant and still spare the plant itself, and they thereby

10: d'Orleans--289-290 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 133, 441, 501, 563

"Lower down,[LSS: at Luang Prabang] lying against the river bank itself, immense rafts, real houses of thirty to forty yards long, carry stocks of merchandise and of various commodities, regularly [290] stacked one above the other. Chinamen live in these floating establishments.

The bank only rises some fifteen yards, and the shallow water scarcely hides a few sandbanks, while the calm powerful river flows on in a muddy stream more than 400 yards wide."

10: d'Orleans--360 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 441, 563, 177.44 France
636.44

"The trade of Laos, like that of the greater part of Siam, is carried on by the Chinese, who form a sort of freemasonry among one another against the foreigner and are constantly pushing forward their advance posts. Masters of the Customs, more intelligent, more hard working, more temperate and more rapacious than the Siamese, they constitute the commercial class, and they have a way of insinuating themselves into the secrets of the natives and transferring their money into their own pockets which we neither could nor would wish to imitate. Our task is a higher one, and it consists, upon the one hand, in undertaking and carrying out such enterprises in the way of mining as I have described above, and upon the other in supplying the native or Chinese middlemen with the raw material and with our national goods upon as reasonable terms as English or German merchandise."

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Goods are imported in the northern part of the land by the Hos, the Burmese and the Ngieous, in the form of merchandise from Yunnan, Tibet, China, India and even Europe. They include furs, iron and copper pots, tin, cotton and silk clothing, small wares, tea, articles for opium smokers, horses, silk, cotton and light wool goods, lacquered boxes, swords, machetes, rifles, etc.

In the middle region and the south, Chinese, Cambodians, Siamese, Annamites and Europeans import the following articles: salt, cloth goods, thread, hats, knit wear, blankets, umbrellas, petroleum, matches (1), worship articles, dyes, bars of iron, porcelain bowls,

(1) Of Japanese manufacture imported through Bangkok and Moulmein, and of Annamite or Tonkinese manufacture imported through Saigon and Vinh.

perfumes, clocks and watches, glassware, paper goods, hardware, copper goods, nails, locks, drugs, a few Chinese staples, etc.

Since Laos has no direct access to the sea, it has no maritime outlets. It gives up its export products to middlemen established in Siam, Yunnan, Annam, Cambodia or Cochinchina, and these middlemen re-export Laotian products to various overseas markets or resell them on the spot for local consumption.

3. PRESENT-DAY COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS. COMMERCIAL PROCEDURES.

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Just about everyone engages in trade in Laos, in highly variable proportions, to be sure, and each according to his resources. There are, however, real merchants, [422] businessmen and traders who are the middlemen between the native producers and the exporters in neighboring countries or on the coast. The greater number of these, and also the most active ones, are the Chinese, then come the Hos and the Burmese. They may act either on their own account, or in behalf of a small local syndicate, or again as representatives of Chinese or European houses established in the ports.

The Laotians are more likely to operate individually or in family groups financed by nobles, officials of high rank or wealthy men who use this means of putting to work the capital which business has already brought them.

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Europeans are beginning to come to Laos for the purpose of engaging in commerce. They generally settle on the banks of the Mekong.

Large business houses in Cambodia and Cochinchina support various enterprises with their money. They provide an outlet for the natural products which they assemble, and supply their agents with merchandise for exchange. The latter operate in the following manner. They have touts who range over the interior of the country with a stock of imported articles which they sell or exchange, in whole or part, for local products. At certain times of the year, generally after the waters go down, temporary markets spring up at fixed points, generally at the Mekong's junctions with its chief tributaries. The middlemen set up their merchandise, and the producers come from the interior to make trades, purchases or sales and to acquire the objects which they need and which neither the country nor local industry can supply. Oftentimes also the producers do not have to move about, and the buyers come and find them in their villages.

In addition to these small markets there are larger ones such as those of Luang-Prabang, Paklay, Vien-Tiane, Nong-Khay, Oubone, Bassac, etc., where the touts and small tradesmen bring their regional products. It is in these centers that merchandise accumulates, and it is from here that it leaves for the great markets in neighboring countries and for [423] [Illustration] [424 Blank page] [425] the ports. Here too the small retailers lay in new supplies of imported products which will be sold in the course of the year for daily consumption in the muongs and villages.

The present organization of commerce in Laos is harmful to the interests of the producers, in the sense that the temporary markets where exchanges are effected are highly scattered, with no link between them; and are often quite remote from the larger centers. The result is that a few import traders lie in wait at the crossroads to the interior or else go into the interior and dictate to the natives, who are ignorant of the value of the trade commodities as well as of that of the country's products in the larger centers. They profit from this state of affairs in order greatly to increase the prices of imported merchandise while at the same time undervaluing local products among the natives. At the present time the latter are therefore at the mercy of these small ambulating merchants, who are in league to fleece them.

Measures should consequently be taken to remedy these conditions, that is to say to defend the economic position of Laotian producers, our nationals, against the rapacity of the merchants--

439 almost all Chinese, the masters of the markets--who scour the country and leave behind none or almost none of the profits which they ex-
441 tract from it.

443 Might not the administration establish, for example, periodic fairs under its supervision which would be held in certain suitably chosen spots? Under its direction market prices would be posted and placed within everyone's ken, and the daily market price could be found of import and export commodities on the nearest large markets and even on coastal markets. Producers would thus gain correct information on the value of their merchandise and would be in a position to decide whether it was to their advantage to operate locally or to go further on before making their transactions.

The question would still remain of giving strong encouragement to private initiative with a view toward the establishment of repositories or emporiums equipped to handle the natural products of the country in wholesale or retail quantities. Such [426] trading posts or factories could compete with the present-day traveling merchants by offering higher prices and also supplying imported goods on more favorable terms.
175 The French Syndicate of Laos [Syndicat français du Laos] made a be-
441 ginning in this direction as early as 1890 and 1891 by establishing its factories at Luang-Prabang, Nong-Khay and Xieng-Hong and later on, in 1892, at Bassac and Outhene, thus distributing factories spaced along the great river over an extent of nearly 2000 kilometers. The guiding idea of the promoters and stockholders of the Syndicate was that its agents should above all else be precursors and pioneers of a fertile idea, just as its counters should be landmarks for future and lasting establishments to be created after their example and beyond their initiative. Once this task had been accomplished, however, the pioneers dispersed and the landmarks so successfully placed were not utilized.

439 Yet isolated attempts made in recent years by several of our
441 countrymen have not always, it must be confessed, been crowned with success. Without special commercial aptitudes, without either the
443 necessary capital or credit and consequently not able to supply themselves at first hand, and restricted by the system of customs now in force in Indo-China, they have not succeeded in all their operations despite their real efforts and their unquestioned good will. Neither should we lose sight of the fact that commerce in Laos should not seek its chief profit in the sale of imported products, but rather in the exportation of a few selected natural products such as sticklac, benzoin, cardamom and rubber, among others.

149: Reinach--316 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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In spite of the disadvantageous conditions governing any commercial undertaking in Laos, two young merchants of foreign origin have not hesitated to resume part of the program of the French Syndicate. Financed and supported by one of the large Saigon business houses, they founded a similar trading post or factory at Vien-Tiane in 1898 (1).

(1) Two companies, one the Company of French Factories, the other the Company of Laotian Factories, have just been formed in Tonkin. It is their intention to do business in Laos.

They set to work courageously, sparing no effort and working themselves at the various handling operations with a view toward reducing their overhead expenses.

For nearly three years they have tried everything in the way of importing and exporting, without any particular bias, their ideal being to traffic in French products using commercial routes and a port which was also French.

[430] According to them, the status of their undertaking is as follows.

Although they benefit, like other importers, from the privilege of an eighty percent exemption from customs duties levied at Saigon on imported merchandise of foreign origin (1), they cannot compete

(1) It would seem that this exemption has just been suppressed on imports into French Laos, that is to say into the territories on the left bank of the Mekong.

One feature has resulted which is odd to say the least. Foreign merchandise coming from Saigon or Pnom-Penh, for example, and destined for Siamese Laos, that is to say for the territories on the right bank, benefits from an eighty percent exemption from duties levied on merchandise in transit through French Indo-China. On the other hand, merchandise destined for the left bank, which is French territory, pays the full duty without any reduction.

It is therefore to the advantage of merchants established in Laos to cross over to the right bank, that is to say from France to Siam! This is also an inducement to fraud, for the exempt merchandise on the right bank can cross over to the left bank without difficulty.

with the products of the same kind which come in through Bangkok.

10: d'Orleans--320 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 437, 443, 551

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "...We were overrun by a troop of female hawkers, who settled themselves down in our quarters and spread out their wares for sale. These women all wear the same sort of dress, namely a silk petticoat with a scarf to match, some of them having their hair cropped close after the Siamese fashion, which is a very ugly one. After a few days we get quite familiar and call these young ladies by their proper names. They either have some name which indicates their sex, followed by the qualification of small, pretty, or what not; or else they bear the name of some good quality, such as peace, happiness, prosperity, jewel. The same saleswomen came back every day, asking an exorbitant price for every article and not showing any inclination to rebate it. However, they are very good-natured in the bargaining which follows, and seem as well pleased if they do not effect a sale as when, after a long discussion, we end by making a purchase."

10: d'Orleans--320-321 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 411, 438, 443, 778

"They [LSS: women merchants in Luang Prabang] have a very diversified stock of goods to choose from, including gold embroidered shirts made by the Lus, Siam brocaded vests, old silver, bracelets made of Kas bronze, and hatchets and other weapons in old bronze; these latter are very scarce and difficult to buy, as they are preserved with superstitious reverence by the families to which they belong. The hatchets, some of which are straight while others are curved, are very characteristic, while the ivory-handled knives represent yaks, the genii of the Buddhist religion, [321] similar to those which are found in the interior of Borneo."

10: d'Orleans--325 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 347, 363, 443

"In front of us is a broad avenue, lined with fine trees, which is perpendicular to the river, and is intersected at a distance of a hundred yards or so by a road which runs parallel to the Mekong. This is the main street of Luang Prabang, upon the two sides of which the market is held morning and evening. The animation is greatest in the morning, when, for a distance of more than half a mile, there is a long row of small booths, some of which are rather lofty, and are surmounted by a roof of bamboos, while others are very close to the ground. These booths are the rendezvous of the whole population, of the bourgeoisie, of the mountaineers, of the bonzes, of the working classes, and of the villagers."

10: d'Orleans--326-329 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 439, 443

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "The shops and booths contain the various products of the country, such as articles of food, strong condiments, rice cakes, jam, and all that is required to make the quids of betel-nut, barks of red wood, native shirts, scarves, flowers for the pagodas, earthenware pans, iron implements, small pigs of lead (from Ban Lathane, one or two days' sail up the Mekong), and a variety of other local goods. In addition to these, there are the articles imported either [pages 327 and 328 contain illustration] [329] from the North or the South. From China come opium, musk, tea, vermicelli, and the felt carpets with a white pattern which are brought from Tali, and which I had seen before when travelling in Thibet; from Burmah green and red boxes of lacker work such as one sees in India; from Bangkok and Xieng Mai European shoddy goods, muslins and stuffs, red silks with the mark, 'Manufactured in Lyons, France,' with calicoes sold for about sixpence a yard, imitation jewellery, sleeve links, garters, thread, needles, Japanese matches (sold for fourpence or fivepence per ten boxes), scribbling paper, condensed milk and a host of other articles, all either of English or of German make, the only French articles which I came a cross are a few bottles of ink and buttons."

10: d'Orleans--330 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 443, 651, 177.44 Siam
636.44

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "In the market, each vendor has his own special stall, while the representatives of the same trade are all placed together, and a tax of twenty-five cowries is collected from each of them every morning by soldiers told off for the purpose, whereas the street hawkers are exempted from all dues."

10: d'Orleans--344-345 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 443, 527, 556

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"We pay an early visit to the market and find the streets crowded, the women being attired in their finest things, and being loaded with bracelets and necklaces of gold, while the market itself is full of [345] birds in cages, which it is considered to be a very meritorious act to purchase and let loose. This Laos custom is very general among the Buddhists, and I remember seeing at Batang a Chinese soldier who, as he caught his fish, put them into a bucketful of water, the Thibetans giving him money at the close of the day to put them back into the river."

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Europeans are beginning to come to Laos for the purpose of engaging in commerce. They generally settle on the banks of the Mekong.

Large business houses in Cambodia and Cochinchina support various enterprises with their money. They provide an outlet for the natural products which they assemble, and supply their agents with merchandise for exchange. The latter operate in the following manner. They have touts who range over the interior of the country with a stock of imported articles which they sell or exchange, in whole or part, for local products. At certain times of the year, generally after the waters go down, temporary markets spring up at fixed points, generally at the Mekong's junctions with its chief tributaries. The middlemen set up their merchandise, and the producers come from the interior to make trades, purchases or sales and to acquire the objects which they need and which neither the country nor local industry can supply. Oftentimes also the producers do not have to move about, and the buyers come and find them in their villages.

In addition to these small markets there are larger ones such as those of Luang-Prabang, Paklay, Vien-Tiane, Nong-Khay, Oubone, Bassac, etc., where the touts and small tradesmen bring their regional products. It is in these centers that merchandise accumulates, and it is from here that it leaves for the great markets in neighboring countries and for [423] [Illustration] [424 [Blank page] [425] the ports. Here too the small retailers lay in new supplies of imported products which will be sold in the course of the year for daily consumption in the muongs and villages.

The present organization of commerce in Laos is harmful to the interests of the producers, in the sense that the temporary markets where exchanges are effected are highly scattered, with no link between them, and are often quite remote from the larger centers. The result is that a few import traders lie in wait at the crossroads to the interior or else go into the interior and dictate to the natives, who are ignorant of the value of the trade commodities as well as of that of the country's products in the larger centers. They profit from this state of affairs in order greatly to increase the prices of imported merchandise while at the same time undervaluing local products among the natives. At the present time the latter are therefore at the mercy of these small ambulating merchants, who are in league to fleece them.

Measures should consequently be taken to remedy these conditions, that is to say to defend the economic position of Laotian producers, our nationals, against the rapacity of the merchants--

439 almost all Chinese, the masters of the markets--who scour the country
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The question would still remain of giving strong encouragement to private initiative with a view toward the establishment of repositories or emporiums equipped to handle the natural products of the country in wholesale or retail quantities. Such [426] trading posts or factories could compete with the present-day traveling merchants by offering higher prices and also supplying imported goods on more favorable terms.
175 The French Syndicate of Laos [Syndicat français du Laos] made a be-
441 ginning in this direction as early as 1890 and 1891 by establishing its factories at Luang-Prabang, Nong-Khay and Xieng-Hong and later on, in 1892, at Bassac and Outhene, thus distributing factories spaced along the great river over an extent of nearly 2000 kilometers. The guiding idea of the promoters and stockholders of the Syndicate was that its agents should above all else be precursors and pioneers of a fertile idea, just as its counters should be landmarks for future and lasting establishments to be created after their example and beyond their initiative. Once this task had been accomplished, however, the pioneers dispersed and the landmarks so successfully placed were not utilized.

439 Yet isolated attempts made in recent years by several of our
441 countrymen have not always, it must be confessed, been crowned with success. Without special commercial aptitudes, without either the
443 necessary capital or credit and consequently not able to supply themselves at first hand, and restricted by the system of customs now in force in Indo-China, they have not succeeded in all their operations despite their real efforts and their unquestioned good will. Neither should we lose sight of the fact that commerce in Laos should not seek its chief profit in the sale of imported products, but rather in the exportation of a few selected natural products such as sticklac, benzoin, cardamom and rubber, among others.

10: d'Orleans--300-301 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 436, 455, 525, 651, 177.52 Siam
636.52

"In addition to the forced labour, there is, the capitation tax, the opium tax, and the monopoly of the tchoum-tchoum, but the monopoly of gaming, which is the source of large revenue in Siam itself, has been suppressed here by the Siamese as being immoral. It is the same with the speculation upon the mpney exchange, which is not yet resorted to in Luang Prabang. In the valley of Ménam, more especially, the money in use is composed of earthenware counters, the circulation of which is suspended or the value altered by a Government decree, large profits being thus secured in very arbitrary fashion. Another source of profit [301] for the treasury of Luang Prabang is the produce of the customs, there being a tax of three per cent. upon the merchandise and of a basket of salt upon each canoe, which comes up from the south with a load of it."

10: d'Orleans--329 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 439, 458, 563

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "It is the Chinese who import and sell the goods from Siam or the Western Shan States, there being four traders in European articles. One of these is a French protégé, who tells me that he has brought his stock of goods from Bangkok by Pitchaï. When he goes down, he takes with him from Luang Prabang ivory, for which he pays about 5s. a pound, and benzoin which costs him about a rupee per lb. Last year, the price of these articles was very nearly double, and the trader tells me that a pair of fine stag's horns is worth about thirty rupees, a smaller pair fetching a third of that price. He adds that business is very bad, and that it is as much as he can do to make both ends meet."

7: Thompson--375-376 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 147, 461, 464, 621

"Labour, as is the case in so many tropical countries of great potential wealth, is the second greatest need. The Laotians' inadequacy, both numerically and psychologically, combined with the country's inaccessibility are almost insuperable obstacles to industrial or commercial progress. This was plainly seen when Laos's vast mineral wealth, especially in tin, attracted capitalist investment in the discreditable wave of mining speculation that spread over Indo-China in the late [376] 1920's. The Laotians have no sense of time, and a thousand obstacles and superstitions interfere with the accomplishment of work at a fixed date. Their physical stamina is not proof against epidemics, especially those maladies brought from foreign countries. Whole villages displace themselves at the slightest provocation. One Laotian proverb says: 'At the end of three days change your house; at the end of three years change your village.' What started as a necessity to escape invaders or soil exhaustion has become a habit, and a means of escaping any regular irksome task. The ease with which the Laotians drift across the Mekong into Siamese territory makes the French authorities very loath to take strict measures with them. Moreover, the European residents themselves, who would normally be the motive force behind any change, succumb to the prevailing atmosphere of su-su, the Oriental equivalent of dolce far niente."

10: d'Orleans--307 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 461, 463, 511, 556

[LSS: at Luang Prabang] "The men do but little work, labour in the mines and the cultivation of the soil being left to the Kas and it is only in the towns that they are found engaging in any artistic occupation, such as the making of jewellery or the chasing of silver. Even those who do work rarely do so for more than seven hours a day, and the woman keep the pot boiling by spinning silk and making various materials, though they do not overwork themselves. When a household is very hard pressed the men seek employment as boatmen, and are very expert, making enough in a month or two to keep them the rest of the year, so that if there are few large fortunes, most of the inhabitants have enough to live upon in comfort, preferring freedom and tranquillity to an excess of labour, which would only give them what they do not want. Moreover, when they do happen to have put by a decent sum of money, they go and spend it at the pagoda, either in fulfilment of a vow or in payment of some religious ceremony. This is their only luxury, nor, indeed, do they regard it as one, for they reckon upon profiting by it in another world."

23: Franck--329-330 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 461

"I thought several times that afternoon that the men were going to give up entirely. They lay down in the road as if completely exhausted, something I had never seen a Chinese carrier do in all my two years of wandering in China; but finally we coaxed them at dark into a scattered little thatched town in the jungle on the edge of the clear rushing river that had made off with my canteen. The place was named Ban-long, with a waterfall to lull me to sleep in the basket-weave sala where I soon stretched out on my cot, for we had to start very early again. There was difficulty in getting men in time, and without the prince I should not have been able to get them at all. But he, working most of the night through the obsequious village head-man, collected twelve substitutes for our eight lazy Pwun or Nuong carriers, and [330] we were off in the soft, black tropical night between two and three in the morning."

23: Franck--344-345 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 461, 609

"On the other hand these naïve jungle-dwellers do not lack physical fear. They crouched at the trail-side raising palmed hands to me; in the more settled districts farther south long rows of them crowded against the wall of the mountain road, even turning their faces away, as if fearing a blow, which seemed to speak badly for their rulers, whether the old ones or the present French--or were they merely dazzled by my magnificence? When our pace grew too slow to be borne, I could always drive the coolies on by galloping after them shouting, whereupon they actually ran. But soon they settled down to an almost lazy stroll again, covering hardly half the ground of the incessant dog-trot of the indefatigable Chinese; nor were there by any means as many smiles and [345] childish pleasantries as among those far harder workers and sufferers of many times greater hardships."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

slaughterers are obliged to work by flares, which is responsible, the 753
French think, for an unusually picturesque effect. It is 'not done' to 825
go along while the actual killing is in progress, but shortly after, when the carcasses are suspended from hooks to be cut up, and the workers, stripped to their loincloths, and garishly splashed, paddle about in a vermilion sea. Cars are stationed just beyond the reach of the steaming odours, and one is recommended to see the thing as one views a nude in a picture gallery – that is, divorced from all but a disinterested abstraction, in this case the colour.

The possibilities of Vientiane, it was clear, would be quickly 292
exhausted. Thao Nhouy, the Laotian Minister of Education, lent 301
me his jeep to see some of the surrounding villages, but the roads 535
were so appalling that it broke down after being driven for about five miles. He then suggested that I might like to see the local schoolgirls dancing, and when I said that I would be delighted, and asked for permission to take photographs, the girls were sent off home, on their bicycles, to get their best clothes. An hour or two later they began to trickle back, wearing their mothers' jewellery as well as their own and with their silk finery done up in paper parcels. When they had dressed and were ready they made a glittering sight. One girl wore a scarf ornamented with real gold thread said to be worth about £50 in English money. They danced under the supervision of a teacher whom I recognized as a professional actor, from the *boun*,[1] and who occasionally intervened when a girl failed in some minor feat, such as bending her fingers back at an expressive ninety degrees from the palm.

All these girls, dressed as they were like princesses, came from 493
shacks in the forest. Each one had a bicycle – infallibly fitted with 511
dynamo lighting, and sometimes 3-speed gears. It seems that a bicycle for his daughter is one of the essentials for which a Laotian will work. It is considered ill-bred and irreligious in Laos to work 241
more than is necessary. The father of a family cultivates an amount 461
of land, estimated, by a bonze who is expert in such matters, to be 511
792

[1] [i.e., Laotian religious festival. -- Analyst] 255

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

241 sufficient for his requirements. If there are six members of the
● 461 family, six standard, equal sized portions of land will be cultivated.
511 If a child is born into the family another piece of land is cleared and
792 worked. When a member of the family dies, whether it be a baby or the grandfather, cultivation of his portion will be stopped. Just enough is produced for the family to eat and to provide a small surplus sold in the market – *with the bonze's approval* – to buy occasional strict necessities, like a silk shawl and a bicycle for the
735 daughter. There is no social insurance and there are no poor. The
556 old and the sick are supported by the young, or, where they are
792 left without able-bodied providers, by the community, and the
771 bonzes give instructions for the necessary land to be placed under cultivation for them. The accumulation of wealth which is not to be used for definite, approved purposes, causes a man to lose prestige among his neighbours, just, as in the West, the process is reversed. The main difference, it seems, between Buddhism in Indo-China, and Christianity – apart from any question as to their relative merits – is that, whether we admire it or not, the former is largely put into practice.

It is a stimulating reflection that the Western millionaire, obsessed for the sake of social distinction with the amassing of enormous possessions – little of which he can personally consume – would attain the same ends of personal celebrity under a Laotian Buddhistic order of things by his priestly austerities – by embracing the most abject and prestige-conferring form of poverty.

181 For this reason perhaps the local Evangelist missionary and his
771 wife have made no converts. Like all who have lived among the
785 Laotians they are charmed with them – although, of course,
797 disappointed at their blindness. They also deplore their immorality.

In the matter of converts the Evangelists have been no more unsuccessful than their Portuguese, Spanish and French forerunners. The Laotians having little capacity for abstractions, either in their

who work gold mines--and by the inhabitants of several regions, whose state of fortune would nevertheless enable them to use a more precious metal. 301 306 [563]

Jewelry and examples of the goldsmith's art are found in different forms and types which vary greatly with the region and race, as will be seen by the nomenclature given in Chapter IX.

Food. The Laotian scorns the pleasures of the table, and is generally a moderate eater and drinker. Steam-cooked glutinous rice forms the basis of his food supply. To this he adds salt, peppers, various other spices, fresh or preserved fish, etc. Besides these, but less frequently, his day-to-day diet may be varied with poultry, eggs, buffalo meat, beef and pork, as well as venison. To be sure, it is mainly on the occasion of public or private festivals, which are fairly numerous in the course of the year, that the Laotian improves on his usual rather frugal fare in this way. 262

The customary beverage is water which may be taken directly from the rivers or first be hastily decanted into jars or water-coolers of porous earthenware. In general, Laotians prefer water taken directly from the river to that which has been filtered. Finally, the people of Laos consume rice brandy which is obtained by distillation, and a kind of beer made by cold fermentation of rice mixed with paddy husks. 271 273

The use of these drinks, aside from rare exceptions, is reserved for holidays. [527]

Physical appearance, character, occupations. The Laotian's character is, in general, mild, friendly and happy. His physiognomy is [181] open and smiling. Not quarrelsome by nature, he even shrinks from coming to blows in extreme cases and prefers to end a dispute with an outburst of laughter rather than with blows. 152

Since, all in all, it has few needs and inhabits a land with luxuriant vegetation which is abundantly favored with products to be had for the scavenging, this happy people can easily satisfy its needs and be content with its fate. [Illustration alongside text here.]

It is assuredly lazy, but out of indifference much rather than out of any deliberate intent. It cannot grasp the advantage or utility of a regular and prolonged effort beyond what is strictly necessary to provide it with a living and a few distractions to which, in reality, its own joyous disposition makes the greatest contribution. 461

To the men are reserved the chief tasks, which have a more virile and noble character than those which are the women's lot. 462 241

149: Reinach--166 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Since there is not, so to speak, any class of salaried workers in Laos except in certain types of work and in transport by pirogues and rafts, the inhabitants of any given center lend one another their help in farming, harvesting, building houses or pirogues, etc. Taking turns, the one who has asked help of his neighbors will put on a celebration for them when the work is over, and will himself receive an invitation from someone else in return for help which he has given.

[792]

Laotian celebrations, in which the bonzes are never forgotten, are usually given under the verandas of the pagodas or in their dependencies, unless they take place in the host's own home or under sheds specially constructed for the purpose on one side. The latter is always the case in a "Ngan" given for those who have helped in building a house, and the same is true for a birth or marriage.

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Celebrations generally begin towards four or five in the afternoon when the heat is beginning to wane. They last all night and sometimes resume on the following day after the guests have relaxed for a few hours. Some "Ngans" go on in this way for nearly a week and are interrupted only by the coming of the Laotian sabbath, a day of absolute rest when only the preparation of food is permitted, and no work or pleasure. By the light of kerosene lamps borrowed here and there, or of resinous torches, the girls, who are decked out in all their finery, are stationed in a line squatting down against a wall or partition. Before them there are [221] vases made of copper, silver or porcelain. They all pretend to be busy with minor tasks and may imitate, for example, the preparation of food. But in reality this is only their way of keeping some kind of countenance.

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[805]

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The adults and children of both sexes are massed at each end of the row of girls. Then the young men, their heads covered with scarves, come and squat down opposite the girls and with their heads still covered begin an animated conversation which soon turns into regular flirting. If there is enough space the orchestra takes up its position nearby and in the center, between the young people, are the singers, improvisers and "Kene" players. Cakes, fruit, quids of betel, cigarettes, rice brandy and various condiments are passed around.

Spectators who have not been specially invited come and stand behind the young people, as do passersby who drop in for a quid, a cigarette, a cup of brandy or a bowl of rice, or to listen to the songs and music for a little while.

619 they bear come, as in the case of the Khao-Thais, from peculiarities
[291] of costume. In fact, whereas the Dam-Thais, both men and women,
only wear clothing which is dark blue and almost black, with no
563 colored ornamentation, the Deng-Thais, although they wear the
same kind of clothing, always add a few ornaments such as embroidery,
galloons or red turbans.

Physical appearance. Costume. The Thais have strongly marked
142 features and stern faces. Their complexion is clear and rather swarthy,
461 and they are quite tall. They are more hardy and above all more
industrious than the Laotians.

Like the Annamites, the men let their hair grow. They bind it
302 up in a coil on the top of the head and cover it with a vast turban,
291 the ends of which fall onto their shoulders on either side of the face.
Men's clothing consists of a broad pair of trousers with a very low
seat and a straight tunic buttoned along the side which comes down
to the knees. A sort of sash made of the same kind of cloth hugs the
[286] waist over the tunic, as a belt would do. The material used by the
Thais for clothing are made of cotton which is generally grown locally
and which the [232] women spin, weave and dye themselves. Their
garments, made with very coarse, irregular thread, have a rough ap-
pearance but are very solid.

The women's figures are thick-set but not fleshy. Their faces,
142 which are more rounded than elongated, are pleasant and their eyes
are beautiful. But childbearing and the work of the fields soon destroy
their gracefulness, and after the age of twenty-five their figures thicken,
their wrists and ankles become heavy and their faces begin to harden
and wrinkle. [Illustration alongside text here]

[286] The Thai woman wears a skirt which is quite similar to the Laotian
skirt, but made of coarser cloth and dyed the same color as the men's
291 clothing. Over this she wears a very short jacket made of the same
cloth which is buttoned down the front and sometimes embellished
563 with chased silver work. The height of elegance is for the jacket to
be cut in such a way that when the woman moves in a certain way it
lets a little skin be seen above the skirt waist. Outside the home and for
ceremonies the women put on a sort of dressing gown which covers their
other clothing and comes down to the ankle. Its sleeves are very close-
fitting, and the garment buttons straight down the front to a point below
the waist. A strip of dark violet cloth, for the Dam-Thais, and red for

Tribal Tai

291 the Deng-Thais, is applied to the edges of the gown. It is further
563 ornamented [233] on the outside edge opposite the buttonholes with colored silk embroidery which does not go down below the waist.

This garment is also folded in half lengthwise and worn rolled around the body with the sleeves left hanging.

302 The women wear their hair parted down the middle in front and rolled into a sort of long tassel behind which is contained within
301 the folds of a little turban. The latter is wound above the forehead and the free end inserted under the first turn, on the nape of the neck. This headdress is quite similar to that of the Annamite women in Tonkin.

In certain regions of Laos, Thai women wind their hair into a sort of coil which girls wear loosely down their neck and betrothed or married women wear on top of the head. Thai jewelry is made of heavy silver and is of the same type as Laotian jewelry. The men wear bracelets on their wrists.

262 Food. The Thai diet is like that of the Laotians, but they prefer non-glutinous white rice and use chopsticks like the Chinese and
264 Annamites.

The use of betel is quite widespread among the Thais, but in
276 contrast to the Laotians they keep their teeth white. The Thais smoke the oily, opiated tobacco of Tonkin and China in bamboo waterpipes whose tiny bowls only contain a small pinch of tobacco. They also smoke a local variety of tobacco, either in cigarettes or in pipes with a highly worked clay bowl into which a long stem ending in a glass or jade mouthpiece is inserted.

156 Character. Although serious and reflective, the Thais have a vivacious and friendly character. They are somewhat cold in appearance, but are sound friends and highly affable when one gets to know them better.

[701] Gentler and more timid than the Laotians, they have no taste for the art of war and it is difficult to get them to stay in the native militia.

433 They are very self-seeking and much more miserly than the Lao-
tians. [234] It should be noted, moreover, that since they produce
438 everything themselves and are a people of farmers and livestock breeders, they do not have, by virtue of their ever sedentary occupations,
156 the opportunities which these latter have to enjoy fairly high profits resulting from commercial transactions, nor the special habits which contact with different races gives.

181 The Thais love pleasure and celebrations. Guaranteed their daily
461

Tribal Tai

181 bread by their work, they have scarcely a care for the morrow.
Scrupulous observers of the traditions handed down to them by their
• 461 ancestors, they live an utterly carefree life and instinctively dread
everything foreign or unknown to them.

Occupations. The men busy themselves with the tasks of farming,
463 fishing and hunting. They are very industrious and skilled farmers,
241 and can draw admirably on the soil's resources. They bring in the water
needed for irrigating their rais or mountain ricefields through ingenious
462 canals built along the sides of hills, and they also know how to capture
springs, often very distant ones, for the same purpose. To decorticate
paddy, they use mills driven by artificial waterfalls. The women perform the household chores, take care of the children, make and mend clothes, harvest and spin cotton, breed silkworms, unwind the cocoons and mill the silk. Theirs also is the task of supplying the home with water and with wood which they gather in the forest, as well as sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, getting in and decorticating the rice. These many tasks leave Thai women and girls little leisure, and it would thus seem only natural that they should profit by a moment of pleasure, whenever one presents itself in the midst of their multiple duties. They do, in fact, go in for fun eagerly and behave as keenly, despite their more reserved appearance, as their Laotian sisters.

361 Houses. There is no difference between Laotian villages and
Thai villages, except that the latter are better kept and cleaner.
342 Thai houses are generally longer and higher than those of the
592 Laotians, by reason of the custom which decrees that the whole family-
parents, children and grandchildren--shall live under the same roof.
Some Thai houses are as much as thirty meters long and from eight to ten meters wide. In rare cases one finds much larger houses which are from seventy to seventy-five meters long and twenty-five meters wide.

Thai houses very often have no verandas on their long sides, but
342 always have two, one at each end, which are covered by rounded roofs
554 and serve as reception terraces or antichambers.

The houses of mandarins and notables can be distinguished from the others by the fact that the roof rafters and the trusses of the gables extend above the line of the roof and cross. These members are decorated with wooden silhouettes or scallops ending in discs which, depending on their number and arrangement, indicate the rank of the house's owner.

Tribal Tai

619 The Neua-Thais. The Neua-Thais differ very little, in all
361 respects, from their fellows. They generally live on higher ground than the other Thais, but they change the location of their village quite frequently. [241] [Illustration] [242] [Blank page] [243]

291 The women knot their skirts under their armpits, above their breasts, and always wear a very short jacket made of cotton, silk or velvet, depending on the season.

231 They engage in sericulture, and with the silk spin and weave brocaded cloth with harmonious colors.

779 At the same time as ancestor worship, the Neu-Thais practice an attenuated form of Buddhism. Pagodas are rare and the bonzes, few in number, serve several centers in turn.

• 461 Their character is docile. They do not have a very marked taste for trade and are content to be excellent farmers and livestock breeders.
276 Unfortunately, they are inclined to be opium smokers. This is doubtless due to the proximity of the Meos and Yaos who are the producers of the drug.

619 The Phou-Eunes. This branch of the Thai family is very close to
101 the Laotians in mores and customs.

There are only a few modifications in costume and language, modifications due to the age-old proximity of the Annamites and the continuous relations which have existed between the two peoples.
[438] These latter may be explained by the fact that the territory long inhabited by the Phou-Eunes in the east and southeast of Tran-Ninh is situated on the Tonkin Gulf side, and that their produce naturally flows towards the ports on the Annamite coast (1).

(1) To be sure, there are several groupings of Phou-Eunes in the Mekong basin, in Tran-Ninh, to the northeast of Vien-Tiane and in Camkeut-Cammon.

361 The Phou-Eunes prefer to live in high valleys and on high plateaus where the climate is quite severe during the winter. They are more reserved in character than the Laotians, more industrious and less inclined to celebrations and festivities of all kinds.

779 Their religion is Buddhism, but the bonzes are less numerous than elsewhere. It is probable that the little taste which Phou-Eunes have for the religious life is due to the influence of nearby Annam, where the bonzes are a long way from being venerated and coddled as they are in Laos.

149: Reinach--186 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Kha

result. But the Kha ideal is to possess a battery of gongs of different 533
sizes and timbres, and with these they manage to obtain quite perfect chords.

Industry. Withdrawn in their mountains where they live in small 433
isolated groups, the Khas use their leisure time to make many basket-work and hollow-ware products which have a mark of elegance and a great deal of delicacy. Other tribes make paper from wood pulp, weave mats from rattan and bamboo bark, etc. They use all these products in trade.

Finally, certain Khas exploit deposits of iron ore and transform 316
it into farming implements, while others wash gold-bearing sands.

In general, although the Khas are industrious they work only to 461
procure what is strictly indispensable. They cannot resign themselves to staying away from home for any length of time and dread any stay in the low country, which they say is unhealthy for them. Since they [313]
have particular aptitudes for woodcutting, however, they have been successfully employed to cut teak wood in the forests on the right bank of the Mekong which are situated in Siamese territory. But it must be admitted that there they are in mountainous country and in the midst of forests, as in their native region.

The Khas of southern Laos. In southern Laos Khas are found who differ very little from those of Upper Laos. We shall not concern ourselves with them, but shall deal briefly with the many more numerous ones who have particular mores and customs.

The Djarais, the Rades, the Bahnars, the Cedangs, the Peunongs, [619]
the Rognaos (1), etc. are the principal types of these Kha tribes,

(1) See Appendix XVIII.

which for the most part are still independent.

These people are proud, large and muscular, supple, trained in 181
all forms of bodily exercise, bold, warlike and brave.

These qualities, moreover, have been developed by their pe- 567
culiar way of [257] [Illustration] [258] [Blank page] [259] life.
Accustomed to hunting slaves from which they extracted large profits 721
by selling them on the banks of the Mekong, these Khas have had to resort to continual expeditions in order to obtain their human game.

For many long years, in fact, they could acquire [Illustration 567
here] the gongs, buffalo, metals, textiles, etc. which they needed only by selling captives, generally Annamites, whom they went and

Se-Bang-Fai. But studies are not yet sufficiently advanced for us to be able to give any useful information. 316

We have nevertheless felt that we should mention these deposits, in order to establish the importance of all this part of Laos from the point of view of mineral wealth.

[327] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER VII

I

SCAVENGING

We have seen that the inhabitants of Laos are apathetic and little inclined to work. They nevertheless find, although they go to scarcely any trouble, enough to supply their needs easily. 461 241

Indeed, with the exception of a few annual crops such as tobacco, cotton and indigo which are grown on the ever-renewed alluvia of the watercourses, the production of rice and of maize are the only occupations which require--and even then during a relatively short time--any degree of work or perseverance. We may mention the opium poppy, ramie, hemp and the mulberry tree merely as a reminder, for only a small part of the population devotes its time to these crops, which are still not at all extensive. [249]

Yet, it may be objected, the native has an easy life, dresses adequately, [328] lives in a house which is solid and comfortable from his point of view, has various tools and utensils, weapons, and sometimes even valuable cloth goods, jewels, etc. He spends money for celebrations and for offerings to the bonzes and pagodas. He pays taxes, he supports court costs which are often large with respect to the question at issue, and he is subject to the exactions of his mandarins to a greater or less degree. Finally, the commercial transactions of Laos involve quantities and sums which are quite high in comparison to the sparse population. 511 [438]

How are we to reconcile all these factors, and how is it that the Laotian, who produces so little with his labor, nevertheless has all he needs to get along on?

This is due to the fact that Laos is above all else a scavenging country. 314

10: d'Orleans--266 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 396, 462, 697, 834

[LSS: at Muong Ngoi] "As I walk down by the side of the river I find a very animated scene; prisoners are going to and fro with manacles on their legs, which do not seem to inconvenience them at all. Elsewhere, men are making rafts and cutting planks; some of them are sawing a tree; they work horizontally, in pairs, putting in wedges as they advance. Women are fetching water in buckets made of bamboo tubes; they take the opportunity of bathing, and do not seem hindered by any bashful feelings. There is a curious remark to make on this point: amongst the Thaï's of the Black River, the men never hesitate to strip themselves, and enter the water; but the women appear more reserved; here, on the contrary, they are the ones that feel no shame, whilst their husbands seem to avoid undressing in our presence."

10: d'Orleans--271-272 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 248, 286, 402, 462

[LSS: in the village of Ban Sop Huan] "Under the houses the women are busy in various employments, and the young girls are separating the cotton from its grain. They use an ingenious machine for this purpose: a tray is placed upon a support about the level of the waist; above it, two rollers, one of iron and one of wood, turn in contrary directions, as the cotton passes between them it is freed from its impurities, which drop on one side, while the textile fabric falls on the other. One of the rollers is moved with one hand by a simple crank while the other is worked by the foot and a pedal [272] which corresponds with an eccentric, it is also furnished with a flywheel (the machine is made entirely of wood). After the cotton is cleaned it is placed in baskets, about twenty-four inches high and ten wide. When full they are sold for one rupee each.

Elsewhere the spun cotton is being dyed, while other women are making a blue stuff, crossed with yellow threads. They are seated, and use a weaving loom with two pedals, two shuttles, and three small boards. They throw one shuttle after the movement of the two small boards, and the other after the third. Tobacco is being dried on some bamboos and further away another group is winding silk."

10: d'Orleans--287 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 286, 301, 462, 534

"As soon as we are fairly in Mekong, we stop on the left bank for luncheon, near a small village hidden among the cocoa-trees. A good road traverses it, and leads to the pagoda; the women are working at the cotton, carding it with a sort of small bow, spinning and weaving it; the children impress me by the fairness of their skin; a great many wear bracelets on their feet. Hanging in the courtyard of the pagoda, I notice a bell at least two yards long, made from the hollow trunk of a tree, it is struck every morning and evening."

565 The common people, kind and carefree in character, roamed
175* over the country in all directions as easy-going masters, leaving
/462/ household tasks to the women and the work of the fields to dependents of an inferior race or to slaves. They were excellent boatmen and traders rather than farmers, so that they liked to perform the function of peddlers and served as a link between the multiple /55/ varieties of mankind which inhabited Lan-Xang.

567 Slavery existed--slaves could be obtained through capture, as
175* the result of debt or through trade--and brought high profits to those
563 who engaged in this traffic. In the region of Muong-Swa there was also a kind of serfdom which was applied to certain Kha tribes placed under the patronage of the king, the princes or the chief representatives of the nobility.

565 But if we consider the gentle and happy temperament of this
175* people whose good humor made up for everything, we are justified in believing that the relations between the various social levels must have been free of any harshness.

191 They spoke a dialect derived from the language which was imported into the basin of the Ménam by Rama Khamheng at the end of the thirteenth century and which was itself derived from the
771 graphs of India (1). They practiced orthodox Buddhism together
793
554

1. Cf. Mission Pavie, op. cit. /Études diverses, Vol. II, "Recherches sur l'Histoire du Cambodge du Laos et du Siam"/ Inscription of Sukhothaï translated by Father Schmitt, p. 192: "It was in (1287 A. D.) that the king Rama-Khameng summoned a teacher who created Thaï writing."

with the cult of the "Phi" or Genii which represented for them the beneficent or maleficent forces of Nature. The bonzes were of comparatively pure morals amidst these peoples for whom enjoyment and pleasure were, when /56/ all is considered, the true gods. Although they were fairly ignorant and recited their prayers in Pali
/782/ without understanding them, they did not lack a certain air of nobility. They also enjoyed a high regard and had as much favor as they could desire. The bonzeries[1] which were built near the pagodas were at once places of inviolable asylum, schools frequented by all the children of the village, and workshops where trades could be learned.

/[1] Buddhist Monasteries--Analyst./

285 lacquer -- red on the inside and black on the outside -- and deco-
532 rated with a fine gilt design which makes a border, like a galloon" (1).
175*

1. Cf. G. Maspero, ibid. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930/, pp. 190-191.

286 Even today weaving remains women's work, and is done solely in
462 the home. The materials, which may be silk or cotton, striped or
532 splashed with colors, embroidered or spangled with gold and silver thread, nevertheless acquire, under the action of light and carefree hands, chatoyant, harmonious or dazzling tones, and yet the looms which are used are simple in the extreme. Patterns "are obtained, as before the invention of the Jacquard loom, by alternately isolating or raising certain woof threads by means of thin bamboo splints" (2).

2. Cf. L. de Reinach, ibid. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 333.

181 Thus did the Laotian of the seventeenth century live in peace, respecting the law of the least effort with an amiable perserverance amidst his laughter and his games. . . . The princes were perhaps the
/565/ only ones in the whole kingdom to know any of the worries which power and its exigencies bring, and it was for not having wished to compromise with his authoritarian principles that King Souligna, towards the end of his reign, compromised the destinies of his people forever.

643* Condemnation of the heir apparent to death. He had three chil-
175* dren, a son Tiao Ratsabout and two daughters. His son married Nang-
648* Tian-Koumali, who gave birth in her turn to two children, King-Kitsarath and Intha-Som. Nang-Tian-Koumali was the sister of a prince of the Sip-Song-Panas who had been driven out of his country by a Chinese invasion and whom the king of Lan-Xang had welcomed in Vientiane together with his family. Tiao Ratsabout, however, committed the imprudence of seducing the wife of the chief palace page. In accordance with his edict which punished the crime of
/684/ adultery by death, Souligna pitilessly referred the deceived husband's complaint to the royal tribunal and allowed his son to be sentenced to capital punishment

The result was that at the king's death, which occurred /130/ in 1694, the direct heirs to the crown were his grandsons King-Kitsarath

149: Reinach--136 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

301
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who work gold mines--and by the inhabitants of several regions, [563]
whose state of fortune would nevertheless enable them to use a more precious metal.

Jewelry and examples of the goldsmith's art are found in different forms and types which vary greatly with the region and race, as will be seen by the nomenclature given in Chapter IX.

Food. The Laotian scorns the pleasures of the table, and is 262
generally a moderate eater and drinker. Steam-cooked glutinous rice forms the basis of his food supply. To this he adds salt, peppers, various other spices, fresh or preserved fish, etc. Besides these, but less frequently, his day-to-day diet may be varied with poultry, eggs, buffalo meat, beef and pork, as well as venison. To be sure, it is mainly on the occasion of public or private festivals, which are fairly numerous in the course of the year, that the Laotian improves on his usual rather frugal fare in this way.

The customary beverage is water which may be taken directly 271
from the rivers or first be hastily decanted into jars or water-coolers 273
of porous earthenware. In general, Laotians prefer water taken directly from the river to that which has been filtered. Finally, the people of Laos consume rice brandy which is obtained by distillation, and a kind of beer made by cold fermentation of rice mixed with paddy husks.

The use of these drinks, aside from rare exceptions, is reserved [527]
for holidays.

Physical appearance, character, occupations. The Laotian's 152
character is, in general, mild, friendly and happy. His physiognomy is [181] open and smiling. Not quarrelsome by nature, he even shrinks from coming to blows in extreme cases and prefers to end a dispute with an outburst of laughter rather than with blows.

Since, all in all, it has few needs and inhabits a land with luxuriant vegetation which is abundantly favored with products to be had for the scavenging, this happy people can easily satisfy its needs and be content with its fate. [Illustration alongside text here.]

It is assuredly lazy, but out of indifference much rather than 461
out of any deliberate intent. It cannot grasp the advantage or utility of a regular and prolonged effort beyond what is strictly necessary to provide it with a living and a few distractions to which, in reality, its own joyous disposition makes the greatest contribution.

462
To the men are reserved the chief tasks, which have a more
virile and noble character than those which are the women's lot. 241

462 Tilling the ricefields, hunting, fishing and managing rafts and
241 pirogues take up about six months of the year. The rest of the time they rest and enjoy themselves. The status of women in Laos, although not as low and painful as that of other women of Asiatic races, is nevertheless not as pleasant as that of their husbands. In fact, all the petty farming tasks fall on them. They perform all the household labors, care for the poultry yard and the livestock, etc. They do the cooking, decorticate the paddy, go and fetch wood and water, spin, weave and dye cotton and silk, take care of the children, etc. Less [182] fortunate than her husband, the Laotian woman has no leisure except on holidays, and even then she has to make all the preparations without letting her daily occupations suffer.

Of ordinary height, generally well made and even elegant of
142 figure, the Laotian woman has a friendly face and is not without
562 either grace or coquetry before her marriage. This does not mean that there are no homely girls, but these are rather an exception. As she grows older and worn from bearing children the Laotian woman loses much of her early grace, but in spite of everything she retains her joyousness, her high spirits and her very pronounced taste for celebrations when there is singing and feasting.

862 Laotian mothers worship their children. They take great care
858 of them and often push their weakness for their children to such a point as to prolong the period of breast-feeding, often beyond the child's fourth year.

342 Dwellings. Like all the representatives of the Thai family, the
574 Laotians inhabit houses which are rectangular in shape and are always raised one or two meters above the ~~house~~ GROUND on piles. Wood and bamboo, in the form of beams, framing members, rafters, door and window casings, partitions, doors, windows, floors and shingles, are used to build houses, without the use of any nails, all joints and assemblies being fastened together with rattan.

The dimensions of the houses vary greatly and depend on the number of families that they are designed to shelter. Verandas with roofs which are sharply inclined and come down quite low are placed around the house, mainly on the south and west, to temper the heat of the sun and serve as a vestibule, a reception hall or a workshop. The family stays there during the day, as on a sort of neutral ground where people who are coming and going can be received without transgressing custom, which decrees that no one except members of the family and close friends shall have access to the inner apartments, which form the private home of the house's inhabitants.

satisfaction and finds a pleasant test of his abilities in setting words to refrains whose meaning is unknown and in stimulating laughter or pleasant and amusing ideas in his audience, either by vaunting the joys of love and the plastic perfections of the human body, or by recalling [217] useful or pleasant memories, or by honoring justice and goodness. The morals of these folk, who are indolent because they are content with very little and are happy and healthy, and to whom all our subtleties are unknown, permit the greatest license in songs and improvisations and the greatest realism and crudity in the expression of thoughts. 538 538 831

In spite of this, there is not the least unhealthy intention in either the poet or his audience. As we have seen above in connection with burials, children of both sexes attend all these festivities accompanied by their parents. They all take pleasure in the same refrains and laugh at the same funny sayings, not because they are vicious but because they are pure pagans for whom enjoyment and pleasure are like gods. The songs are animated by graceful gestures, and together with the music form a whole which is poetic according to their particular esthetic canons and which is simply a manifestation of art and not an indication of loose morals. [535]

Theater. The Laotians also have a dramatic repertory consisting of longwinded plays, epics, religious and warlike stories, romantic tales, ancient legends, etc. These poems are played by several actors, with an orchestra and supernumeraries, and require many very ornate costumes which have not varied in form since the earliest times. Usually, however, the costumes are mere tinsel. 536

Like the Cambodian and Siamese theater from which it comes, the Laotian theater interprets age-old works taken from the Védas, the Ramayana or the Mahabharata. To this repertory are added purely Kmer plays and various adaptations of Burmese origin which are performed in the classical costumes and in which a strong tinge of comedy and modernism and a bit of satire are mingled with the ancient traditions. [171 178]

Women are excluded from the theater, and the female roles are played by young men. As in the case of songs and improvisations, dramatic knowledge, the repertory of plays and the art of acting are handed down from father to son. The actors are called Lakhone and plays are called Kam-Kong-Lakhone or Kam-Kong [218] Fone-Lakhone if they include dances or ballets. Finally, one last dramatic genre [462]

536 of Burmese origin is called I-Ke or Lakhone-I-Ke.

There are also animated Shadow theaters in Laos, like the Chinese or Javanese shadow theaters. The figurines in them are quite large, completely articulated and strikingly lifelike in all their attitudes and in their gestures, which correspond perfectly to the words of their manipulators. Some of these shadow figures are so well articulated that they scrupulously reproduce the movements of the mouth, nose, eyes, etc. Finally, so that they need envy no one, the Laotians also have a puppet theater [Guignol] like our French puppet theater of Lyons. The puppets represent local types and costumes, banter certain social classes with their sarcasm and ridicule certain personages who lend themselves easily to criticism. The artists who make these little wooden knaves function have as much verve, malice and wit as their colleagues in Europe, and although their wit is usually somewhat coarse it is perfectly adapted to the milieu. The puppets enjoy great public favor, and so their performances, which last far into the night, are among those most enjoyed by an audience which is always numerous and attentive. Old men, adults and children come and stay for hours at a time, gasping and lifting their faces towards the opening out of which the puppets' heads and shoulders protrude. The witty sayings, jokes of all kinds and even the gestures of these puppets often shake the whole audience with a fit of uncontrollable laughter.

535 Dancing. The dance (fone in Laotian) finds little favor with the Laotians. Scarcely any but men engage in this pastime, and they •462 dance a kind of Pyrrhic during the feast of rockets and a Phallic at the time of the pirogue regattas. During festivals singers and song-857 stresses often mix dancing with their songs, but it is limited to a few rhythmic gestures of the hands and upper part of the body, without any movement of the feet.

There are no professional women dancers in Laos as there are in Siam or Cambodia. I know of only one ballet corps, [219] that of Luang-Prabang, which is composed exclusively of children and very young people. This group, which is nicely costumed, is developing under the direction of one master and several supervisors. It executes figures and a few steps which are always very graceful, while carrying multicolored lanterns in the shape of balloons or flowers. The dances are accompanied by songs and form a most harmonious and pleasant ensemble.

181 bread by their work, they have scarcely a care for the morrow.
461 Scrupulous observers of the traditions handed down to them by their ancestors, they live an utterly carefree life and instinctively dread everything foreign or unknown to them.

463 Occupations. The men busy themselves with the tasks of farming,
241 fishing and hunting. They are very industrious and skilled farmers, and can draw admirably on the soil's resources. They bring in the water
462 needed for irrigating their rais or mountain ricefields through ingenious canals built along the sides of hills, and they also know how to capture springs, often very distant ones, for the same purpose. To decorticate paddy, they use mills driven by artificial waterfalls. The women perform the household chores, take care of the children, make and mend clothes, harvest and spin cotton, breed silkworms, unwind the cocoons and mill the silk. Theirs also is the task of supplying the home with water and with wood which they gather in the forest, as well as sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, getting in and decorticating the rice. *These many tasks leave Thai women and girls* little leisure, and it would thus seem only natural that they should profit by a moment of pleasure, whenever one presents itself in the midst of their multiple duties. They do, in fact, go in for fun eagerly and behave as keenly, despite their more reserved appearance, as their Laotian sisters.

361 Houses. There is no difference between Laotian villages and Thai villages, except that the latter are better kept and cleaner.

342 Thai houses are generally longer and higher than those of the
592 Laotians, by reason of the custom which decrees that the whole family--parents, children and grandchildren--shall live under the same roof. Some Thai houses are as much as thirty meters long and from eight to ten meters wide. In rare cases one finds much larger houses which are from seventy to seventy-five meters long and twenty-five meters wide.

342 Thai houses very often have no verandas on their long sides, but always have two, one at each end, which are covered by rounded roofs
554 and serve as reception terraces or antichambers.

The houses of mandarins and notables can be distinguished from the others by the fact that the roof rafters and the trusses of the gables extend above the line of the roof and cross. These members are decorated with wooden silhouettes or scallops ending in discs which, depending on their number and arrangement, indicate the rank of the house's owner.

149; Reinach--184 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

291 Men's clothing consists of a jacket and pair of trousers which have the same shape as those of the Lus and are made of coarse cotton cloth manufactured locally. Their headgear is a turban cut from a piece of Turkey-red cotton.

For work, clothing is generally reduced to a narrow strip of cloth forming a belt, one of the ends of which is passed between the legs and fastened in the middle of the back.

During the cold season a jacket is added to this loin-cloth.

The women wear a skirt of the Laotian type which is fastened under the armpits so that it does not come down below the calves of the legs. A short jacket completes their costume. On their head they wear a turban which is generally dark in color. [Illustration alongside text here]

301 Jewelry. Both sexes have silver or copper jewelry such as wide stiff neckbands, bracelets, rings, buttons, clasps, etc. Like the Lus and the Youns, the Khas pierce the lobes of their ears. Often the holes are of such dimensions that a roll of leaves or a bouquet of flowers can be inserted in them.

262 Food. Their diet is very like that of the Laotians and Thais. When there is a shortage of rice its place is taken, until the following harvest, by yams, taros, bamboo sprouts, banana flowers, etc.

462 Occupations. Women and children are given the hardest tasks imaginable, and it is unusual to meet them without baskets on their backs. The men carry only their bag, their sword, their rifle and their pipe.

595 Marriage. Divorce. Adultery. Polygamy is widespread among the Khas, and the number of wives a man possesses is the sign of his wealth. For, regarded as they are rather like beasts of burden and working constantly, the more numerous these wives are the more they will produce.

584 [254] The rules for marriage preliminaries closely resemble the Laotian customs and the ceremony itself, although much less splendid, comprises the same rites. To be sure, the role of the bonzes is filled here by "Pho-Tao," that is to say elders or sorcerers.

586 Divorce may be requested by the wife, or one of the wives, for personal reasons. It may also take place by mutual consent. Finally,
684 it is compulsory in the case of adultery, since the guilty woman must marry her accomplice.

Contrary to what is the case elsewhere, adultery on the part of the husband is punished by a double fine awarded to his wife's family

Kha

586 684 and to the family of his accomplice. In a case of flagrante delicto, however, he has the right to kill the guilty parties.

[462] Kha women, when married, are renowned for their austerity, and their conduct is usually exemplary. Moreover, they are very soon disfigured by precocious and repeated childbearing, as well as by the difficult work which they do, and after two or three years of marriage the poor women are no longer tempting to anyone.

764 Deaths. Cremation is not practiced by the Khas. They bury their dead in as summary a fashion as the Lus, and for a few days bring food to the freshly filled grave. Then the latter is abandoned.

When a chief or a rich man is to be buried, the body is placed in a coffin hewn from a tree trunk.

181 Character. Like all oppressed peoples, the Khas are reserved and timid. They are afraid of innovations and new faces. But in intimate gatherings with their own people they are just as merry and love music, dances, celebrations and festivals just as much as the other peoples of Laos.

535 536 Music and dancing. They know certain dances imitated from the Lus, pantomimes (1) which resemble the I-Ke of the Burmese,

(1) They also have the habit of performing scenes in pantomime, rather like extremely primitive ballet. We shall describe one such scene:

"A group of girls, guarded by two respectable men, are pursuing the pleasures of dancing. A rogue comes up and tries to make off with one of the girls. After a few unsuccessful attempts he succeeds in eluding the guards' vigilance, jumps forward to seize the girl on whom he has designs, and clasps her in his arms. But his happiness is too much for him and he falls senseless at the feet of the girl he wanted to abduct." (Le Laos français.) - [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

and [255] singsong legends in which the r's and k's roll out in terrible fashion. They also have songs which they accompany on flutes, clarinets and single-stringed violins. 533 Some tribes have xylophones, these being instruments composed of bamboo tubes of [Illustration here] different thickness and length, each of which produces a tone varying with its size. It will be seen that by striking with a [256] stick of wood on these tubes, a combination of more or less harmonious sounds will

6: Goudal--5 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-1-4
116, 101, 161, 141, 463, 177.65 France
636.65

"The Tai are of Mongolian race. They came from China and formed various groups, including the Laotians (and the Siamese) and the predominant ethnical group in Upper Tonking. Their numbers are assessed at a million. They are of less than average height (1.59 metres). As a people they are very gay and hospitable. Like the Cambodians, the Laotians are Buddhists, but their religious sense goes hand in hand with very great moral freedom. They are indifferent farmers but engage frequently in fishing and hunting and are excellent boatmen. As traders they possess remarkable qualities.

For a long time the Laotian was considered as an apathetic creature, hating all effort and anxious only to enjoy the present without worrying about the morrow or without trying to improve his moral well-being or his material existence by persevering labour. It cannot be denied that this people, whose country was repeatedly laid waste throughout the centuries by invasions from the north and the west, seemed at the time of our arrival in Indo-China to be doomed to decadence. . . At the present time the country has roads and tracks, and its doors are open to commercial and industrial undertakings which have already done much for the development of the land and its mineral wealth. The local authorities have no difficulty in securing the very active co-operation of the inhabitants in the contruction of roads and tracks. . . The legend

of the Laotian as an idle creature, exercising passive resistance to any attempt to make use ofhis intelligence or his physical labour, had disappeared. Far from taking no interest in public welfare as was long asserted, the Laotians on the contrary seem to take a lively interest in it, and in particular in the progress of the development of the country and of the schools and medical institutions that are being established. (2)

2. Léon Archimbaud: Rapport au nom de la Commission des finances sur le budget général des Colonies (1928), pp. 88-89. This point of view is confirmed by the following statement:

'It has been repeatedly alleged that the Laotian abhors work and does only what is strictly necessary to provide for his own needs and for those of his family. He is said to have two serious defects: a very idle mind and a hatred of effort. This view is mistaken. It is certainly true that there is a certain fundamental apathy and indolence about the Laotian but this can be quite naturally explained by his background and the circumstances

in which his material existence has so far been passed.

'Times have now changed, the country is entirely pacified and war and piracy are merely a memory. . . . Exports of raw materials which were practically non-existent a mere 15 years ago are now increasing rapidly and this is clearly proof that the Laotian worker is not, as has been said, indifferent to gain, but that he can collaborate effectively with the settlers.

'The whole question is one of making use of his services in a manner suited to his special mentality, customs, qualities and defects. It is essential to treat him fairly and kindly; his intelligence and his docility of character enable him to adapt himself gradually to modern working methods. The tin mines in the province of Cammon have for several years been employing Laotian workers who have proved completely satisfactory both for mining the ore and for its treatment.

'Similarly, in connection with road making, in Upper and Lower Laos groups of workers have been used for cutting down

trees and clearing away stumps and undergrowth in the heart of a mountainous country where conditions of work are difficult and resources are slight. Under the skilful direction of our administrators and engineers the use of Laotian labour has proved satisfactory in almost every case.' (M. Bosc: Rapport d'ensemble sur le Laos. Conference on Native Communities held at the International Colonial Exhibition, Paris, 1931.)"

6: Goudal--174 [2] S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians
116, 463, 511

"In Laos, indigenous industries are very little developed, for the needs of the inhabitants are very slight. With few exceptions, there are no workers engaged in any given trade connected with the building of houses, the manufacture of utensils, the making of hunting and fishing gear or of spinning equipment, the dyeing or weaving of materials, or any other activity connected with housing, furniture, clothing, household articles, etc."

10: d'Orleans--264 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 439, 463

"As a rule, the inhabitants appear careless and idle; but probably they need not work to obtain a living, for commerce is the usual occupation in this district. I meet some merchants selling salt that has come from Hong Hay by Luang Prabang. The commodity is in small packets wrapped in banana leaves. Its price is agout one rupee for six pounds. In return they export chiefly rice and silk."

10: d'Orleans--275 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 463, 471, 556, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"...Our boatmen assemble round us. I talk to them, and they tell me that they are engaged upon the pirogues for the benefit of the owner (usually a Laotian), who stands at the helm. To them a boat represents a large capital; the one in which I travel is worth sixty-seven rupees. As a rule the owner trades with them, a pirogue can carry about thirty-six thengs (a theng weighs about thirty-four pounds). The boatmen are chiefly hired from among the Kas;"

10: d'Orleans--305 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 147, 157, 463, 563, 609 Ethnic subgroups

"The Kas of Luang Prabang appear to be very shy, and I could not induce them, even by the promise of presents, to let me photograph them, the only means by which I succeeded being an order from the Siamese Colonel, while, when brought up, they were so intimidated that I could count their pulses beating at more than eighty to the minute. When walking in the streets they proceed as if they were afraid that some one was going to hurt them, and, being more laborious if less educated than the Laotians, they are employed by the latter to fashion the metals, to look after the stock and to cultivate the soil, so that they fill much the same part that the Lacædemonians of old did, except that they are not so badly used."

10: d'Orleans--307 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 461, 463, 511, 556

[LSS: at Luang Prabang] "The men do but little work, labour in the mines and the cultivation of the soil being left to the Kas and it is only in the towns that they are found engaging in any artistic occupation, such as the making of jewellery or the chasing of silver. Even those who do work rarely do so for more than seven hours a day, and the woman keep the pot boiling by spinning silk and making various materials, though they do not overwork themselves. When a household is very hard pressed the men seek employment as boatmen, and are very expert, making enough in a month or two to keep them the rest of the year, so that if there are few large fortunes, most of the inhabitants have enough to live upon in comfort, preferring freedom and tranquillity to an excess of labour, which would only give them what they do not want. Moreover, when they do happen to have put by a decent sum of money, they go and spend it at the pagoda, either in fulfilment of a vow or in payment of some religious ceremony. This is their only luxury, nor, indeed, do they regard it as one, for they reckon upon profiting by it in another world."

34: Thompson--168[2] J-4 (no date)1947 Laotians
116, 563, 463, 181

"This fear and dislike [P.H.: of the Annamese] is also felt by Cambodia's northern neighbors, the Laotians, who are even less able to resist Annamite infiltration. The Laotians do not appear to share the capabilities of their relatives in Siam and resemble the Cambodians in regard to farming and industrial incompetence. Although they are less talented as craftsmen, they are more skillful as boatmen and as merchants. Under sympathetic tutelage, however, they have shown some ability in forestry and even in mining."

34: Thompson--179[2] J-4 (no date)1947 Laotians
116, 463

"In Laos, the local industries were little developed and the population's needs slight. With few exceptions connected with housebuilding, the manufacture of utensils, weaving, and the like, there were no workers engaged in any given trade."

149; Reinach--166 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Since there is not, so to speak, any class of salaried workers in Lacs except in certain types of work and in transport by pirogues and rafts, the inhabitants of any given center lend one another their help in farming, harvesting, building houses or pirogues, etc. Taking turns, the one who has asked help of his neighbors will put on a celebration for them when the work is over, and will himself receive an invitation from someone else in return for help which he has given.

[792]

Laotian celebrations, in which the bonzes are never forgotten, are usually given under the verandas of the pagodas or in their dependencies, unless they take place in the host's own home or under sheds specially constructed for the purpose on one side. The latter is always the case in a "Ngan" given for those who have helped in building a house, and the same is true for a birth or marriage.

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Celebrations generally begin towards four or five in the afternoon when the heat is beginning to wane. They last all night and sometimes resume on the following day after the guests have relaxed for a few hours. Some "Ngans" go on in this way for nearly a week and are interrupted only by the coming of the Laotian sabbath, a day of absolute rest when only the preparation of food is permitted, and no work or pleasure. By the light of kerosene lamps borrowed here and there, or of resinous torches, the girls, who are decked out in all their finery, are stationed in a line squatting down against a wall or partition. Before them there are [221] vases made of copper, silver or porcelain. They all pretend to be busy with minor tasks and may imitate, for example, the preparation of food. But in reality this is only their way of keeping some kind of countenance.

[461
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The adults and children of both sexes are massed at each end of the row of girls. Then the young men, their heads covered with scarves, come and squat down opposite the girls and with their heads still covered begin an animated conversation which soon turns into regular flirting. If there is enough space the orchestra takes up its position nearby and in the center, between the young people, are the singers, improvisers and "Kene" players. Cakes, fruit, quids of betel, cigarettes, rice brandy and various condiments are passed around.

Spectators who have not been specially invited come and stand behind the young people, as do passersby who drop in for a quid, a cigarette, a cup of brandy or a bowl of rice, or to listen to the songs and music for a little while.

181 bread by their work, they have scarcely a care for the morrow.
461 Scrupulous observers of the traditions handed down to them by their ancestors, they live an utterly carefree life and instinctively dread everything foreign or unknown to them.

463 Occupations. The men busy themselves with the tasks of farming, fishing and hunting. They are very industrious and skilled farmers,
241 and can draw admirably on the soil's resources. They bring in the water needed for irrigating their rais or mountain ricefields through ingenious
462 canals built along the sides of hills, and they also know how to capture springs, often very distant ones, for the same purpose. To decorticate paddy, they use mills driven by artificial waterfalls. The women perform the household chores, take care of the children, make and mend clothes, harvest and spin cotton, breed silkworms, unwind the cocoons and mill the silk. Theirs also is the task of supplying the home with water and with wood which they gather in the forest, as well as sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, getting in and decorticating the rice. These many tasks leave Thai women and girls little leisure, and it would thus seem only natural that they should profit by a moment of pleasure, whenever one presents itself in the midst of their multiple duties. They do, in fact, go in for fun eagerly and behave as keenly, despite their more reserved appearance, as their Laotian sisters.

361 Houses. There is no difference between Laotian villages and Thai villages, except that the latter are better kept and cleaner.
342 Thai houses are generally longer and higher than those of the
592 Laotians, by reason of the custom which decrees that the whole family--parents, children and grandchildren--shall live under the same roof. Some Thai houses are as much as thirty meters long and from eight to ten meters wide. In rare cases one finds much larger houses which are from seventy to seventy-five meters long and twenty-five meters wide.

342 Thai houses very often have no verandas on their long sides, but always have two, one at each end, which are covered by rounded roofs
554 and serve as reception terraces or antichambers.

The houses of mandarins and notables can be distinguished from the others by the fact that the roof rafters and the trusses of the gables extend above the line of the roof and cross. These members are decorated with wooden silhouettes or scallops ending in discs which, depending on their number and arrangement, indicate the rank of the house's owner.

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The discrepancy between the officially recognized exports and imports is a sure indication that we are here approaching the truth.

The remedy for this state of things is to make Laos freely open, on equal terms and both entering and leaving, to all goods and to all merchants. It means reducing all the duties levied to the single three percent ad valorem rate both entering and leaving. It means, in a word, parity [452] with our neighbor Siam which, after having left us the land, the water and the wild beasts of the forest, will continue, unless we take care, to be the only one to profit from our colony of Laos.

It will be objected that the remedy which we recommend would not prevent the Treasury from being cheated, since foreign goods introduced into Laos might still, as is the case at present, come in through a back door into the other parts of the Indo-Chinese union. But we reply that the situation is not at all the same. The Mekong is open over more than 2000 kilometers, and there the frontier is entirely a moral one, whereas between Laos and the other lands of Indo-China there are mountainous obstacles with only a few passages, and it would be enough merely to guard these, with respect to customs, in order to prevent fraud.

[453] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER IX

INDUSTRY. ARTS AND TRADES.

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472 needs. Indeed, one cannot regard as export trade the sale of a few silk or cotton goods of Laotian origin in the nearby regions.

463 Mention must first be made of what we may call the products of family industry. With a very few exceptions, there are no specialized workers pursuing a given trade, as regards the construction of houses and the manufacture of various useful articles, hunting and fishing devices, as well as in spinning, dyeing and weaving cloth and, in a

433 word, as regards everything connected with housing, furnishings,
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463 children-- [454] is able to make the ordinary necessary articles by means of very simple methods and rudimentary tools. Thus it may be said that each house and each family represents a village in miniature.

The only industries really worthy of the name are embroidering on cloth, jewelry-making and working with gold and silver, ironmongery, brass-founding, pottery, basketry, the manufacture of certain lacquered articles, paper-making, wood and ivory carving, fresco painting, gold-washing and especially the making of pirogues, in which the natives show remarkable skill.

286 Weaving. The weaving of certain kinds of silk goods with
386 various shaded effects and often spangled with gold, as well as embroidering on cloth, is practiced by a certain number of women in every locality which is of any importance.

The looms used for weaving are extremely simple, and yet brocaded stuffs are made in which the designs are obtained, as before the invention of the Jacquard loom, by isolating or alternatively raising certain woof threads by means of thin strips of bamboo.

Vegetable dyes are used, that is to say that they are produced by trees or plants which grow in the country. Dyeing methods are simple, yet despite this fact the colors last for a long time thanks to a mordant composed of alum or lemon juice. The fundamental colors are blue (indigo), red, yellow and black. With the aid of these dyes the women are able, either by suitably proportioned mixtures or by various juxtapositions on the threads or on the cloth, to obtain a great variety of shades.

For some fifteen years now tinctorial powders have also been used which have an aniline base and are of German origin. But these dyes fall far short of being as colorfast and long-lasting as the local dyes. Their colors do not merge as well, and with them it is impossible to obtain the harmonious shades which the tinctorial products of Laos give to cloth and to thread.

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7: Thompson--375-376 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 147, 461, 464, 621

"Labour, as is the case in so many tropical countries of great potential wealth, is the second greatest need. The Laotians' inadequacy, both numerically and psychologically, combined with the country's inaccessibility are almost insuperable obstacles to industrial or commercial progress. This was plainly seen when Laos's vast mineral wealth, especially in tin, attracted capitalist investment in the discreditable wave of mining speculation that spread over Indo-China in the late [376] 1920's. The Laotians have no sense of time, and a thousand obstacles and superstitions interfere with the accomplishment of work at a fixed date. Their physical stamina is not proof against epidemics, especially those maladies brought from foreign countries. Whole villages displace themselves at the slightest provocation. One Laotian proverb says: 'At the end of three days change your house; at the end of three years change your village.' What started as a necessity to escape invaders or soil exhaustion has become a habit, and a means of escaping any regular irksome task. The ease with which the Laotians drift across the Mekong into Siamese territory makes the French authorities very loath to take strict measures with them. Moreover, the European residents themselves, who would normally be the motive force behind any change, succumb to the prevailing atmosphere of su-su, the Oriental equivalent of dolce far niente."

7: Thompson--376 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 177, 167, 186, 464

"It is obvious that the future development of the country, as in Cambodia, cannot depend on any but imported labour. As ever, it is the prolific and industrious Chinese and Annamites who are flowing into Laos to the economic betterment of the land, but equally to the moral distress of its people. Middle Laos, from Savannakhet to Vientiane, is the region most subject to infiltration. Upper and Lower Laos will probably be cut apart by a wedge of foreign colonizers. The French cannot but favour this immigration. Laos is a terrestrial paradise offering an easy living, undisputed by the timid Laotians, to the miserable Annamites from the over-crowded Tonkinese delta. The Laotians, like the Khmers, prefer to withdraw rather than to struggle with their old enemies. A terse Laotian proverb crystallizes this ancient antagonism: 'Dog and cat, Annamite and Laotian.' In addition to taking their land and their women the Annamite has introduced vices like gaming and theft, and diseases like tuberculosis and syphilis. The contempt of the industrious and formalistic Annamite for the lazy and carefree Laotian is only matched by the latter's impotent hatred. Yet the evil is without remedy. Rich, unoccupied land will inevitably attract an industrious and prolific people like the Annamites, who are able and willing to do what Laotians cannot and will not do."

35: Ennis--130 H-3 (no date) 1936 Laotians
116, 241, 311, 464, 496

"The colonization schemes sponsored by the Indochinese government in other parts of the peninsula have not touched Laos. The local administration, however, has been encouraging small-scale settlements. The Société de l'Houle Pakhout has placed 12,000 coffee plants upon the plateau of Boloven, and in the same region a group of natives has set out 100 hectares of kapotiers. The colonization of Laos cannot be initiated until the railroad from Tanap to Thaklek is completed, which will link up the interior to river nagivation [sic] upon the Mékong. Here, as elsewhere, one of the chief problems is inadequate labor supply. (58)

58. Rapports au grand conseil, pp. 85 ff."

000 are incapable of any initiative or any work.

The Laotian people taken as a whole needs to be guided and sustained at once firmly and gently. In accordance with the hallowed expression, "an iron hand in a velvet glove" is needed to lead them. What we need to make them understand, in order that they may profit thereby, is that the only purpose of the improvements which are proposed is to procure them a greater sum of well-being, a good which they are far from scorning.

By taking possession of Laos, it is to be hoped that we have assured its security for all time. The appreciable development of agriculture and trade during these last few years is proof that [513] [Illustration] [514] [Blank page] [515] the inhabitants have grasped the goal which we are pursuing. To increase the country's resources in order to bring about prosperity, this is the task to be accomplished. It is a duty which we cannot shirk without betraying our traditions, and without losing our prestige in the eyes of the peoples which have welcomed us as liberators and protectors in the true sense of the word, who conquered them by the heart and not by fire and sword.

2. COLONIZATION METHODS

464 Although some of the higher regions of Laos have a climate
513 approaching that of Algeria, it is not a colony to be populated. Europeans cannot engage in continuous physical labor there, and must limit themselves to a role of direction and supervision, leaving the heavy manual work to Orientals.

The question of labor is thus of prime importance for utilization of the country's resources. Yet given the sparse population density, its lack of aptitudes and the great distances between inhabited centers, it would seem to be no easy matter to count on the Laotians. They are above all a people of boatmen, drovers, carters and camacs.

Nor can one employ the Khas. Although good mine, forest and agricultural workers, provided they do not have to leave their mountains and their forests, they are unsuited to any kind of work in the plains or low valleys.

Thus no other solution is left to the problem of recruiting workers than to have recourse to Annamite or Chinese immigration. Now, the Annamite is afraid to move; he (especially the delta Annamite) dreads staying in regions which are at all mountainous (1). Prejudices, super-

(1) The first Europeans who came to Laos know how difficult it was to recruit, in Annamite territory, a suitable force of "boys"

who were disposed to follow them.

464 stitions and perhaps also the opposition of the mandarins who for
563 centuries have tried [516] to prevent any exodus towards the lands situated beyond the mountains, have in the long run made him a stay-at-home.

This industrious, intelligent and prolific people prefers to struggle
000 for life in agglomerations which are too dense, rather than emigrate in order to obtain a life of well-being and ease.

We should not, however, despair of ever seeing the Annamites spread into Laos and there provide a powerful force for repopulation and make the low plains which border the Mekong from Cammon to Cambodia bear fruit. It is up to us to destroy the legends, to reduce to nothingness the superstitions which have gained currency, and then to use our influence to bring an end to the ostracism in which Laos is held. Does it not belong today to the great Indo-Chinese family in which all the component peoples are French subjects in the same right?

On the day when the mandarins no longer sustain a fear of Laos and a dread of slavery among the Annamites, it will be possible to induc them to emigrate into the Mekong basin. The colonies already in existence, particularly at certain points in Cammon, will grow from that day on through the addition of newcomers. We must not deceive ourselves into thinking that such immigration will not take time, and so in order to meet our most pressing needs European colonies in Laos will have to appeal to laborers from the southern provinces of China and especially from the island of Hainan, that inexhaustible reservoir which has supplied coolies to several parts of the world for so many years.

But, it will be asked, is Laos ready to welcome colonists who want to work the mines and forests and to engage in trade, agriculture and livestock breeding? We believe that, in the present state of communications, some of these undertakings are possible at this moment and that others cannot hope to succeed until the country's economic equipment has developed.

3/6 As concerns commerce and the exploitation of forests and mines,
313 we have noted that several attempts have already been made. These are valuable indications showing the [517] courses which isolated
185 colonists or companies which would like to employ their capital in our new possession can follow as of the present time. Indeed, such undertakings yield profits almost from the very beginning, and if they are

6: Goudal--32-33 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-1-3
116, 466, 651, 177.46 France
636.46

Laos. --An Order of 12 May 1914 regulated labour dues for natives and assimilated Asiatics between 18 and 60 years of age who inhabit the territory of Laos.

Registered Laotians are required to provide 16 days' labour per annum, which may be commuted at the rate of 0.40 piastre, while 'Khas' must provide 20 days.

The commutation of labour dues is optional. Labour conscripts may only be recruited within a radius of 100 kilometres from the place of employment or at a maximum of five days' march for the outward and return journeys. No wages are paid for days thus worked, but each day taken up by the journey from the village to the place of work is paid at the rate of 30 cents. At least one-quarter of the labour called up must be employed solely on communal work. The commutation fee is fixed at 0.25 piastre.

An Order of 18 June 1929 increased the commutation fee to 0.30 piastre.

An important Circular issued on 21 June 1934 laid down the measures to be taken by the Residents in Laos to secure that the recruiting and employment of requisitioned labour should be carried out in the best conditions and with due attention to the requirements of health and hygiene.

The recruitment of labour must be carried out with the greatest care and under the supervision and responsibility of the indigenous authorities. Sick and infirm persons, elderly persons and children may not be employed in any circumstances. When the workplace is far from the village, the workers must be carried in service lorries or canoes.

Before work is begun the encampments must be carefully organised. The workers' food must be the object of strict supervision, and every care must be taken to avoid victimisation of the workers by itinerant traders.

As a rule a dresser must be made responsible for the health in all workplaces employing at least 50 workers. The workers must be supplied with tools and implements so as to secure a maximum individual output.

In the management and organisation of workplaces, every effort must be made to co-ordinate administrative supervision, the work of the indigenous authorities and the technical instructions issued by the public works services.

It is thus clear that the regulation of labour dues has undergone practically the same evolution in all the countries of the Union. The old system of compulsory labour, which in theory was subject [33] to no restrictions, has been reduced to a reasonable number of days by the French authorities, while the work exacted from the inhabitants has been

restricted to the district in which the latter live, so as to avoid long absences from home and transfer to distant places. The regulations recommend the avoidance of mass levies likely to empty the villages of their able-bodied population, and discourage the requisitioning of labour during periods of agricultural activity. The introduction of certain measures for the protection of the workers' health (infirmaries in the work-places, etc.), together with the compulsory supply of appropriate tools and implements has certainly introduced a more humane element in the labour system. Finally, the general adoption of commutation fees has led to dues being treated as a tax (in three countries, the dues are included in the personal tax). Only for certain tribes in mountainous districts is the character of the former compulsory labour system still maintained."

6: Goudal--42-43 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians
116, 466, 482, 653, 177.46 France
636.46

"In Laos, the regulation of compulsory labour for public purposes has been the subject of a number of legislative measures, including an Order by the Senior Resident of 27 June 1933 which closely resembles that issued by the Governor-General of 5 February 1932.

Moreover, in the countries of the Union where this form of labour is still permitted, Orders are issued periodically establishing the [43] maximum weight of the load carried by porters and the rates of wages payable to such workers. Annual reports are also sent to the central administrative authorities on the value and usefulness of requisitioned labour. If the present effort made by the authorities is continued, it is practically certain that in the near future compulsory labour levies for transport work and large-scale public works will become a thing of the past."

6: Goudal--122 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians
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"In Laos, the preventive measures embodied in the above-mentioned Order of 3 June 1922 have been declared applicable by the Order of 13 June 1932."

6: Goudal--161-162 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-1-2
116, 466, 671, 177.46 France
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"Laos--Sections 197-201 of the Laotian Civil Code provide for two methods of assessing workmen's compensation, according to whether the accident was or was not the consequence of an operation or dangerous work for which no special remuneration was laid down to offset the risk. If the accident is caused by dangerous work, the liability of the employer is regulated as follows: in the case of death or permanent total incapacity, the victim or his dependants are entitled, according to their situation, to an allowance amounting to 100 piastres for officials, 80 piastres for an employee of the administration or a skilled worker exercising a remunerative trade, and 50 piastres for all other workers.

These allowances are reduced to one-half or to one-quarter of the stated amount when the victim's working capacity is reduced, even permanently, by 50 or 25 per cent.

In case of temporary incapacity, the person liable in case of accident is required to pay as damages to the injured party the cost of the treatment entailed and in addition, throughout the whole period of incapacity, full wages in the case of an official, 0.55 piastre a day in the case of an employee of the administration or a skilled worker, and 0.25 piastre a day in the case of all other persons. [162]

All the above-mentioned allowances are reduced by one-half if the injured person is under age and has undertaken the operation or dangerous work with the authorisation of his parents.

6: Goudal--161-162 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-2
116, 466, 671, 177.46 France
636.46

Among other classes of work, the Civil Code classifies the following as dangerous: scaling of tall trees, going down wells or underground caves or passages, diving into a deep or rapidly flowing part of a river, the capturing of wild animals, the training of untamed animals, pursuit of criminals, etc.

When, on the other hand, the accident is not the result of dangerous work, but is nevertheless incurred in the course of, or arising out of, paid employment, the employer is required, in case of death or permanent incapacity, to pay to the victim an allowance equal to one-half of the corresponding indemnity established for injuries caused by dangerous work. In case of death he must also pay the cost of burial or cremation.

If the accident results in minor injuries, the employer must provide the injured person with medical attendance and food throughout the period of temporary incapacity.

Finally, in no case is the employer responsible for accidents resulting from unavoidable circumstances."

6: Goudal--166 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians
116, 466, 647, 177.46 France
636.46

"In Laos, no local labour inspectorate has so far been established. An Order of 22 December 1932 required the inspector of political and administrative affairs to carry out the duties of local labour inspector in addition to his own work. Subsequently, as the first-class administrator of the civil services who carried out these double duties was not replaced, the chief administrative officer of the Cammon province was entrusted with the duties of labour supervisor for all mining undertakings situated in his area.

It would seem that the cuts in the estimates, which led to a reduction in the staff of the various local inspectorates, have resulted in an unfortunate decline in the activity of these services. (1)

1. We read, for example, in the Annual Report of the Tonking Labour Inspectorate for the period 1 July 1933-30 June 1934: 'The attachment of the labour inspectorate to the Fifth Bureau has resulted in greatly reducing the sphere of activity of the labour inspector, whose time is mainly taken up by his duties as chief of the Bureau of Economic Affairs; his tours of inspection have thus been reduced to those which are strictly necessary'. "

149: Reinach--1 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

[1] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER I

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THE POLITICAL STATUS OF LAOS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO THE CAPTURE OF VIEN-TIANE IN 1827

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the territories situated in the basin of the Mékong River were designated by the name of Laos or Lao, and from the political point of view formed two autonomous States.

Their autonomy was much more apparent than real, and existed in fact only for the internal administration of the two kingdoms. As far as their foreign relations went, they were tributaries of the more powerful nations which surrounded them.

The kingdom of Luang-Prabang (or Lan-Xang--of the million elephants) was the northernmost of the two and bordered on Yunnan, Tonkin, Annam, Vien-Tiane (or Vieng-Chang), the Burmese States [2] (or Sib-Song-Pahn-Na) and the You-Eun States (or Lao-Xieng). It was supposed to provide China, Annam and Siam, either annually or every three years, with tribute consisting of certain valuable products and of precious metals, and called "Gold and silver flowers."

The other, or kingdom of Vien-Tiane, was the southernmost and was bordered on the north by Luang-Prabang, on the east by Annam, on the south by Cambodia and on the west by Siam. It was the tributary of Annam and Siam in the same right and under the same conditions as the first.

This state of affairs was profoundly modified in the beginning and middle of the nineteenth century by various events of capital importance.

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At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth the Thai kingdom, or Siam, had often appealed to the Laotian princes for help in repulsing Burmese invasions or repressing the insurrections of Ngiéous, Shans and You-Eûns which were frequent at this time. The princes' devotion was ill rewarded. Around 1825, in fact, when the kingdom of Vien-Tiane seemed to want to shake off Siamese suzerainty, it saw its territory invaded by Siamese armies. After two years of war the land had been dismembered, depopulated

3: Robequain--260 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 135, 316, 439, 471

"For the past several years the production of tin in the Nam Patène basin in Laos has exceeded that at Pia Ouac. The Nam Patène River is a left hand tributary of the Nam Hin Boun, which itself flows into the Mekong at Pak Hin Boun, north of Thakhek. Cassiterite has been mined here from time immemorial by the Laotians who dug small shafts a few meters deep into the alluvium. Native mining continues today on the European concessions, the ore being purchased by the companies. Formerly, after careful sorting, the richest particles were crushed, washed in cradles and reduced in Chinese charcoal-furnaces. But about 1920 production was still a mere ten to fifteen tons a year; it was exported to Thailand where it was used only as ballast for fish nets."

3: Robequain--260-261 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 135, 316, 471

"It was not until 1923 that the Société d'Études et d'Exploitations Minières de l'Indochine began to work the beds systematically. Veins had first been discovered in the eluvium and alluvium of a huge karstic basin some 30 kilometers long and 8 wide, cut into the Urals-Permian limestone which dominates it with dramatic masses and sheer, almost insurmountable slopes. The eluvial cassiterite is joined in depth to the veins which pass through the Muscovitic sandstone subjacent to the limestone, and which have been metamorphized by granite intrusions. Here it is not associated with wolfram as it is in Pia Ouac. It is about ten meters thick with a thin covering of unproductive soil; mining is quite easily performed by the open-pit method, under a 'cai's' direction. Almost all the ore extracted up to the present has come from the Phon Tiou bed on the Solange grant. The 1926-1929 boom brought about the formation of other companies whose grants are worked by the Compagnie Fermière des Étains d'Extrême-Orient. Production started in 1933 and is carried [261] on around Boneng. They have begun cutting out the veins, whose reddish chimneys stand out between their white sand-stone wells."

10: d'Orleans--275 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 463, 471, 556, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"...Our boatmen assemble round us. I talk to them, and they tell me that they are engaged upon the pirogues for the benefit of the owner (usually a Laotian), who stands at the helm. To them a boat represents a large capital; the one in which I travel is worth sixty-seven rupees. As a rule the owner trades with them, a pirogue can carry about thirty-six thengs (a theng weighs about thirty-four pounds). The boatmen are chiefly hired from among the Kas."

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but it has not met with favor on the part of the specialists, who have
preferred the Chinese thread.

10: d'Orleans--307-308 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 342, 476

"There would be but a poor opening for labour here, [LSS: at Luang Prabang] as what work has to be done is paid for in kind, one family helping another. Thus, for instance, let us suppose that a certain family wants to build a house. Having gradually got together all the necessary materials, it calls its neighbours together, and the [308] whole work is completed in a single day, the housewarming taking place the same evening, and all who have shared in the work joining in it."

Sports and games. These are widespread in Laos. 526

"Boxing has fervent disciples there, as does flat-handed wrestling. Some of the champions have remarkable professional skill, agility and cleverness which never lose their elegance.

"The Laotians play with balls and shuttlecocks, but without using either their hands or rackets. Any other part of the body, for example, from the foot to the head, may be used to return a ball or shuttlecock. Nearly all young people play this extremely graceful game, which requires great suppleness, a quick eye and perfect ease of movement, which in this game should be neither jerky nor violent (1).

(1) This game is also played in Burma, whence it was doubtless imported into Laos. The ball is made of large-mesh rattan latticework and is spherical in form with a diameter of ten to twelve centimeters. The shuttlecock is half-spherical. It is of similar construction, covered with cloth and provided with feathers along the edge. (Author's note.) [171]

"Like all Orientals, Laotians have a passion for games of chance in any form. This is the race's only real vice, and the French administration is obliged to maintain active surveillance over it. 525

"A form of chess, more complicated than the game played in Europe, is widely played, and a few players are highly reputed for their perfect grasp of the game." (Le Laos français.) 524

Celebrations and festivals. In addition to the legal public holidays, the temperament of the Laotians leads them to celebrate a great many others, for the most diverse and the most futile reasons. In principle, the Laotian makes no expenditures to ameliorate his daily fare and the pleasures of the table, as far as choice foods go, are indifferent to him. This does not prevent him, however, from organizing celebrations among relatives, friends and neighbors which anyone can attend without being specially invited. This custom of giving public festivities, or "Ngans" to use the native term, where everyone eats and drinks, has a good time, jokes and makes love, shows the friendly side of the Laotian character and the extreme sociability of the people. Those whose personal resources are too limited to cover the expenses of a "Ngan" either join with others in similar straits or go skirmishing through the city or village in search of the money, food, brandy and wax needed to accomplish their plan. 527 [476]

149: Reinach--168 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

476 463 527

Since there is not, so to speak, any class of salaried workers in Laos except in certain types of work and in transport by pirogues and rafts, the inhabitants of any given center lend one another their help in farming, harvesting, building houses or pirogues, etc. Taking turns, the one who has asked help of his neighbors will put on a celebration for them when the work is over, and will himself receive an invitation from someone else in return for help which he has given.

[792]

Laotian celebrations, in which the bonzes are never forgotten, are usually given under the verandas of the pagodas or in their dependencies, unless they take place in the host's own home or under sheds specially constructed for the purpose on one side. The latter is always the case in a "Ngan" given for those who have helped in building a house, and the same is true for a birth or marriage.

527

Celebrations generally begin towards four or five in the afternoon when the heat is beginning to wane. They last all night and sometimes resume on the following day after the guests have relaxed for a few hours. Some "Ngans" go on in this way for nearly a week and are interrupted only by the coming of the Laotian sabbath, a day of absolute rest when only the preparation of food is permitted, and no work or pleasure. By the light of kerosene lamps borrowed here and there, or of resinous torches, the girls, who are decked out in all their finery, are stationed in a line squatting down against a wall or partition. Before them there are [221] vases made of copper, silver or porcelain. They all pretend to be busy with minor tasks and may imitate, for example, the preparation of food. But in reality this is only their way of keeping some kind of countenance.

[461 805]

527 836 584

The adults and children of both sexes are massed at each end of the row of girls. Then the young men, their heads covered with scarves, come and squat down opposite the girls and with their heads still covered begin an animated conversation which soon turns into regular flirting. If there is enough space the orchestra takes up its position nearby and in the center, between the young people, are the singers, improvisers and "Kene" players. Cakes, fruit, quids of betel, cigarettes, rice brandy and various condiments are passed around.

Spectators who have not been specially invited come and stand behind the young people, as do passersby who drop in for a quid, a cigarette, a cup of brandy or a bowl of rice, or to listen to the songs and music for a little while.

342 bedrooms separated from each other by partitions or curtains, the
[178] other is the communal room. In the space between the inner and outer beam, and not limited by the longitudinal partition, is the altar on which there are always one or several buddhas. It is placed on the side of the bedrooms, on the "soung" side of the dwelling, that is on the side opposite the entrance. The dimensions of the dwellings vary between six and twenty-four meters long by four to nine meters wide.

342 The houses are most often open to the east or to the north. They may also overlook what is passing by in the streets or the paths and,
823 as the case may be, the whole length of the river. For there is a superstition which forbids building "across the current," which is considered as unconquerable and invincible, and it would be dangerous to defy it.

343 The outhouses consist of an adjoining kitchen and a granary, a few meters removed from the principal dwelling. Near this granary
[252] is found the picturesque rice pestle (khok khao) which the women work with their feet.

343 [62] All the villagers participate in building the house. When the propitious day and moment have been determined, the owner feeds
● 476 everybody the whole time the house is being built.

Tattooing

301 Every self-respecting Laotian must be tattooed. The absence of
885 tattooing is a sign of mental and moral, therefore of social, inferiority.
562 As a general rule, however, the Laotian woman is not tattooed. This custom is found only among the women of Youan, Kha or Lu.

The Laotian is tattooed chiefly on his thighs, forearms and chest.
301 The tattooing on the thighs is so close together that from a distance a tattooed man looks as if he were wearing close-fitting blue shorts. The Laotians are called "white bellies" as opposed to those who are tattooed down to the navel and are then called black bellies. The colors used for tattooing are indigo blue, red, and black made from a mixture of lampblack diluted with buffalo gall.

Those who have been tattooed are convinced that the signs they
[751] wear give them certain supernatural powers, particularly making them invulnerable to bullets and snake bites. During the events of 1941 Siamese soldiers were found wearing white cotton vests covered with cabalistic signs closely related to tattooing. These are a kind of removable tattooing intended to protect those who are wearing them.

23: Franck--270-271 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 101, 291, 301, 481 Ethnic subgroup

"I had known the Miao, or, as the French call them, the Méo, in southwestern China, though there my acquaintance had been mainly with the 'Flowery Miao' in their extravagantly colorful dress. These were 'Black Miao', a much more independent tribe, and with almost no color in their black or dark-blue garments, sometimes set off by a dull red or purplish wine-colored scarf about the waist. Both men and women, often riding on horses, were a wilder tawnier type than their flowery relatives, their sturdy independence as plainly to be seen as their bare feet; for none of them, of either sex, had ever tortured their feet with shoes. Their sunburned hair and eyes were more nearly brown than black, and both sexes wore the hair long. Most of the men had carelessly wound turbans of dark cloth, a few of them wore Chinese skullcaps and dressed their hair Chinese fashion, old Chinese fashion, more exactly, for the majority still had queues, often hanging unbraided loosely about their shoulders. Another custom among these sturdy mountaineers is the wearing about their necks of heavy silver rings of all shapes. These are evidently concerned with their tribal superstitions as well as being their idea of combining adornment with safe banking. All silver money that falls into their hands is turned into rings; men, women, even the children, all wear them, large and small, from mere twisted silver wire to veritable horse-collars, some with open ends, some fastened with silver padlocks. Sometimes there are as many as half a dozen on a single neck, even of men on their way to work in the jungle. The richest

of them clanked like perambulating pawnshops whenever they moved.

A critical observer might have wondered why they do not spend for shirting some of the silver dollars they turn into neck-rings. For the men wear a shirt or jacket that covers [271] everything except what a shirt is most expected to cover, leaving bare a foot or more of the waist, with the navel as its central point of departure. But to every race its own ideas. The girls are not prudish, yet not at all forward. For their jackets, open almost to the navel and giving frequent half-glimpses of the breasts, were plainly designed for comfort rather than coquetry, as were their plaid skirts reaching hardly to their bare knees. The women walk with a powerful yet not ungraceful swing of the hips and a saucy flirting of their short pleated skirts, of which they are perhaps quite unconscious. Some of the men wear the tatooed blue panties ending in ruffles just below the knees that are common in Laos and the Shan States, but this is evidently due to extratribal influence, just as are the flowered silk gowns a few of the well-to-do among them wear after the fashion of the Chinese."

6

389 the rockets are naturally in proportion to the size of the latter. For large rockets, they are made up of a kind of broad, triangular ladder, the top of which is leaned against a tree top.

524 Hot air balloons. In northern Laos, balloons are constructed
527 out of paper which is either made locally or imported from China. They are cylindro-spherical in shape and a little gondola of rattan cane is suspended from them by a cotton thread. In the gondola there is an oil cup filled with lard and provided with two or three cotton wicks, and these are lit in order to keep the air in the balloons hot for a given length of time.

Since they are generally launched in the evening at the time of the great holiday of the twelfth month (October-November), the absence of wind makes it possible to follow their aerial course as long as the cotton wicks continue to give off light.

[469] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER X

1. PRESENT ROUTES OF COMMUNICATION BY LAND

487 We have already dealt in Chapter II with the routes of communication by river, and so shall deal here only with land routes (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVII.

In Laos they are of three kinds:

1. The cart roads negotiable by ox-carts and wagons;
2. The mule tracks over which elephants, horses, mules and oxen can pass.
3. The paths or even mere trails which can be used only by travelers on foot.

[481] [470] As a consequence of the ingrained habit which both animals and people have of always walking in single file, the roads of Laos, like those of many other lands, are reduced to the width of a path which is marked on the ground either by the trampling animals and men, or by two deep ruts into which the wheels of carts sink. In the forest, depending on how wide and how high a path has been cleared through the undergrowth, a road may be practicable for elephants, men on horseback, oxen or only for travelers on foot.

177 gesture, and others say that to salute the Laotian way sometimes
576 seems degrading because those whom one greets do not always return the greeting in the same manner, considering it as an homage which is their due but which does not need to be reciprocated.

The Laotian is polite, one must abide by that. The Laotian is respectful of tradition, one must abide by that even more emphatica But let us not forget that from now on all Laotians must have the sense of progress and the desire to improve themselves. Politeness must be neither a unilateral token of respect nor a mark of the humiliation of the human being.

554 To salute in the French manner the subordinate nods his head
576 after having taken off his hat if he is wearing one. If someone extends his hand to him, he shakes it. The superior is the first to hold out his hand. The woman is the first to hold her hand out to a man. To be polite one should shake hands somewhat forcefully. In order to do so one should always use one's right hand and never imitate certain Laotian peasants who, under the pretense of being acquainted with French customs, extend their hand from afar to Europeans while stretching out their left arm.

In the street. --When one meets a high personage in the street it is no longer necessary, as it used to be, to sit down in order to greet him. After having taken off one's hat one nods one's head. If one is not wearing a hat one is free to greet him either by joining one's hands together or by nodding one's head politely. If one is on a bicycle or on a horse, there is no need at all to dismount. The mere gesture of nodding one's head suffices. If one has something to say to a friend whom one meets, one should stand on the side of the street or of the pavement to conduct one's conversation. When one is on a bicycle one should dismount and should not leave one leg over the frame of the bicycle while one is chatting. If one is dealing with a colleague or an intimate friend, one may hail him using expressions like: "Sabay!" (good day), or "Pai sai ma?" (where are you coming from?): that is good tradition, which must always be preserved.

481 Laotians have the habit of walking in Indian file. This habit
576 should be abandoned because it is no longer good form. It will be well to practice the European custom of walking abreast of one another except in cases when this is a hindrance or on a path. When there are two people walking together, /972/ the superior places

481 himself at the right hand side. When there are three, the superior
576 walks in the middle. The same applies to travel in a conveyance. But when the group is very numerous, it is not possible for all to walk abreast. In that case the walkers divide themselves into several groups.

576 Habits and deportment. --The different habits of a person often attract the attention of the others. Our bad habits are immediately remarked by those who surround us; thus we become the laughing-stock of the whole community. Persons who expose themselves to ridicule and to mockery are the fools who make a display of their learning; people who wear glasses without being either near-sighted or farsighted or even without having anything wrong with their eyes; those who lower their hat to the right when the sun strikes their left temple; those who speak and while doing so always keep their pipe or a cigarette in their mouths; those who, while they speak or are walking, constantly keep their hands in the pockets of their trousers; those women whose sin is raised above their knees; and those who make themselves up and dress like actresses.

The habits which I have just described belong to persons who do not take the trouble of observing the behavior of well-bred people in order to follow their example. Those who, instead of observing other, prefer to keep their own bizarre habits are nok vong or nok soun persons (eccentrics).

I cannot, here, enumerate all types of correct behavior. You may consider as good behavior that which does not arouse the attention of others in an unfavorable way. A polite person is recognized by the fact that he talks softly, that he observes the hierarchy and by the fact that he always says: "Khop chai!" (thank you) and "Kho thot!" (pardon me). The politest terms for saying thank you are "Khop khoun!" and "Khop phadet phakhoun!" Well-bred people use these phrases every time they receive something or when someone has rendered them a service. They never forget to say: "Pathan thot!" or "Kho aphaythot!" (1) every time they make a slip in

1. Other terms of politeness used to excuse oneself.

speaking, when they pass in front of, or near, a person, when they are forced to pass through a door ahead of others or when they have

6: Goudal--42-43 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians
116, 466, 482, 653, 177.46 France
636.46

"In Laos, the regulation of compulsory labour for public purposes has been the subject of a number of legislative measures, including an Order by the Senior Resident of 27 June 1933 which closely resembles that issued by the Governor-General of 5 February 1932.

Moreover, in the countries of the Union where this form of labour is still permitted, Orders are issued periodically establishing the [43] maximum weight of the load carried by porters and the rates of wages payable to such workers. Annual reports are also sent to the central administrative authorities on the value and usefulness of requisitioned labour. If the present effort made by the authorities is continued, it is practically certain that in the near future compulsory labour levies for transport work and large-scale public works will become a thing of the past."

"Higher up there were two or three villages that seemed to have inhabitants of both sexes and all ages, some of whom we now and then met making their way along the winding, perpetually climbing road. The sound of our horn drove them mad. The more fearful tried their best to climb the sheer earth or rock wall of the blasted mountain-slide; the others, as if imploring us to be merciful and realize that they would run away if they could, snatched themselves bare-headed and, placing their hats against their stomachs, tried to break their spines in kowtowing to me as they might to a long dead emperor suddenly returned to earth. A few, less obsequious, or less quick-witted, watched us pass with open mouths and stupefied expressions, bawling children scurrying in and out between their legs. Near the top of the climb there suddenly appeared horses and other pack-animals, and the panic we created among these unusual carriers in Indo-China could not easily be described. We passed not a [265] few traveling pigs along the way too, for wherever there is Chinese culture there must also be pork. Though they are credited with infinite patience, the Chinese will not drive pigs to market. But the Annamese, more afraid of work perhaps, rather than more patient, usually try to, with a cord tied to each porker's leg. This may possibly be easier than the Chinese way of bodily carrying them, two on a one-man shoulder-pole or one between two men, so that carrier and carried, bound to market in this undignified manner, seem fellows in misery. In Hanoï and the larger towns of Annam this more certain form of transportation may also now and then be seen. But the Annamese pig is ordinarily

driven, which is hard on motorists. For most of the pigs we met were too strong for the holder, and yet not quite strong enough to get away entirely and dash themselves over the mountain-side. Therefore, as they seemed bent on suicide in any form--and who could blame them?--the car always had to wait while the would-be pig-driver and several of his fellows united in one mighty tug of war that dragged the squealing animal out from under our wheels. For the most foolhardy of Annamese chauffeurs, however disdainful of the pig-driving populace, would scarcely have risked running over one of these porcine obstructions on this pathway along the bottomless pit."

23: Franck--271 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 276, 411, 482, 492 Ethnic subgroup

"The men, [EJ: of the 'Black Miao'] and sometimes the women, carry crude daggers in home-made sheaths; some had a long slender rifle, a few of them crossbows of a simple form, and most of them smoked or carried in their sashes pipes of sometimes elaborately tortured shapes. They use pack-oxen as well as little horses, but most of them, of both sexes, carry in a basket on their backs, though Chinese influence perhaps has led some to fasten two baskets at the ends of a short, stiff whole bamboo over a shoulder, thereby losing all the advantage of the long and supple shoulder-pole of China and Annam."

23: Franck--327 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 482

"Two Laosian carriers bore between them about half the load of one Chinese coolie; they made much less speed, not to mention their many complaints along the way, and at that they had to be relieved every few hours, or at least at the end of a day. For a load I had often seen one Chinese jog along under day after day of from ninety to a hundred li we had eight men; the cot or the valise that a Chinese coolie would carry at one end of his shoulder pole, with as much at the other, and any odds and ends on top, these tropical fellows put in the middle of two long bamboos between two men."

23: Franck--331 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 262, 411, 415, 482 Ethnic subgroup

"These fellows [EJ: Kha] carried a slim ration of glutinous rice in little round baskets with a telescope cover, and some uncooked rice in a cloth at the back of the waist, just as do some South American Indians. At their sides hung a kind of machete, in a sheath made of half bamboo with wooden strips across it, much the sort of thing a Boy Scout turned loose in the woods might contrive. They were as small as upper grammar-school boys, and though they looked hardier than almost any tame people, they were really even less useful as carriers than the Pwun. They prefer to carry by a band across the forehead, but as my baggage was not arranged for that method most of them were forced to endure one end of the stiff whole-bamboo that takes the place of the wiser springy split-bamboo or hickory carrying-poles of the Chinese--because one of them alone cannot carry a real load. Yet on the whole the long file of silent, rather anemic fellows made better time, thanks perhaps to their lighter loads, than those of the day before."

23: Franck--338-339 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 554, 482

" For in Laos the importance of a traveler depends upon the amount of baggage he carries, the amount of trouble he puts the country to in getting him through it, even as in many other lands. The king never travels without an enormous retinue and tons of baggage, whether he needs it or not, and if he gets separated from it he withdraws into incognito. One [339] reason the coolies of Laos cannot carry more is that each of them has a musette containing his personal belongings and food, a knife in a wooden scabbard, and increasing odds and ends, until by this time they had nearly as much baggage as we, in sharp contrast to the Chinese, who, in a land of strong and constant competition, carry almost nothing of their own. On this third afternoon two men carried nothing but the loads of the others, and they seemed to be getting weaker as their own loads grew ever bigger. If this kept up I should have to have two men for every one who was actually carrying for me and my escort. "

149: Reinach--10la G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

142
516
291
411
482

Fig. 36 /p.135/ Typical Khas of the province of Stung-Treng.

149: Reinach--1898: G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochine
Leotlam AM8

411
482
516
291

Fig. 71 /p. 291/ Typical Khas of the provinces of Stung-Treng. (Photographed at Saigon in 1898.)

149: Reinach--303 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

805
[262]

Tamlung-Si-Bate	1/1000 picul or	0.061924	kilogram
Khanane-Lao (daily ration)	1/100 picul or	0.61924	"
Khanane-Khao	1/10 picul or	6.19245	kilograms
Boung-Koite (or Mune)	2/10 picul or	12.3849	"
Bok-Noi	3/10 picul or	18.5873	"
Bok-Niai (one man's load)	4/10 picul or	24.7698	"

[482]

805
436

Coins and measurements of weight for silver

1. Sub-multiples of the Bak (or Salung) 1 Fuang=0.001876 kilogram
2. Multiples of the Bak (or Salung)

	1 Bak or 2 Fuangs=0.003753	"
Tep (Rupee)	or 3 Baks=0.011259	"
Bate (Tical)	or 4 Baks=0.015012	"
Piaster (Mane or Kib)	or 7 Baks=0.026271	"
Tael (Bia)	or 10 Baks=0.03753	"
Barre (Hang or Khane)	or 10 Bias or 100 Baks=0.3753	"

Sang or Cattie (silver pound) or 33 Bias or 330 Baks=1.23849 kilograms

805 [412] Measures of length for cloth, wood, etc.

		meters
1 Niou (finger breadth)	or 1/96 Fathom	=0.01895
1 Kam (closed fist) or 6 Nious	or 1/16 Fathom	=0.11375
1 Kheup (span) or 12 Nious	or 1/8 Fathom	=0.2275
1 Sok (cubit) or 2 Kheups	or 1/4 Fathom	=0.4550
1 Wa or 4 Soks or 8 Kheups	or 1 Fathom	=1.82

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1 Sok Luong (royal cubit)	or 1/4 Royal Fathom	=0.5
1 La Luong (1 Yard and a few centimeters)	or about 1/2 Royal Fathom	=1
1 Wa Luong	or 1 Royal Fathom	=2

439
489

A) Means of transport used

1. BY LAND. The means of transport used on land routes include men, elephants, horses, mules, oxen and oxcarts.

482 Men. A man serving as a bearer may carry his burden in three different ways, depending on the race to which he belongs and the route he must follow, whether over plains or mountains.

a) On the back. This manner of carrying burdens is used by all mountainfolk in general, Thais, Khas and others. Women and children as well as men carry burdens which are naturally in proportion to their strength. In transports, the average load for one bearer is thirty kilograms.

b) With a bamboo pole, the load being distributed at both ends. Two baskets, two packs or two cases are fastened to the extremities of a light, fairly thick bamboo pole which is about 1.5 meters long. The bearer places the middle of the pole on his shoulder and balances the load with his hand. The weight of the load thus carried will vary between 24 and 30 kilograms. This way of carrying loads is used by the [442] Burmese, the Lus, the Youns, the northern Laotians and some Khas.

c) With a bamboo pole, the load being suspended in the middle. This method of transport requires two men, one at each end of a bamboo pole about two meters long. It is difficult by this means to carry a load greater than 15 to 20 kilograms per man, or 30 to 40 kilograms per pole. This method of transport is used in the plains regions by the Laotians, Thais and other inhabitants of valleys and plateaus. A bearer can cover an average distance of 25 kilometers per day in level country, and from 15 to 20 in mountainous regions.

Carrying loads on one's head, which meets with such favor in Africa, is not a method used in Laos.

492 Elephants. Depending on its age, size and energy, an elephant can carry loads varying between 100 and 190 kilograms. But it is a delicate animal and requires great care and rather frequent rest periods.

On the other hand, it can go anywhere, even in spots where horses and even men would be halted. The elephant's step is regular on uneven terrain as well as in flat regions. The average distance covered in a day is from 18 to 25 kilometers, depending on the nature of the terrain and the temperature.

7: Thompson--377 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 484, 815, 177.81 France
636.81

"Laos has offered a rich field to scientists. Henri Mouhot was its first scientific explorer, and he was followed by others, chiefly zoologists. The Lagrée Mission continued this work, as did Dr. Harmand, who made a great collection there on his 1872-78 series of explorations. Pierre's work on the forest flora of Laos has been perhaps the greatest single scientific achievement."

7: Thompson--367 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175, 484, 654

"Not until 1889, when Pavie was given a semi-official mission and numerous collaborators to study the economic possibilities of the upper country, did France's interest there re-awaken. Despite Siamese opposition the mission was able to obtain precise and exhaustive information about the country, all the way from Yunnan to Cambodia, for the government and the newly formed French Commercial Syndicate of Upper Laos."

10: d'Orleans--262 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 167, 484, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"We accept an offer from a Thai family encamped upon a sand bank, who invite us to warm ourselves at their fire. We begin to talk and find that our hosts were forcibly deported from the plain of Dien Bien, and that, after ten years' absence, they are returning to their home. They have a pirogue and a raft made of bamboos tied together, which carries their animals, fowls and pigs; we leave them after buying some cocoa-nuts which they have brought from the south."

23: Franck--297 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 484, 493, 501

"There were two Fords in Luang Prabang, that which had come for me at Don-mo and one belonging to the king. It would of course have been bad manners for the commissaire openly to emphasize his real bosshood by sporting the better car; besides, the garage mechanics of the capital are as inexperienced as filling-stations are rare; hence the transportation that had been placed at my disposal lacked something of the regality of its rival, particularly in the matter of diligent polishing. There were also some horses, a few elephants, several victorias, even three or four rickshaws, though these, except perhaps that of the king inside the palace grounds, might as well not have been imported, for there were no men in this languid Eden both able and willing to pull them. Nearly every one walks in Luang Prabang, barefooted and silent, unless he travels by boat. For the most important conveyances are the long narrow pirogues, some of them surprisingly large, hollowed out of single tree-trunks, which ply the Mekong and the Nam-khan that flows into it above the town. On the bow of each boat there is almost sure to be a bouquet of flowers, a pretty custom, even if it is probably based on a superstition, and one in keeping with this gentle people of a land so kindly treated by nature."

23: Franck--341 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 484, 501

"Down this shot now and then a man with only a loin-cloth over his tattooed thighs, riding a little green bamboo raft, the only part of the craft above water being a raised place for a bundle of a few clothes and other belongings, and a jackfruit for possible hunger."

68: Mouhot--110 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 484, 776, 823, 579

"As for the Laotians, I have found them, although superstitious, very courageous, especially those who traverse this forest [HD: i.e. Dong Phya Phia, the forest of the 'King of Fire', between Khao-Khoc and Korat in Siam] eight or ten times a year. Some of them even venture to awake the 'King of Fire' by bringing down game or shooting at robbers: yet death , even in the best season, carries off one or two out of every ten who travel here. I think the number of those who fall victims to this terrible journey must be considerable in the rainy season, when every torrent overflows its bounds; the whole soil is soaked, the pathways nothing but bogs, and the rice-grounds covered with several feet of water. After five or six days' walking through all this, with feet in the mud, the body in a profuse perspiration, and breathing a fetid atmosphere, hot as a stove and reeking with putrid miasma, what wonder that many sink and die?"

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

accustomed to use when asking potential converts if they were willing to accept Christianity. Thus, by his linguistic industry, the Father had done no more than bring his religion into secret ridicule; while the Meos, at least, are not likely to have felt anything other than slight bewilderment at the evangelist's quite unintelligible discourse.

Laos, they said at Saigon, was happily free from those disorders that made travel so chancy in the rest of Indo-China. The only difficulty was getting to Laos. Once you got there all was well, and there was nothing to stop you going about the country as much as you liked.

This account proved to be cruelly fictitious. You left Vientiane in the same way as you came – by plane. Either that, or you waited an indefinite time for the military convoy which provisioned Xien-Khouang in the north and the posts between – islands in perilous seas. The only way to get to Luang Prabang, the second of the ancient capitals of the country, which was about 300 miles away up the Mekong – or about 250 miles across country – was by one of the occasional motor pirogues. It now remained to find out what were the possibilities of making the trip in this way.

Providing myself with a Chinese interpreter – the pirogues being, of course, Chinese owned – I went down to the river. By walking a mile or two along the thirty-feet-deep bank you came to a place where the main stream floundered over from the Siamese side, so that a few barely connected stagnant puddles lay directly beneath. In one of these the pirogue lay, cracking in the sun and seemingly abandoned. It was an ugly, shapeless craft; a small junk, with its deck-space entirely covered over with a kind of hutment, so that travellers were confined to a stinking semi-darkness for the duration of their journey. It was arranged so that air and light could be kept out by the lowering of rush-matting screens over the few apertures in the sides.

A few corpse-like figures lay strewn about the fore-shore and the

appointment /256/ as second-class vice-consul in Luang-Prabang 175*
with the duty "of seeking means of communication joining the 654
regions whose possession we claim to Annam and Tonkin." After
a stay of only three and a half months in France he returned to
Bangkok in the following March, impatient to turn his dream into
a reality, but he had reckoned without the ill will of the Siamese
authorities.

Provisory agreement of May 7, 1886. On May 7, 1886 a 648*
provisory agreement was signed sanctioning the creation of the 175*
French vice-consulate, but a clever draft of the agreement im-
plicitly recognized, as a guarantee, Siam's authority over the
Laotian principality. The Bangkok government flattered itself
that it would obtain the ratification of this act before the repre-
sentative of the Republic reached his post, and that the latter's
role would therefore be limited to defining the limits of "Siamese
Laos." The Quai d'Orsay had become more circumspect, however,
and reserved its /257/ acceptance until it received the first re-
ports of its representative (1). Thus Pavie was refused his exequatur

1. Pavie's recommendations and the dramatic events of June 1887 caused all notions of ratification to be abandoned.

and had to set forth "as a simple traveler" after waiting six months
for his passports -- just the time needed by the Chao-Meun to ful-
fill his mission in every particular. Pavie then had to take the
longest route by way of Xieng-Mai, where his progress was further
delayed for two months while the elephants necessary for his convoy
were collected.

FIRST PAVIE MISSION (1887-1889).

He did not reach Luang-Prabang until February 10, 1887, ac- 484
companied by eight Cambodians who showed themselves to be com- 648*
panions of the utmost fidelity and devotion (recruited for the most 175*
part, however, in a single day at Pnom-Penh) and by a Siamese
functionary "Whose duty it was to assist him in his relations with
the authorities of the country." Scarcely had he arrived before he
fell under the charm "of this delicate landscape which suddenly 000
takes on development through the action of a restfully gentle light."
From the right bank, where he proposed to build his dwelling, he
did not tire of admiring "the most /258/ beautiful site in Laos,

[114] of what has been observed, and because no better expression of the facts could be hoped for.

THE THAI RACE

142 "Laotians. Of all the Thais, the Laotian is the one who has
144 remained the purest, although he has a much higher proportion of Aryan blood than the other varieties, with the exception of the Lus. Fairly tall in stature, his hair cut short, elegant in his movements and more refined than all the other inhabitants of the land, he is the aristocratic type of Laos. His upbringing, his education, his religion and even his vices have a mark of distinction which make
438 them stand out above those of his neighbors. An excellent boatman,
505 and a trader rather than a farmer, he is the one who seems the master of the land, as much by virtue of his commercial aptitudes as by the
484 ease with which he ranges the country. Mounted on his long and narrow shaped pirogue, made in one piece of a tree trunk hollowed out by fire, he goes great distances to visit peoples of the most varied races [175] [Illustration] [176] [Blank page] [177] and serves as a link between all the human varieties which populate Laos. He is at home and at his ease everywhere, standing out clearly above all his countrymen in this respect.

[361] "The Laotian prefers to settle along navigable watercourses and in proximity to plains of ricefields. He is glad to have his land
[241] worked by mercenaries or by dependents of inferior race, and some-
[567] times by slaves (at least before our arrival). He himself, with quite an extensive knowledge of the needs and resources of the other inhabitants of the land, particularly likes to traffic in all kinds of merchandise. He it is who goes to buy forest products and cereal grains on the spot from the mountainfolk or from sedentary farmers, and sells them cloth, salt, tobacco, earthenware, farming implement
[439] etc. in exchange. He it is who exports the products of Laos to neighboring countries and brings back the things which Laotian industry cannot produce. His business as a commercial traveler, which he likes and which gives him a good standard of living, occupies him for only a few months of the year but brings him into contact with all the neighboring peoples and also with the Europeans and Chinese in the Siamese, Annamite and Cochinchinese trading posts. Thence arises his veneer of civilization which strikes one at first glance.

505 Large quantities of nep (rice suitable
438 for making alcohol), hides, horn, cardamom, wax, benzoin, various gums, etc. were shipped from Bassac, from Pakse, from Savannakhet, from Vien-Tiane and from other Laotian centers which had formerly traded exclusively with Bangkok by way of the Nongkay-Outaradit route on the Menam and by the Korat route on the Se-Moun.

505 "Passenger traffic, which was almost nil when the new services
484 were established, is increasing every day. The natives are beginning to become familiar with this rapid, convenient and inexpensive manner of traveling which the steamship represents and they are making more frequent use thereof, a fact which can only contribute to the broadening of relations between the various posts scattered along the great river and increase trade in their products of all kinds" (1).

(1) See, in Appendix XXX, the transport rates between France and Indo-China and between Saigon and Laos.

[487] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER XI
1. SOCIAL STATUS. SLAVERY

[565] Upon our arrival in Laos, we found a hierarchial society com-
prised of nobles, commoners and slaves. We could not do better than
567 to preserve all features of the political, social and administrative organization just as it had been. In this respect we took our inspira-
178 tion from our predecessors the Siamese, leaving our new subjects the utmost liberty and respecting their traditions, customs and mores in-
177 sofar as these were compatible with our own institutions.

Thus we were at times forced to recall certain native officials who had compromised themselves with the Siamese, or who through their exactions had made themselves unworthy of their office. Moreover, we have always acted tactfully and mildly, [488] leaving the choice of officials to election, in accordance with custom.

But above all, we took radical measures by completely suppressing the slave trade and by regularizing a very mild form of slavery for debt.

[556] There used to be slavery in Laos, as in Siam, in the form of slavery by capture, by purchase and for debt. It yielded high profits for those who engaged in the traffic, for the children and grandchildren of slaves were slaves themselves at birth, a fact which increased the fortunes of their masters to that extent.

65]
659 it possible to draw up the tax rolls for the following year.

657 A head tax is owed by every able-bodied man between the ages of eighteen and sixty, except for bonzes, pagoda servants, the native authorities, men who have served for four years in the civil guard, militiamen on active duty, invalids and liberated slaves.

There are four categories of registered persons:

1. Those of the great Thai race, who pay five francs and also owe twenty days of service in kind in Upper Laos, and ten in Lower Laos. This service may be redeemed upon payment of five francs;

2. Those of the other races such as Khas, Meos, Yaos, etc., who pay 2.50 francs and owe ten days of service in kind, redeemable for 2.50 francs;

3. The Annamites, who pay a head tax of five francs and do not owe any service in kind;

4. Foreign Orientals, who pay a head tax of 12.50 francs per year and do not owe any statute labor. If they are merchants, they pay a license fee of five francs per shop.

[500] B. Indirect taxes

The indirect taxes include:

1. Travel permits and passports;
2. Permits for weapons;
3. Administrative fines;
4. Local taxes levied on products and animals exported from Laos.

[484] For travel permits, Laotians pay a fixed fee of 0.50 franc per person and per permit. Foreign Orientals pay 1.875 francs for a permit which is good for three months.

[411] Permits for weapons occasion the collection of a tax of 1.50 francs. Annual renewal of the permit is obligatory, and costs 0.75 franc.

[421] There are as yet no taxes on land in Laos. It would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to levy such a tax in view of the present state of the country, which has no land registry, and with the system of property (1) such as it exists at present.

423 (1) "As regards public domain, we have maintained the custom which is consecrated by the local laws and usages. By virtue of these usages and these laws, the State is sole proprietor of the land and everything under it, without any exception, no matter how it is being exploited or what establishments have been made there,

10: d'Orleans--258 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 131, 342, 361, 485

"Although the region called Laos has not, properly speaking, any clearly defined frontiers, we may consider that we have crossed the eastern boundary between Dien Bien and Sop Nao. Here the country changes, and we appear to enter a more civilised world; the houses are still based upon piles, but they are better built than those of the Thaïs, and they are arranged in regular lines on each side of a street; at the entrance an empty hostelry is ready for travellers."

25: Brodrick--108-109 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 361, 485

"Vientiane strings along the left bank of the Mekong and it faces almost due south over the expanse of eastern Siam's great bulge. Vientiane is quite a large place and has grown from 1900, when it was refounded, into a town of over 10,000 inhabitants, with a Government-owned bungalow and two rather modest hotels. In the Upper Laos, as a rule, there are no hotels at all, you either camp [109] out or put up in a sala where you can get eggs, chickens, rice and fuel very cheap. In the olden days, at least, before the last war, you could get by in the Laos very comfortably for ten shillings a day."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

CHAPTER XVII

LAOS

LAOS from 10,000 feet was a grey-green frothing seen through 000
a heat-mist that was like a pane of dirty glass. As we came into Vientiane in the late afternoon the mist thickened and the pilot came down as if to look for landmarks. For the last half-hour bundles of rags kept whirling past the cabin. They were vultures — bad things to hit at two hundred miles an hour. We landed bumpily in a haze, as though bonfires had been lit round the field; and in this the sun wallowed — a diffused yellow disc. As the door of the cabin was opened, the heat rolled in.

In most journeyings there stands out the memory of days of dis- 132
couragement; when the enthusiasm flags under the strain of petty physical discomforts. The introduction to Laos was spent in such a period. This was the earthly paradise that all the French had promised; the country that was one vast Tahiti, causing all the French who had been stationed there to affect ever after a vaguely dissolute manner. To be fair to Laos I was seeing it at the worst of all possible seasons — it was late March — when the air is burdened with the presage of storms and the landscape blighted with autumnal sadness. Heat lay like an interdict on the town of Vientiane, although the sun was wrapped until late morning in a sweltering mist. At certain hours, out of the stillness, a hot wind rose suddenly and skirmished in the streets, producing a brief, false animation, flapping huge leaves in the faces of passers-by, who were half disembodied by the swirling dust, above which they floated like genii. Sometimes the grey, swollen sky squeezed out a few drops of rain.

I was lodged in the government guest-house, a European villa — 132
since it had two storeys — which at some time had gone native, 485
with earthenware dragons crawling on its roof. Hornets had

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM 1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

132 started cellular constructions in the window shutters and armies of
485 cockroaches marched across the floors. Precious, expensive water was brought in large pots and left in the subdivision of the room where, using a gourd with a hole in its bottom, you could take a shower. The main advantage of having this open pot of water in the room was that it collected a gauzy layer of mosquitoes which were content to stay there in harmless concentration, unless disturbed. The Mekong could be seen from the window, a sallow strip of water across half a mile of whitened river-bed. Perhaps this drought had something to do with the town's electrical generating system, because only occasionally – and never at night – would the filament of the electric light bulb consent to glow feebly. Whenever the hot wind sprang up, stirring the trees round the house, great dry leaves as big as dishes came tumbling down and fell with a crash in the layer already deposited on the earth. It was the death-rattle of the year, which in Laos expires in croaking senility, to be re-born with the raging storms which were about to break.

346 Vientiane is a religious centre, one of the two ancient capitals of Laos. It abounds with pagodas, many of them deserted and in ruins; and colossal Buddhas, with dusty half-obliterated smiles, sit in the tumbled brickwork.

527 Since at this time,[1] when the earth had dried up, there was no
794 work to be done anywhere, it was the season of *bouns*; the Laotian festivals. Each pagoda holds one, as a means of collecting funds. They last for three days, and although an attempt is made not to hold two *bouns* at the same time, there are so many pagodas that duplication cannot always be helped; so that every night for several weeks the sky over one or more districts of Vientiane glows with the reflection of thousands of lights, while from a distance one catches the gusty, carnival sounds of Laotian rejoicings. *Bouns* start at about eleven, and go on all night.

527 The first night after my arrival I went to a *boun*, which I found by

1 [late March. -- Analyst]

149: Reinach--124 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

792
Although less pure than in Cambodia, the bonzes' morals in Laos are generally fairly good. They are, moreover, greatly loved, highly 785 regarded and fondly cherished. When there is a celebration or a 554 great feast in a family, part of the choicest dishes is always reserved for the bonzes.

On the next to the last day of every phase of the moon, the bonzes must make public confession of their faults and be prepared, should the need arise, to undergo the punishments which the code stipulates. 792

Bonzeries are schools and at the same time workshops where all 871 trades are taught. All knowledge is concentrated in them, as our 874 knowledge was during the Middle Ages in monasteries.

Together with the pagodas, they are also spots of inviolable 485 asylum in accordance with certain rights, and hostelries where 778 travelers are lodged and fed with the produce of the bonzes' alms-seeking.

Newly ordained bonzes must stay in the pagoda at least three 792 months, and may quit their habit at the end of this period. If a bonze desires to return to the pagoda after he has reentered lay life, his reassumption of the habit gives rise to the same formalities and ceremonies as the first time. It is a new ordination.

The liturgical litanies of the Buddhist religion, which the bonzes 198 psalmodize, may not be translated into Laotian. The bonzes and 788 the [165] [Illustration] [166] [Blank page] [167] Laotian faithful, as well as the cantors and the French adepts, chant prayers whose meaning they do not understand (1).

(1) In reality the Laotian, Lu and Youn bonzes form a sort of 792 caste as the Druids used to in Gaul. More particularly, they are 779 the ministers of worship, the repositories of moral authority, of scientific traditions, of secrets and of artistic and industrial 178 methods. They transmit by word of mouth the precepts of Buddhist dogma, which were long ago explained by those who introduced the religion into the land. But the writings in "Pali" which contained these, although they can still be read mechanically by a few scholars, are no longer understood. Thence arises the necessity of handing down their meaning by word alone. Thence also, without doubt, arises the increasingly greater attenuation of the purity and force of these principles as they

346 Pagodas are always built on ground which has been perfectly leveled, is quite extensive and is surrounded by a wooden palisade or brick wall of elbow height.

[485] Within the pagoda enclosures there are bonzeries and dependent structures to serve as quarters for the bonzes, schools for their pupils and hostelries for travelers.

735 The construction and upkeep of pagodas are entirely dependent on the generous liberality of the faithful. Thus these edifices can be used
346 as a criterion for discovering both the state of prosperity of a region and the religious faith of its inhabitants.

[778] As used to be the case for our churches, Laotian pagodas and even their enclosures are, according to the customs of the land, sanctuaries which confer immunity against legal prosecution for certain crimes and misdemeanors.

[52] It is also in the enclosure and sometimes under the cloisters and verandas of the pagodas that the inhabitants gather on the legal holidays, and also private holidays, which are known as "Ngans".

844 Childbirth. Dr. Estrade describes the delivery of a woman of southern Laos as follows. The preliminaries, the operation itself and post-delivery procedure are the same, with only slight differences in detail, in northern Laos, and we may therefore quote Dr. Estrade's description as applicable to all of Laos in general.

"Childbirth never takes place in the house inhabited by the pregnant woman or her direct relatives, but always in the home of a neighbor or distant relative who gives hospitality to the patient until she is up and about again. The duration of pregnancy is counted in moons, as in all calculations of time, the moon being the essential element for the Laotian in the measurement of time and the occurrence
777 of a great many phenomena. When a woman reaches the last moon of her pregnancy she takes certain precautions all tending to delay
821 delivery until the first phase of the new moon, since births during the last phases are signs of misfortune [189] such as the death of the child,
[782] deformity, etc. These prejudices have such force that parents are careless in caring for any child born during the last phases of the moon, and in such a case all of their effort goes into prayers, offerings to the bonzes and the making of votive offerings (1)

(1) This assertion should not, however, be taken too literally or in any general sense. This is a prejudice which is kept up by the bonzes in their own self-interest, and is easy to see through. (Author's note.)

149: Reinach--147 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Polygamy. Although polygamy is not the rule in Laos, it is sanctioned by custom, and the only limits as to the number of wives one man may possess are the extent of his resources and his personal taste for becoming the husband of a greater or lesser number of wives. 595 554

Since infertile unions are regarded as a punishment of [194] heaven, and since physiological defects are beyond the comprehension of the Laotians, a husband who has no children has two courses between which he can choose:

1. To repudiate his sterile wife. He must then leave her all their property gains since their marriage and half of their common property: [586]

2. To keep this wife and take a second one.

Recourse is preferably had to the last solution in most cases. By acting thus the husband avoids making restitutions which would often be difficult for him. Moreover, his first wife often persuades him to take a second wife who will be under her orders and almost become her slave.

This is what does happen if the husband has enough money for several wives. They are all under the domination of the first, never sit at the same rank as she and may not wear jewels or clothes which are as rich and sumptuous as hers. They are, in a way, legal concubines.

These secondary wives are ranked in accordance with their date of entry into the polygamous household and are designated as the first wife, second wife, third wife, fourth wife, etc. In the house, except for the times when the husband or master keeps them with him, they are employed as servants for all the household tasks, farming, spinning cotton, weaving cloth, etc.

In the case the first wife should die, and according to the will of the husband, the second wife takes her place and the others advance one notch.

There is also another very curious type of polygamy which is encouraged by the nomadic habits of the Laotian traveler or trader and which, "utile dulci," yields him profit, security and pleasure. Some natives are, in fact, married at several different places, often quite far from one another and generally situated at the spots where periodic markets are held. 438 595 485

The advantages of this type of polygamy--from the Laotian point of view, of course--are that the husband can have an associate

438
595 in each center who will represent him, handle business in his absence,
485 collect at leisure the stock of trading merchandise needed for the next [195] trip, and also provide a home for him where he is sure to find a smiling face and a warm welcome in the course of his wanderings.

554 Among the nobility and the so-called princely families polygamy
595 is the rule and is almost obligatory for the sake of prestige, which demands a greater or lesser number of concubines depending on the husband's rank. It may sometimes happen, for various reasons, that there are two wives whose progeniture enjoy a higher rank and inherit the titles and duties of the father. It also happens, in this social milieu, that the first wife or wives will see that their husband is growing old, worn out and morose, and will seek to distract him during his last years by making him marry quite young girls for whom he is more of a father than a husband but who give him the illusion of rejuvenation and bring joy and gaiety into the house with the light of their youth (1).

(1) Thanks to the docile character of Laotian women in general, and also to the atavistic imprint of custom which makes them regard polygamy as an entirely natural status, peace and harmony are rarely troubled in such households. A hierarchy naturally arises among the various wives and concubines. Each of them remains in the place assigned to her by the date of her entry into the household and enjoys any special favors which may be conferred on her by their common husband without arousing any jealousy.

Quarrels between wives are so rare that when one does by chance occur the corporal punishments decreed by ancient custom are unhesitatingly applied. The situation is of such a nature as to preserve among Laotian wives a spirit of conciliation and amiability which is not the least of their charms.

832 Kissing. Punishment for amatory offenses. Like most of the
834 peoples of the Far East, the Laotians do not indulge in kissing, at least not in the European manner. They rub their noses against the skin of their children or wives and sniff more or less noisily.

Although the morals of the Laotians seem excessively free to us and their remarks, songs and gestures often border on what we would describe as obscenity, we should not conclude that the Laotians are deliberately lewd or cynical. They are instinctively careful to be

10: d'Orleans--365 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 487

"Having decided to leave Luang Prabang for Bangkok, I have the choice of four principal routes; through Xieng Maï and Raheng down the Meping; through Nan going directly overland from Luang Prabang to the Menam; through Paklay, spending some days in descending the Mekong, and going on then to strike the Menam at Pitchai or Ontaradit; and finally by Nong Kay on the Mekong and thence to Korat. Our state of health and also the lateness of the season leads us to adopt the shortest of these, via Paklay, which has, moreover, to my eyes, this advantage, that it is one of the most frequented of the trade routes, and will give me some idea of the navigation of the Mekong."

68: Mouhot--119-120 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 122, 175, 487

"To consult any existing maps of Indo-China for my guidance in the interior of Laos [HD: i.e. territory which is now central and northeastern Siam] would have been a folly, no traveller, at least to my knowledge, having penetrated into east Laos, or published any authentic information respecting it. To question the natives about places more than a degree distant would have been useless. My desire was to reach Louang-Prabang by land, to visit the northern tribes dependent on that state, and then again to descend the Mekong to Cambodia. Setting out from Korat, [HD: in Siam, northeast of Bangkok] I had but to proceed northwards as long as I found practicable roads and inhabited places; and if I could not go by a direct route to Louang-Prabang, I [120] should only have to diverge to the east when I judged it necessary."

115: Le Boulanger--199 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(20th Cent.) Laotians AM8

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487

Fig. 18. Bridge over the Nam-Khane at Luang-Prabang.

/Facing p. 326/

133
505

its southward course, and just before it reaches the 20th parallel it is joined by its first important left-bank tributary, the Nam-Tha.

The Nam-Tha comes from the northeast and crosses the rich plain of Muong-Luong-Nam-Tha which has been called "the jewel of all Upper Laos," for it is an extremely fertile and well watered region capable of being made into an infinite number of fine rice-fields. The Nam-Tha is navigable in all seasons as far as Sop-Ngim, and as far as Muong-Luong for small pirogues.

The Mékong continues in a sourtherly direction as far as Ban Pak-Kop (19° 45'), then suddenly bends eastward for a distance of 200 or so kilometers as far as Luang-Prabang, as if it were going to flow into the Gulf of Tonkin. In this part of its course it flows between steep hills. It can be navigated by pirogues in all seasons despite the Keng-Li rapids, which require merchandise to be unloaded during the low water period. Upstream from Luang-Prabang it resumes its north and south direction, and towards the 20th parallel its left bank is joined by three large rivers, the Nam-Hou, the Nam-Suong and the Nam-Khan.

In view of the length of its courses and the volume of its waters, the Nam-Hou may be regarded, as we have noted, as one of the branches of the Mékong. Although its mouth is narrow, it soon widens out and takes on the appearance of a great river as far as Muong-Ngoi. At this point it becomes narrow again, only to widen once more until its junction with the Nam-Ngoua. The Nam-Hou could doubtless be negotiated by steam launches during the high water period as far as Muong-Koua (about 150 kilometers from Luang-Prabang), the market where the produce of the region is concentrated. It is navigable in all seasons for pirogues as far as Muong-Houa. From Muong-Houa to Muong-Hahin and Muong-Hou the Nam-Hou can be negotiated only by extremely narrow rafts going downstream. The great rapids of Keng-Louang, situated a day's journey from Pak-Hou, require the cargoes of pirogues to be completely unloaded during middle and low water periods.

[81] By way of the Nam-Ngoua, its left-bank tributary, and its sub-tributary the Nam-Youn, which are navigable in all seasons for small pirogues, the high plateau of Muong-Theng (Dien-Bien-Phu, province of Van-Bu, Tonkin) can be reached. From that point two land routes connect with the Black River at Muong-Lai (Lai-Chau) and Van-Bu.

[487]

487 A particularity which should be noted is that these two land routes which represent some hundred odd kilometers are the only ones which the traveler can take in order to go from Hanoi to Saigon by way of Luang- [Illustration here] Prabang, that is to say by way of the Red River, the Black River, the tributaries of the Mékong and the great river itself, or in order to cover a total distance of approximately 3200 kilometers. These hundred kilometers of land roads are the only ones which merit the name, since all the rest of the journey is made on navigable waterways in steamships, pirogues and rafts.

505 133 The Nam-Suong and its tributary the Nam-Seng can be negotiated in all seasons by pirogues and rafts. Ban-Pak-Seng, at the junction of the Nam-Suong and the Nam-Seng, is the capital of one of the most prosperous cantons in the province of Luang-Prabang.

A day's journey away from Luang-Prabang the Nam-Suong is blocked by [82] a shelf called the Keng-Luang which necessitates complete portage of merchandise and even of pirogues and rafts at certain seasons.

The Nam-Khan is navigable for pirogues and rafts during the greater part of the year, starting at Muong-You which is the ford for the road from Tran-Ninh to Luang-Prabang. It flows into the Mékong in the northern part of this city, one of the suburbs of which it circles.

[361] Luang-Prabang, the capital of the kingdom of the same name, is situated at an altitude of 350 meters above sea level, at 19° 54' 20" N. latitude and 99° 45' E. longitude. From the commercial point of view it is one of the most important centers--if not the most important--in Laos. The city numbers about 10,000 inhabitants and 2000 houses. In Luang-Prabang the river is 350 to 400 meters wide. Just above and below the city it is blocked by sandbanks which leave a channel only 100 meters wide during the low water period, but which is always navigable for pirogues and rafts.

The following table shows the average length of time it takes to travel both up and down the rivers between Luang-Prabang and the posts on this reach.

389 the rockets are naturally in proportion to the size of the latter. For large rockets, they are made up of a kind of broad, triangular ladder, the top of which is leaned against a tree top.

524 527 Hot air balloons. In northern Laos, balloons are constructed out of paper which is either made locally or imported from China. They are cylindro-spherical in shape and a little gondola of rattan cane is suspended from them by a cotton thread. In the gondola there is an oil cup filled with lard and provided with two or three cotton wicks, and these are lit in order to keep the air in the balloons hot for a given length of time.

Since they are generally launched in the evening at the time of the great holiday of the twelfth month (October-November), the absence of wind makes it possible to follow their aerial course as long as the cotton wicks continue to give off light.

[469] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER X

1. PRESENT ROUTES OF COMMUNICATION BY LAND

487 We have already dealt in Chapter II with the routes of communication by river, and so shall deal here only with land routes (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVII.

In Laos they are of three kinds:

1. The cart roads negotiable by ox-carts and wagons;
2. The mule tracks over which elephants, horses, mules and oxen can pass.
3. The paths or even mere trails which can be used only by travelers on foot.

[481] [470] As a consequence of the ingrained habit which both animals and people have of always walking in single file, the roads of Laos, like those of many other lands, are reduced to the width of a path which is marked on the ground either by the trampling animals and men, or by two deep ruts into which the wheels of carts sink. In the forest, depending on how wide and how high a path has been cleared through the undergrowth, a road may be practicable for elephants, men on horseback, oxen or only for travelers on foot.

491 In a land where the population is so sparse and where the centers are often at great distances from one another, the roads have been laid out in accordance with two principal concerns: the shortest distance and the avoidance of as much maintenance work as possible. Thus in order to fulfill these two conditions they pass through swamps on the plains and in mountainous regions over the crests, the gentlest slopes and the least steep hillsides.

In principle, these roads are supposed to be repaired every year, refilled, laid out again if necessary, rid of the trees which have fallen across them and, in a word, kept up in an easily passable state. The administration makes every effort to reach this goal, and is gradually trying to modify the routes and make the bridges which are thrown over the ravines and watercourses more solid and permanent. But time is needed to change the age-old habits of the people and to make them follow a master plan of methodically conceived and executed projects.

487 491 175 In the extreme north in the territory of Muong-Hou-Neua, there are mountain mule tracks which continue on into Yunnan. They were once paved by the Chinese using paving stones taken from the surrounding rocks, and then formed very broad, low steps through the mountains. Traces can still be seen of these roads which have today fallen into disrepair, and there remain, particularly at crossings over watercourses, straight or slanting stone bridges which have fallen into ruins. At certain points there are also stone drinking troughs which sometimes bear the remains of sculptures.

487 In sum, there are scarcely any roads except paths in Laos, and the latter are sufficient for communication by land. Moreover, wide roads have been experimented with in various provinces [471] over sections of varying length. On these wide roads, often even paved, which were built with high crowns and provided with gutters along the sides, it was found that the natives and their animals stubbornly continued to trace a tiny, whimsically twisting path outside of which the grass kept on growing until it covered the road once more.

Here, for each province, is a list of the main roads with some indication of the category to which they belong. We shall not deal, to be sure, with the many paths which are frequented only by travelers on foot and are designed to place one village in communication with another.

487
491

Province of Muong-Hou. The trade routes which cross the Muong-Hou are:

1. The road from Luang-Prabang to S'semao by way of Muong-Sai, Muong-Hou-Tai, Muong-Hou-Neua, with branches at Muong-Yo to Muong-La and at Muong-Hou-Tai to Man-La;

2. The road from Luang-Prabang to Dien-Bien-Phu by way of the valley of the Nam-Hou as far as Muong-Houne. This route has been abandoned for the river route along the Nam-Hou and the Nam-Ngoua;

3. The road from Talan to Man-La merely crosses the territory of Kien-Seo in order to return to Yunnan via Muong-Le;

4. The most important road is that which connects the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na with the Black River.

Starting at I-Hou, it passes through Man-La, Muong-Hou-Neua, Pou-Fang, and Muong-Nhie and ends at Lai-Chau.

The trip from I-Hou to Lai-Chau takes twenty days. This route is followed by the caravans of Deo-Van-Tri, the Quan-Dao of Lai-Chau, which transport tea from the Pahn-Na to Tonkin (30 tons in 1897);

5. From I-Hou to Man-Hao (Red River) by way of Yunnan (thirty days).

This road has the advantage of being better built and better kept up. There are stone bridges over the watercourses, and it passes through important centers in Yunnan such as I-Pang, S'semao, Pou-Eurl and Talan.

All of these roads belong to the second category. [472]

Province of Vien-Poukha. 1. From Luang-Prabang to Vien-Poukha by way of Muong-Sai, Sop-Ngim and Muong-Luong-Nam-Tha (16 days).

2. From Vien-Poukha to Xieng-Khong by way of Muong-Mugne (117 kilometers, 5 days);

3. From Vien-Poukha to Muong-Sing (80 kilometers, 3 days);

4. From Muong-Sing to Xieng-Kok (72 kilometers, 3 days).

These roads belong to the second category.

Provinces of Luang-Prabang and Tran-Ninh. In these provinces the main roads of communication are as follows:

487
491

1. From Luang-Prabang to Bangkok by way of Pitchai.

Luang-Prabang to Pak-Lay (Mekong).....	4 days
Pak-Lay to Pitchai (Siam) by land.....	10 "
Pitchai to Bangkok (Menam).....	11 "
Total	25 days.
Length of return voyage.....	50 "
Entire trip, going and return.....	75 days.

2. From Luang-Prabang to Vien-Tiane by way of Muong-Khassy, Som-Di and Tourakome, in 11 to 12 days.

[32] This road belongs to the second category, but only during the dry season. Certain parts are flooded in the plains or impassable in the mountains during the rainy season.

3. From Luang-Prabang to Vinh (Annam) by way of Tran-Ninh.

By land to Tha-Do, going either through Ban-Pak-Sa and Xieng-Det, or through Sop-Vi and Muong-You to reach Xieng-Khouang (Tran-Ninh); from Tha-Do to Vinh via the Song-Mo and the Song-Ca. Length of trip 20 days, and of return trip, that is to say from Vinh to Luang-Prabang, 30 days. A minimum of 50 days for the round trip (1). A second category road.

(1) This route is extremely picturesque, and the Superior Resident describes it as follows:

"For tourists I should recommend all of this route from Luang-Prabang to Xieng-Khouang by way of Muong-You, especially the part between Sop-Tia and Ban-Namat, a part of which our present maps do not give any idea. Between these two points one crosses the Pou-Hong, a very high peak. The road follows the crest almost continually and passes over the highest point. When one reaches the last peaks, the view stretches out in all directions as far as the eye can see and one can then gain some idea of Laos and particularly of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang. Everywhere, on all sides, there is nothing but a chaos of mountains pressed against one another, and the location of the valleys is indicated only by a few bands of mist, especially at the beginning of the rainy season. Above these mountains rise isolated needles of calcareous rock which have extremely bizarre shapes.

"On the plateau from Ban-Sot to Xieng-Khouang, one would really think that one was on one of the plateaus of the Juras or of

487
491

Switzerland. Everywhere pine forests cover the summits of small, low and very gently sloping hills, covered with a carpet of verdure which rests the eyes pleasantly." (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900, loc. cit.) [Translator's note. Probably refers to December 1900, "Rapport du Résident supérieur sur le Tran-Ninh."]

[473] On the territory of Tran-Ninh, a road is now being put into a suitable state of repair which will avoid Xieng-Khouang and lead directly from the frontier of Luang-Prabang to that of Annam. This road, which will be able to be made into a cart road, will shorten the trip by two days.

During the high water period the length of the trip from Muong-You to Luang-Prabang can be shortened by four days by going down the Nam-Khan.

4. From Luang-Prabang to Muong-Son (Hua-Pahn).

a. Via the Mekong and the Nam-Hou as far as Muong-Ngoi, and by land from Muong-Ngoi to Muong-Son via Sop-Sat (13 to 15 days).

b. By land, passing through Ban-Sop-Vi and Muong-Sakok (11 days).

This road has a few bad parts which necessitate its classification in the third category.

5. From Luang-Prabang to Hanoi, by way of Lai-Chau.

a. The Mekong, the Nam-Hou and the Nam-Ngoua to Dien-Bien-Phu.

b. From Dien-Bien-Phu to Lai-Chau, by land.

c. From Lai-Chau to Hanoi by way of Van-Bu and Cho-Bo (Black River).

The total trip takes 18 to 30 days, depending on the height of the waters. The land route is in fairly good condition; second category.

6. From Luang-Prabang to Muong-Hou.

Via the Mekong and the Nam-Hou to Muong-Ha, and from Muong-Ha to Muong-Hou by land: 16 to 26 days.

Second category roads.

7. From Luang-Prabang to Muong-Nan (Siam).

[474]a. By land via Pak-Lung and Muong-Hou-Sa (13 days).

b. Via the Mekong to Ban-Tha-Dua, and from Tha-Dua to Nan by land via Nape (9 days).

8. From Pak-Lay to Tahit (Outaradit, Siam) by way of the Pou-Dou (8 to 23 days, depending on the method of transportation

487
491

used).

9. From Pak-Lay to Muong-Pit-Sanoulak (Siam) by way of Ken-Tao and Dane-Sai (10 days).

Second category roads (1).

(1) Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine. "Le royaume de Luang-Prabang, d'après une monographie de M. le Commissaire du Gouvernement Grand."

Province of the Hua-Pahn. From Muong-Son to Muong-Het, by land (5 to 6 days).

From Muong-Son to Xieng-Khouang, by land (14 to 15 days).

Second category roads, but which are not practicable over their whole course during the rainy season, especially from Muong-Son to Xieng-Khouang.

Province of Vien-Tiane. 1. From Vien-Tiane to Tran-Ninh.

a. By way of Muong-Poun.

b. Via the Nam-Sane (Tha-Tom).

2. From Vien-Tiane to Cammon by way of Borikane.

3. Vien-Tiane is connected to Burma by the Muong-Leui, Outaradit and Muong-Pray road, and with Siam by Nong-Khay and Korat.

The road to Burma which, from Muong-Pray, continues towards Xieng-Mai-Moulmein, is attracted towards the one from Luang-Prabang on the left bank of the Mekong, in the village of Pong-Ngeum.

These roads belong to the second category. Some parts which are not yet in good condition are to be improved in the imminent future. The road from Tha-Tom to Xieng-Khouang, in particular, was the object of a large repair project in 1900. It is now negotiable by horseback riders and beasts of burden.

487
491

[475] Province of Cammon. 1. From Pak-Hin-Boun to Vinh (Annam).

From Pak-Hin-Boun to Keng-Kiet (by water).....	3	days
From Keng-Kiet to Cammon.....	2-1/2	"
From Cammon to Ha-Trai via Nape and the ridge of Tram-Mua.....	1-1/2	"
From Ha-Trai to Vinh (by water).....	2	"
Total.....	9	days

This road belongs to the second category, and is traveled by elephants used for transporting goods. It is possible to travel from Pak-Hin-Boun to Keng-Kiet by a rather poor path for travelers on foot.

2. From Lakhone to Vinh by way of Qui-Hop (12-1/2 days, including 10 by land).

This road joins the above at Cho-Pho. It can only be classed in the third category, and is a path for travelers on foot.

3. From Na-Huong to Mahasay (by land, 4 days).

4. From Tha-Khek to Mahasay (by land, 2-1/2 days).

5. From Pak-Hin-Boun to Vien-Tiane and Savannakhet along the Mekong (1).

(1) A road for carts some twenty kilometers long is planned between Pak-Hin-Boun and Ban-Ta-Koua to facilitate the working of tin mines.

These roads, although poor in certain parts, may be classified in the second category.

Province of Song-Khone. 1. From Savannakhet to Ban-Mouang by way of Song-Khone, Ban-Dan-Na-Lao, Kham-Thong-Niai and Pak-Sedone (10 days).

2. From Savannakhet to Quang-Tri (Annam) by way of Song-Khone, Muong-Phine and Ai-Lao (15 to 20 days).

These routes belong to the second category. During the dry season, certain parts of their course may be classified in the first category.

149: Reinach--362 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

487
491

Province of Ban-Mouang. 1. Road along the Mekong, connecting Ban-Mouang with Khong (4 days).

[476] 2. Road from Bassac to Attopeu. It starts at Fia-Fay on the Mekong, and follows the Attopeu telegraph line (5 days).

3. Road connecting the plateau of the Bolovens with the Sedone. It starts at [Illustration here] Ban-Da-Sia and ends at Champi. This is the road followed by oxen and elephants carrying cardamom.

All these roads are in the second category. The one along the Mekong may even be said to be in the first category during the dry season, at certain points of its route.

Province of Khong. 1. On the island of Khong, two cart roads connect the capital with the southern point and the west coast. Both belong to the first category.

2. Road along the left bank of the Mekong, from Khong to Stung-Treng (3 days). Same remark as for the other roads which follow the bank of the river.

3. Road from Khong to Siempang and Ban-Takalane (Se-Sane): 4 days.

4. Road from Ban-Kok-Padek (left bank of the Mekong, below Moulapoumok on the right bank) to Ban-Takalane, joining the above just before Siempang.

These roads belong in the second category.

[477] Province of Stung-Treng. 1. Road from Takalane to Ban-Mouang by way of Siempang and Kampo.

2. Road from Siempang to Cambodia via the ford of Pa-La-Su (Se-Sane).

3. Road from Stung-Treng to Kratie by way of Sreki.

4. Road from Stung-Treng to Ban-Done and Darlac, by way of Lompat or by way of Sreki.

The roads to Cambodia are the tracks followed by the convoys of oxen coming from the region of Nam-Nao, Song-Khone and Wapy.

Province of Attopeu. Road from Attopeu to Qui-Nhon by way of Kon-Toum and Ang-ke (1) (about 15 days on horseback or

(1) By now (1898-1899) there is a very good road for travelers on foot and horseback, which connects the Annamitic divide with the Mekong. At several points the road is built with ditches and is suitable for carts. The parts which are still somewhat difficult--

487
491

the steep slopes of certain peaks, the brinks of torrents, etc.--are being subjected to new routings or improvement projects which will soon be carried out. (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, loc. cit.) [Translator's note. This seems to be a reference to the December 1899 number, "Notes du Commandant supérieur du Bas Laos sur la région est du Bas Laos."]

elephant back).

Province of Saravane. 1. Road from Ban-Mouang to Saravane by way of Kham-Thong-Niai, along the Sedone (4 to 5 days). This road is a first category road over a distance of five kilometers from Keng-Kok to Keng-Pho. The falls of the Sedone can thus be avoided by a cart road at all seasons of the year. Over the rest of its route the road belongs to the second category.

2. Road from Saravane to Attopeu by way of Thateng, the plateau of the Bolovens, Nong-Bok and the Se-Pien (4 to 5 days. Second category).

3. Road from Saravane to Ai-Lao by way of Muong-Nong (a poor path).

Province of Darlac. 1. Road from Ban-Me-Thuot or Darlac to Ninh-Hoa (Annam). A six or seven day trip. This is a cart track on the Laotian side of the divide, that is to say as far as Ai-Bloum. At Me-Sao a branch forks toward Cong-Son (Annam). This is a portion of the route selected for the Saigon-Qui-Nhon railway.

[478] 2. Cart road from Ban-Done to Kratie, either by way of the Pou-Kha (10 to 12 days), or by going around the mountain to the north and connecting with the road from Stung-Treng to Kratie at Sreki.

2. PROJECTED LAND ROUTES OF COMMUNICATION

185
491
653

Three large highways are projected, namely:

1. From Savannakhet to Ai-Lao and Hué; [Illustration here]
2. From Pak-Hin-Boun to Vinh by way of Ha-Trai;
3. From Luang-Prabang to Vien-Tiane.

These roads will be negotiable by carts and will be provided with iron and wooden bridges. Engineering officers have been placed at the disposition of the Superior Resident of Laos to make a study of these various routes.

7: Thompson--375 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 489, 503, 653

"The Mekong was the only means of communication with Cochin-Chinese seaports. The subsidy accorded to the Compagnie des Messagéries Fluviales to improve its navigation of the Mekong was too high for the colony's budget, yet inadequate for the work it had to do. Hundreds of thousands of francs were lost in acquiring a knowledge of these problems and in training a personnel. Mekong boats must reckon on three periods of navigation. In low water there are no less than eight trans-shipments between Pnom-Penh and Luang-Prabang, by rail and by road, both of which were expensive and difficult to build because of the shifting surface of the land. Mid-season is the best for navigation, since high water means contending with a terrible current. Laos is desperately in need of railroads, and it has fewer than any other country in the Union. Every Governor, from Doumer on, has had railroad projects, but they have always been laid aside for other works. The recent realization of Laos's mineral wealth through journalistic propaganda has been counteracted by the depression; yet once again there is promise to fill this crying need, notably Robin's impetus to road-building in 1935-6. Unless this is soon done, Laotian commerce will escape permanently to Bangkok. Contraband can never be controlled along the great watery frontier, and Siam's comparatively duty-free imports and cheap railroad and boat transportation will always have the advantage."

10: d'Orleans--358-360 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 439, 489, 177.43

"Though the natural products of Luang Prabang are so varied, the cost of transport over so long a distance from the coast would reduce the profits very considerably, though I think that the complaints of the Chinese traders as to business being carried on at a loss must be an exaggeration, for if so why do they carry it on?

In any event, it is difficult to form a précise estimate of the commerce of the principality. According to the Siamese the exports from the Laos region, which includes the country between Strung Treng and Xiangsen in one direction, and Xieng Mai and Attopen in the other, amount to about £900,000, and if this estimate is correct the proportion of Luang Prabang must be very small. Macey gives the exports of benzoin at £40,000, but if this was so at one time the total must have decreased very much.

But trifling as the commercial movement of Luang Prabang may be, it is of interest to us, because of the situation of the town upon the Mekong, nearly in the centre of the Laos and in the vicinity of Tonkin, to see what share we may hope to have in it and what profit can be derived from it. Opinions vary very much upon the subject, and Mr. Archer, the British Consul, whose statistical reports as to the trade of this region are well worth careful study, is of opinion that there is little to fear from French competition, the cost of transport being too great, and with regard to steam navigation, he does not deem it possible upon the Mekong, on account of the rapids upon the other [359] hand. I have read several articles in the Bangkok Times to the effect that the French have great facilities for getting into their hands all trade upon the Mekong, and that to guard against this

Siam ought to push on the construction of railways with all speed. Then, again, Mr. Macey and Captain Devrez assert that the Tonkin routes are much shorter, easier, and less expensive than those leading to Bangkok.

Whatever the truth may be, of one thing I can speak positively, and that is that the greater part of the commercial current of Luang Prabang either comes from or goes to Bangkok. This current follows one of two routes. It either proceeds from Luang Prabang to Paklay by the Mekong; Paklay to Pitchai or Ontaradit by land and from thence to Bangkok down the Menam (this being the way by which we returned), a voyage of twenty-six days going down and fifty-two coming up. The second route is from Luang Prabang to Nong Kay by the Mekong; from Nong Kay to Korat and from Korat to Bangkok, this being rather the longer of the two. These routes, though shorter than that which brings Luang Prabang and Tonquin within a month of each other, have the advantage of being safer both by water and by land, there being no rapids on the Menam, while the roads are wide enough for elephants to travel easily along them and might easily have rails laid down. Owing to the facility of the communications, the cost of transport between Luang Prabang and Bangkok is if not cheaper, at all events not dearer than those via the Black River, and as I have been over the two routes myself I am in a [360] position to make the comparison. M. Massie, moreover, has arrived at the same conclusion."

25: Brodrick--85 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 131, 489, 177.48 France
636.48

"The Laos was, and indeed still is, a country happy in its isolation. It is land quite difficult of access. There are no railways. There is only one all-weather road crossing the country and that in the Lower Laos. Moreover, in my day, at least, that is to say on the very eve of the last World War, you did not just start off for the Laos as you would for any other part of Indo-China, discreet inquiries were made. The French liked to keep their Laos uncontaminated by foreigners.(1)

1. The total area of the Laos is just under 90,000 square miles and the population, at the last census, was just over one million. There is no all-weather road right up the Mekong Valley and the highways from the east cannot be used during the rains except for that across the Lower Laos from Dong-Ha to Kabao. Much of the Laos is, therefore, except for air-communication, cut off from the outer world for at least five months out of every year."

68: Mouhot--125 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 231, 489, 492

"In all this mountainous region [HD: i.e. from Korat in Siam north to Luang Prabang] elephants are the only means of transport. Every village possesses some, several as many as fifty or a hundred. Without this intelligent animal no communication would be possible during seven months of the year, while, with his assistance, there is scarcely a place to which you cannot penetrate."

68: Mouhot--126-129 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 231, 489, 492

"We must not, however, exaggerate his merits. Probably the saddles used by the Laotians are capable of great improvement; but I must admit that the load of three small oxen, that is to say, about 250 or 300 pounds, is all that I ever saw the largest elephants carry easily, and 18 miles is the longest distance they can accomplish with an ordinary load. Ten or twelve miles are the usual day's work. With four, five, or sometimes seven elephants, I travelled over all the mountain country from the borders of Laos to Louang-Prabang, a distance of nearly 500 miles.

All this eastern portion, with the exception of a few villages filled with 'black-bellied savages'--so called from the manner in which they tattoo themselves--is inhabited by the same race, the 'white-bellied Laotians,' who call themselves Laos, and are known by this name to all the Siamese, Chinese, and surrounding nations. [127-128 contain illustration] [129]

The black-bellied or western Laotians are called by their eastern brethren by the same name which, in Siam and Cambodia, is bestowed on the Annamites, Zuène, Lao-Zuène. The only thing that distinguishes them is, that they tattoo the under part of the body, principally the thighs, and frequently wear the hair long and knotted on the top of their heads. Their language is nearly the same, and differs little from the Siamese and Eastern Laos, except in the pronunciation, and in certain expressions no longer in use among the former."

68: Mouhot--135-136 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 361, 489, 133

"On the 24th of June [HD: 1861] I arrived at Paklaie, lat. 19° 16'58", the first small town on my northward route. It is situated on the Mekon, and is a charming place; the inhabitants seem well off; the houses elegant and spacious,--larger, indeed, than I have seen before in this country; and everything betokens a degree of prosperity which I have also remarked wherever I have stopped since. The Mekon at this place is much larger than the Menam at Bangkok, and forces its way between the lofty mountains with a noise resembling the roaring of the sea and the impetuosity of a torrent, seeming scarcely able to keep within its bed. There are many rapids between Paklaie and Louang Prabang, which is ten or fifteen days' painful travelling.

I was tired of my long journey on elephants, and was [136] anxious to hire a boat here, but the chief and some of the inhabitants, fearing that I might meet with some accident, advised me to continue my route by land. I therefore proceeded as far as Thadua, ninety miles farther north, and during eight days passed through much the same style of country as before, changing one valley for another, and crossing mountains which became more and more elevated, and being more than ever annoyed by the leeches. We were, however, no longer compelled to sleep in the jungle, for every evening we reached some hamlet or village, where we found shelter either in a pagoda or caravanserai."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

we sneaked past we could see a bonfire with a group silhouetted round it. Our passing appeared to go quite unnoticed.

We reached Muong Kassy about two hours later and slept in a large, barn-like Laotian building of thatch and bamboo, which served as the officers' mess. Insects had been at the bamboo and the slightest movement filled the air with a powder which had the effect of snuff. The building swayed slightly with each step, but no more when there were twenty occupants, as there were next day, than when there were only two.

Muong Kassy was the headquarters of a company of Engineers whose job was the upkeep of the bridges. They were uncomfortably isolated here on top of a small hill rising only partially free of the forests, with magnificent views in all directions, which nobody noticed any longer. There was no doctor, so that casualties of any kind might have to wait several weeks for a convoy going in any direction. In the rainy season, when roads and bridges disappeared, the garrison was confined to barracks for five or six months. Outside the stockades the usual straggling collection of Laotian and Chinese huts had formed, with saloons selling 'shoum', a fire-water made from maize. Everything was brought by convoy and was in short supply, except the shoum which was a local speciality. The store-keepers also had a stock of what was described in English on the label as 'fruit tonic'. The fruit tonic was made in Siam and was probably an industrial by-product; but the garrison had found out that shoum plus fruit tonic was more effective than either separately, and that stunned by a good stiff early morning dose of this, the day's boredoms could be better supported. A shoum-and-fruit-tonic relaxed the nerves too. It was after we had been introduced to this Muong Kassy custom that Dupont changed his plans, and quite forgetting about his pregnant wife, and the bicycle she might succeed in putting together, he said we would stay the day, and leave next morning.

Taking a guide from the camp, we went for a dip in the river.

Indochina: WHO WOMAN

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

489 It was fitting that at Luang Prabang the impetus of travel should
509 have spent itself. Not even convoys ever came as far as this. Groups of unfortunate men occasionally set off on foot and walked for as long as three weeks through jungle trails to relieve isolated posts. Other arrivals and departures were by a weekly D.C.3 plying between Luang Prabang and Vientiane. It was booked up well ahead.

505 Down at the riverside the story was much the same as at Vientiane. There were pirogues which supposedly made regular journeys, but no one was prepared to commit himself to positive information about them. One authority went so far as to say that it was out of the question to hope to travel north by pirogue because the river was too low at this time of the year. I had just thanked him when the engine of what looked like a totally abandoned hulk, lying in an oily pool not far away, suddenly burst into wheezy activity. One of the crew of two said that they would be leaving in half an hour. Bound for where? – Vientiane? No . . . Xieng
701 Khong – for the unnavigable north, of course. All the space had been reserved for a body of ex-pirates who had changed sides and had now, it was said, demanded to be sent back to fight their former allies.

While I was slowly piecing together this jig-saw of information in pidgin-French, the brand-new patriots arrived for embarkation; a most apathetic looking body of men. In their ill-fitting uniforms they were standardized; deprived of individuality by a common factor of misery, an ingrained habit of expressionless stoicism. Silently they filed up the gang-plank and filled the dim interior of the pirogue. It was difficult to believe that the fire of conviction burned in any of these breasts, and I felt sorry for the French N.C.O. who was being sent back in charge.

000 But Monsieur Leveau said that there would also be a pirogue going south one day, and to save me from being victimized by Chinese cat-and-mouse tactics he sent for the owner and asked him when the boat would leave. With gentle satisfaction the Chinese

facing: COCHIN-CHINA: THE SEARCH FOR SMALL FISH

489 [432] 3. The excessive distance to be traversed before any port is reached, and the consequent impossibility of effecting transactions on time in natural products with a variable market price, such as cardamom, among others.

4. Excessive customs exit duties and local taxes.

The above is an impartial exposé of the situation of the commercial trading post of Vien-Tiane, according to the very statements of the men who founded it. Yet in spite of everything these young traders have not lost courage. They hope for a better future which can perhaps be anticipated the day when some of the innovations of which we shall speak in what follows have become an accomplished fact (1).

(1) See same chapter, Art. 7 and Chapter X, Art. 4.

4. EXPORTS

439 Although the various products which constitute the exportable merchandise of Laos have already been examined, we present them here once again with certain complementary information on their value, importance, origin and destination. The figures contained in the following tables are to be regarded as a minimum (2) for exports

(2) In fact, many products are exported from Laos without their exit being officially recognized.

in 1898 and 1899.

I LOWER LAOS (3)

(3) We refer here only to exports from Lower Laos, since there is not sufficient information to be able to establish similar tables for Upper Laos. Further on, however, we shall give the total exports from Upper Laos for 1898.

A) Merchandise

		1898	1899
Total exports	Weight	1,281T	498,415T
	Value	442,629F	405,942F

439 These imports chiefly involve the following goods: spun cotton, spun silk, native cotton goods, printed sampots, absinthe, salt, copper pots, etc.

One should also remember the imports by way of the River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales] which are destined for the administration or for Europeans, and which amount to 9,233 cases of goods weighing about 300 tons.

In addition to the foregoing, salt is imported into southern Laos by the Cochinchina excise office at three depots, Stung-Treng, Khong and Ban-Mouang. Between October 1898 and February 1899, 120 tons of salt were sold to the inhabitants at a price lower than that which they ordinarily paid.

If we compare the figure for imports with that for exports, we note that in 1899 imports amounted to 92,017 francs as against exports of 847,662 francs, or a figure nearly ten times greater.

This discrepancy is even greater than is indicated, for the total value of exports is reckoned on the average purchase price in the country of origin, and should surely be doubled to obtain the average sale price on the nearby markets of Siam, Cambodia and Cochinchina. This difference between imports and exports results from the fact that the greater part of the imported merchandise does not enter Laos by [441] French routes, but comes in through the back door by way of Bassac, Oubone, Lakhone, Nong-Khay, Paklay, Xieng-Khong, Luang-Prabang, etc.

To sum up, we cannot with any certainty give any figure for overall trade in all of Laos. If, however, we take as a basis the averages obtained in various provinces, it may be presumed that this trade represents somewhat more than two million francs, to wit:

Exports.....1,244,989 francs (1)

(1) A figure obtained by adding the total exports of Upper and Lower Laos for 1898, according to the above tables.

Imports (3/4 of exports).... 933,741 francs
2,178,730 francs

439 489 6. MEANS OF TRANSPORT USED. COMPARISON BETWEEN TRANSPORT COSTS ON VARIOUS TRADE ROUTES FROM LAOS TO THE SEA.

149: Reinach--331 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

439
489

A) Means of transport used

1. BY LAND. The means of transport used on land routes include men, elephants, horses, mules, oxen and oxcarts.

482 Men. A man serving as a bearer may carry his burden in three different ways, depending on the race to which he belongs and the route he must follow, whether over plains or mountains.

a) On the back. This manner of carrying burdens is used by all mountainfolk in general, Thais, Khas and others. Women and children as well as men carry burdens which are naturally in proportion to their strength. In transports, the average load for one bearer is thirty kilograms.

b) With a bamboo pole, the load being distributed at both ends. Two baskets, two packs or two cases are fastened to the extremities of a light, fairly thick bamboo pole which is about 1.5 meters long. The bearer places the middle of the pole on his shoulder and balances the load with his hand. The weight of the load thus carried will vary between 24 and 30 kilograms. This way of carrying loads is used by the [442] Burmese, the Lus, the Youns, the northern Laotians and some Khas.

c) With a bamboo pole, the load being suspended in the middle. This method of transport requires two men, one at each end of a bamboo pole about two meters long. It is difficult by this means to carry a load greater than 15 to 20 kilograms per man, or 30 to 40 kilograms per pole. This method of transport is used in the plains regions by the Laotians, Thais and other inhabitants of valleys and plateaus. A bearer can cover an average distance of 25 kilometers per day in level country, and from 15 to 20 in mountainous regions.

Carrying loads on one's head, which meets with such favor in Africa, is not a method used in Laos.

492 Elephants. Depending on its age, size and energy, an elephant can carry loads varying between 100 and 190 kilograms. But it is a delicate animal and requires great care and rather frequent rest periods.

On the other hand, it can go anywhere, even in spots where horses and even men would be halted. The elephant's step is regular on uneven terrain as well as in flat regions. The average distance covered in a day is from 18 to 25 kilometers, depending on the nature of the terrain and the temperature.

489
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[447] Current transport costs are generally as follows:

Land Routes	francs
By human bearer, per hundred kilograms and per day:	1.90 to 2
By elephant, " " " " " "	1.60 to 1.80
By pack-horse, " " " " " "	1.90 to 2
By pack-ox, " " " " " "	0.70 to 0.80

By referring to what has been said above, we may deduce, for each of these methods of transport, the following average cost per ton or per kilometer:

By human bearer:	0.76 to 0.80 francs
By elephant:	1.07 to 1.20 "
By pack-horse:	0.76 to 0.80 "
By pack-ox:	0.70 to 0.80 "

Boatmen. Boatmen may be hired by the day or by contract for a given journey. The current prices are 0.375 franc per man per day without rice, and 0.30 franc with food.

Coolie bearers. Coolie bearers are generally paid 0.25 franc per man and per day without food, or 0.20 franc with rice.

Chief coolies and chief pirogue boatmen. The chief coolies and chief pirogue boatmen, pilots, etc. are always paid higher than their men. The amount of increase will vary, depending on conditions, by fifty to a hundred percent.

Pirogue rental. Renting a pirogue usually costs the same price per day as hiring a boatman. Thus the cost of renting a pirogue and hiring four boatmen is reckoned on the basis of five units.

B) Comparative transport costs on various trade routes from Laos to the sea.

We have thought that it might be of interest to sum up, in the comparative table given below, the courses and costs per ton and per kilometer of transports on ten of the principal trade routes of Laos.

149: Reinach--338 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

489
435
439

[448] COMPARATIVE TABLE OF TRANSPORT COSTS ON VARIOUS TRADE ROUTES FROM LAOS TO COCHINCHINA, ANNAM, TONKIN AND SIAM (AND VICE VERSA)

Courses	Means of transport	Distance in kilometers	Number of days		Price in francs		Observations
			upstream	downstream	Total per metric ton of 1000 kilograms	Per ton and per kilometer (ton-kilometer)	
I. Luang-Prabang to Saigon	By River Merchant Fleet. Steamships and pirogues	2300	50-60	30-35	162.50	0.0705	The average rate for cotton goods is taken as a basis.
II. Nong-Khay to Saigon	Same	1840	27-35	18-22	122.25	0.0664	Same.
III. Nong-Khay to Bangkok by way of Korat	Oxcarts	603	34 to 36		260 to 300	0.414 to 0.497	On this route prices vary from one year to the next, depending on the abundance of draft oxen, which are often decimated by epizootic disease.

149: Reinach--339 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina Laotians AM8

189
435
439

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF TRANSPORT COSTS ON VARIOUS TRADE ROUTES FROM LAOS TO COCHINCHINA, ANNAM, TONKIN AND SIAM (AND VICE VERSA) [continued]

III. (continued)							In case of a rise, the prices given here should be increased by about 15 percent.
IV. Luang-Prabang to Nong-Khay	1. By River Merchant Fleet. Pirogues and rafts.	460	15 - 25	10 - 12	40	0.0861	The average rate for cotton goods is taken as a basis. Usual prices, whatever the merchandise.
	2. By free rafts. Upstream by pirogue.		18 - 25	9 -12	250	0.543	
V. Nong-Khay to Pak-Hin-Boun	1. By River Merchant Fleet. Steamships.	335	2	1-1/2	22.50	0.0673	Average rate for cotton goods taken as basis. Usual prices, for all merchandise.
	2. By rafts and free pirogues.		8-14	4-5	100	0.298	

149: Reinach--340 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

489
435
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COMPARATIVE TABLE OF TRANSPORT COSTS ON VARIOUS TRADE ROUTES FROM LAOS TO COCHINCHINA, ANNAM, TONKIN AND SIAM (AND VICE VERSA) [continued]

VI. Pak-Hin-Boun to Haiphong via Ben-Thuy (Annam	By pirogue, elephant, sampan and steamships belonging to the Correspondances fluviales du Tonkin.	570	15-17	15-16	130 to 150	0.228 to 0.263	By pirogue from Pak-Hin-Boun to Keng-Kiet. By elephant from Keng-Kiet to Hatrai (Annam). By sampan from Hatrai to Ben-Thuy. By steamship from Ben Thuy to Haiphong.

489
435
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II. Bassac to Bangkok via Oubone and Korat.	1. Steamship from Bangkok to Pakin. 2. Carts from Pakin to Oubone. 3. Pirogues from Oubone to Bassac.	750	36	36	26.65 215 19	290.65	0.388	
I. Bassac to Saigon.	Pirogue and steamship.	1110	14	30	57.20	0.0515		

439 [450] A mere glance at the table is enough to show the enormous
• 489 difference between transport costs towards Siam, and those towards
435 Annam, Tonkin and Cochinchina. And even so, we have not reckoned with the various interior local taxes which shippers have to pay on the roads of Siam, nor evaluated the worries and bothers to which they are subject or the robberies which they must fear. [Illustration here]

We have already expressed the opinion that if these routes continue to win favor with merchants, this is because they end at points and at markets where the latter can be sure not only of marketing their products, but also of finding at low prices all the merchandise, no matter what its source, which is necessary to the inhabitants of Laos.

Let our markets in Cochinchina, Cambodia, Annam and Tonkin be supplied in the same way and offer the merchants of Laos the same advantages in the way of reduced prices; let trading posts or factories be established on the Mekong at Stung-Treng, [451] Bassac, Lakhone, Hin-Boun, Vien-Tiane, Pak-Lay and Luang-Prabang, and the roads leading to Siam will rapidly be forsaken for our own. Indeed, all the merchants know that security now reigns in Laos. One pays what is due only once, the distances are shorter, and transport costs are lower than those paid from the Mekong to Siam.

7. CUSTOMS SYSTEM TO BE ADOPTED

439 The valley of the Mekong, of which we occupy one side, remains
651 open in fact whereas the coasts of Indo-China are closed by the customs. If we were to close this valley as well by a customs barrier we should then have contracted enormous expenditures without any hope of compensating receipts. From still another point of view, is it not to be feared that the present state of things will bring about the following result? Today, foreign merchandise is halted on our coasts by customs duties. Since such merchandise is, moreover, indispensable to our nationals, there can be no doubt but that it is coming into our possessions by a back door, despite the long distances, the high costs and the difficulties of all kinds which the roads from Siam to the Mekong offer. After flooding this basin first, it will penetrate into Cambodia, Annam and Tonkin without any profit either for the Treasury or for our nationals.

We speak in the future tense, but who can deny that we might

2: Gourou--31 N-5 (1939 ?) 1945 Laos
491

Tran Ninh, apart from the Plaine des Jarres, appears as a high and difficult country: the population is sparse, and road construction has been presented with great difficulties.

3: Robequain--101-102 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians-1-2
116, 491, 499

"It will be by highway transport that the complete opening up of Laos, already partly realized, will be accomplished. The first job was to connect the wide reaches of the middle Mekong with the China Sea, across the Annamite ridge which is very narrow at that point. The best road, metalled throughout and open all the year around, is that between Savannakhet and Quang Tri on the mandarin road, through Ai Lai Pass (410 meters). Another which is more mountainous and less dependable, but a little shorter, goes from Vinh to Thakhek via Nape, [102] crossing the Annamite summit at an altitude of 715 meters. Throughout its Laos section it has wooden bridges which must be rebuilt after each rainy season, with a resulting large increase in taxation. It competes with the new road from Se Bang Fay, which extends the téléférique west of Mu Gia Pass.

In the mountainous country lying between the Red River and the Mekong, road work is more difficult than in northern Tonkin. A series of ridges and high plateaus running northwest to southeast presents serious obstacles to the extension of roads into the region. Moreover, the population is scarce and the mineral resources, apparently not as great as Tonkin's, remain unexploited. However, the two capitals of Laos, Vientiane and Luang Prabang, will not long lack regular communications with the deltas of Tonkin and North Annam; during the dry season it is already possible to go by automobile from Hanoi to Luang Prabang through Vinh and the Tran Ninh plateau (the Astrid road or Colonial Road No. 7).

Finally, the inadequacy of the Mekong, which seems practically irremediable, as well as Saigon's desire for the largest possible share of the Laos trade, has resulted in construction of a road branching off the Cochin China system and going up river from Kratié. This was finished as far as Paksé between 1935 and 1937, in less than three dry seasons—thanks to the systematic organization of the work which mustered a total of 6,500 coolies in this unhealthy and sparsely populated region. The trip from Saigon to Paksé can be done in about twelve hours; it used to take six days by launch. The metalled highway is to be extended along the left bank of the river as far as Vientiane.

By means of these roads the ports of Indo-China hope effectively to rival Bangkok. As a matter of fact Thailand now draws a large part of Laos' overseas traffic thanks to the railroads which early were built as far as Chiengmai to the north and across Siamese Laos as far as Khon Kaen and Ubon; these termini are linked to the Mekong by motor highways which are steadily being improved by Thailand."

10: d'Orleans--339 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 274, 438, 491

"Going up the stream as far as the point where the two rivers meet, we came to the movable bridge built upon piles, which leads to the village of Pan Luong and beyond that, quite at the south of the village, the manufactory of tchoum-tchoum. This liquor is obtained by putting water and rice into earthenware jars, and letting it ferment for a fortnight; at the end of that time the contents of the jars are placed, together with a little yeast, into wooden casks surmounted by a large vat full of water. By a somewhat complicated process, the liquor known as tchoum-tchoum is obtained and sold at the rate of two ticals per gallon."

25: Brodrick--90 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 103, 491

"All the year round, you can get by car from Vinh on the Annam coast to Xieng-Khouang, the capital of Tran-ninh province, but you certainly cannot push through from Xieng-Kouang to Luang-Prabang except during the dry season. (1)

1. As you cannot get through as soon as the rains cease since, not only has the road-surface to be reconditioned in places, but some of the bridges have to be rebuilt. This route from Ving to Luang-Prabang is the Route coloniale No. 71, often called 'Queen Astrid's Highway,' since the road was laid out, or at least much improved, against the visit of the King and Queen of the Belgians in the '20's."

23: Franck--260-261 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 133, 491

"At Muongsen there begins one of the greatest automobile climbs I have ever seen, up and up and forever up through the jungled ranges of the great Annamese chain, an ascension unforgettable both for its magnificence and its danger. We climbed abruptly to an elevation of fifteen hundred meters, a full mile above sea-level, without moving forward a mile on the map. The road, forever clawing itself a place in the flank of the mountain, constantly making great detours, looking always for an opening, a gap to slip through, writhed like a tortured snake, struggled fiercely upward, grew dizzy with effort, took breath again, and climbed valiantly onward. On the left, or, worse still, on the right, the abyss always yawned. Our wheels touched the edge of space and flung stones off down sheer wooded slopes into le vide--emptiness; in many places there were curves so sharp that we had just room between the jagged mountain wall and the bottomless pit to make the turn by backing and filling where the slightest miscalculation might have meant destruction. Even then we barely got by without striking a lamp on the recently blasted mountain-side or dropping a hind wheel over the edge. [261]

Between the trees of every size there were glimpses here and there for an instant of the great Annamese chain we were struggling to surmount. The narrow little boats fighting their way up the rapids of the river we had crossed again at the beginning of the climb had long since disappeared; the river itself was gone. Giant ferns, valleys full of banana-plants, perfect tenement clothes-line mazes of jungle vines, range after

blue range of the densest forest-jungle sank beneath us, and still the climbing continued, steadily, inexorably, forever. Sometimes, when the road was completely exhausted, it went a little way on the level, but only long enough to catch its breath, as quickly as do the barrel-chested Indians of the Andes, before digging its toes into the mountain-side again. The air became fresher; the humid scent of the tropics disappeared; with every wheel-turn it was more pleasure to breathe. Behind and below us lay an ocean of branches, a vegetation so compact that it filled the vast ravine of the visible world to its very edges, like an overflowing bowl of greens, an immense panorama of verdure dotted with densely black patches of shade that looked like the mouths of caves."

23: Franck--261-262 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 349, 491

"There were many long thatch-roofed bridges, some of them curved, some with sharp angles, bridges of timbers and rough-hewn planks evidently cut on the spot, some covered with woven bamboo splints, bridges supported only by the upright trunks of trees along the sides of them, so that even [262] the least nervous of travelers could not but have wondered whether they would always hold the weight our heavy car suddenly put upon them. Many similar bridges had been abandoned and left to disintegrate into the jungle again, because the road had been cut farther back into the hillsides."

23: Franck--346 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 491, 177.49 France
636.49

"Had it been in China or South America, this important trail between the two principal capitals of Laos would be impassable, in spots at least, which is the same thing so far as an overland trip is concerned, during the rainy season that was now upon us. Thanks to the few French overlords, however, mile after mile was welded together by many woven-bamboo bridges that sagged like bed-springs under our weight."

23: Franck--353[2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 491

"I thought often of that résident of a Cambodian province who broke five ribs by running into a deer, as we raced on eastward by a forest-walled road as unpeopled as if it had been built for my especial use, bounding every little while over bridges held by vine and woven-bamboo cables, the bridges themselves merely a larger form of wickerwork or basketry."

26: Brodrick-- 59-60 S-3 (1939) 1944 Laotians -1-2
116, 131, 491

"Route Coloniale No.13 runs northwards from Cambodia into the Laos country--the first home of the Thai-speaking immigrants from over the mountain in Yünnan (see p.47) (3)

3. Route Coloniale No. 1 runs from the Siamese frontier to that of China.

The Laos country between the Annamese Chain and the course of the Mekong (with an extension over the right bank of the river in the north) is a land of mountains and deep valleys, of swift-flowing hill-streams. It borders on Tongking, Annam, Cambodia, Siam and Yünnan.

Although the Laos has a total area of 89,320 square miles (or more than one and a half times that of England), until a few years ago, this vast region, with a scattered population of less than one million, was almost inaccessible. [60] The Mekong was the only highway to the south, and arduous mountain-paths zigzagged through the jungle down to the littoral of Annam. In the wet season the Laos was isolated. In the last few years, however, not only has the 1000-mile long route coloniale No. 13 been completed, (1) but

1. The road runs from Cambodia and Saigon through Thakek and Paksé to Vientiane and thence to Luang-Prabang.

the Queen Astrid Highway (690 kilometres) has been cut from Vinh, on the coast of Annam, up and over the Annam Chain, and through the famous 'Plain of Jars' (2) to

2. The 'Plain of Jars' is dotted with hollowed megaliths formerly used as burial urns.

Luang-Prabang. Another road has been constructed from Vientiane to Vinh (282 kilometres) and among the subsidiary routes recently laid out is the so-called 'Benzoin Way' from Samneua to Moc-Chau (in Tongking) where it joins the road to Hanoi.

All these roads, however, are impracticable, or, at least, dangerous during the wet months (May to October) although route coloniale No. 13 is not impassable for most of the year. But communication between the Laos and the east (and that means with Hanoi, the capital of the Indo-Chinese Union) during the monsoon must be maintained by air."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians--AM8

which seemed to have completed their lives' span while in the act of drinking. But a climb of only a few hundred feet was enough to break right out of this hot-house profusion; to pass through the curtains of liana and to reach the first pines.

Approaching the portentous kilometre, the road became steadily worse. It was only just wide enough for the six-wheelers to pass and there were frequent tyre-bursts. Whenever a vehicle was put out of action, it was manhandled off the road and left to its own devices. There was continual trouble with the bridges, which were temporary affairs, put up at the end of the rainy season and only intended to last until the weather broke again. The most rickety-looking of the bridges had to be tested first with a jeep, followed by an unladen lorry. When this precaution was neglected, a lorry loaded with supplies crashed through and fell into the river below. This meant a painful detour through the water for the rest of the convoy. Several vehicles also got stuck and had to be hauled out. Any of these moments would have provided an ideal opportunity for an attack.

The Meo dog suffered from the heat just as badly as, according to report, its original owner would have done. Its tongue lolled from its mouth and, laying its head either on Dupont's lap or on mine, it dribbled on our bare knees. It could not stand the dust, and wetted us further with its continual sneezings.

Some of the drivers were showing signs of tiredness, and probably nervous strain. The standard of driving was going down. We were once again in the bamboo thickets, and the road was no better than a ledge round the flank of a low hill. On our right was a precipice, but the vegetation was so thick that you could get no idea of the drop. Dupont, having profited by casualties in front, had now worked his way up to a position immediately behind the last of the lorries, and we were nosing our way round the hill, keeping a look-out for occasional gaps in the road left by subsidences, when the lorry ahead suddenly turned off the road and went over the side. Gently, almost, it was lowered from sight amongst the bamboos.

149: Reinach--344a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

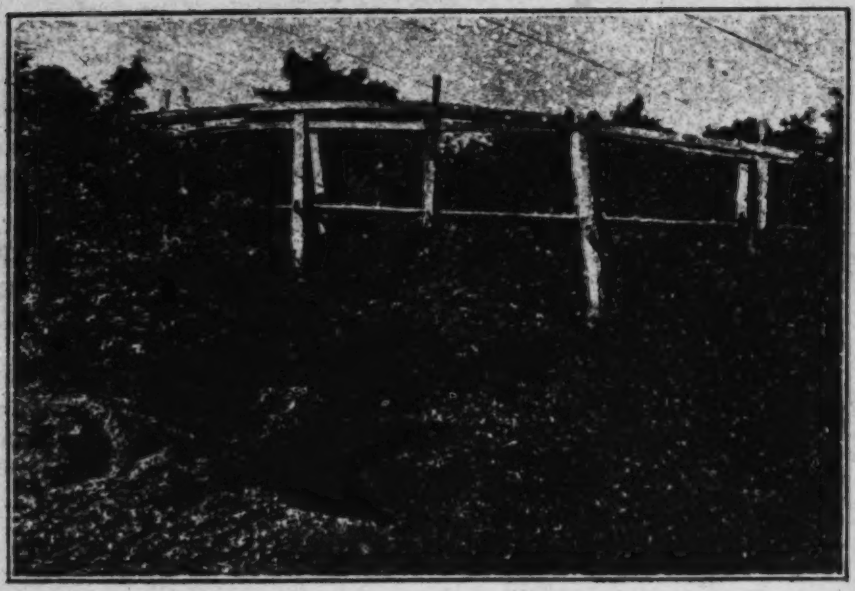

Fig. 108 /p.453/ A suspension bridge at Khong.

491 In a land where the population is so sparse and where the centers are often at great distances from one another, the roads have been laid out in accordance with two principal concerns: the shortest distance and the avoidance of as much maintenance work as possible. Thus in order to fulfill these two conditions they pass through swamps on the plains and in mountainous regions over the crests, the gentlest slopes and the least steep hillsides.

In principle, these roads are supposed to be repaired every year, refilled, laid out again if necessary, rid of the trees which have fallen across them and, in a word, kept up in an easily passable state. The administration makes every effort to reach this goal, and is gradually trying to modify the routes and make the bridges which are thrown over the ravines and watercourses more solid and permanent. But time is needed to change the age-old habits of the people and to make them follow a master plan of methodically conceived and executed projects.

487 491 175 In the extreme north in the territory of Muong-Hou-Neua, there are mountain mule tracks which continue on into Yunnan. They were once paved by the Chinese using paving stones taken from the surrounding rocks, and then formed very broad, low steps through the mountains. Traces can still be seen of these roads which have today fallen into disrepair, and there remain, particularly at crossings over watercourses, straight or slanting stone bridges which have fallen into ruins. At certain points there are also stone drinking troughs which sometimes bear the remains of sculptures.

487 In sum, there are scarcely any roads except paths in Laos, and the latter are sufficient for communication by land. Moreover, wide roads have been experimented with in various provinces [471] over sections of varying length. On these wide roads, often even paved, which were built with high crowns and provided with gutters along the sides, it was found that the natives and their animals stubbornly continued to trace a tiny, whimsically twisting path outside of which the grass kept on growing until it covered the road once more.

Here, for each province, is a list of the main roads with some indication of the category to which they belong. We shall not deal, to be sure, with the many paths which are frequented only by travelers on foot and are designed to place one village in communication with another.

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Province of Muong-Hou. The trade routes which cross the Muong-Hou are:

1. The road from Luang-Prabang to S'semao by way of Muong-Sai, Muong-Hou-Tai, Muong-Hou-Neua, with branches at Muong-Yo to Muong-La and at Muong-Hou-Tai to Man-La;

2. The road from Luang-Prabang to Dien-Bien-Phu by way of the valley of the Nam-Hou as far as Muong-Houne. This route has been abandoned for the river route along the Nam-Hou and the Nam-Ngoua;

3. The road from Talan to Man-La merely crosses the territory of Kien-Seo in order to return to Yunnan via Muong-Le;

4. The most important road is that which connects the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na with the Black River.

Starting at I-Hou, it passes through Man-La, Muong-Hou-Neua, Pou-Fang, and Muong-Nhie and ends at Lai-Chau.

The trip from I-Hou to Lai-Chau takes twenty days. This route is followed by the caravans of Deo-Van-Tri, the Quan-Dao of Lai-Chau, which transport tea from the Pahn-Na to Tonkin (30 tons in 1897);

5. From I-Hou to Man-Hao (Red River) by way of Yunnan (thirty days).

This road has the advantage of being better built and better kept up. There are stone bridges over the watercourses, and it passes through important centers in Yunnan such as I-Pang, S'semao, Pou-Eurl and Talan.

All of these roads belong to the second category. [472]

Province of Vien-Poukha. 1. From Luang-Prabang to Vien-Poukha by way of Muong-Sai, Sop-Ngim and Muong-Luong-Nam-Tha (16 days).

2. From Vien-Poukha to Xieng-Khong by way of Muong-Mugne (117 kilometers, 5 days);

3. From Vien-Poukha to Muong-Sing (80 kilometers, 3 days);

4. From Muong-Sing to Xieng-Kok (72 kilometers, 3 days).

These roads belong to the second category.

Provinces of Luang-Prabang and Tran-Ninh. In these provinces the main roads of communication are as follows:

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1. From Luang-Prabang to Bangkok by way of Pitchai.

Luang-Prabang to Pak-Lay (Mekong).....	4 days
Pak-Lay to Pitchai (Siam) by land.....	10 "
Pitchai to Bangkok (Menam).....	11 "
Total	25 days.
Length of return voyage.....	50 "
Entire trip, going and return.....	75 days.

2. From Luang-Prabang to Vien-Tiane by way of Muong-Khassy, Som-Di and Tourakome, in 11 to 12 days.

[132] This road belongs to the second category, but only during the dry season. Certain parts are flooded in the plains or impassable in the mountains during the rainy season.

3. From Luang-Prabang to Vinh (Annam) by way of Tran-Ninh.

By land to Tha-Do, going either through Ban-Pak-Sa and Xieng-Det, or through Sop-Vi and Muong-You to reach Xieng-Khouang (Tran-Ninh); from Tha-Do to Vinh via the Song-Mo and the Song-Ca. Length of trip 20 days, and of return trip, that is to say from Vinh to Luang-Prabang, 30 days. A minimum of 50 days for the round trip (1). A second category road.

(1) This route is extremely picturesque, and the Superior Resident describes it as follows:

"For tourists I should recommend all of this route from Luang-Prabang to Xieng-Khouang by way of Muong-You, especially the part between Sop-Tia and Ban-Namat, a part of which our present maps do not give any idea. Between these two points one crosses the Pou-Hong, a very high peak. The road follows the crest almost continually and passes over the highest point. When one reaches the last peaks, the view stretches out in all directions as far as the eye can see and one can then gain some idea of Laos and particularly of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang. Everywhere, on all sides, there is nothing but a chaos of mountains pressed against one another, and the location of the valleys is indicated only by a few bands of mist, especially at the beginning of the rainy season. Above these mountains rise isolated needles of calcareous rock which have extremely bizarre shapes.

"On the plateau from Ban-Sot to Xieng-Khouang, one would really think that one was on one of the plateaus of the Juras or of

487
491

Switzerland. Everywhere pine forests cover the summits of small, low and very gently sloping hills, covered with a carpet of verdure which rests the eyes pleasantly." (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900, loc. cit.) [Translator's note. Probably refers to December 1900, "Rapport du Résident supérieur sur le Tran-Ninh."]

[473] On the territory of Tran-Ninh, a road is now being put into a suitable state of repair which will avoid Xieng-Khouang and lead directly from the frontier of Luang-Prabang to that of Annam. This road, which will be able to be made into a cart road, will shorten the trip by two days.

During the high water period the length of the trip from Muong-You to Luang-Prabang can be shortened by four days by going down the Nam-Khan.

4. From Luang-Prabang to Muong-Son (Hua-Pahn).

a. Via the Mekong and the Nam-Hou as far as Muong-Ngoi, and by land from Muong-Ngoi to Muong-Son via Sop-Sat (13 to 15 days).

b. By land, passing through Ban-Sop-Vi and Muong-Sakok (11 days).

This road has a few bad parts which necessitate its classification in the third category.

5. From Luang-Prabang to Hanoi, by way of Lai-Chau.

a. The Mekong, the Nam-Hou and the Nam-Ngoua to Dien-Bien-Phu.

b. From Dien-Bien-Phu to Lai-Chau, by land.

c. From Lai-Chau to Hanoi by way of Van-Bu and Cho-Bo (Black River).

The total trip takes 18 to 30 days, depending on the height of the waters. The land route is in fairly good condition; second category.

6. From Luang-Prabang to Muong-Hou.

Via the Mekong and the Nam-Hou to Muong-Ha, and from Muong-Ha to Muong-Hou by land: 16 to 26 days.

Second category roads.

7. From Luang-Prabang to Muong-Nan (Siam).

[474]a. By land via Pak-Lung and Muong-Hou-Sa (13 days).

b. Via the Mekong to Ban-Tha-Dua, and from Tha-Dua to Nan by land via Nape (9 days).

8. From Pak-Lay to Tahit (Outaradit, Siam) by way of the Pou-Dou (8 to 23 days, depending on the method of transportation

487
491

used).

9. From Pak-Lay to Muong-Pit-Sanoulak (Siam) by way of Ken-Tao and Dane-Sai (10 days).

Second category roads (1).

(1) Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine. "Le royaume de Luang-Prabang, d'après une monographie de M. le Commissaire du Gouvernement Grand."

Province of the Hua-Pahn. From Muong-Son to Muong-Het, by land (5 to 6 days).

From Muong-Son to Xieng-Khouang, by land (14 to 15 days).

Second category roads, but which are not practicable over their whole course during the rainy season, especially from Muong-Son to Xieng-Khouang.

Province of Vien-Tiane. 1. From Vien-Tiane to Tran-Ninh.

a. By way of Muong-Poun.

b. Via the Nam-Sane (Tha-Tom).

2. From Vien-Tiane to Cammon by way of Borikane.

3. Vien-Tiane is connected to Burma by the Muong-Leui, Outaradit and Muong-Pray road, and with Siam by Nong-Khay and Korat.

The road to Burma which, from Muong-Pray, continues towards Xieng-Mai-Moulmein, is attracted towards the one from Luang-Prabang on the left bank of the Mekong, in the village of Pong-Ngeum.

These roads belong to the second category. Some parts which are not yet in good condition are to be improved in the imminent future. The road from Tha-Tom to Xieng-Khouang, in particular, was the object of a large repair project in 1900. It is now negotiable by horseback riders and beasts of burden.

487
491

[475] Province of Cammon. 1. From Pak-Hin-Boun to Vinh (Annam).

From Pak-Hin-Boun to Keng-Kiet (by water).....	3	days
From Keng-Kiet to Cammon.....	2-1/2	"
From Cammon to Ha-Trai via Nape and the ridge of Tram-Mua.....	1-1/2	"
From Ha-Trai to Vinh (by water).....	2	"
Total.....	9	days

This road belongs to the second category, and is traveled by elephants used for transporting goods. It is possible to travel from Pak-Hin-Boun to Keng-Kiet by a rather poor path for travelers on foot.

2. From Lakhone to Vinh by way of Qui-Hop (12-1/2 days, including 10 by land).

This road joins the above at Cho-Pho. It can only be classed in the third category, and is a path for travelers on foot.

3. From Na-Huong to Mahasay (by land, 4 days).

4. From Tha-Khek to Mahasay (by land, 2-1/2 days).

5. From Pak-Hin-Boun to Vien-Tiane and Savannakhet along the Mekong (1).

(1) A road for carts some twenty kilometers long is planned between Pak-Hin-Boun and Ban-Ta-Koua to facilitate the working of tin mines.

These roads, although poor in certain parts, may be classified in the second category.

Province of Song-Khone. 1. From Savannakhet to Ban-Mouang by way of Song-Khone, Ban-Dan-Na-Lao, Kham-Thong-Niai and Pak-Sedone (10 days).

2. From Savannakhet to Quang-Tri (Annam) by way of Song-Khone, Muong-Phine and Ai-Lao (15 to 20 days).

These routes belong to the second category. During the dry season, certain parts of their course may be classified in the first category.

487
491

Province of Ban-Mouang. 1. Road along the Mekong, connecting Ban-Mouang with Khong (4 days).

[476] 2. Road from Bassac to Attopeu. It starts at Fia-Fay on the Mekong, and follows the Attopeu telegraph line (5 days).

3. Road connecting the plateau of the Bolovens with the Sedone. It starts at [Illustration here] Ban-Da-Sia and ends at Champi. This is the road followed by oxen and elephants carrying cardamom.

All these roads are in the second category. The one along the Mekong may even be said to be in the first category during the dry season, at certain points of its route.

Province of Khong. 1. On the island of Khong, two cart roads connect the capital with the southern point and the west coast. Both belong to the first category.

2. Road along the left bank of the Mekong, from Khong to Stung-Treng (3 days). Same remark as for the other roads which follow the bank of the river.

3. Road from Khong to Siempang and Ban-Takalane (Se-Sane): 4 days.

4. Road from Ban-Kok-Padek (left bank of the Mekong, below Moulapoumok on the right bank) to Ban-Takalane, joining the above just before Siempang.

These roads belong in the second category.

[477] Province of Stung-Treng. 1. Road from Takalane to Ban-Mouang by way of Siempang and Kampo.

2. Road from Siempang to Cambodia via the ford of Pa-La-Su (Se-Sane).

3. Road from Stung-Treng to Kratie by way of Sreki.

4. Road from Stung-Treng to Ban-Done and Darlac, by way of Lompat or by way of Sreki.

The roads to Cambodia are the tracks followed by the convoys of oxen coming from the region of Nam-Nao, Song-Khone and Wapy.

Province of Attopeu. Road from Attopeu to Qui-Nhon by way of Kon-Toum and Ang-ke (1) (about 15 days on horseback or

(1) By now (1898-1899) there is a very good road for travelers on foot and horseback, which connects the Annamitic divide with the Mekong. At several points the road is built with ditches and is suitable for carts. The parts which are still somewhat difficult--

487
491

the steep slopes of certain peaks, the brinks of torrents, etc.--are being subjected to new routings or improvement projects which will soon be carried out. (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, loc. cit.) [Translator's note. This seems to be a reference to the December 1899 number, "Notes du Commandant supérieur du Bas Laos sur la région est du Bas Laos."]

elephant back).

Province of Saravane. 1. Road from Ban-Mouang to Saravane by way of Kham-Thong-Niai, along the Sedone (4 to 5 days). This road is a first category road over a distance of five kilometers from Keng-Kok to Keng-Pho. The falls of the Sedone can thus be avoided by a cart road at all seasons of the year. Over the rest of its route the road belongs to the second category.

2. Road from Saravane to Attopeu by way of Thateng, the plateau of the Bolovens, Nong-Bok and the Se-Pien (4 to 5 days. Second category).

3. Road from Saravane to Ai-Lao by way of Muong-Nong (a poor path).

Province of Darlac. 1. Road from Ban-Me-Thuot or Darlac to Ninh-Hoa (Annam). A six or seven day trip. This is a cart track on the Laotian side of the divide, that is to say as far as Ai-Bloum. At Me-Sao a branch forks toward Cong-Son (Annam). This is a portion of the route selected for the Saigon-Qui-Nhon railway.

[478] 2. Cart road from Ban-Done to Kratie, either by way of the Pou-Kha (10 to 12 days), or by going around the mountain to the north and connecting with the road from Stung-Treng to Kratie at Sreki.

2. PROJECTED LAND ROUTES OF COMMUNICATION

185
491
653

Three large highways are projected, namely:

1. From Savannakhet to Ai-Lao and Hué; [Illustration here]
2. From Pak-Hin-Boun to Vinh by way of Ha-Trai;
3. From Luang-Prabang to Vien-Tiane.

These roads will be negotiable by carts and will be provided with iron and wooden bridges. Engineering officers have been placed at the disposition of the Superior Resident of Laos to make a study of these various routes.

185
491
653

A credit of 32,500 francs has been established for the construction of [479] these roads in the 1900 budget, and another of 10,000 francs has been set aside for improving the existing roads.

These credits are allocated for meeting the costs of equipment, iron, skilled labor, etc. Current repairs are made through statute labor and payments in kind which all registered persons owe.

Supervision of these projects falls to the inspectors and chief guards of the native civil guard.

With support such as this, it becomes clear that it will be possible to carry out quite large road projects with credits which might seem quite insufficient at first glance. It is true that they will be renewed as the need arises.

3. PRESENT RAILWAY ROUTES

496

"There is only one railway in Laos. It crosses the island of Khone and is used for transhipment of passengers and goods from the lower reach to the Khone-Pakmoun reach and vice versa. It is a narrow railway, with a gauge of one meter. It is 4.5 kilometers long. It was built by the administration and placed at the service of the River Merchant Fleet [Messageries Fluviales]."

4. PROJECTED RAILWAY ROUTES

496
185
653

"A railway is planned which will connect the great middle reach of the Mekong with a seaport in Annam, passing through Ai-Lao, Quang-Tri and Hué. This would make it possible for all the products of central Laos to flow down towards Annam, and avoid for transports in general the disadvantages and dangers of the Kemmarat rapids. Studies for this line were begun in the first days of 1899, and have continued during the dry season of 1899-1900" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900]

The portion of this line in Annamite territory, that is to say the Quang-Tri-Hué-Tourane section, is included in the schedule of expenditures to be covered by a loan of 200 millions, to the extent of 24 millions. Since it is 195 kilometers long, the cost comes to 125,000 francs per kilometer.

10: d'Orleans--354 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 292, 492, 493, 644

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"Every one kneels in the dust as the monarch passes by, behind him being four bearers of parasols, two white and two green. The cortége is a lengthy one, being headed by a group of horsemen, bare legged, and with their toes resting upon the edge of very broad stirrups; their dress consisting of a small white jacket and a broad brimmed felt hat. Then comes a mandarin in a wooden palanquin, upon each side of him being a man who carries a bamboo mat to protect him from the mud which the young girls endeavour to throw at him. A troop of children who come along clapping their hands are succeeded by two broad-wheeled waggons,[sic] one of which is drawn by a horse, and the other by men, and by three elephants conveying in a howdah, made of osier to protect them from the sun, officers of a lower grade."

10: d'Orleans--374 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 422, 492

"Our elephants having been brought to us at an early hour, we load them immediately and set out.

Our convoy comprises seven animals, smaller than those we had in India. Ours carry only 100 tchangs (2 1/2 cwt.). They are owned by a few families and not by the villagers in common. An animal fifteen years old is worth from six to seven tchangs, or from about 480 to 560 rupees. The one I am riding is valued at 640 rupees. The elephants require much care, which is the more readily given them as they represent a fortune for their owners. They are liable to fall ill and suffer particularly from diarrhœa. They are then treated with indogo and sugar cane.

Each elephant has two men to tend it. They take turns in driving it, in riding on its neck and in walking behind it. The man who walks behind often lops off small branches for the animal to eat. At night, one of them sleeps near the aoudah, while the other remains with the elephant. Our saddles are attached to the animals, but changed several times a night to allow them to feed on the pastures.

I am pleased to find again these good big beasts with which I passed such a pleasant month in India. Although the keepers appear to me to be kinder here, the elephants are less intelligent, or rather not so well trained; for, as elsewhere, they were captured wild. They are not very prolific in India when domesticated, but in Cambodia, on the contrary, our interpreter says, they are more so. The father of Takiate who has owned two for the last fifteen years, has had a young one which he sold to the king."

10: d'Orleans--375 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 492

"The Laotian elephants seem to me inferior to their fellows of India. The leaders do barely two miles an hour over good ground. This slow, regular and almost mathematical pace, however, permits very precise operations with the compass, but otherwise is very tiresome. One ends, however, by getting used to the aoudah and by taking it for better or worse. Imagine a harness of the heaviest materials and the roughest workmanship, resting directly on the animal's back and kept in place by a palm-tree thong. In front is a strap passing across the breast,and behind a rather loose crupper made of a stick held by two cords. Upon the harness rises a small plated bamboo chest, largest at the top and covered by a sort of large straw rug. The baggage is put into this chest. For travellers it is covered with a bamboo plant, and a railing or projection behind allows one to stow away one's bag, trappings, gun, &c. The legs are crossed or they hang down in front; or more often one lies down in the shape of a Z.

In front the driver, with his feet passed through a thong in place of stirrups, drives the beast, guiding him with his legs. He rarely speaks to him, and I have never seen him use the prod which he holds in his hand. He seldom descends from his perch during the day, and in crossing a river he lets down with a string a small bamboo tube which he pulls up to drink."

23: Franck--271 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 276, 411, 482, 492 Ethnic subgroup

"The men, [EJ: of the 'Black Miao'] and sometimes the women, carry crude daggers in home-made sheaths; some had a long slender rifle, a few of them crossbows of a simple form, and most of them smoked or carried in their sashes pipes of sometimes elaborately tortured shapes. They use pack-oxen as well as little horses, but most of them, of both sexes, carry in a basket on their backs, though Chinese influence perhaps has led some to fasten two baskets at the ends of a short, stiff whole bamboo over a shoulder, thereby losing all the advantage of the long and supple shoulder-pole of China and Annam."

68: Mouhot--125 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 231, 489, 492

"In all this mountainous region [HD: i.e. from Korat in Siam north to Luang Prabang] elephants are the only means of transport. Every village possesses some, several as many as fifty or a hundred. Without this intelligent animal no communication would be possible during seven months of the year, while, with his assistance, there is scarcely a place to which you cannot penetrate."

68: Mouhot--126-129 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 231, 489, 492

"We must not, however, exaggerate his merits. Probably the saddles used by the Laotians are capable of great improvement; but I must admit that the load of three small oxen, that is to say, about 250 or 300 pounds, is all that I ever saw the largest elephants carry easily, and 18 miles is the longest distance they can accomplish with an ordinary load. Ten or twelve miles are the usual day's work. With four, five, or sometimes seven elephants, I travelled over all the mountain country from the borders of Laos to Louang-Prabang, a distance of nearly 500 miles.

All this eastern portion, with the exception of a few villages filled with 'black-bellied savages'--so called from the manner in which they tattoo themselves--is inhabited by the same race, the 'white-bellied Laotians,' who call themselves Laos, and are known by this name to all the Siamese, Chinese, and surrounding nations. [127-128 contain illustration] [129]

The black-bellied or western Laotians are called by their eastern brethren by the same name which, in Siam and Cambodia, is bestowed on the Annamites, Zuène, Lao-Zuène. The only thing that distinguishes them is, that they tattoo the under part of the body, principally the thighs, and frequently wear the hair long and knotted on the top of their heads. Their language is nearly the same, and differs little from the Siamese and Eastern Laos, except in the pronunciation, and in certain expressions no longer in use among the former."

bank, and himself set out together with Vacle to go down the river 648*
as far as Outene. 175*

Reconnaissance in Cammon and return to France (February-May 1889). The government of Indo-China had, in fact, called his attention to a state of affairs which had just been created in Middle Laos by the entry in scene of a Siamese agent, the "Prat Yott," who had moved back the old boundaries indicating the limits between Annam in the strict sense and the principalities of the Mekong and had established himself with an armed force in the cantons of Camkeut and Cammon, which were dependencies of Annam. By its mass deportations Siam had previously emptied this whole region, where its troops had searched vainly in 1828 for the fugitive King Anou (1). Then after the final ruin of Vientiane it had completely

1. See above, p. 172.

lost interest in Cammon, and the "survivors," who were indeed few in number, had asked and obtained the consent of the court of Hue to be attached to the empire.

Vacle and Pavie peacefully went down the /288/ river on a raft, saluting Paklay -- and its dramatic memories -- as they passed, as well as Vientiane, Nongkhay and Outene. Then they went up the Nam-Hin-Boun in a pirogue as far as the rapids of Keng-Kiec "which flow between calcareous upheavals" and penetrated on elephant back into the plateau of Camkeut to reach Vinh and then Hanoi by way /492/ of the ridge of Hatrai.

Upon their arrival in Cammon they were confirmed by the Phou-Thais of the region "in their certitude that the region had always been administered by Annam." Thus Pavie categorically declared to the Siamese Pra Yott whom he found established not far from Nape and who tried to justify both his presence and the moving of the boundaries by imaginary incursions of pirates: "In no way do you have the qualifications necessary to define the frontier. The territory on which we are standing is Annamite. You must expect before very long to see our soldiers here to replace you. I advise you to welcome them with all due respect so that the people may see that our two countries are friendly" (1). Indeed, Captain de

1. Pavie distinguished, or affected to distinguish, between the Siamese government which was "of good faith" and its own overzealous agents.

505
133
497
492

from upstream to downstream and vice versa was accomplished by means of oxcarts. In the high water period, however, loaded pirogues ventured to descend the passes. Nowadays the railways offers such advantageous transportation that merchants no longer have any reason to expose their pirogues to the dangers of the Khône passes or to effect a transshipment by means of carts or bearers.

4. The maritime reach from South Khône to the sea.

For a distance of about 200 kilometers, that is to say from South Khône to Kratié (Cambodia), this reach is navigable for steam launches only during the high water period (July to October). It is navigable over a shorter distance, from Khône to Stung-Treng, in all seasons. From Kratié down to the sea steam navigation is possible all year long.

[60] Thus, despite its great rate of flow and the volume of its waters, the Mékong can be negotiated by steam launches only over a small part of its immense course. Here navigation will be interrupted by insurmountable changes in level, there it will be stopped by the rapidity of the current, and elsewhere a lack of water or sand will form an obstacle. In short, the Mékong is a capricious river and has, in addition to a few magnificent reaches where steam navigation is generally easy, rapids which render it dangerous and even impossible.

Under present conditions the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet [compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine] has been able to establish a fairly direct service by steam launch and pirogue from Saigon to Luang-Prabang, over a total distance of 2300 kilometers.

The following table shows the length in kilometers of possible journeys both by steam launch and by pirogue during high and low water periods.

Today Nong-Khay numbers about 10,000 inhabitants and 2000 houses. It is the starting point for the ox-cart caravans which travel to Bangkok by way of Korat carrying all the products of northern Laos. 505 [492]

From Nong-Khay on the Mékong winds through a plain in a northeast direction. Its banks are densely populated and highly fertile. At Pon-Pissay, on the 18th parallel (2), the river makes 505 133

(2) The reader will have noted that the 18th parallel has often been referred to in the foregoing. This stems from the curious fact that, in its meanderings, the great river is theoretically cut seven times by the parallel between Pak-Lay and Saniabouri, that is to say over a distance of 535 kilometers.

another northward bend [85] as far as Keng-Sa-Doc, which is just downstream from Pak-Sane (Patchoum). From this point on the Mékong takes the course which it will keep all the way to the sea, following a line approximately parallel to the Annamitic Chain and to the Gulf of Tonkin.

Somewhat beyond Pon-Pissay the Mékong is joined on its left bank by an important tributary, the Ngûm, a fine river with a peaceful course whose valley is highly populated and gives rise to quite extensive trade. Cinnamon, tobacco and catechu [sisièt] are its chief products. The Ngûm can be navigated by pirogues and rafts in all seasons as far as Tinh-Kéo, where the river is joined by the Nam-Song, about thirty kilometers from Tourakhom. The gunboat Massie went partway up the river during the high water period. It is said that the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine] intends to begin a steam launch service along the river because of its commercial importance.

After the Ngûm on the left bank of the river come first the Nam-Mang, which is of no great interest, and then the Nam-Nhièp, which might be thought larger than it really is, to judge by its mouth. In fact, its total length is scarcely fifty kilometers, and its valley is sparsely populated. Just downstream from the Nam-Nhièp is the mouth of the Nam-Sane, which flows into the river at Muong-Pak-Sane (Patchoum). This river, which has a very winding course, can be navigated by pirogues and rafts in all seasons as far as Keng-Louang, to the north of Borikan. It can be navigated by steam launches over a distance of about fifty kilometers during the high water period.

3. The Inner Reach

505
133
361
438

After being joined by the Moun, the largest tributary on its right bank, the Mékong turns back eastward. As it leaves the narrow gorge of Pak-Moun where its course narrows to as little as 200 meters in width between sheer cliffs, it resumes a general north-northwest and south-southeast direction and spreads out over rich plains as far as the mouth of the Sédone.

Korat (1), the largest market in Siamese Laos, also belongs to the

(1) The Moun passes about 25 kilometers to the southeast of Korat.

Mékong basin through the Ta-Krong. The importance of this center is well-known, and today it is directly connected with Bangkok by a railway. Oubône (2), the other market town which is the storehouse

(2) Korat and Oubône are the seats of two French consulates.

of Lower Laos for Korat and Bangkok, as Nong-Khay is the storehouse of Upper Laos, is situated on the banks of the Moun about 300 kilometers from Korat, and only sixty from the Mékong. Communication between Korat and Oubône is achieved mainly by land, by means of ox-carts. We have seen in the foregoing that [93] steam navigation had been attempted on the Moun during the high water period as early as 1891, and that the Siamese were then planning to send their steamships out on the Mékong in the hope of getting there ahead of us. The launches provide a highly irregular service between Oubône and Tha-Phan-Sang, which is about 25 kilometers downstream from Korat. The trip takes from eight to ten days going upriver, and four to five coming down.

[492]

In its lower course, that is to say between Oubône and Pak-Moun, the Moun is barred near its mouth by shelves which make navigation extremely difficult, even for pirogues, during part of the year. The Chinese merchants of Oubône, however, who go by pirogue to Bassac or out on the Sédone, go up and down the Moun in all seasons. Because of the particular service for which they are used, their pirogues are known by the special name of Hua-Moun, or pirogues of the Moun (1)

(1) See table, Chapter VIII.

231 654 It is much to be desired that the work of our physiologists may finally be successful and place at the disposal of everyone serums which will be capable of fighting the epizootic diseases which are decimating horned animals. In the meantime our administrators can only recommend to the natives a few rules of veterinary hygiene, a feeble protective measure against the epidemic. They should be particularly careful to see that dead carcasses are not thrown into watercourses.

231 492 262 825 Oxen. In Laos, oxen are raised mainly for use in transport or for export as animals for slaughtering. In the far north they are also harnessed to carts.

The Laotians have an instinctive repugnance for beef meat, and eat it only when an animal dies by accident or has to be killed as the result of a wound or broken bone. There are even certain prejudices and certain customs in this matter, which are doubtless vestiges of another age when the ancestors of the present-day inhabitants were pastoral people among whom slaughtering [404] oxen for food was prohibited under penalty of a fine.

231 Whereas the buffalo in Laos are sturdy and of a fine height, the oxen often leave much to be desired. This is due to the fact that the natives raise oxen as they do buffalo, that is to say by leaving it to forage for itself. Although the buffalo, a hardy and autochthonous animal, requires almost no care in breeding, the ox, which is a cross-bred animal, imported and not so tough, requires a great deal of care and management. But when ox raising is treated like buffalo raising, the result is an inferior product and thence a progressive degeneration of the breed.

The Youns, the Lus and the Burmese are the only ones who have a complete mastery of raising oxen as draft and pack animals, and who produce individuals of comparatively tall stature which are sturdy, courageous and resistant to fatigue. They are even able, thanks to suitable treatment and care, to condition and train the often puny specimens which they sometimes go great distances to buy, even into southern Laos.

231 The oxen of Song-Khone (1) and of the Kham-Thong-Niai-Saravane

439 (1) In 1898 the presence of about 1,500 oxen and cattle was reported in this province.

region are destined mainly to be sold for meat in Cambodia and in Cochinchina, and this is quite a lucrative trade.

149: Reinach--331 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

439
489

A) Means of transport used

1. BY LAND. The means of transport used on land routes include men, elephants, horses, mules, oxen and oxcarts.

482 Men. A man serving as a bearer may carry his burden in three different ways, depending on the race to which he belongs and the route he must follow, whether over plains or mountains.

a) On the back. This manner of carrying burdens is used by all mountainfolk in general, Thais, Khas and others. Women and children as well as men carry burdens which are naturally in proportion to their strength. In transports, the average load for one bearer is thirty kilograms.

b) With a bamboo pole, the load being distributed at both ends. Two baskets, two packs or two cases are fastened to the extremities of a light, fairly thick bamboo pole which is about 1.5 meters long. The bearer places the middle of the pole on his shoulder and balances the load with his hand. The weight of the load thus carried will vary between 24 and 30 kilograms. This way of carrying loads is used by the [442] Burmese, the Lus, the Youns, the northern Laotians and some Khas.

c) With a bamboo pole, the load being suspended in the middle. This method of transport requires two men, one at each end of a bamboo pole about two meters long. It is difficult by this means to carry a load greater than 15 to 20 kilograms per man, or 30 to 40 kilograms per pole. This method of transport is used in the plains regions by the Laotians, Thais and other inhabitants of valleys and plateaus. A bearer can cover an average distance of 25 kilometers per day in level country, and from 15 to 20 in mountainous regions.

Carrying loads on one's head, which meets with such favor in Africa, is not a method used in Laos.

492 Elephants. Depending on its age, size and energy, an elephant can carry loads varying between 100 and 190 kilograms. But it is a delicate animal and requires great care and rather frequent rest periods.

On the other hand, it can go anywhere, even in spots where horses and even men would be halted. The elephant's step is regular on uneven terrain as well as in flat regions. The average distance covered in a day is from 18 to 25 kilometers, depending on the nature of the terrain and the temperature.

149: Reinach--332 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

492

Pack-horses and mules. It is astounding to see the courage, the spirit and the stamina of the horses and mules used for transporting merchandise in the northern part of Laos and in Yunnan. These animals are small in size, undernourished and scarcely given any care, yet they can go on for several months without stopping at all except for two halts every twenty-four hours, one in the middle of the day and the other at night. Depending on their size and training, the net load which they can carry is 60 kilograms for the smaller ones and 90 kilograms for the larger ones, not counting the weight of the saddle and pack-saddle, the harness and the various pieces of equipment belonging to the muleteers.

The average distance covered by pack-horses and mules each day varies from 20 to 28 kilometers, depending on the nature of the terrain. With their incomparable sureness of foot these animals can go anywhere, in the mountains as well as on the plains.

[443] **Pack-oxen.** Oxen are used for carrying loads throughout all of Laos and in other neighboring countries such as Burma, Siam and Cambodia. The loads are made up of two baskets higher than they are wide, traversed by a wooden bar which rests on the pack-saddle on the animal's back. In northern Laos and regions of the same latitude an ox load is about 50 kilograms, while in countries further to the south it may be as little as 35 or even 30 kilograms. [Illustration here]

The oxen of the north are much more robust than those of the south, and they are accustomed to mountain roads. The speed of pack-oxen is very low. The distance covered in an average day, which generally ends at eleven o'clock or noon, varies between 10 and 14 kilometers, depending on whether the animals are going over flat or mountainous ground.

Draft oxen. Oxen are harnessed to carts and wagons which are used in long distance transport and for agricultural transport. The carts are covered with a waterproof roof made of braided rattan and shaped like a tortoise shell. The [444] wagons have high rails and wheels 1.8 meters in diameter, and are not covered.

A cart can carry 300 kilograms and a wagon more than 900.

For agricultural transports, wagons are sometimes harnessed to two buffalo.

Draft-oxen have a considerably higher speed than pack-oxen,

492 and some are even trained to trot. It may be reckoned that the average distance covered daily by a team of two oxen, on flat ground, naturally, is from 15 to 20 kilometers.

501 505 2. BY WATER. Besides the natural method of floating, or of floating improved by bamboo air jackets (used for rough timber), steamships, pirogues and rafts are used in Laos for trips and for transport.

Steamships. The steamships in Laos at present are:

1. The Lagrandière, a 100 metric ton gunboat which is at present immobilized at Xieng-Kok, just above Xieng-Lap.

2. The fleet of the superior residency, including the Argus, the Haiphong and the Ham-Luong.

3. The commercial fleet of the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [Compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine], composed of the following ships: the Trentinian, the Colombert, the Garcerie and the Vien-Tiane, each of 105 tons' burthen, and the Massie of 100 tons (1).

(1) See Appendix XXX.

Pirogues. Pirogues are used for trips and for transporting merchandise, particularly in an upriver direction.

There are pirogues on the Mekong and its chief tributaries which are capable of covering great distances and which vary in size and in tonnage. They are from 10 to 25 meters long and can transport from 1 to 6 tons of merchandise. Depending on their size and the difficulty of the journey, these pirogues are manned by a sufficient number of men, generally varying from four to ten. [445] They are maneuvered by oars and poles going downstream, and by poles and towlines going upstream.

Rafts. There are two kinds of rafts. Some are formed of two pirogues which are joined side by side, covered with a floor and lightened on the sides by packets of bamboo, while the others are composed solely of bundles of bamboo which are solidly joined and then covered with a floor. Both kinds are used going downstream only. The former are dismounted when the journey is over. [Illustration here] The pieces of bamboo are removed, and the disjoined pirogues are ready to go back upstream separately.

10: d'Orleans--354 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 292, 492, 493, 644

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"Every one kneels in the dust as the monarch passes by, behind him being four bearers of parasols, two white and two green. The cortége is a lengthy one, being headed by a group of horsemen, bare legged, and with their toes resting upon the edge of very broad stirrups; their dress consisting of a small white jacket and a broad brimmed felt hat. Then comes a mandarin in a wooden palanquin, upon each side of him being a man who carries a bamboo mat to protect him from the mud which the young girls endeavour to throw at him. A troop of children who come along clapping their hands are succeeded by two broad-wheeled waggons,[sic] one of which is drawn by a horse, and the other by men, and by three elephants conveying in a howdah, made of osier to protect them from the sun, officers of a lower grade."

23: Franck--297 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 484, 493, 501

"There were two Fords in Luang Prabang, that which had come for me at Don-mo and one belonging to the king. It would of course have been bad manners for the commissaire openly to emphasize his real bosshood by sporting the better car; besides, the garage mechanics of the capital are as inexperienced as filling-stations are rare; hence the transportation that had been placed at my disposal lacked something of the regality of its rival, particularly in the matter of diligent polishing. There were also some horses, a few elephants, several victorias, even three or four rickshaws, though these, except perhaps that of the king inside the palace grounds, might as well not have been imported, for there were no men in this languid Eden both able and willing to pull them. Nearly every one walks in Luang Prabang, barefooted and silent, unless he travels by boat. For the most important conveyances are the long narrow pirogues, some of them surprisingly large, hollowed out of single tree-trunks, which ply the Mekong and the Nam-khan that flows into it above the town. On the bow of each boat there is almost sure to be a bouquet of flowers, a pretty custom, even if it is probably based on a superstition, and one in keeping with this gentle people of a land so kindly treated by nature."

23: Franck--349 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 363, 493

"Though the French have brought a few automobiles, the humped-ox cart--a curious cart with a movable axle and huge wheels higher than a man--is still the more common type of conveyance. Vientiane has an avenue of flamboyants of which it is justly proud, and a lot of good French residences, with a pleasant woodsy atmosphere out of keeping with the solemn air of French officialdom."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

slaughterers are obliged to work by flares, which is responsible, the 253
French think, for an unusually picturesque effect. It is 'not done' to 825
go along while the actual killing is in progress, but shortly after, when the carcasses are suspended from hooks to be cut up, and the workers, stripped to their loincloths, and garishly splashed, paddle about in a vermilion sea. Cars are stationed just beyond the reach of the steaming odours, and one is recommended to see the thing as one views a nude in a picture gallery – that is, divorced from all but a disinterested abstraction, in this case the colour.

The possibilities of Vientiane, it was clear, would be quickly 292
exhausted. Thao Nhouy, the Laotian Minister of Education, lent 301
me his jeep to see some of the surrounding villages, but the roads 535
were so appalling that it broke down after being driven for about five miles. He then suggested that I might like to see the local schoolgirls dancing, and when I said that I would be delighted, and asked for permission to take photographs, the girls were sent off home, on their bicycles, to get their best clothes. An hour or two later they began to trickle back, wearing their mothers' jewellery as well as their own and with their silk finery done up in paper parcels. When they had dressed and were ready they made a glittering sight. One girl wore a scarf ornamented with real gold thread said to be worth about £50 in English money. They danced under the supervision of a teacher whom I recognized as a professional actor, from the *boun*,[1] and who occasionally intervened when a girl failed in some minor feat, such as bending her fingers back at an expressive ninety degrees from the palm.

All these girls, dressed as they were like princesses, came from 493
shacks in the forest. Each one had a bicycle – infallibly fitted with 511
dynamo lighting, and sometimes 3-speed gears. It seems that a bicycle for his daughter is one of the essentials for which a Laotian will work. It is considered ill-bred and irreligious in Laos to work 241
more than is necessary. The father of a family cultivates an amount 461
of land, estimated, by a bonze who is expert in such matters, to be 511
792

[1] [i.e., Laotian religious festival. -- Analyst] 255

3: Robequain--261 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 135, 316, 402, 494

"Laos ore is harder to work than Tonkinese because of its lower metal content and the presence of considerable amounts of sulphurous and ferruginous matter. In addition, coal is scarce here: producer gas gazogenes run the dynamos which produce motive power, but they consume enormous quantities of wood, which must be cut farther and farther away from the mine. As a result, the ore has never been smelted on the spot. But mechanical processes for separating and purifying have gradually been set up at the mines. For example, after crushing and magnetic separation, very well-equipped washers prepare concentrates for export. Under sloping roofs, powerful machines stand in tiers one above another on the hillsides, so that the water and the gradually purified product itself are moved as much as possible by mere gravity from one process to another. The mud and rocks, which were dumped out of small wagons at the top of the mill, appear as black cassiterite crystals at the bottom where they fill little 35 or 50 kilogram sacks for shipment to Singapore. They are transported either via the Mekong or over the roads from Thakhek and Savannakhet to the Annam coast. Six thousand Annamites work in the tin mines of the Laos basin; though a few are Tonkinese most of them come from Nghê Tinh. Work is done by gangs and goes on continuously since the machines can be stopped only at great expense; at night this isolated basin, surrounded by rugged mountains and dotted with electric lights which furnish illumination for the coolies as they work to the accompaniment of the mills' unrelenting rhythm, is a striking picture."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ROAD TO XIEN KHOUANG

494 THE struggle with the pirogue men, which I expected would become a daily routine, was suddenly broken off by news of a convoy going to Xien Khouang. And better still there was a spare seat in a car which would leave the convoy after the danger point was passed and carry on to Luang Prabang. This was a jeep belonging to a French official called Dupont, a flamboyant, red-bearded figure I had often seen hurtling through the streets of Vientiane. Dupont had been on a mission in Vientiane and was now returning to his home in Luang Prabang.

000 He arrived at the villa at about 3 a.m. next morning — a tornado approach, through the foot-deep carpet of dead leaves. Shrouded in protective clothing as the driver of an early Panhard-Levasseur he could be seen through the bare frangipani branches, tooting his horn continually, and waving his arms with excited exasperation at the thought of things he had forgotten. There was a platform built between the driver's and passenger's seats on which a dog which looked like a samoyed perched uneasily. Dupont said it was a race bred only by the Meos. In the back of the jeep a Laotian driver sat buried in luggage. He was asleep, and as we took the corners his head rolled from side to side like a freshly cut-down suicide.

So far I had met French intellectuals, soldiers, politicians, but Dupont was the man of action, although action that seemed often without motivation or relevance. He was a corsair out of his day; an adventurer who was swaggeringly going native and whose ardours Laos would tame and temper. Dupont had married a Laotian wife in Luang Prabang and said that he would never return to France. His children would probably be brought up as Buddhists, and by that time, no doubt, Dupont himself would be paying some sort of lax observance to the rites. In the meanwhile he had reached

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

000 the point of respecting in a light-hearted way all the superstitions of East and West combined; sometimes perplexed when they were in conflict, as happens, for example, with Friday the 13th; since in Indo-China all odd days are fairly lucky, and Friday is the luckiest day of the week. He carried a Laotian sorcerer's stick, engraved with signs and symbols enabling him to cast a rapid horoscope, but was only affected by verdicts in support of decisions he had already taken. Dupont was in a great hurry to get back to Luang Prabang, because his wife was pregnant and he was afraid that she would hurt herself on her bicycle, although he had dismantled it and had
494 hidden some essential parts. We were supposed to stay in the convoy until the Xien Khouang embranchment was reached, about a hundred miles from Luang Prabang, but Dupont said that if I had no objection we would clear off on our own at the first possible opportunity. He then made some fatalistic remarks about death and predestination.

494 At the convoy assembly-point, we found a great show of discip-
722 line. Tight-lipped officers were walking up and down examining tyres and checking guns and ammunition. Drivers were assembled and lectured on convoy discipline. A soldier's Laotian wife, being observed to be pregnant, was refused permission to travel. The infantry escort was carried in five or six lorries and as many others were loaded with supplies. A dozen jeeps were placed in the middle of the convoy, which was guarded at each end by an armoured car. Dupont was turned back when he tried to bluff his way to the head of the column behind the leading armoured car, from which position he had hoped to be able to sneak away at an early opportunity

527 Although by the time we got under way it was shortly before dawn, all Vientiane was still awake. Grinding our way through the streets we passed a *boun* in full swing with its temple-dancers still trapesing round their stage, and the magnified sobbings of a crooner not quite drowned in the roar of thirty exhausts. The streets were full of torch-carrying crowds.

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

000 tasted of earth and bitter herbs when a commotion aroused us. Hurrying from the restaurant we saw Dupont's dog busy with carrion in a nearby field, surrounded by an excited huddle of vultures for whose benefit it had been exposed there. Dupont's cries of horror were interrupted by the whistle of the convoy-commander, who this time signalled for all officers to gather round
494 him. He told them that seventy Issaraks[1] were reported to be in
669 ambush, awaiting us at Kilometre 115 – about twenty miles further
725 on. They were turned out in new American uniforms, he said, and were well armed. At Kilometre 115 a cross-country track leading from Siam into Viet-Nam crossed our route. It occurred to both Dupont and myself that if this report was several hours old, it was not likely that the Issarak would be in the place where they were first seen. However, the official view taken was that they would not have moved more than five kilometres down the road in our direction, because orders were given for the infantry escort to dismount from their lorries at Kilometre 110 and to precede the convoy on foot for the next five kilometres. We noticed, too, that the officer assumed that the Issarak, if they had moved at all, would have inevitably marched towards us, and not in the other direction, because, once Kilometre 115 had been reached, the danger would be officially declared at an end, and the infantry ordered back into their lorries.

137 We now entered a country of low, bare hills; a whitish landscape, rarely animated by wandering pink-skinned buffaloes. In the hollows there were islands of splendid vegetation – flamboyant trees, arranged as if by design, with giant ferns and feathery bamboos. Peacocks gleamed in abandoned paddy fields, and storks, flapping away at our approach, trailed their legs in pools of yellow marsh-water. The vegetation was sensitive to quite small variations in altitude. The valley-bottoms were choked with bamboo thickets, and slender, segmented canes, wreathed in blue convolvulus, curved over our path like coachmen's whips, flicking us as we passed beneath. At this level the ditches were full of dead butterflies

[1] [i.e., "free men" of Laos and Cambodia. -- Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

A DRAGON APPARENT

000 Up till the last fraction of a second before a thousand graceful stems screened it from our view it was still upright and quite level. The soldiers in it had hardly risen from their seats and raised their arms not so much in alarm, it seemed, as to wave farewell.

Soon after, the infantry climbed down from the lorries and began their march in single file along the sides of the road in front. This manœuvre seemed to me not only useless but dangerous, since nothing could have been easier for ambushers than to let the soldiers go by and then destroy the defenceless vehicles. In the spirit of one who whistles in the dark to keep his courage up, the armoured car ahead occasionally opened up with its machine-guns and 2-cm. cannon, provoking, to the great discomfort of the following cars, one small forest fire. We never heard that the enemy
494 was other than imaginary. At five in the afternoon we crawled into the village of Vang Vieng, having done about twenty miles since mid-day.

133 Vang Vieng was just such another village as the one where we had had our mid-day Chinese soup, but it was set in the most staggering surroundings. Overhanging it was a range of mountains which were not very high, since the peaks only reached 8000 feet, but which did not look like any mountains I had ever seen before. There was no visual preparation by a gently rising foreground of foothills. These were stupendous walls of rock rising 4000, 5000 and 6000 feet sheer out of an absolutely flat plain. We were overhung, as it were, by a huge scrabbling in the sky, which at its base had been erased by mists. Dupont said that we would pass over these mountains that night.

494 It was at Vang Vieng that Dupont had planned to slip away. His
725 resolution was only slightly shaken when it was announced that the
669 whole convoy would stay in the village overnight, owing to the presence of a small force of Viet-Minh, which the infantry would have to clear out, in a village fifteen kilometres further along the

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

road; but as all the men were thoroughly tired this operation would 494
be postponed till early next morning. Dupont was determined not 725
to stay in Vang Vieng, but even he seemed to think twice about 669
deliberately disobeying the convoy-commander's orders, and when he finally did so it was done in gentle stages, rather than in one flagrant act of insubordination. The excuse given for this phobia about Vang Vieng was that all the sleeping space would be taken up and we should find nowhere to stretch out comfortably.

We were still filthy from our travels; sweat-soaked and covered 497
in bright yellow dust, through which the perspiration trickled down regular courses. As part of his campaign Dupont suggested that we should have a meal first and after that get permission from the convoy-commander to go for a bathe in a river, twelve kilometres down the road, where we should still be three kilometres short of the village with the Viet-Minh. Dupont described this river as if it had magical curative properties. It came out of a cave not far away, he said, and the water was icy cold. This course being agreed 251
upon, we went to the usual Chinese eating-house run by one Sour 265
Hak. Taken by surprise by our invasion, Sour Hak found himself short of food. However, as these villages are completely cut off during the six months' rainy season, there are always standbys for emergency. Reaching to the top of the cupboard he found a hunk of venison *boucané*, dusted it off and set it before us. This meat, prepared in a manner similar to that employed by the Argentine gauchos, was black, fine grained in texture as cheese, odourless and tasted slightly of liquorice. According to the usages of life in the bush, strips were cut off it with one's clasp knife. Fortunately, Sour Hak was found, quite mysteriously, to have a stock of first-rate Burgundy; doubtlessly bought in the belief that it was Algerian. Dupont's sudden optimism was only lowered by Sour Hak's refusal 000
at any price to sell a green parakeet, which had flown in one day and attached itself to the house. Since tasting civilization nothing could persuade this bird to use its wings again, although like a true Laotian it enjoyed being taken for a ride on a bicycle. Dupont's

3: Robequain--94 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 496, 177.49 France
636.49

"Laos still lacks railways. Some years ago surveys were completed on the projected line from Tan Ap to Thakhek, which had been selected as the shortest and most convenient route between the coast of Annam and the Mekong. About twenty kilometers of rail were laid from Tan Ap as far as Xom Cuc, and téléférique built to hoist material and supplies from the workyards to Mu Gia Pass which will be traversed by a tunnel at an altitude of 370 meters; a service road was built in order to assure the easy maintenance of the téléférique.. The roadbed beyond Thakhek was also started, but budgetary difficulties caused the stoppage of work."

35: Ennis--130 H-3 (no date) 1936 Laotians
116, 241, 311, 464, 496

"The colonization schemes sponsored by the Indochinese government in other parts of the peninsula have not touched Laos. The local administration, however, has been encouraging small-scale settlements. The Société de l'Houle Pakhout has placed 12,000 coffee plants upon the plateau of Boloven, and in the same region a group of natives has set out 100 hectares of kapotiers. The colonization of Laos cannot be initiated until the railroad from Tanap to Thaklek is completed, which will link up the interior to river nagivation [sic] upon the Mékong. Here, as elsewhere, one of the chief problems is inadequate labor supply. (58)

58. Rapports au grand conseil, pp. 85 ff."

seems to be a cloak of verdure with deep, harmonious folds. Its 133
bed is deeply cut and scattered with rocks and rapids as far as a point upriver from Vientiane where it attains an average width of 900 meters. Enormous calcareous rocks strung out like beads or laid on in cliffs like a veneer alternate with graceful beaches, and here and there hamlets cling to the hillsides which are lit up, as if by a flame in the sun, by the gilded spire of a pagoda. . . .

After describing a sharp bend to the south it flows peacefully towards Savannakhet between low banks which are now sandy and now covered with vigorous vegetation. It is 1500 meters in width, and its waters are deep enough in this level stretch to permit steamboat navigation all year long. Downstream from Savannakhet stretches a sudden succession of staggered rapids over a /7/ length of about 160 kilometers. These are the "Khemmarat." The current is extremely violent and forms eddies and whirlpools, while an irregular channel winds in the midst of the rocky bed. "The yellowish waters break against the rocks with a dreadful noise. Men have fled its banks, and the great trees of the forest lean from both sides over the abyss, into which their weight often drags them. A few daring fishermen have made themselves homes in the crags of the rocks, but these unfortunate creatures scarcely have time to flee when the first rains come, so great is the rapidity with which the waters of the river rise" (1).

1. De Carné, Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois.

When it leaves the rapids the Mekong widens out (two kilometers), with isles of verdure scattered here and there, and again becomes navigable as far as Khong, the old capital of Lower Laos. Its banks grow higher again, and many villages rise in the midst of /134/
rich and fertile plains. It reaches a width as great as eight or ten kilometers and gives birth to an important group of islands, including the island of Khône which is famous for its waterfalls which bring navigation to an absolute halt. A railroad has been built /496/
across the island by the French administration to serve as a connecting link /8/ between the level stretch of Khong and that of Kratié (Cambodia).

Laos ends at South Khône, and the coastal reach of the Mekong, which belongs to Cambodia and to Cochinchina, begins.

The great river is fed from the left by multiple tributaries, the 133
chief ones of which (Nam-Ou, Nam-Ngum, Nam-Ka-Dinh, 132

149: Reinach--50a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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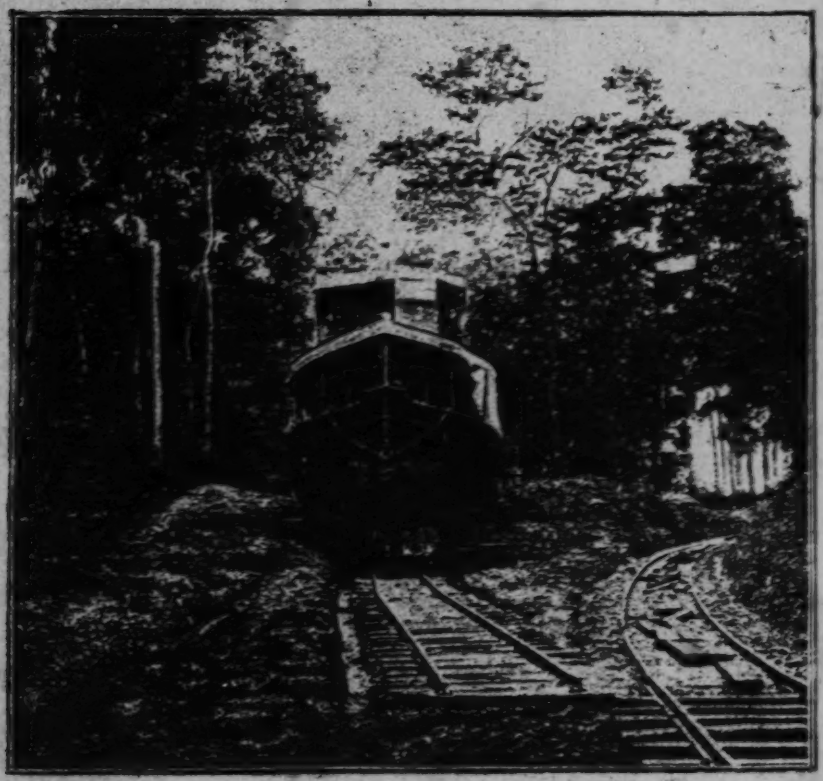

Fig. 20 /p. 70/ The Garcerie crossing the island of Khone from one reach to another (1897). (Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

149: Reinach--50b G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

Fig. 21 /p. 71/ A critical moment--the passage of the Trentinian across the island of Khone (1897). (Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

439 178 [437] The conclusion to be drawn from the preceding tables is not favorable toward orienting Laotian trade towards the ports of French Indo-China. It is evident that the export trend of animals and products shows a marked tendency to move towards Oubone and Siam. Indeed, Siam's share of total exports from Lower Laos (merchandise and animals), which was 179,627 francs in 1898, rose to 381,185 francs in 1899. This was an increase of more than double.

On the other hand, we see that the share of Annam, Cochinchina, and Cambodia in this same traffic, which was 699,712 francs in 1898, fell to 466,477 francs in 1899, representing an approximate decrease of one-third.

[496] The causes of this persistent and increasing orientation of Laotian trade towards Siam are perhaps to be sought in the opening of the railroad from Bangkok to Korat (1) as well as in the customs system of

(1) The king of Siam inaugurated this line on December 21, 1900.

French Indo-China.

439 497 505 There is no question but that the railroad constitutes a considerable improvement over the old means of transport, as much by virtue of the lower costs and shorter travel time as by the suppression of the dangers and bothers of the cart road from Korat to Bangkok (domestic duties, exactions of the local authorities, robberies, etc.). But are these reasons sufficient to explain or justify the admitted fact?

The River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales] service is, as we have previously noted, the most rapid and least expensive means of transporting merchandise from Luang-Prabang to Saigon. Why then is this service, which is superior even in its present imperfection, scorned by exporters in general and used mainly by importers for products destined for the Europeans in Laos? The answer is a simple one. Exporters would not hesitate to use the Mekong route and to transport their products to Pnom-Penh or to Saigon-Cholon if, as they can do at Moulmein, at Xieng-Mai, at Nong-Khay, at Bassac, at Oubone, at Korat and at Bangkok, they could obtain [438] supplies there of imported merchandise from various sources to make up the counterpart of their exports. But, besides the fact that they would not be able to find certain special merchandise which is indispensable to them in the French marketplaces, they could not obtain the rest except at an increase of fifty or sixty percent or even more over the ordinary prices in the markets of Siam and Burma which we have just cited.

149: Reinach--355a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

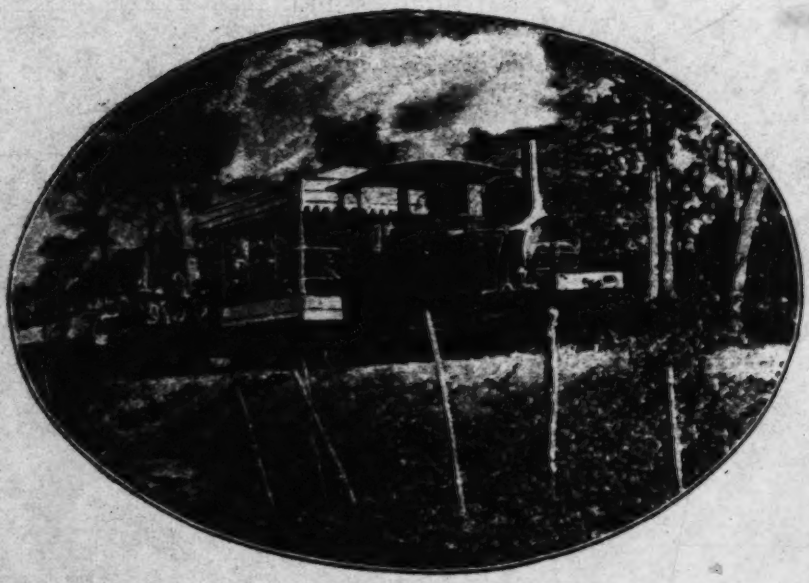

Fig. 111 /p.469/ The Khone railway.

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A credit of 32,500 francs has been established for the construction of [478] these roads in the 1900 budget, and another of 10,000 francs has been set aside for improving the existing roads.

These credits are allocated for meeting the costs of equipment, iron, skilled labor, etc. Current repairs are made through statute labor and payments in kind which all registered persons owe.

Supervision of these projects falls to the inspectors and chief guards of the native civil guard.

With support such as this, it becomes clear that it will be possible to carry out quite large road projects with credits which might seem quite insufficient at first glance. It is true that they will be renewed as the need arises.

3. PRESENT RAILWAY ROUTES

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"There is only one railway in Laos. It crosses the island of Khone and is used for transhipment of passengers and goods from the lower reach to the Khone-Pakmoun reach and vice versa. It is a narrow railway, with a gauge of one meter. It is 4.5 kilometers long. It was built by the administration and placed at the service of the River Merchant Fleet [Messageries Fluviales]."

4. PROJECTED RAILWAY ROUTES

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"A railway is planned which will connect the great middle reach of the Mekong with a seaport in Annam, passing through Ai-Lao, Quang-Tri and Hué. This would make it possible for all the products of central Laos to flow down towards Annam, and avoid for transports in general the disadvantages and dangers of the Kemmarat rapids. Studies for this line were begun in the first days of 1899, and have continued during the dry season of 1899-1900" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

The portion of this line in Annamite territory, that is to say the Quang-Tri-Hué-Tourane section, is included in the schedule of expenditures to be covered by a loan of 200 millions, to the extent of 24 millions. Since it is 195 kilometers long, the cost comes to 125,000 francs per kilometer.

653 [480] Construction of this line was authorized by the law of
496 December 25, 1898, but its extension to the Mekong, and that is to
185 say the means of entrance into Laos, is classified among the lines of
third-degree urgency for which routes have scarcely been outlined.

Another railway has also been planned from Binh-Dinh to
438 Attopeu, with the same third-degree urgency classification as the
633 line from Savannakhet to Quang-Tri. It seems astonishing that anyone should have thought, even as a line of third-degree urgency, of a line which would start from the sea and end in a cul-de-sac, crossing one of the most mountainous regions which is inhabited by Kha tribes who are still partly unpacified. It may be that there is some thought of facilitating, by means of such a line, the exploitation of the gold and copper-bearing deposits in the region of Attopeu, even though it has now been established that the best deposits are located on the Se-Sane, more than 50 kilometers to the south of this point as the crow flies. It is also to be feared that by reason of the nature of the terrain this line may cost as much as 200,000 francs per kilometer, if the conditions of its route be compared with those of the lines estimated at 125,000 francs.

The projected Savannakhet-Quang-Tri railway does not seem to be the best solution for creating an entry into Laos and an outlet to the sea.

In the first place, it is not the shortest and most economical, despite the low elevation of the ridge of Ai-Lao, which is only 410 meters in altitude.

Besides, Savannakhet has never been a trade center and market of distribution and transit like Luang-Prabang, Pak-Lay, Nong-Khay and Bassac.

To be sure, it is an administrative center situated opposite the market of Ban-Mouk and the seat of the main office of the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [Compagnie des Messageries Fluviales], which has storehouses, a depot, workshops, etc. there. But this center was built up from nothing scarcely six years ago. The market of Ban-Mouk is an unimportant one, and the office of the River Merchant Fleet is inaccessible to its steam launches during a large part of the year.

[481] If Nong-Khay, instead of Ban-Mouk, were located opposite Savannakhet, there would be an advantage to capturing this great market in which the major part of the trade of Upper and Middle Laos is centered, and to turn this trade away from Bangkok to the profit of Tourane. But one must surrender to the evidence, for Nong-Khay

149: Reinach--365a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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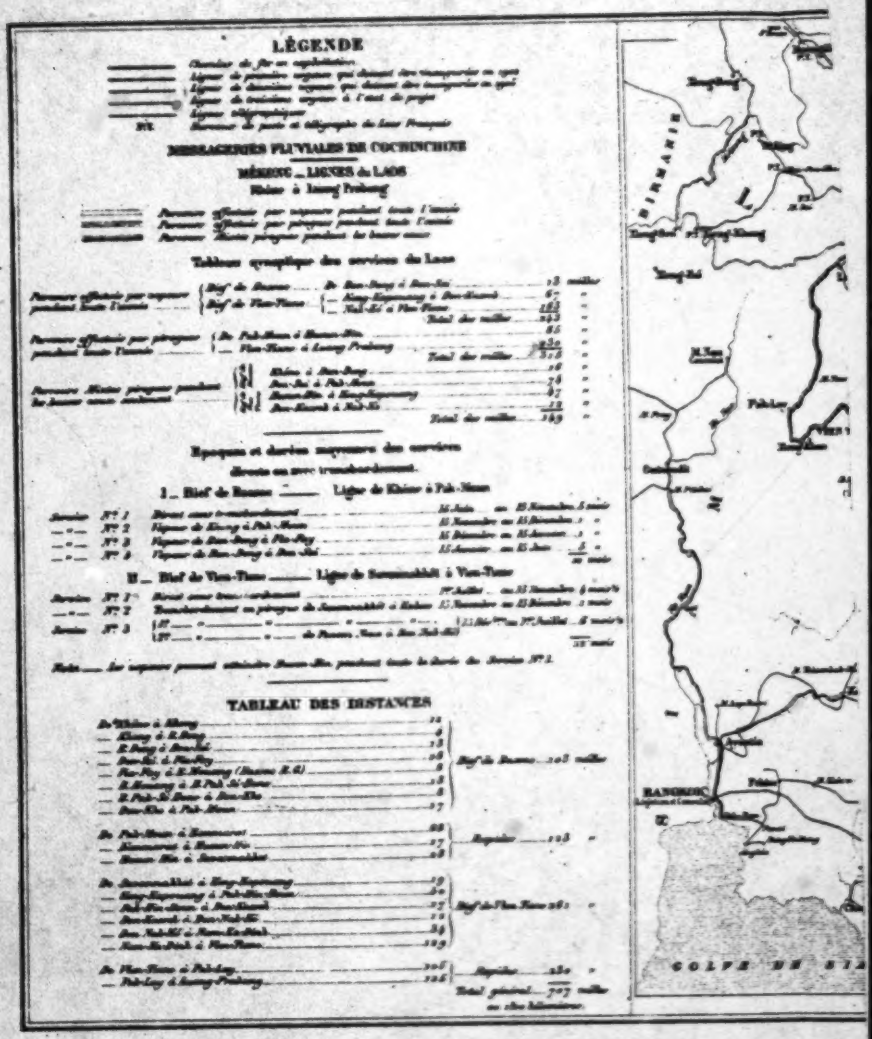

Map of means of communication by river, by postal and telegraph service and by railway in 1900.

Plate 6, Part A /between pp. 480-1/

149: Reinach--365b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Map of means of communication by river, by postal and telegraph service and by railway in 1900.

Plate 6, Part B /between pp. 480-1/

653 is no further from Vinh than Savannakhet is from Tourane. In fact,
496 the distance by steamship to Hin-Boun (or Tha-Kek) and from there
185 to Ben-Thuy [Illustration here] (port of Vinh) by way of Nape, the
438 ridge of Tram-Mua and Ha-Trai by railway is only 500 kilometers,
633 whereas it is also 500 kilometers from Savannakhet to Tourane.

It has been objected that the ridge of Tram-Mua, the highest
496 point on the line in question, is at an altitude of more than 1,200
185 meters, that many calcareous peaks encumber the route, and that the port of Ben-Thuy has a sand bar (that of Cua-Hoi) which leaves a depth of water of only 1.5 to 4.5 meters, depending on the tide.

All of this information is correct, although somewhat exaggerated. The ridge of Tram-Mua is not an insurmountable obstacle, and the road which crosses it leaves the Mekong at the 250 meter level and manages to reach it by rounding the [482] peaks of Pou-Hak and Pou-Kha-Sak and by rising gradually, ascending 1000 meters over a distance of about 140 to 150 kilometers.

Ha-Trai, moreover, which is situated on the river of Ngan-Pho, is at approximately the 100 meter level, and the descent from the ridge requires half a day on elephant back. The slope is very steep, without any doubt, on the Annamite side, since it represents the hypotenuse of a right triangle with a base 15 kilometers long and an altitude of 1,100 meters. It is not such, however, as to make the establishment of a railroad impossible, and cog-railways could also be used, as in Switzerland, at the steepest parts of the route.

Finally, the bar of Cua-Hoi is only an imaginary obstacle. Indeed, it would be sufficient merely to extend the railway beyond the bar, where the foundation is everywhere solid enough, or else to dredge a channel.

From the financial point of view the advantage also lies with the Hin-Boun-Ben-Thuy project, which will cost 30 millions instead of 61. Indeed, expenditures of 24 millions are anticipated for the Quang-Tri-Tourane section, to which 37 millions must be added for the Quang-Tri-Savannakhet section (about 300 kilometers at 125,000 francs per kilometer), whereas if we assume a cost of 150,000 francs (1) per kilometer for the Hin-Boun-Ben-Thuy line (about 200 kilometers),

(1) Cost anticipated for the Vietri-Lao-Kay and Saigon-Qui-Nhon lines.

we are confronted with an expenditure of 30 millions. The difference between 30 and 61 millions is so great that it would even be possible

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to anticipate, for the line which we recommend, a much higher cost per kilometer (although this has not been demonstrated) than the cost which we assume.

Both lines--the one from Hin-Boun (or Tha-Khek) to Ben-Thuy and the one from Savannakhet to Quang-Tri--have their partisans. The latter line is more in favor, but we believe that, like its rival, the line from Hin-Boun to Ben-Thuy should be studied by engineers, who, without any preconceptions, would draw up an estimate [483] which could be compared with the other and serve as a basis for evaluation by the government of Indo-China.

In conclusion, when the Hanoi-Nam-Dinh-Vinh section is completed, and if it is joined to the line of which we have been speaking, it will constitute a network connecting the Mekong with Tonkin and eventually with the great central region of China by way of Lao-Kay, whereas the Quang-Tri-Tourane section is destined to remain isolated, with no connection either with the north or the south, for a period of time which is as yet indeterminate (1).

(1) The Superior Resident favors a line connecting Tran-Ninh to the coast:

"The opening of this railway would not bring profit to Tran-Ninh only, and it is certain that the line would be used not only by all officials and travelers who had to reach the upper reach of the Mekong and even the middle reach, but also by the greater part of the merchandise destined for these reaches.

"I have no doubt but that, the day this railway is opened, it will have to be extended to Luang-Prabang, which it will be possible to reach in less than three days from Vinh by this means. Another branch extended from Xieng-Khouang towards Pak-San would give us the whole Mekong trade, and the problem whose solution we are now pursuing would then be solved. There would no longer be any need to seek a route from Luang-Prabang to Tonkin, from Outhene to Vinh, or from Savannakhet to Hué, and there would no longer be any need to explore the possibilities of navigation through the Kemmarat rapids or between Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang. The two reaches, separated by rapids which have heretofore been regarded as an obstacle to commercial steam navigation, would be opened up and would be less than three days' distance from a seaport.

"On that day the colonization of Laos will take a giant stride, and the land will be wholly opened to all the enterprises

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which the difficulty of communications is now impeding."
(Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, loc. cit.)
[Translator's note. Probably refers to December 1900 issue, "Rapport du Résident supérieur sur le Tran-Ninh."]

5. POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH SERVICE

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The telegraph network in Laos is quite complete. At the present time only three commissionerships are not served by a telegraph line, those of Tran-Ninh, the Hua-Pahn and Darlac. All the other provinces possess one or several telegraph offices, where postal service is also provided.

Examination of Plate VI will show the extent of the telegraph network in Laos. The lines are divided into two sections: the northern one which is under the jurisdiction of the Annam-Tonkin central office, and the southern one which is attached to the Cochinchina-Cambodia central office. [484] The two sections are not connected with one another, but soon will be. Tonkin will then be in communication with Cochinchina by means of a line which will cross all of Laos from north to south.

When this result has been achieved, that is to say when the Luang-Prabang-Vien-Tiane section has been completed, the Laotian network will be 2,283 kilometers long: 1,168 in Upper Laos and 1,115 in Lower Laos.

[505] By the terms of a contract between the administration and the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [Compagnie des Messageries Fluviales], the latter was made responsible for the transport of postal dispatches on the Mekong as far as Luang-Prabang (1). Outside

(1) This company receives an annual subsidy of 300,000 francs from the government of Indo-China for this purpose.

of the region of the river, and even in certain stretches served by the Company where service can be made more rapid, the administration has recourse either to human carriers or to pirogues.

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6. SERVICE BY THE RIVER MERCHANT FLEET [MESSAGERIES FLUVIALES]

Transport for merchandise and passengers is provided on the Mekong as far as Luang-Prabang by the Cochinchina River Merchant

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from upstream to downstream and vice versa was accomplished by means of oxcarts. In the high water period, however, loaded pirogues ventured to descend the passes. Nowadays the railways offers such advantageous transportation that merchants no longer have any reason to expose their pirogues to the dangers of the Khône passes or to effect a transshipment by means of carts or bearers.

4. The maritime reach from South Khône to the sea.

For a distance of about 200 kilometers, that is to say from South Khône to Kratié (Cambodia), this reach is navigable for steam launches only during the high water period (July to October). It is navigable over a shorter distance, from Khône to Stung-Treng, in all seasons. From Kratié down to the sea steam navigation is possible all year long.

[60] Thus, despite its great rate of flow and the volume of its waters, the Mékong can be negotiated by steam launches only over a small part of its immense course. Here navigation will be interrupted by insurmountable changes in level, there it will be stopped by the rapidity of the current, and elsewhere a lack of water or sand will form an obstacle. In short, the Mékong is a capricious river and has, in addition to a few magnificent reaches where steam navigation is generally easy, rapids which render it dangerous and even impossible.

Under present conditions the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet [compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine] has been able to establish a fairly direct service by steam launch and pirogue from Saigon to Luang-Prabang, over a total distance of 2300 kilometers.

The following table shows the length in kilometers of possible journeys both by steam launch and by pirogue during high and low water periods.

439 178 [437] The conclusion to be drawn from the preceding tables is not favorable toward orienting Laotian trade towards the ports of French Indo-China. It is evident that the export trend of animals and products shows a marked tendency to move towards Oubone and Siam. Indeed, Siam's share of total exports from Lower Laos (merchandise and animals), which was 179,627 francs in 1898, rose to 381,185 francs in 1899. This was an increase of more than double.

On the other hand, we see that the share of Annam, Cochinchina, and Cambodia in this same traffic, which was 699,712 francs in 1898, fell to 466,477 francs in 1899, representing an approximate decrease of one-third.

[496] The causes of this persistent and increasing orientation of Laotian trade towards Siam are perhaps to be sought in the opening of the railroad from Bangkok to Korat (1) as well as in the customs system of

(1) The king of Siam inaugurated this line on December 21, 1900.

French Indo-China.

439 497 505 There is no question but that the railroad constitutes a considerable improvement over the old means of transport, as much by virtue of the lower costs and shorter travel time as by the suppression of the dangers and bothers of the cart road from Korat to Bangkok (domestic duties, exactions of the local authorities, robberies, etc.). But are these reasons sufficient to explain or justify the admitted fact?

The River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales] service is, as we have previously noted, the most rapid and least expensive means of transporting merchandise from Luang-Prabang to Saigon. Why then is this service, which is superior even in its present imperfection, scorned by exporters in general and used mainly by importers for products destined for the Europeans in Laos? The answer is a simple one. Exporters would not hesitate to use the Mekong route and to transport their products to Pnom-Penh or to Saigon-Cholon if, as they can do at Moulmein, at Xieng-Mai, at Nong-Khay, at Bassac, at Oubone, at Korat and at Bangkok, they could obtain [438] supplies there of imported merchandise from various sources to make up the counterpart of their exports. But, besides the fact that they would not be able to find certain special merchandise which is indispensable to them in the French marketplaces, they could not obtain the rest except at an increase of fifty or sixty percent or even more over the ordinary prices in the markets of Siam and Burma which we have just cited.

149: Reinach--363a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

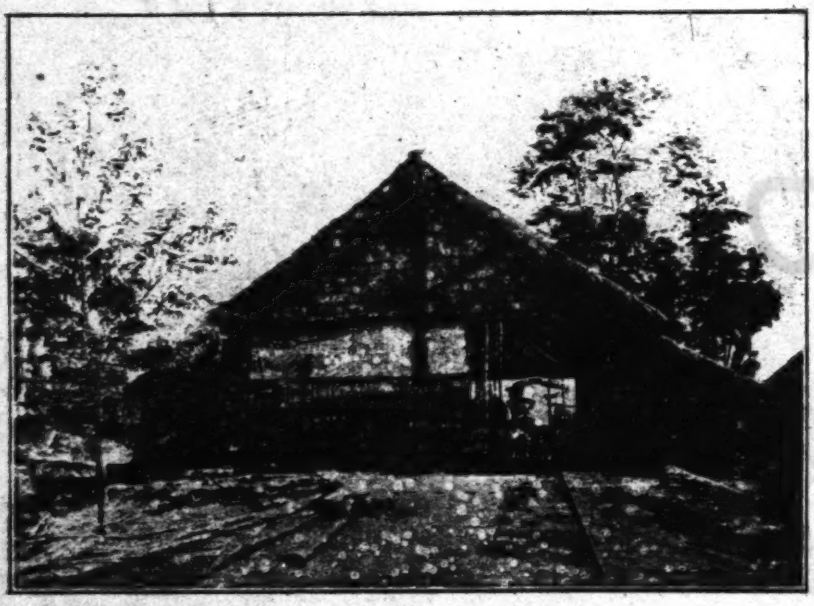

Fig. 113 /p.478/ South Khone railway station.

3: Robequain--101-102 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians-1-2
116, 491, 499

"It will be by highway transport that the complete opening up of Laos, already partly realized, will be accomplished. The first job was to connect the wide reaches of the middle Mekong with the China Sea, across the Annamite ridge which is very narrow at that point. The best road, metalled throughout and open all the year around, is that between Savannakhet and Quang Tri on the mandarin road, through Ai Lai Pass (410 meters). Another which is more mountainous and less dependable, but a little shorter, goes from Vinh to Thakhek via Nape, [102] crossing the Annamite summit at an altitude of 715 meters. Throughout its Laos section it has wooden bridges which must be rebuilt after each rainy season, with a resulting large increase in taxation. It competes with the new road from Se Bang Fay, which extends the téléférique west of Mu Gia Pass.

In the mountainous country lying between the Red River and the Mekong, road work is more difficult than in northern Tonkin. A series of ridges and high plateaus running northwest to southeast presents serious obstacles to the extension of roads into the region. Moreover, the population is scarce and the mineral resources, apparently not as great as Tonkin's, remain unexploited. However, the two capitals of Laos, Vientiane and Luang Prabang, will not long lack regular communications with the deltas of Tonkin and North Annam; during the dry season it is already possible to go by automobile from Hanoi to Luang Prabang through Vinh and the Tran Ninh plateau (the Astrid road or Colonial Road No. 7).

Finally, the inadequacy of the Mekong, which seems practically irremediable, as well as Saigon's desire for the largest possible share of the Laos trade, has resulted in construction of a road branching off the Cochin China system and going up river from Kratié. This was finished as far as Paksé between 1935 and 1937, in less than three dry seasons—thanks to the systematic organization of the work which mustered a total of 6,500 coolies in this unhealthy and sparsely populated region. The trip from Saigon to Paksé can be done in about twelve hours; it used to take six days by launch. The metalled highway is to be extended along the left bank of the river as far as Vientiane.

By means of these roads the ports of Indo-China hope effectively to rival Bangkok. As a matter of fact Thailand now draws a large part of Laos' overseas traffic thanks to the railroads which early were built as far as Chiengmai to the north and across Siamese Laos as far as Khon Kaen and Ubon; these termini are linked to the Mekong by motor highways which are steadily being improved by Thailand."

10: d'Orleans--261 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 501

"We are entering Laos itself, and shall soon be in a position to verify our observations. Nothing detains us here, [LSS: at Sop Nao] our coolies are paid and dismissed, and we have but to start. We find four pirogues sufficient for our party; they are about ten yards long, but narrower than those on the Black River; the awnings are higher, and bamboos tied to both sides of the boats make them balance more steadily. The boatmen use two kinds of oars, which they manage sometimes with the aid of a bamboo ring as a kind of rowlock, sometimes with both hands only. One oar is small and made in a single piece, the other is larger, and has a wooden blade fastened to it by small stems of bamboo. The sail of a windmill gives a very fair idea of it. A steersman uses a similar oar in the front of the boat, to guide the pirogue through the rapids."

10: d'Orleans--283 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 361, 501

"We still meet with fishing-rafts; but here the terraces support round huts with a rectangular opening in front; the bamboos are arranged above them to meet the current with a corner only, so that they should not catch the detritus, which would otherwise accumulate. From a distance, the effect of these buildings is rather like an enlarged beaver village, and we can imagine that the lacustral dwellings, of which so many remains are found in European lakes, must have resembled them closely.

We pass rafts laden with rice, in the middle two straw mats are connected by a roof; there is a little terrace in front and another at the back. The whole is fifteen yards long, and the Kas boatmen slowly row them down the stream."

10: d'Orleans--289 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 133, 361, 501

[LSS: near Luang Prabang] "The river is 300 or 400 yards wide; the banks are steep but low, the villages are numerous and always surrounded by small woods, while sea gulls wheel and cry over our heads. Our boats travel slowly; the men have fastened the two pirogues side by side, and like our boys they are busy washing and dressing before they enter the city. At four o'clock we pass the Laotian Custom House on our left, and, thanks to our flag, we are not stopped."

10: d'Orleans--289-290 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 133, 441, 501, 563

"Lower down,[LSS: at Luang Prabang] lying against the river bank itself, immense rafts, real houses of thirty to forty yards long, carry stocks of merchandise and of various commodities, regularly [290] stacked one above the other. Chinamen live in these floating establishments.

The bank only rises some fifteen yards, and the shallow water scarcely hides a few sandbanks, while the calm powerful river flows on in a muddy stream more than 400 yards wide."

10: d'Orleans--365-366 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 501

"Our boat is large and comfortable, being a palace in comparison with the canoes of the Black River or the Nam Ou. A bamboo flooring is placed on two parallel canoes the [366]roof is high enough to permit one to stand erect beneath it. The whole with its three compartments, carries besides ourselves the interpreter, the boys, and eight oarsmen; four of whom are in the prow, while two have oars in the direction of the boat's axis to guide it when in the rapids. We quickly settle ourselves into this floating house, in one corner being our beds; while in the middle is a table and some chairs, and at one end an improvised oven, made of sand and stones, which serves as kitchen."

23: Franck--287-288 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 501

"We were off down the small river about seven next morning. To have started earlier, with a heavy fog filling the whole valley of a stream bristling with rocks and rapids, would have been dangerous. The king's son-in-law and I each had a boat, though I should have liked better to have had him with me, for the sake of information as well as companionship. The craft were what the French call pirogues, long and narrow, as slim and long in proportion as a lead-pencil, sharpened at both ends, and just about as easily turned over. They were frailly made of boards barely an inch thick, tied together with vines, with a prairie-schooner top of banana-leaves held in shape by a network of bamboo splints, and movable back and forth as sun, wind, rain, or lack thereof suggested; and mine had a raised platform with a mat in honor of my super-princely rank. It was of about the size, and the comfort, of its [288] antithesis, of the mule-litter of northern China, which it strangely resembled in its jerky overbalanced gait, teetering so incessantly that I could not even write rough notes in it. I had four boatmen, two at each of the slightly raised, distant, pencil-like ends of the craft, all wearing tattooed breeches but not much else. Sitting cross-legged and half pretending to paddle, these typical piroguiers of Luang Prabang seemed the personification of laziness, until one saw them in the rapids, the rock gorges, the genuine waterfalls they dare to shoot."

23: Franck--294 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 501, 515

"Bamboo rafts, with little houses on them, made their way more slowly down the stream, so placid now that it mirrored the ever-lower hills densely covered with jungle-forest, networks of lianas, some trees completely shrouded in vines, whole hillsides of huge banana-plumes, flashes of birds across them. Women wearing nothing but skirts were getting water from the river; others, especially at sundown, were bathing themselves and their naked children. Bonzes in dirty yellow robes, loafing, or horse-playing to use up the energy their calling does not permit them to waste in work or domestic happiness, showed themselves here and there along the way. The people seemed darker, burned to an almost Madrasi color."

23: Franck--297 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 484, 493, 501

"There were two Fords in Luang Prabang, that which had come for me at Don-mo and one belonging to the king. It would of course have been bad manners for the commissaire openly to emphasize his real bosshood by sporting the better car; besides, the garage mechanics of the capital are as inexperienced as filling-stations are rare; hence the transportation that had been placed at my disposal lacked something of the regality of its rival, particularly in the matter of diligent polishing. There were also some horses, a few elephants, several victorias, even three or four rickshaws, though these, except perhaps that of the king inside the palace grounds, might as well not have been imported, for there were no men in this languid Eden both able and willing to pull them. Nearly every one walks in Luang Prabang, barefooted and silent, unless he travels by boat. For the most important conveyances are the long narrow pirogues, some of them surprisingly large, hollowed out of single tree-trunks, which ply the Mekong and the Nam-khan that flows into it above the town. On the bow of each boat there is almost sure to be a bouquet of flowers, a pretty custom, even if it is probably based on a superstition, and one in keeping with this gentle people of a land so kindly treated by nature."

23: Franck--297-298 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 226, 501, 526

"Huge fish are caught in the Mekong, weighing a hundred and fifty, two hundred, sometimes even two hundred and fifty--not pounds, but kilograms, fish so big that it takes ten men to carry one of them and one man to carry a severed head. It is easy to understand what the flap of such a fish-tail sometimes means to the fishermen in their frail vine-tied canoes. But it is just the fishing for such a people in such a climate; for every time they catch a fish they can--and usually do--[298] rest for a week without going hungry. Racing pirogues as much as twenty paces long lie bottom up on bamboo-horses under little thatch roofs here and there upon the high weed-grown river-bank at the edge of the capital, being used only in November during the annual regattas. For rowing--more exactly paddling--is the athletic sport of Luang Prabang."

23: Franck--324-325 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 501, 505

"More exactly they are floating furnished houses, a combination of raft and boats surmounted by three or four rooms and servant quarters, two small windows on each side of the superstructure, and all those refinements one expects among such a comfort-loving people as the French. At high water these house-rafts can go down the Mekong in fewer days than are required for the overland trip through the jungle, though by no means so fast as I proposed to make it; and at all times this way of leaving Luang Prabang is so usual [325] that rarely does a Frenchman in the colonial service go by land. In fact most of those bound for the capital come up the river also, though that is a hard and tedious job--for the native boatmen. An official salary continues unabated irrespective of speed. Upon due reflection, no doubt, an income forever dragging at the heels of my personal exertions has much more to do with my weakness for hurrying than have any impressions on the transmigration of souls. This trip down the river is not only comfortable, but interesting and sometimes exciting, if not dangerous. The piroguiers say prayers and throw food into the air, or place it, as well as flowers, on the bow of the boat before passing bad rapids, that the unseen spirits may be propitiated. But on board, all the amenities of French civilization prevail, from whist to the three-cornered drama, and romance has culminated and domestic disaster befallen during these long and too restful journeys."

23: Franck--341 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 484, 501

"Down this shot now and then a man with only a loin-cloth over his tattooed thighs, riding a little green bamboo raft, the only part of the craft above water being a raised place for a bundle of a few clothes and other belongings, and a jackfruit for possible hunger."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

accustomed to use when asking potential converts if they were willing to accept Christianity. Thus, by his linguistic industry, the Father had done no more than bring his religion into secret ridicule; while the Meos, at least, are not likely to have felt anything other than slight bewilderment at the evangelist's quite unintelligible discourse.

Laos, they said at Saigon, was happily free from those disorders that made travel so chancy in the rest of Indo-China. The only difficulty was getting to Laos. Once you got there all was well, and there was nothing to stop you going about the country as much as you liked.

This account proved to be cruelly fictitious. You left Vientiane in the same way as you came — by plane. Either that, or you waited an indefinite time for the military convoy which provisioned Xien-Khouang in the north and the posts between — islands in perilous seas. The only way to get to Luang Prabang, the second of the ancient capitals of the country, which was about 300 miles away up the Mekong — or about 250 miles across country — was by one of the occasional motor pirogues. It now remained to find out what were the possibilities of making the trip in this way.

Providing myself with a Chinese interpreter — the pirogues being, of course, Chinese owned — I went down to the river. By walking a mile or two along the thirty-feet-deep bank you came to a place where the main stream floundered over from the Siamese side, so that a few barely connected stagnant puddles lay directly beneath. In one of these the pirogue lay, cracking in the sun and seemingly abandoned. It was an ugly, shapeless craft; a small junk, with its deck-space entirely covered over with a kind of hutment, so that travellers were confined to a stinking semi-darkness for the duration of their journey. It was arranged so that air and light could be kept out by the lowering of rush-matting screens over the few apertures in the sides.

A few corpse-like figures lay strewn about the fore-shore and the

149: Reinach--la G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 1. [Frontispiece] Laotian boatman.

149; Reinach--47a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotiens AM8

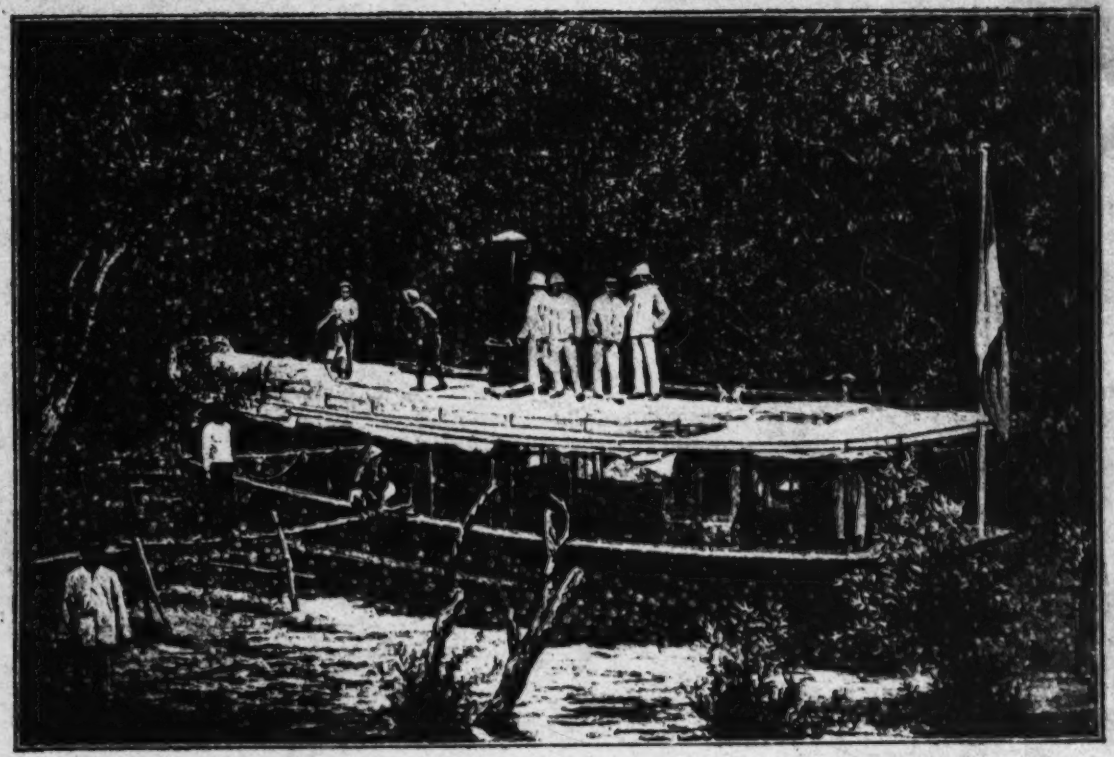

Fig. 19 /p. 65/ The launch Argus between Tat-Vai and Tat-Liou, in 1891.
(Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

149: Reinach--50a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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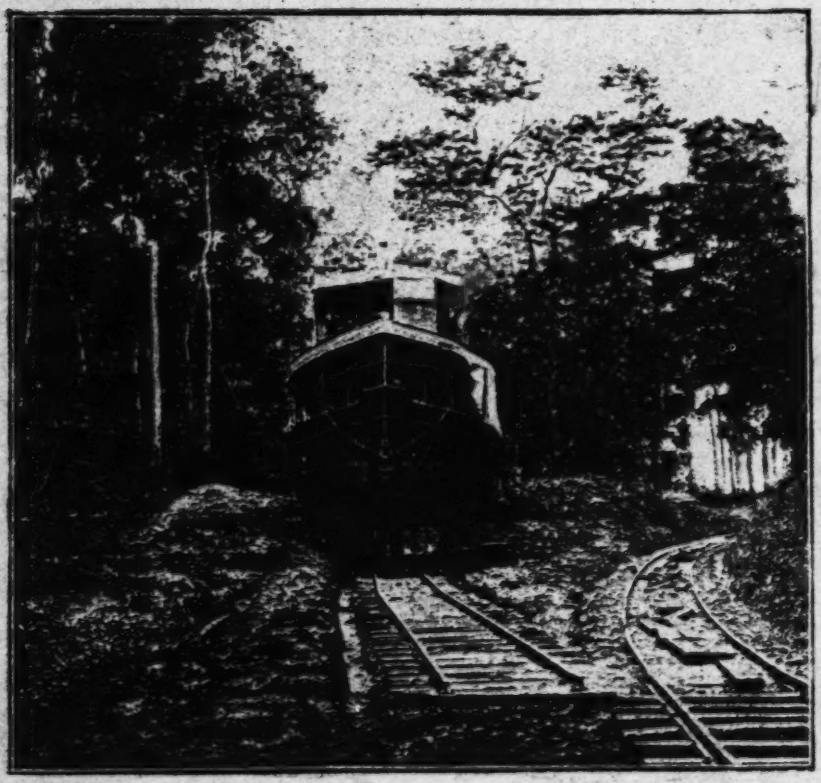

Fig. 20 /p. 70/ The Garcerie crossing the island of Khone from one reach to another (1897). (Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

149; Reinach--50b G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
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Fig. 21 /p. 71/ A critical moment--the passage of the Trentinian across the island of Khone (1897). (Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

149: Reinach--52a G-3 (no date)1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

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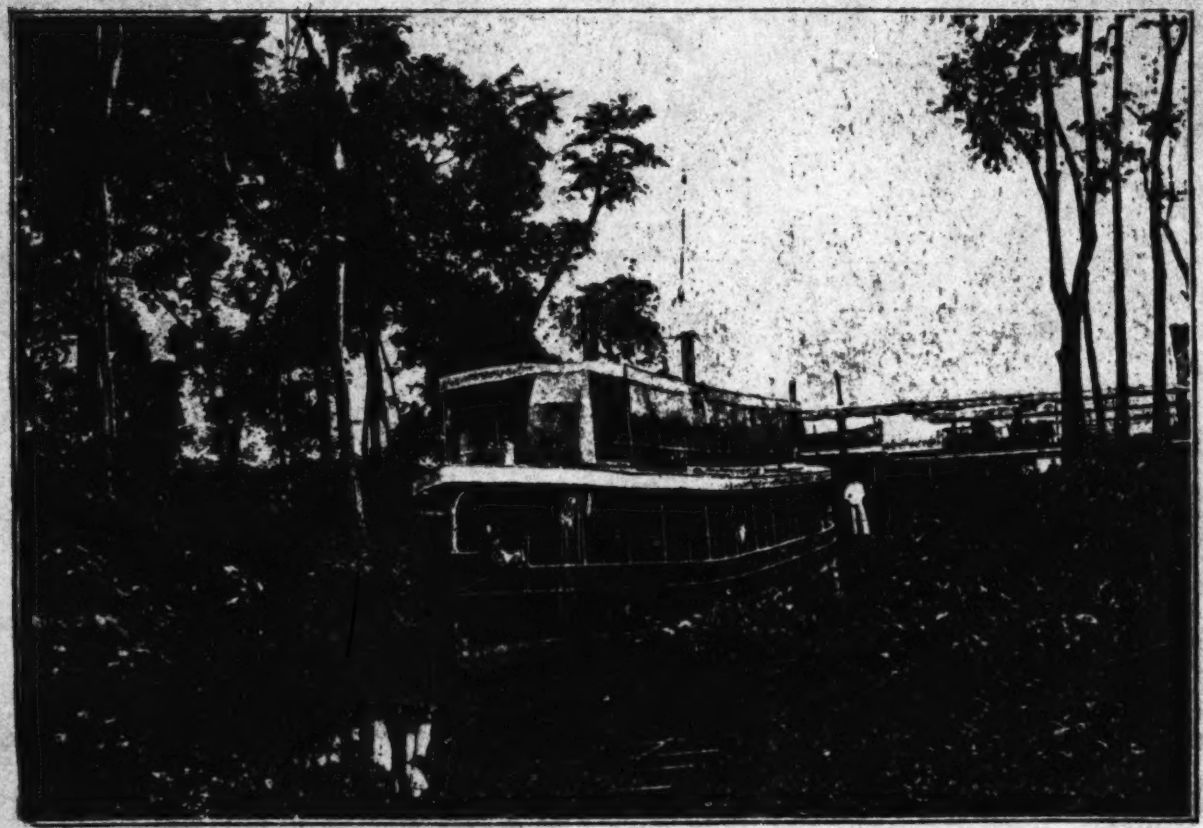

Fig. 22 /p. 75/ The Garcerie in the tidal dock at South Khone. (Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

527 Those desirous of obtaining special graces give similar celebrations
182 which last several days and several nights, and the offerings are more beautiful and more varied. It is generally on occasions of this sort that assumptions of the habit by bonzes and their pupils are particularly likely to occur.

Being present at these ceremonies confers certain indulgences, and that is why they are so punctually followed and why all those who take part try [224] to help in celebrating them by offerings of all sorts.

[796] On the spot where the celebration is to be held, a sort of pulpit is constructed beforehand where the bonzes stand as they come up by turns to read passages chosen for the occasion from the sacred books. They never allow themselves to be disturbed by the surrounding noise, but stand as if transfixed in the middle of the songs and shouts.

It is readily understandable that this should be an agreeable way to procure one's salvation, but since it is very costly it is not within everyone's means. Fortunately, there are ways of compromising with
[565] heaven which enable even the poorest to associate themselves in these great celebrations, in accordance with their resources, by means of even very modest offerings and to benefit therefrom both spiritually and materially.

There is no doubt but that a belief in the efficacy of plenary and partial indulgences enters into their consideration, but it is equally reasonable to suppose that the attraction of the profane pleasures which one enjoys in the course of these gatherings is not the least of the motivating causes which lead the Laotian people to frequent them so zealously.

[71] Pirogue races. We have seen that pirogue races and regattas took place during some of the legal holidays, and a few words of
526 explanation on this matter are given below.

501 This custom must have been introduced by the Malays and then handed down from the Kmers to the Laotians, following an ascending direction from south to north.

The pirogues used in the "Souang-Hua" (1) regattas are specially

(1) Literally, pirogues which run.

built and exclusively reserved for this use. Sometimes as much as twenty-five meters in length, they are hewn out of specially chosen wood and have most elegant delicate and elongated lines. Their extremities are armed with what appear to be slender gilded horns. The exterior is lacquered black with gold ornamentation and the

inside is lacquered red.

The pirogues are manned by forty or fifty oarsmen who half [225] [Illustration] [226] [Blank page] [227] crouch and half sit in pairs on what amount to thwarts made of bamboo and joined to a framework. The oarsmen face forward as they paddle, holding their blade in both hands and not supporting it on any point of the boat. A pirogue chief, usually a mandarin, is in the prow, and in the stern is the pilot, who jumps about and stimulates the whole crew with his shouts and gestures. Amidships there are sometimes musicians, with kene, gong and tom-tom, and two or three trained men who, their belts [Illustration here] adorned with enormous jointed "lingams," dance the "Phallic" standing up with their feet on the edges of the pirogue and declaim occasional odes and improvisations the terms of which are extremely crude.(1). In their songs they invite beings,

(1) In southern Laos the men who perform these dances hold grotesque masks in front of their faces with their hands.

plants and elements to unite, combine and fertilize one another so as to maintain "Life" in all its forms on the surface of the earth.

The crews of the different racing pirogues are clothed in different colors, like the jackets of our jockeys, and they vie ardently with one another, making the water fly to surpass their own efforts. The crew which reaches the finish line first manifests its enthusiasm by [228] standing up in the pirogue, uttering shouts of triumph and brandishing the oars. Oftentimes all these uncoordinated movements result in throwing everybody into the water, but the pirogue is soon righted and emptied to the accompaniment of roars of laughter and the crew members take up their posts again, ready for a new race.

Racing pirogues are not launched until the time when they are to be used. Ordinarily they are stored on sawhorses and under sheds on the grounds of certain pagodas whose bonzes are responsible for their upkeep, and for storing the oars and accessories and clothing of the oarsmen.

Certain pirogues are held in common by the inhabitants of a village, while others are the property of particular rich men, muong chiefs or high mandarins who have had them built at their own expense and pay for their upkeep and for that of their crew of oarsmen. In Laos a man will become the owner of a racing pirogue as in France one might become the owner of a racing stable. The racehorse

149: Reinach--170a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

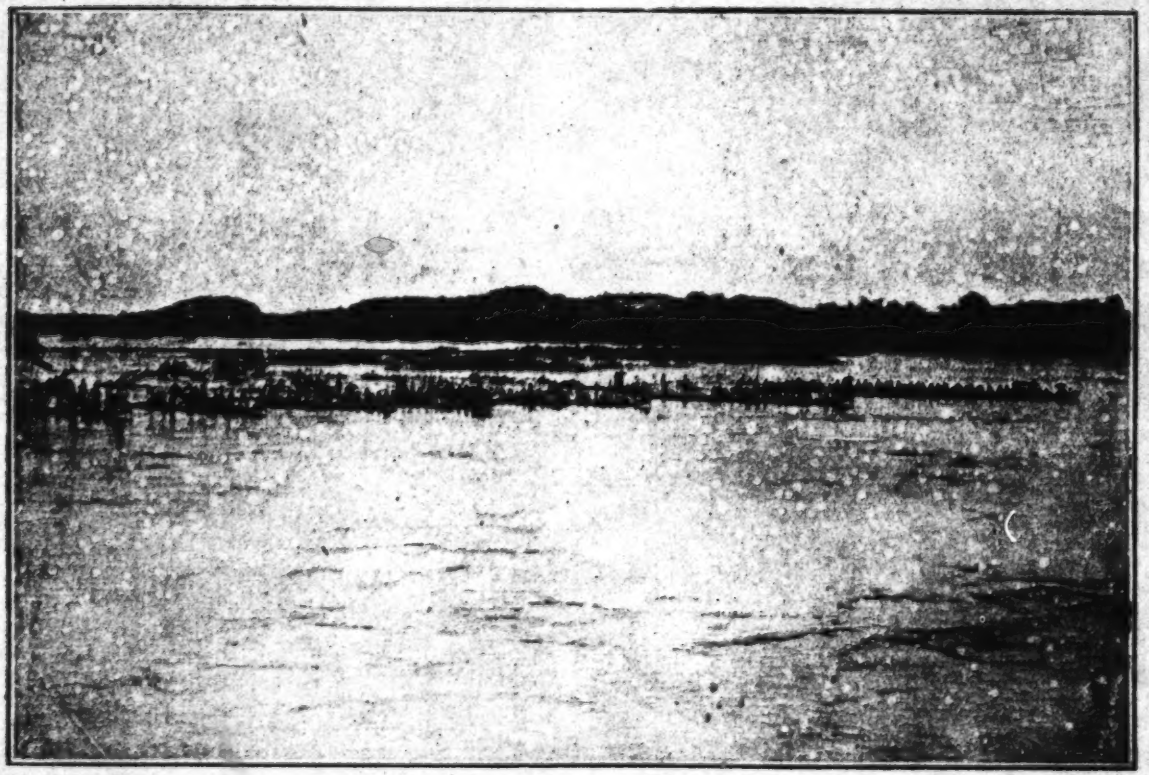

Fig. 55 /p. 225/ Feast of the Great Oath. Racing pirogues at Khong (October 4, 1898).

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Fig. 56 /p. 227/ Pirogue races at Khong.

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[525]
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Tribal Tai

s the long pirogue, and the jockeys are the oarsmen. Nor will it be
n vain to remark that, as in our races, heavy wagers are often laid
by the owners and the lovers of this kind of sport.

Thais or Phou-Thais. The Thais or Phou-Thais are divided into
619 four distinct groups. These are:

144 1. The Khao-Thais (white);
175 2. The Dam-Thais (black);
3. The Deng-Thais (red);
4. The Neua-Thais (northern).

The Khao-Thais are the result of marriages between Chinese men and Dam-Thai women, or vice versa, although the former case is the most frequent. They do not form large agglomerations, but only isolated family groups in the midst of the surrounding population. They are found only in the northern part of the Sib-Song-Chau-Thais, a territory which is dependent on Laos from the ethnographic point of view but administratively attached to Tonkin.

The following is what is known of their origin: [229] [Illustration] [230] [Blank page] [231]

"Around 1600 a rebel Chinese leader assembled a few partisans, set sail from Canton and landed at Haiphong. From there he went on to Bac-Ninh, continually increasing the number of his men. At Bac-Ninh the rebel leader received an envoy from the king of Annam, who asked him to help put down the Thais and the Muongs of the Black River. The Chinese leader accepted, and after leaving Bac-Ninh he went to Lao-Kay, from which point he soon entered the province of the Sib-Sing-Chau-Thais. After defeating the Thais and the Muongs he was given this province out of gratitude for his help. His troops, worn out by the campaign, settled in the country and lost no time in marrying Thai women. It was from such unions that the white Thais were born" (1).

(1) E. Picanon, op. cit. [Le Laos français, Paris, 1901.]

619 Dam-Thais and Deng-Thais. These two varieties have a common
563 origin and belong to the same family (2). The different names which

(2) Thais are found in nearly all of Laos, where they are scattered among the Laotian population. They are particularly numerous in the Hua-Pahn, where they are in the majority in certain muongs.

149: Reinach--192a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 78 /p. 271/ A pirogue convoy setting out on the Mekong.

149: Reinach--243a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina.
Laotians AM2

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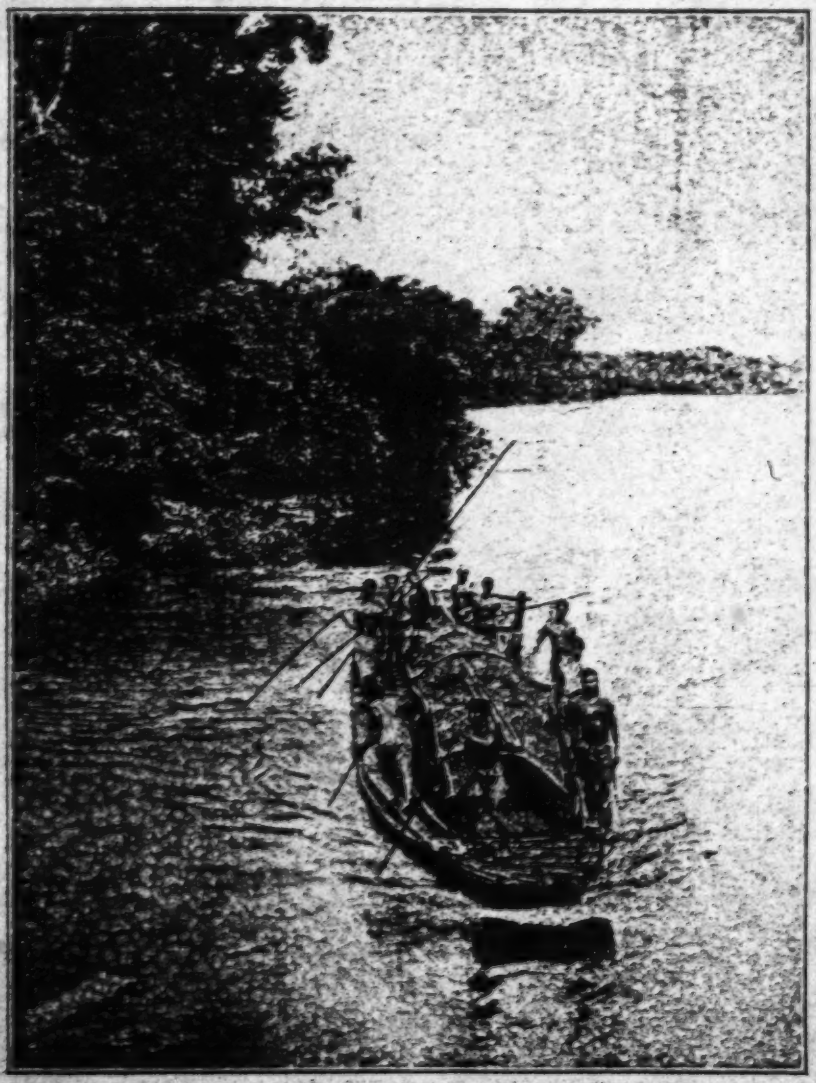

Fig. 88 /p. 331/ Pirogue going up the Mekong. (Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

149: Reinach--250 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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19. Miscellaneous resins.

Several trees, such as the "Kok-Mai-Niang, Kok-Mai-Tabeng, [Illustration here] Kok-Mai-Sak" (1), etc., yield an oleo-resin which,

(1) See Appendix XX.

when mixed with paddy husks, is used to make torches and a siccative, shiny extract which is called "Nam-Mane-Niang," and again a kind of pitch (Khi-Si) which is used to caulk pirogues and to smear various basketwork receptacles so as to make them watertight. It is similar to damarine.

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The production of these resins is limited to local needs.

20. Black lacquer.

The black lacquer of Laos is a natural black varnish, thick and [343] solid, which is called "Nam-Kieng." It is secreted by the "Kok-Mai-Nam-Kieng."

Nam-Kieng is used to lacquer racing pirogues, elephant palanquins, pagoda columns and statues, frames, receptacles of different kinds, sword sheaths, etc. The lacquer producing trees grow only in certain localities, and the varnish is not exported. Its price varies throughout the land between 62 and 75 francs per hundred kilograms. [435]

It would be of interest to identify this lacquer with that of Japan, and to study the question as to whether it might not be possible to increase the number of trees which produce it with a view towards making it the basis of an export trade, at least to the countries bordering on Laos.

21. Cunao (the mock gambier, Mak-Soua in Laotian).

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The cunao is a brownish tubercle used instead of catechu, the color of which it has, for dyeing cloth. It is found in Cammon, in a part of the Hua-Pahn and on the right bank of the Nam-Hou. This product is bought mainly by Annamites and Chinese, who use it in Annam and Tonkin for dyeing the peasants' work clothes.

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Fig. 88 /p.342/ Racing pirogue.

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Fig. 89 /p.350/ Fishing for the "Pa-Phon" on the Mekong.

149; Reinach--315a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

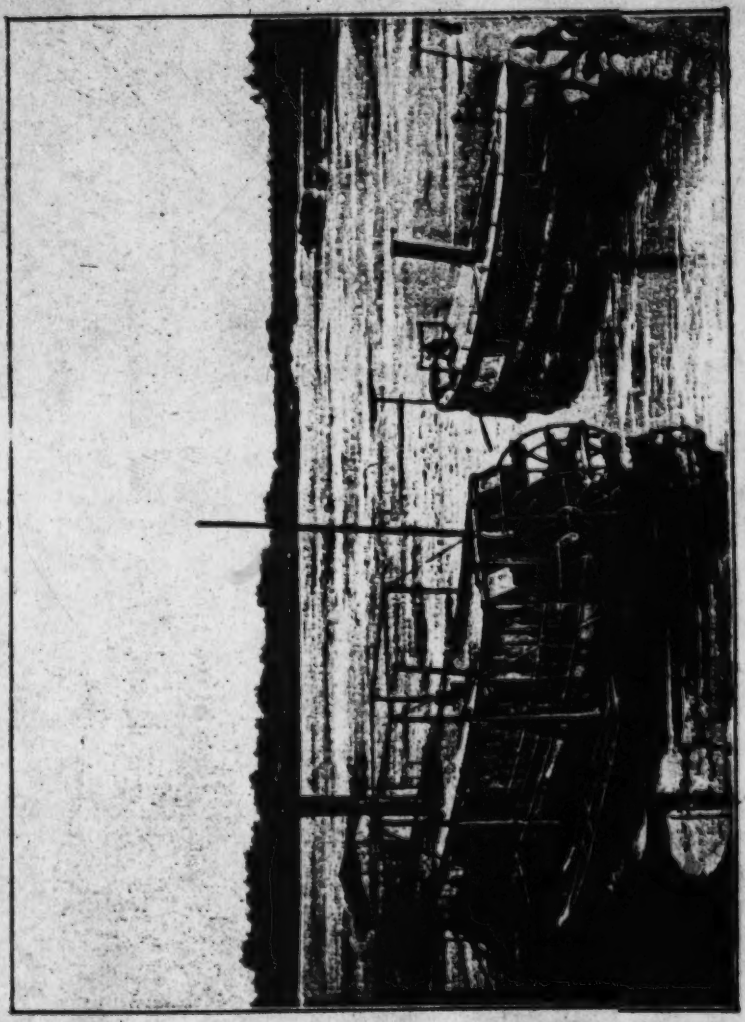

Fig. 103 /p.427/ Administration launches. The "Haiphong" and the "Ham-Luong."

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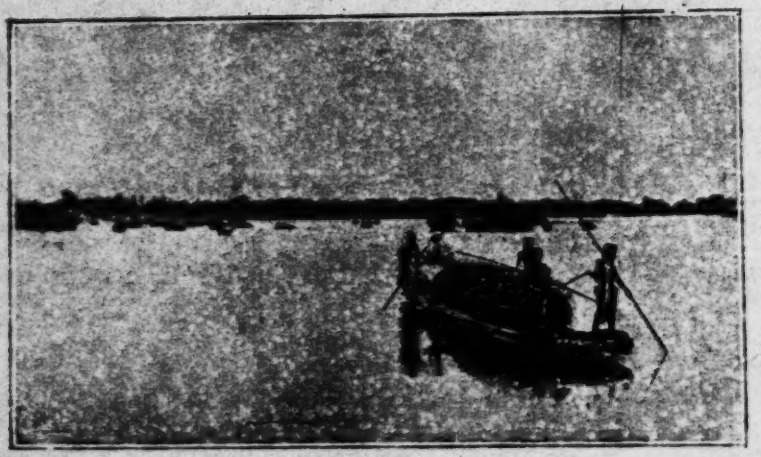

Fig. 104 /p.431/ Pirogue going up the Mekong.

492 and some are even trained to trot. It may be reckoned that the average distance covered daily by a team of two oxen, on flat ground, naturally, is from 15 to 20 kilometers.

501 505 2. BY WATER. Besides the natural method of floating, or of floating improved by bamboo air jackets (used for rough timber), steamships, pirogues and rafts are used in Laos for trips and for transport.

Steamships. The steamships in Laos at present are:

1. The Lagrandière, a 100 metric ton gunboat which is at present immobilized at Xieng-Kok, just above Xieng-Lap.

2. The fleet of the superior residency, including the Argus, the Haiphong and the Ham-Luong.

3. The commercial fleet of the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [Compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine], composed of the following ships: the Trentinian, the Colombert, the Garcerie and the Vien-Tiane, each of 105 tons' burthen, and the Massie of 100 tons (1).

(1) See Appendix XXX.

Pirogues. Pirogues are used for trips and for transporting merchandise, particularly in an upriver direction.

There are pirogues on the Mekong and its chief tributaries which are capable of covering great distances and which vary in size and in tonnage. They are from 10 to 25 meters long and can transport from 1 to 6 tons of merchandise. Depending on their size and the difficulty of the journey, these pirogues are manned by a sufficient number of men, generally varying from four to ten. [445] They are maneuvered by oars and poles going downstream, and by poles and towlines going upstream.

Rafts. There are two kinds of rafts. Some are formed of two pirogues which are joined side by side, covered with a floor and lightened on the sides by packets of bamboo, while the others are composed solely of bundles of bamboo which are solidly joined and then covered with a floor. Both kinds are used going downstream only. The former are dismounted when the journey is over. [Illustration here] The pieces of bamboo are removed, and the disjoined pirogues are ready to go back upstream separately.

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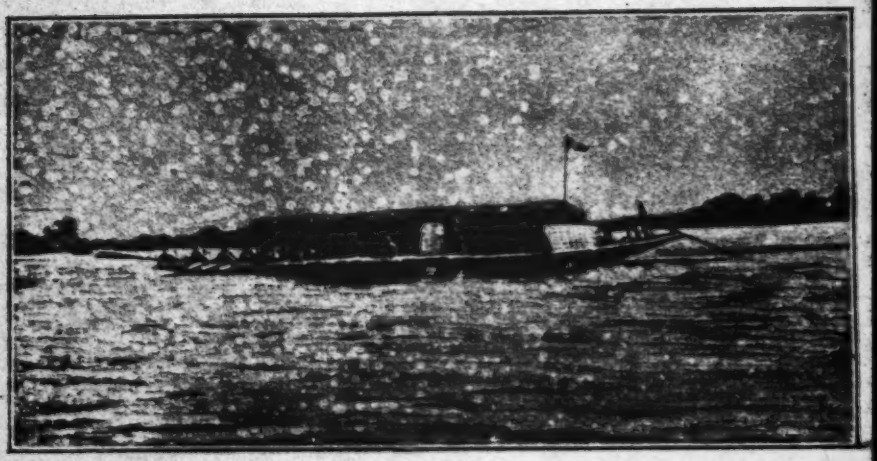

Fig. 106 /p.445/ Raft descending the Mekong.

149: Reinach--334 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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The rafts which are composed solely of bamboo are demolished upon their arrival, and the material which went into them is sold for various uses, particularly for making tiles of crushed bamboo.

Depending on their dimensions the rafts made up of two pirogues will have a crew of six to twelve men, who also serve as pirogue boatmen on the return trip.

The bamboo rafts have a similar crew, although their progress is necessarily much slower than that of the above rafts.

The following is a list of the various kinds of pirogues and rafts used in Laos:

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[446] Types of pirogues	Size in meters	Capacity	Stops	Usual course	Periods of navigation
Rafts (Phe)	30	200 to 250 piculs or 12 to 15 tons	Xieng-Khong, Luang-Prabang, Nong-Khay, Vien Tiane, etc.	Xieng-Khong to Luang-Prabang and Nong-Khay. Nong-Khay to Saphai, Bassac and Khong	All year in north Laos. March to June in south Laos.
Large pirogues with packets of bamboo on the sides (Hua-Ob).	20	60 to 100 piculs, or 3600 kilograms to 6 tons.	Same	Same	
Large pirogues. Those which go from Bassac to Pnom-Penh are called Hua-Khmen.	15	60 to 100 piculs, or 3600 kilograms to 6 tons.	Xieng-Khong, Luang-Prabang, Nong-Khay, Vien Tiane, Bassac and Khong.	Xieng-Khong to Savannakhet. Bassac to Pnom-Penh.	May to October in northern Laos. May and June in southern Laos.
Large pirogues. Those which go from Oubone to Bassac and Khong are called Hua-Moun.	12	40 to 50 piculs, or 2400 kilograms to 3 tons.	Xieng-Khong, Luang-Prabang, Nong-Khay, Vien Tiane and Oubone.	Oubone to Champa and Bassac	(a) Laotian pirogues: August for the salt trade. (b) Chinese pirogues: all year.

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Types of pirogues	Size in meters	Capacity	Stops	Usual course	Periods of navigation
Medium pirogues. (Hua-Vieng).	10	30 to 40 piculs, or 1800 to 2400 kilograms.	All points on the Mekong and its tributaries.	Various courses (ad libitum).	All year.
Small pirogues (Touk-He). Fishing pirogues or those which make short trips from one village to another.	6 to 8	8 to 15 piculs, or 500 to 1000 kilograms			

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Fig. 107 /p. 450/ The Trentinian and the Massie of the River Merchant Fleet /Messageries fluviales/. (Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

149: Reinach--353a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 110 /p.466/ A racing pirogue.

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Fig. 115 /p.485/ The arrival of the Bassac at South Khone.

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Fig. 124 /p. 519/ Bonzes navigating on the Mekong.

·10: d'Orleans--263 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 502

"Before the start, our men fasten fresh bamboos to the sides of the pirogues, and place a thick row of palm trees round the bows, forming a small hedge. The effect is original, for we seem to carry a garden in front of us. In spite of these precautions, we ship several waves at the first rapid; it is considered dangerous, and we are not sorry to find ourselves on the other side, for the impression is very different when descending the river instead of ascending it; everything depends upon the steersman placed at the bows. The man must be very skilful, for he has to guide the pirogue, which moves with great rapidity, exactly between two rocks, one surplus touch of the oar would inevitably sink it."

10: d'Orleans--271 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 502, 789

"The river narrows and forms a rapid, which is considered dangerous; and before he approaches it our steersman takes off his turban and rolls it round his breast, then he washes his face, kneels down like a Mussulman with clasped hands, then, raising himself, he strikes the pirogue several times with his hand; he is invoking the devil, who guards the rapids, and is begging him to grant us a safe passage. This prayer is a Laotian custom; for my own part the ceremonial inspires me with less confidence than our men's quick eyes and strong arms, which take us through the rapids without any check."

133 vast impenetrable forests and "the traveler sees only tall grass or
137 gigantic trees intertwined with lianas, then all at once, through a break in the foliage, he discovers the cascades of a river. This is the only noise to interrupt the impressive silence of these great forests" (2).

2. L. de Reinach, Le Laos, 1911.

133 Set against the huge mountain masses of Yunnan, this tormented region has always been the natural refuge of peoples driven out of India or China by famine, great invasions or religious discord, and its orography explains, in large measure, the multiplicity of tiny
/631/ states which were formed there throughout the ages. Its abrupt defiles radiate out and, so to speak, become calmed in the valleys of the Ménam, the Mékong and the Red River, and its principal substructure spreads out /5/ and ends in a vast plateau known as the plateau of Tran-Ninh, whose hillocks are planted with pine trees and drop suddenly from east to west.

In the southeast, however, the Tran-Ninh plateau clings "like an excrescence" to a long artery known as the Annamitic Chain which forms a distinct line of demarcation between Laos and Annam. This chain runs parallel to the coast in a northwest-southeast direction, and its peaks go all the way down to the Mékong by successive stages, first forming plateaus or folds of ground covered with thick forests (dông in Laotian), then slighter undulations where there are forest glades (khok in Laotian), and finally vast ricefields ending in the river.

The Mékong. This great river frontier which, over 800 kilometers of its length, marks the political separation of French Indo-China from the kingdom of Siam, gives life to Laos, together with its tributaries, "as the Nile constitutes Egypt." It fertilizes it with
/226/ its alluvia, feeds the native with its fish and guarantees transport for
/505/ his rafts and pirogues from north to south. But this liquid highway where nature seems to have taken pleasure in piling up obstacles and which is cut by numerous rapids and barred by waterfalls, can not be
/502/ /6/ regarded as usable for regular navigation over all of its length.
133 Fed by the melting snows of Tibet, the Mékong enters Laos through a capricious gorge, widens for a moment in the alluvia of an old lake basin and narrows again towards Luang-Prabang. Grandiose surroundings framed by the blue line of the far-off peaks give it what

part of the natives' diet? Do not its alluvia yield the cotton, tobacco and indigo which are indispensable to the Laotian, and does not the river itself, in the high water period, transport the wood needed for cooking food, so that, in a manner of speaking, it has only to recede in order to collect firewood? Finally, from the commercial point of view, is not the Mékong the great fluvial artery and the only practical route joining Yunnan to Saigon? M. Blancsubé, a former deputy for Cochinchina, envisaged the use to which the Mékong could be put when he said: [372] 133 [502]

"I see in our establishment throughout the whole Mékong valley, the means of making flow into Saigon the products of thirty kingdoms and tribes scattered along the river, as well as those of Yunnan and those of the interior provinces of China. I see the means of making Saigon into one of the greatest storehouses in the world, and making it the queen of the Far East." 000

The vision is a tempting one. Unfortunately, the reality is quite another thing. On the one hand the orientation of trade towards Bangkok was climaxed by the completion of the Korat railroad, while on our part the problem of making the Mékong navigable from Yunnan to the sea is still far from having been solved.

Looked at as a whole, the Mékong flows first in a largely north and south direction as far as Ban-Houé-Pak-Kop (1) (where the Houé- 133

(1) Pak = mouth, junction of rivers.

Kop flows into its right bank), then turns suddenly eastward in the gorge which it has cut around the plateau which forms the last stage of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na.

Macey (2) says, in this connection, that one can almost certainly

(2) "Cinq ans au Laos." Lecture delivered before the Society of Commercial Geography [Société de Géographie commerciale] on November 19, 1895. [113]

accept the hypothesis that in a relatively recent geological epoch the Mékong flowed into the sea in the Gulf of Siam through the valley of the present-day Ménam. The other branch of the Mékong which goes down to the sea through Cambodia and Cochinchina was a continuation of the Nam-Hou. It was only when an upheaval or

3: Robequain--113-116 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians-1-5
116, 133, 503, 505, 177.50 France
636.50

"The Mekong appeared to offer a splendid means of penetrating the plateaus and mountains of Laos. At one time it was even suggested that Saigon could be one of the great ports for Southern China. As early as 1866, the Doudart de Lagrée and Francis Garnier mission realized the difficulties[114]of navigating the river above Kratié. This large river, as a matter of fact, is still very young as far as physical geography is concerned, or rather, a series of recent and still only partially explained tectonic episodes have renewed its youth. It consists of a chain of calm-surfaced reaches, separated by rapids or falls. The chief obstacle to navigation is at Khône where the arms of the river, spread out over an area several kilometers wide, drop 15 meters through torrential and rock-studded channles or cataracts. Here precisely is the border between Cambodia and Laos. Other rapids are scattered both up and down stream, making navigation by launch difficult and uncertain throughout entire sections between Kratié and Savannakhet. It is only at Savannakhet ('the gateway to paradise') that the great navigable reaches begin which permit launches to sail as far as several kilometers above Vientiane without breaking bulk.

Europeans were eager to tame the Mekong. As early as 1890 the Messageries

3: Robequain--113-116 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians-2
116, 133, 503, 505, 177.50 France
636.50

Fluviales de Cochinchine had organized a steamship line which, with the help of some trans-shipment, operated as far as Khône. For more than two years the launch, Argus, tried to get past the Khône barrier through the channels which canoes sometimes used in descending the river. In view of the failure of these attempts, a narrow guage railway was built across Khône Island, and by this means gunboats and then launches were carried to the upper river in 1893.

Conditions of navigation have been improved since then, but scouring the river channels has not always produced the desired results, since the river's reactions are difficult to predict; buoying had been improved up to 1925; more than a thousand towers, buoys and landmarks had been built. Hundred-ton launches, drawing one and one half meters, can reach as far as Khône, at high water, about three months a year; in other months, the section between Kratié and Khône, much of which had to be traversed by canoe up to 1900, can now be covered, with only one trans-shipment, by a short thirty-ton launch which can manage the sharp turns of the narrow channels. Above Khône, the most difficult passage is through the sandstone canyon of Kemmarat, where the river attains [115] a depth of eighteen meters during the heavy floods and the current in some rapids is from nine to ten knots. Since 1910 more powerful launches have been put into service, and were later supplied with semi-Diesel engines; they have gradually reduced the number of changes but the Keng Sa rapids are still impassable at low water

and necessitate trans-shipments to motor-canoes.

In 1895 a small gunboat, the Lagrandière, went up above the Savannakhet-Vientiane reaches to within 50 kilometers of the Yunnan frontier, about 2,500 kilometers from the sea and 400 meters above sea-level; this was a purely sporting exploit. Since then other steamboats have gone up as far as Luang Prabang, but it was realized that regular traffic could not be maintained through one section, dotted with dangerous rapids. Nevertheless, the trip between the two Laotian capitals previously made by native canoes plying upstream, and by rafts going downstream, has been very much speeded up since 1930 by the use of motor canoes.

In brief, progress is summed up in the following figures; in 1900, at low water, it took 65 days or more to go from Saigon to Luang Prabang; in 1909 the time was reduced to a maximum of 50 days; in 1937 the upstream trip took 37 days, downstream 27; and at high water, it took 27 or 22 days, respectively.

In spite of all this, French Upper Laos is still farther from Saigon by water than Saigon is from Marseille. Even below Vientiane in Lower Laos, the transport capacity of the Mekong depends on the obstacles encountered between Savannakhet and Khône. It is difficult to cut down the present length of the time needed for the journey: the narrowness of the channels and the limited power of the engines which can negotiate them do not

permit increasing the useful cargo beyond 100 tons. At low water, trans-shipment is a heavy burden on shipping. In 1936 only 4,644 tons of freight passed the port of Khone going downstream (10) and 5,286 tons upstream.

10. Excluding teak logs which are floated down the river.

Thus the high hopes for the Mekong as a means of transportation have been dashed. Experts believe that if additional improvements could increase the traffic to 25,000 tons a year, [116] this is a maximum which would be hard to surpass. Railways and highways will therefore have to furnish transportation which will be justified in the future by our reasonable expectations for an enlarged Laotian economy, if not by its extent at present. (11)

11. The arguments in favor of the water route are set forth by Colonel Bernard in the Bulletin du Comité de l'Indochine, February 20, 1936. Navigation on the Mekong has undergone great changes since the end of 1937, at the expiration of the contract of the Campagnie Saigonnaise de Navigation et de Transports, which had replaced the Messageries Fluviales. Steam launches no longer negotiate the Kemmarat narrows;

3: Robequain--113-116 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians-5
116, 133, 503, 505, 177.50 France
636.50

there is no longer a regular service between Paksé and Savannakhet. From Savannakhet to Vientiane service is now assured by a company employing flat-bottomed barges and from Vientiane to Luang Prabang and Xieng Sen by motor canoes."

7: Thompson--375 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 489, 503, 653

"The Mekong was the only means of communication with Cochin-Chinese seaports. The subsidy accorded to the Compagnie des Messagéries Fluviales to improve its navigation of the Mekong was too high for the colony's budget, yet inadequate for the work it had to do. Hundreds of thousands of francs were lost in acquiring a knowledge of these problems and in training a personnel. Mekong boats must reckon on three periods of navigation. In low water there are no less than eight trans-shipments between Phom-Penh and Luang-Prabang, by rail and by road, both of which were expensive and difficult to build because of the shifting surface of the land. Mid-season is the best for navigation, since high water means contending with a terrible current. Laos is desperately in need of railroads, and it has fewer than any other country in the Union. Every Governor, from Doumer on, has had railroad projects, but they have always been laid aside for other works. The recent realization of Laos's mineral wealth through journalistic propaganda has been counteracted by the depression; yet once again there is promise to fill this crying need, notably Robin's impetus to road-building in 1935-6. Unless this is soon done, Laotian commerce will escape permanently to Bangkok. Contraband can never be controlled along the great watery frontier, and Siam's comparatively duty-free imports and cheap railroad and boat transportation will always have the advantage."

36: Gourou--23 (no date) 1947 Laotians
116, 311, 361, 376, 503

"Problems of the Mekong and of Laos.

Above Kratié the mighty River Mekong is of very little use. True, it is easy to imagine a marvellous control program, a sort of grandiose Laotian T.V.A. Dams would divide the river into level reaches; locks would allow ships of large tonnage to sail as far as Luang Prabang; the dams would make possible a huge electricity production, and the irrigation of vast tracts. Rice, cotton, maize, would fill the holds of river vessels that would ply to the sea without transhipping their cargos. Pacific and profitable co-operation would be established between Indochina and Siam.... All of which are daydreams. Capital is lacking and, above all, manpower. Such works would be possible only if the lands drained by the Mekong were populous. But Laos should nevertheless not be neglected. It should draw great profit from a modernization of forest exploitation, and from the application of the measures we have outlined above. Nothing valuable, however, will be effected in Laos unless, at first, small, selected areas are developed. It is difficult to help sparse, shifting populations, who escape both health measures and education. Whereas, if the Laotians scientifically colonize their own territory, beginning with integral development of favored areas with health control, they will then be setting up centers of demographic expansion and of economic activity from which the development of the less favored regions can proceed. Only then can the Mekong's domestication be begun."

149; Reinach--45 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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A rapid glance at what has been done to make the river navigable will enable us to indicate the work that has been accomplished, the difficulties that have been overcome, and what still remains to be done.

The question of navigation on the Mékong was first raised by Francis Garnier in 1866 when he went up the great river as second in command of the exploratory mission to Indo-China. At this time, steam navigation on the river stopped at Kratié, about 220 kilometers upstream from Pnom-Penh. As a consequence Francis Garnier was immediately led to study the possibility of steam navigation beyond the Sambor rapids, the extreme limit of the hydrographic exploration which had then been done along the Mékong.

"Steam navigation," he said (1), "although strictly practical as far as the foot of the Khône waterfalls, presents a great many difficulties. Between Kratié and the island of Khône it is doubtful whether any channel exists which is deep enough at the low water period. In the high water period sufficient depth is no longer a question, but the velocity of the current reaches its maximum and is great enough to halt the progress of a steamship, or at least impede its movement."

(1) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

These considerations were true at the time when the author visited these parts, but are no longer entirely applicable as concerns navigability during the high water season. Indeed, steam navigation has gradually been transformed and mechanical equipment has been perfected, yet despite all this a period of twenty-two years passed [62] before any serious and effective attempt was made to achieve results for which Francis Garnier's conclusions could not have led us to hope.

In September 1885 Post-captain Réveillère succeeded in passing, in a torpedo boat, the Préa-Tapang rapids which form the principal obstacle on the Mékong, somewhat below [Illustration here] the frontier of Cambodia and Laos. In 1886 and 1887 Lieutenant-Commander de Fésigny, who was assigned to study the hydrography of the river above Kratié, made a serious study of these rapids and proved that it was possible to pass them in small ships. He first took the gunboat Sagaie to Stung-Treng, and then took the launch Mouette of the Cochinchina River Fleet [Messageries fluviales de

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Cochinchine] as far as the Khône waterfalls, as well as the launch Doc-Phu-ca of the local service.

It remained for his colleague, M. Heurtel, to pass these [63] same rapids in boats of comparatively high tonnage and thus open the regions of southern Laos to trade once and for all. At the end of August in 1889 M. Heurtel passed the rapids for the first time in the side-wheeler sea sloop Alouette, which was no less than fifty meters in length, then a few days later in the packet Cantonnais of the River Merchant Fleet. The latter was forty meters long, made a speed of nine knots and drew 1.9 meters of water, and he took it well above Stung-Treag to the very foot of the Khône waterfalls.

It had been shown that a commercial service by steamship was possible during several months, at the high water season, as far as Khône. Now that the way lay open M. Rueff, the skilful director of the Cochinchinese River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine], hastened to extend a regular line of steam navigation along the great river beyond Kratié, first to Samboc, then to Sambor, and finally to Stung-Treng and Khône (1890).

Since 1891 the Bassac, which was specially built to order for the Cochinchinese River Merchant Fleet by the Dubigeon yards in Nantes so that it could pass rapids and shallows (it draws only .7 meter of water when loaded), has provided regular and rapid communication between Saigon, Pnom-Penh and Khône.

There remained the ticklish question of finding a channel through the Khône rapids. Francis Garnier was quite categorical on this point.

"At the cataracts themselves," he said, "continuous navigation of the Mekong must necessarily stop unless gigantic projects are undertaken." (1)

(1) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

People nevertheless believed that a practicable passage existed, for pirogues arrived in Pnom-Penh each year which came directly from Bassac. It was also learned, at the same time (this was in 1891), that Siamese sloops were navigating on the Moun and would perhaps soon even come down the great river as far as Bassac.

[64] "The work of the Siamese," wrote M. Delaporte, a former

503 member of the Lagrée mission, in 1891 (1), "have resulted in a plan

[113] (1) L. Delaporte, La grande voie commerciale de l'Indo-Chine, 1891.

505 to establish a complete service serving the course of the Mékong, in order to divert its trade to the heart of the kingdom of Siam via the fine Sé-Moun river and then take it by railway to the capital and the sea. This plan is now in the process of full achievement. Two steamships will very shortly be introduced, one on the middle course of the river between Bassac and Kemmarat with its headquarters at Pak-Moun at the river junction, and the other on the Sé-Moun between Pak-Moun and Khorat at the point where the river ceases to be navigab and this service will be completed by a railway joining Khorat to Bangkok."

505 It was thus a question of out-distancing the Siamese sloops. Governor General Piquet himself became interested in the matter
503 and embarked on board the Cantonnais (October 1891) in the hope of passing the Khône rapids and showing the French flag in the upper
654 reach. The Argus, under the command of Ensign Guissez and serving as a look-out ship for the Cantonnais, reached Khône and tried to reconnoiter the passage. The latter had been shown by the inhabitants to M. Pelletier and Dr. Mougeot, two Europeans who then held the concession to the large island of Ca-Lomnieu, and was accessible at certain times of the year to pirogues coming down the river. But the season was far advanced (it was the end of October). The low water made it impossible to attempt the desired trial, and the Cantonnais had to return to Saigon.

In the meantime the Argus anchored in the pass of Ka-Sedam between the rapids of Tat-Val and Tat-Liou in order to complete the studies which had been begun and the exploration of the river as far upstream as possible. For more than two years this launch tried to negotiate the passes, but failed because of its large draft, its instability and its lack of speed.

The persevering energy and efforts of its commander were not lost, however, for they prepared the way for the work subsequently undertaken in these parts.

It being impossible to find a suitable passage for [65] [Illustration] [66] [Blank page] [67] steamships, a transshipment railway was built

across the island of Khône. It was further necessary to establish two docks, one a tidal dock and the other a launching basin, at South Khône and at North Khône, especially for the transshipment of launch cargoes. 505 503 654

Lieutenant Commander Simon expressed himself as follows in a lecture which he delivered to the Geography Society [Société de Géographie] on May 15, 1896:

"Believing themselves protected, thanks to this natural barrier, from any repressive measures on our part, the Siamese had crossed the Mékong at Kemmarat, Lakhône and Outhène and were invading Annam little by little and establishing advance posts as little as three days away from Hué. This took place in 1892.

"The government became alarmed, and in order to satisfy solicitations by Cochinchina at the same time, it decided at the suggestion of M. Delcassé in March 1893 to purchase two screw-propelled gunboats, the La Grandière and the Massie, which were intended to exercise surveillance over the upper Mékong.

"These two ships were to be set afloat above the Khône waterfalls. From there they were to negotiate, by any possible means, the Kemmarat gorge which is particularly dangerous for its rapids, and then show their flag at daybreak in the great reach, presumably navigable, which extends from Kemmarat to Vien-Tiane and whose eastern bank includes Annamite Laos.

"Such was the object of the mission which was entrusted to us.

"It was at the same time a hydrographic mission whose work was to take the Khône waterfalls, which steam navigation has today brought within four days' journey of Saigon, as its point of departure and stop only when it was materially impossible to proceed any further.

"As far upriver as possible and as far as possible, these were the orders of the day.

"The ships, which were demountable in five sections, were assembled and set afloat at Saigon in August 1893, and their transshipment past the waterfalls was accomplished in one piece, that is to say without disassembling them, on a carriage which was built for the purpose and which rolled along a track. The track, which was one meter wide, started at the downstream end of the falls, that is to say in the lower basin, and ended in the upper basin after crossing the island of Khône.

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"The administration of public works of Cochinchina was particularly responsible for carrying out the work. The operation was directed by Messrs. Gubiand, the engineering director of public works, and Crouzat, the chief clerk of the department of civil engineering [conducteur principal des ponts et chaussées], and was fully successful despite the haste, the difficulties and the mishaps and tribulations which we had to undergo.

"On October 31, 1893, five months after the mission's arrival in Saigon, two ships, the Massie and the Ham-Luong, had passed the Khône waterfalls.

"The Ham-Luong was a sloop from Cochinchina which was sent at the last [68] moment and in all haste to replace the La Grandière numerically and provisorily, the latter being disabled below the falls as the result of grave damage to the engine."

After they had been floated in the upper reach the Massie and the Ham-Luong pushed on to Bassoc immediately, then to the junction with the Sé-Moun. The Massie finally reached Kemmarat on February 28, 1894, after successfully passing the 120 kilometers of rapids just below it. There the Massie had to wait for high water before it could pass the Keng-Sa, one of the most dangerous obstacles in this region. In the high water season of 1894 it was in the Vien-Tiane reach, where it showed the French flag over an extent of more than 500 kilometers. On September 5, 1894, the La Grandière went to Khône in its turn, on its way from one reach to another, and then in November caught up with the Massie which it soon passed. Finally in August 1895 Lieutenant Commander Simon took the La Grandière through the series of rapids stretching over a distance of 350 kilometers between Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang, which he reached on September 1.

[631
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"This brilliant success demonstrated France's power to the friendly and hostile populations of the banks of the Mékong. Through the more frequent sight of our officers, our weapons and our cruising steamships, which ammounted to ambulatory offices, it strengthened the work accomplished by our diplomats on the left bank, which belonged to us henceforth" (1).

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(1) Lanier, L'Asie, 1898. Selected readings in geography.

We rejoice at being able to render deserved homage here to the abilities of Commander Simon who, in the midst of the greatest

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difficulties, was able to complete the daring work which he had assumed. He did not fear to turn his own hand to the task by giving largely of himself and often remaining in a pirogue in the middle of the river, despite the heat of the sun, in order to seek out a passage for his gunboat.

But Luang-Prabang was not to be the terminus of the La Grandière's journey.

[69] "The difficulties which had long been pending in western upper Laos had just entered into a more acute phase. It was more than ever timely and urgent for us to strengthen our diplomatic arguments with the help of effective justifications of our rights based on accomplished facts.

"We had to show our colors still farther upstream, at least as high as Xieng-Khong, that is to say, in the heart of the territories which others had attempted to detach from our influence by proposing that they remain neutral" (1).

(1) Lieutenant Commander Simon, op. cit. [Lecture delivered to the Société de Géographie on May 15, 1896.]

On September 8, the La Grandière resumed its march upriver. "Finally we reached our last stage, Tang-Hô, on October 25, 1895. We were a day's journey from Xieng-Lap, at 20° 40' N. latitude, 2500 kilometers from the sea and at an altitude of more than 400 meters. Here the La Grandière was stopped once and for all, for in the present state of things Tang-Hô must be regarded as the limit of all possible ventures in steam navigation, at least when the water level is low" (2).

(2) Lieutenant Commander Simon, op. cit.

These conclusions did not give pause to Lieutenant Commander Mazeran, for he took his gunboat further still. It is now at Xieng-Lap, immobilized and unable to return downriver. There is some question of disarming it and attempting to bring it down to Luang-Prabang by surrounding it with a bamboo sheath. It could at least be used and render some service in Luang-Prabang.

The results of Lieutenant Commander Simon's mission relative to the navigability of the reaches of Bassac and Vien-Tiane enabled the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des

505 Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine] to introduce a regular service
503 of steam launches there. To this end the company signed a contract
654 with the general government of Indo-China, the purpose of which was to organize a complete service from Saigon to Luang-Prabang for passengers and merchandise, using steamships and pirogues by turns, depending on the navigability of the river and on the season. The task was a difficult one, for it was first necessary to enlarge the [70] tidal docks and launching basins and to rebuild, strengthen and correct the railway on the island of Khône to permit the transshipment of three steam launches weighing seventy tons each (1). This [Illustration

(1) The gunboats Massie and La Grandière weighed only twenty-two tons each.

here] was a veritable tour de force which had to be repeated three times. During the high water period of 1893 (2) the operation was

(2) For this transshipment, as for that of 1894, human labor was the driving force. Only since August 1898 has a locomotive run along this railway.

carried out with complete success, [71] [Illustration] [72] [Blank page] [73] thanks to the combined work and efforts of the local administration and the River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des Messageries fluviales]. Today one of these ships, the Garcerie, is assigned to regular service in the Bassac reach between Khône and Pak-Moun. The two others, the Trentinian and the Colombert, have followed the path laid out for them by the gunboats through the Kemmarat rapids and provide service in the Vien-Tiane reach over a distance of nearly 500 kilometers (1).

(1) Just recently the launch Hamluong, which is 22 meters long, has a draft of 1.3 meters and a speed of seven to eight knots, has gone upriver through the Kemmarat rapids under the command of the engineer Jeanneau and has reached Vien-Tiane where it is at the disposition of the Superior Resident.

503 Here, then, is an initial result achieved. During the high water
505 period steamships can provide service from Kratié to Khône. Others

have been introduced in the upper reaches and can easily serve, 503
during the high water period, nearly 200 kilometers in the Bassac
reach and nearly 500 in the Vien-Tiane reach. But during the low 505
water period the stretch between Kratié and Khône is still served by
pirogue over the greater part of the course. Then the navigable reach
of Bassac is reduced to thirty kilometers for steam launches, and
the Vien-Tiane reach requires transshipment by pirogue over some
twenty kilometers between two stretches covered in the above manner.
The two reaches are, moreover, separated by a 160-kilometer strip
which is not navigable in any season.

The impetus has therefore been given, and the way lies open.
Today it remains only to complete the work thus begun and to finish
setting the necessary beacons and clearing the bed of rocks before
navigation, and that is to say trade, can be expanded further. Let
us recapitulate what has been done and what has been proposed.

First of all, from the budgetary point of view, a sum of 87,500 503
francs has so far figured annually in the budget of Laos under the 652
label Studies and projects for the navigability of the Mékong. This
sum was further increased in 1900, and in the budget for public works
in the general interest the following credits appeared:

	francs
Navigability of the Upper Mekong. Purchase of materials for clearing rocks and laying beacons	25,000
[74] Clearing rocks and laying beacons in the lower reach	12,500
Clearing rocks and laying beacons in the middle and upper reaches	62,500
Continuation of studies	25,000
TOTAL	125,000(1)

(1) In 1901 the following figures appeared in the general budget:

Clearing rocks and setting beacons in the Upper Mekong in the lower and middle reaches	75,000
In the upper reach	25,000
Studies	25,000
TOTAL	125,000

It may therefore be assumed that several thousands of francs
have already been spent to make the great river navigable. It must
be admitted that so far the visible results have not compensated for
the sacrifices made, and we prefer to suppose that such credits are

503 entered in the budget annually to satisfy the public opinion which demands them, but that in reality they are far from being spent. If
652 they have been used it has been without appreciable profit, probably as the result of the lack of a master plan governing the work to be accomplished. Indeed it is our earnest hope that expenditures of this size have not been occasioned by the few scientific missions composed of officers and engineers from the department of civil engineering.

Here, in this connection, is an extract from the interesting notice on Indo-China published at the time of the Universal Exposition of 1900:

503 "Since 1887 many missions have studied the reach between Kratié and Khône and have traced the routes which today enable the steamships of the River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales] to navigate there during the high water season. But a great deal remains to be done, and a more complete work of clearing rocks and setting beacons, if pursued perseveringly and methodically, would certainly make it possible to increase the period of navigability by several months each year. The enlargement of the canal between Stung-Treng and Thboung-Kla has already made it possible for launches to ply between Don-Logna and Siem-Boc (2) all year long

(2) In May 1897, that is to say during the low water period, Lieutenant Commander Ytier was able to negotiate the stretch between Kratié and Stung-Treng in a launch which drew 1.5 meters of water (the Sambor). He concluded that after a few rocks had been cleared and buoys set out to mark the route the Mékong would be navigable between Kratié and Stung-Treng, during the low water period, for a boat with a draft of one meter and a speed of twelve knots in a speed trial. But he added that "navigation would always remain difficult or at least ticklish during the low water period, and that without a practical man, without a Talcon pilot, the shelves could not be negotiated and there would be an almost certain risk of running aground."

over a distance of sixty to eighty kilometers. [75] [Illustration] [76] [Blank page] [77] The same will certainly be true below Siem-Boc, in the part of the rapids which are properly known as those of Préapatang, when they have been more fully studied, buoyed and

cleared of the rocks which obstruct them.

"In 1893 and 1894 another mission studied the whole upper reach of the river above Khône and as far as Vien-Tiane and Nong-Khay, and extremely complete maps were drawn up which made it possible in the years following to organize the regular services of the River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales] which now provide frequent communication between all the posts on the Mékong as far as Luang-Prabang.

"This mission called attention to certain passages which might be greatly improved by setting buoys and clearing rocks, thereby rendering navigation possible during the high water period. It showed the necessity of complementary studies at other points, particularly some distance upstream from Kemmarat and over the whole stretch between Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang.

"Moreover, a special committee for studying plans for improving the Mékong has been formed in Saigon for the purpose of assembling and centralizing all the studies made so far and of drawing up a program of action for the achievement of which large credits have been appropriated in the general budget of Indo-China.

"There is reason to hope that this program will soon be elaborated and carried out, and that within a few years, when the entire course of the Mékong has been made accessible to steam navigation, the products of the rich regions which it waters will no longer be exported by other routes than those of Cambodia and Cochinchina, but will come down in toto to Saigon and there be reexported to all parts of the world."

We note, moreover, that all efforts to make the Kemmarat rapids navigable have been abandoned. The Superior Resident in Laos says, in fact, in a report (1):

(1) Report sent to the directors of the Agriculture and Commerce bureaus in April 1899.

"The exploratory work which has been done both by the engineers and by the officers of the Mékong hydrographic mission have demonstrated that the rapids which extend, on the one hand, from Pak-Moun to Hueûn-Hin south of Savannakhèt, and those which are found, on the other hand, starting at Sam-Pan-Na north of Vien-Tiane, [78] cannot be rendered negotiable by steamship except by means of considerable labor and of expenditures whose total it is impossible to

503 predict. It has therefore been decided that, for the moment at least, no more attention should be given to these rapids and that our concern should be restricted to accomplishing the labors necessary to facilitate steam navigation during the low water period in the following reaches:

"1. from Kratié to Stung-Treng and Khône;

"2. between Khône and Pak-Moun;

"3. between Savannakhèt and Sam-Pan-Na."

It might perhaps be understandable that the plan to make these rapids navigable should have been abandoned, if haste were made to build a railway joining the middle Mékong to some port in Annam, when the rapids would become an absolute barrier which we should no longer think of overcoming. But such is not the case, and many long years will still have to pass before the products of the markets of Luang-Prabang and Nong-Khay can reach the Annam coast in any practical way. Moreover, if the work on the navigability of the Mékong continues to go forward at the same slow rate and if we do not take greater advantage of this "moving highway," we shall continue to play into the hands of the Siamese and the market in Bangkok, thanks to the Korat railway, will continue to absorb the Laotian products which should have no other outlets than Saigon, Tourane and Vinh.

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d.--DESCRIPTION OF THE DIFFERENT REACHES

1. The Upper Reach

133 505 The Mékong enters Laos where it is joined by the Nam-La, at 21° 40' N. latitude, slightly downstream from Xieng-Hong which is on the 22nd parallel. As far as Xieng-Sèn it flows in an approximately northeast and southwest direction between two ranges of peaks which constrict its bed and make it a torrent rather than a river. In this narrow corridor it has dug a channel which varies, during the high water period, from 150 to 300 meters in width and which sometimes grows as narrow as 50 meters during the low water period. Its bed is generally encumbered with shoals and [79] rocks; and the whirlpools, eddies, currents and counter-currents make navigation impossible. Thus Lieutenant Commander Mazeran's bold and successful venture deserves mention here, for he succeeded in taking the gunboat La Grandière as far as Xieng-Kok, that is to say nearly to the 21st

3: Robequain--113-116 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians-1-5
116, 133, 503, 505, 177.50 France
636.50

"The Mekong appeared to offer a splendid means of penetrating the plateaus and mountains of Laos. At one time it was even suggested that Saigon could be one of the great ports for Southern China. As early as 1866, the Doudart de Lagrée and Francis Garnier mission realized the difficulties[114]of navigating the river above Kratié. This large river, as a matter of fact, is still very young as far as physical geography is concerned, or rather, a series of recent and still only partially explained tectonic episodes have renewed its youth. It consists of a chain of calm-surfaced reaches, separated by rapids or falls. The chief obstacle to navigation is at Khône where the arms of the river, spread out over an area several kilometers wide, drop 15 meters through torrential and rock-studded channles or cataracts. Here precisely is the border between Cambodia and Laos. Other rapids are scattered both up and down stream, making navigation by launch difficult and uncertain throughout entire sections between Kratié and Savannakhet. It is only at Savannakhet ('the gateway to paradise') that the great navigable reaches begin which permit launches to sail as far as several kilometers above Vientiane without breaking bulk.

Europeans were eager to tame the Mekong. As early as 1890 the Messageries

3: Robequain--113-116 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians-2
116, 133, 503, 505, 177.50 France
636.50

Fluviales de Cochinchine had organized a steamship line which, with the help of some trans-shipment, operated as far as Khône. For more than two years the launch, Argus, tried to get past the Khône barrier through the channels which canoes sometimes used in descending the river. In view of the failure of these attempts, a narrow guage railway was built across Khône Island, and by this means gunboats and then launches were carried to the upper river in 1893.

Conditions of navigation have been improved since then, but scouring the river channels has not always produced the desired results, since the river's reactions are difficult to predict; buoying had been improved up to 1925; more than a thousand towers, buoys and landmarks had been built. Hundred-ton launches, drawing one and one half meters, can reach as far as Khône, at high water, about three months a year; in other months, the section between Kratié and Khône, much of which had to be traversed by canoe up to 1900, can now be covered, with only one trans-shipment, by a short thirty-ton launch which can manage the sharp turns of the narrow channels. Above Khône, the most difficult passage is through the sandstone canyon of Kemmarat, where the river attains [115] a depth of eighteen meters during the heavy floods and the current in some rapids is from nine to ten knots. Since 1910 more powerful launches have been put into service, and were later supplied with semi-Diesel engines; they have gradually reduced the number of changes but the Keng Sa rapids are still impassable at low water

and necessitate trans-shipments to motor-canoes.

In 1895 a small gunboat, the Lagrandière, went up above the Savannakhet-Vientiane reaches to within 50 kilometers of the Yunnan frontier, about 2,500 kilometers from the sea and 400 meters above sea-level; this was a purely sporting exploit. Since then other steamboats have gone up as far as Luang Prabang, but it was realized that regular traffic could not be maintained through one section, dotted with dangerous rapids. Nevertheless, the trip between the two Laotian capitals previously made by native canoes plying upstream, and by rafts going downstream, has been very much speeded up since 1930 by the use of motor canoes.

In brief, progress is summed up in the following figures; in 1900, at low water, it took 65 days or more to go from Saigon to Luang Prabang; in 1909 the time was reduced to a maximum of 50 days; in 1937 the upstream trip took 37 days, downstream 27; and at high water, it took 27 or 22 days, respectively.

In spite of all this, French Upper Laos is still farther from Saigon by water than Saigon is from Marseille. Even below Vientiane in Lower Laos, the transport capacity of the Mekong depends on the obstacles encountered between Savannakhet and Khône. It is difficult to cut down the present length of the time needed for the journey: the narrowness of the channels and the limited power of the engines which can negotiate them do not

permit increasing the useful cargo beyond 100 tons. At low water, trans-shipment is a heavy burden on shipping. In 1936 only 4,644 tons of freight passed the port of Khone going downstream (10) and 5,286 tons upstream.

10. Excluding teak logs which are floated down the river.

Thus the high hopes for the Mekong as a means of transportation have been dashed. Experts believe that if additicnal improvements could increase the traffic to 25,000 tons a year, [116] this is a maximum which would be hard to surpass. Railways and highways will therefore have to furnish transportation which will be justified in the future by our reasonable expectations for an enlarged Laotian economy, if not by its extent at present. (11)

11. The arguments in favor of the water route are set forth by Colonel Bernard in the Bulletin du Comité de l'Indochine, February 20, 1936. Navigation on the Mekong has undergone great changes since the end of 1937, at the expiration of the contract of the Campagnie Saigonnaise de Navigation et de Transports, which had replaced the Messageries Fluviales. Steam launches no longer negotiate the Kemmarat narrows;

3: Robequain--113-116 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians-5
116, 133, 503, 505, 177.50 France
636.50

there is no longer a regular service between Paksé and Savannakhet. From Savannakhet to Vientiane service is now assured by a company employing flat-bottomed barges and from Vientiane to Luang Prabang and Xieng Sen by motor canoes."

10: d'Orleans--339 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 133, 505

"This brings us to the confluent of the Nam Kane, which is not more than 130 feet broad, and is only accessible to canoes of light draught, whereas if there was more water, it could be utilized for the transport of goods as far as Luang Prabang. From Vinh to this latter place, the journey now takes about thirty days and the region situated between the coast of Annam and the Mekong is a very fertile one. This is the plateau of Poûon, which is in the possession of an European climate, the vine, fruit trees, melons and other European plants thriving well there. The country is a very healthy one, and there is a prosperous future before the intelligent colonists who know how to go to work."

23: Franck--324-325 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 501, 505

"More exactly they are floating furnished houses, a combination of raft and boats surmounted by three or four rooms and servant quarters, two small windows on each side of the superstructure, and all those refinements one expects among such a comfort-loving people as the French. At high water these house-rafts can go down the Mekong in fewer days than are required for the overland trip through the jungle, though by no means so fast as I proposed to make it; and at all times this way of leaving Luang Prabang is so usual [325] that rarely does a Frenchman in the colonial service go by land. In fact most of those bound for the capital come up the river also, though that is a hard and tedious job--for the native boatmen. An official salary continues unabated irrespective of speed. Upon due reflection, no doubt, an income forever dragging at the heels of my personal exertions has much more to do with my weakness for hurrying than have any impressions on the transmigration of souls. This trip down the river is not only comfortable, but interesting and sometimes exciting, if not dangerous. The piroguiers say prayers and throw food into the air, or place it, as well as flowers, on the bow of the boat before passing bad rapids, that the unseen spirits may be propitiated. But on board, all the amenities of French civilization prevail, from whist to the three-cornered drama, and romance has culminated and domestic disaster befallen during these long and too restful journeys."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

489 It was fitting that at Luang Prabang the impetus of travel should
509 have spent itself. Not even convoys ever came as far as this. Groups of unfortunate men occasionally set off on foot and walked for as long as three weeks through jungle trails to relieve isolated posts. Other arrivals and departures were by a weekly D.C.3 plying between Luang Prabang and Vientiane. It was booked up well ahead.

● 505 Down at the riverside the story was much the same as at Vientiane. There were pirogues which supposedly made regular journeys, but no one was prepared to commit himself to positive information about them. One authority went so far as to say that it was out of the question to hope to travel north by pirogue because the river was too low at this time of the year. I had just thanked him when the engine of what looked like a totally abandoned hulk, lying in an oily pool not far away, suddenly burst into wheezy activity. One of the crew of two said that they would be leaving in half an hour. Bound for where? – Vientiane? No . . . Xieng
701 Khong – for the unnavigable north, of course. All the space had been reserved for a body of ex-pirates who had changed sides and had now, it was said, demanded to be sent back to fight their former allies.

While I was slowly piecing together this jig-saw of information in pidgin-French, the brand-new patriots arrived for embarkation; a most apathetic looking body of men. In their ill-fitting uniforms they were standardized; deprived of individuality by a common factor of misery, an ingrained habit of expressionless stoicism. Silently they filed up the gang-plank and filled the dim interior of the pirogue. It was difficult to believe that the fire of conviction burned in any of these breasts, and I felt sorry for the French N.C.O. who was being sent back in charge.

000 But Monsieur Leveau said that there would also be a pirogue going south one day, and to save me from being victimized by Chinese cat-and-mouse tactics he sent for the owner and asked him when the boat would leave. With gentle satisfaction the Chinese

133 vast impenetrable forests and "the traveler sees only tall grass or
137 gigantic trees intertwined with lianas, then all at once, through a break in the foliage, he discovers the cascades of a river. This is the only noise to interrupt the impressive silence of these great forests" (2).

2. L. de Reinach, Le Laos, 1911.

133 Set against the huge mountain masses of Yunnan, this tormented region has always been the natural refuge of peoples driven out of India or China by famine, great invasions or religious discord, and its orography explains, in large measure, the multiplicity of tiny
/631/ states which were formed there throughout the ages. Its abrupt defiles radiate out and, so to speak, become calmed in the valleys of the Ménam, the Mékong and the Red River, and its principal substructure spreads out /5/ and ends in a vast plateau known as the plateau of Tran-Ninh, whose hillocks are planted with pine trees and drop suddenly from east to west.

In the southeast, however, the Tran-Ninh plateau clings "like an excrescence" to a long artery known as the Annamitic Chain which forms a distinct line of demarcation between Laos and Annam. This chain runs parallel to the coast in a northwest-southeast direction, and its peaks go all the way down to the Mékong by successive stages, first forming plateaus or folds of ground covered with thick forests (dông in Laotian), then slighter undulations where there are forest glades (khok in Laotian), and finally vast ricefields ending in the river.

The Mékong. This great river frontier which, over 800 kilometers of its length, marks the political separation of French Indo-China from the kingdom of Siam, gives life to Laos, together with its tributaries, "as the Nile constitutes Egypt." It fertilizes it with
/226/ its alluvia, feeds the native with its fish and guarantees transport for
/505/ his rafts and pirogues from north to south. But this liquid highway where nature seems to have taken pleasure in piling up obstacles and which is cut by numerous rapids and barred by waterfalls, can not be
/502/ /6/ regarded as usable for regular navigation over all of its length.
133 Fed by the melting snows of Tibet, the Mékong enters Laos through a capricious gorge, widens for a moment in the alluvia of an old lake basin and narrows again towards Luang-Prabang. Grandiose surroundings framed by the blue line of the far-off peaks give it what

phantom king (1) who had remained "under the guardianship of a 642
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1. Chao-Kham-Souk, one of Chao-Houy's sons (see above 647
p. 168 and p. 177, note 2) who had been placed on the /175*/
throne by Bangkok in 1863. His fief had been dismembered by the treaty of 1893 and was in reality no longer anything but a Siamese province. He was to die in 1899.

Siamese agent of an inferior type." At Khong he met Commander Tournier, who had been placed in charge of the Legion troops stationed between Stung-Treng and the islands of Khone, and who was also invested with civil powers in the muongs of the left bank while awaiting the imminent arrival of administrators from Cochinchina (this latter country was to organize the southern Laotian provinces at the expense of its own budget). On August 9 he wit- 654
nessed the arrival of Lieutenant-commander Simon, the leader of 505
a hydrographic mission /329/ which had been planned the year before by M. Delcasse. This mission was to employ the sloops La Grandiere and Massie and to go on surveillance duty on the Middle and Upper Mekong. With this purpose it was to: 1) trans-ship its cargo at Khone; 2) cross the dangerous defiles of Kemmarat by every possible means; and 3) stop "only where it was materially and absolutely impossible to get through." At the cost of tremendous effort the mission was to reach Luang-Prabang on September 1 and Tang-Ho on October 25, 1895 at a distance of 2500 kilometers from the sea and an altitude of more than four hundred meters (1). On

1. The bold results of the Simon mission demonstrated the possibility of organizing a regular navigation service from Saigon to Luang-Prabang by using either steam sloops or pirogues, depending on the season. The service was later established.

August 13 Pavie reached Pnom-Penh and then went to Hatien where 648*
the gunboat Vipere was waiting for him. The latter took him to 175*
Bangkok on the 20th, and scarcely had he landed when he hastened to inform both the Quai d'Orsay and Prince Devawongse of the discoveries he had made all along the Mekong, namely that the treaty had not been made known to the populace and that the king of Siam's proclamation relative to the return of former inhabitants of the left bank of the river to their own country was still unknown

149; Reinach--42 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

c.--NAVIGABILITY OF THE MÉKONG
WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED--WHAT REMAINS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

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From the point of view of navigation, the Mékong does not constitute one continuous artery from one end to the other of its course. Several serious obstacles, such as the Khône waterfalls and the rapids of [56] Kemmarat, lie in the way of steam navigation. It has therefore been found necessary to divide the river, as far as navigability goes, into several reaches. These are:

1. The reach of Luang-Prabang or upper reach, which extends [Illustration here] from the Mékong's entry into Laos to Sam-Pan-Na, that is to say from approximately the 22nd parallel to the 18th.

In this reach navigation is impossible, even for pirogues, as far as Tang-Hô because of the river's irregular drop in level (approximately 160 meters over a distance of 180 kilometers) and the many rocks which encumber its bed.

From Tang-Hô to Vien-Tiane navigation by pirogues and [57] [Illustration] [58] [Blank page] [59] rafts is the rule and native boats function all year long despite fairly numerous rapids.

2. The reach of Vien-Tiane or middle reach, which extends from Sam-Pan-Na to Ban-Ta-Sa-Kou (right bank) or Hueûn-Hin (left bank), that is to say from the 18th parallel to slightly below the 16th and the head of the Kemmarat rapids. This reach is navigable for steamships of a draft of one meter during almost all of the year.

Between this last reach and the following one comes the extremely precipitous part of the river which is known as the rapids of Kemmarat and stretches over a distance of 160 kilometers as far as Pak-Moun (15° 20'). In its present state steam navigation of any sort is impossible. All year long, however, rafts and pirogues can go downriver through the rapids, but only pirogues can go upriver.

3. The reach of Bassac, between Pak-Moun and North Khône, that is to say between approximately 15° 20' and 14°.

This reach is navigable all year long and over its entire length for rafts and pirogues, and only during three or four months (July to October) for steam launches.

To the south of this reach the Khône waterfalls form a complete obstacle to steam navigation over a distance of about five kilometers. Before the establishment of the railway transhipment of merchandise

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from upstream to downstream and vice versa was accomplished by means of oxcarts. In the high water period, however, loaded pirogues ventured to descend the passes. Nowadays the railways offers such advantageous transportation that merchants no longer have any reason to expose their pirogues to the dangers of the Khône passes or to effect a transshipment by means of carts or bearers.

4. The maritime reach from South Khône to the sea.

For a distance of about 200 kilometers, that is to say from South Khône to Kratié (Cambodia), this reach is navigable for steam launches only during the high water period (July to October). It is navigable over a shorter distance, from Khône to Stung-Treng, in all seasons. From Kratié down to the sea steam navigation is possible all year long.

[60] Thus, despite its great rate of flow and the volume of its waters, the Mékong can be negotiated by steam launches only over a small part of its immense course. Here navigation will be interrupted by insurmountable changes in level, there it will be stopped by the rapidity of the current, and elsewhere a lack of water or sand will form an obstacle. In short, the Mékong is a capricious river and has, in addition to a few magnificent reaches where steam navigation is generally easy, rapids which render it dangerous and even impossible.

Under present conditions the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet [compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine] has been able to establish a fairly direct service by steam launch and pirogue from Saigon to Luang-Prabang, over a total distance of 2300 kilometers.

The following table shows the length in kilometers of possible journeys both by steam launch and by pirogue during high and low water periods.

149: Reinach--44 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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KRATIÉ TO LUANG-PRABANG

Distance in kilometers: 1503.4

Stage	High Water		Low Water		Observations
	Steam launch	Pirogue	Steam launch	Pirogue	
Kratié to Stung-Treng	135	—	—	135	
Stung-Treng to South Khône	55	—	55	—	
South Khône to North Khône	5	—	5	—	Railway
North Khône to Ban-Dong	28.8	—	—	28.8	
Ban-Dong to Don-Saï	32.9	—	32.9	—	
Don-Saï to Pak-Moun	127.7	—	—	127.7	
Pak-Moun to Savannakhèt	—	210.5	—	210.5	
Savannakhèt to Kabao	30	—	—	30	
Kabao to Vien-Tiane	453	—	430	23*	*Stage from Don-Kassec to Don-Nakè
Vien-Tiane to Luang-Prabang	—	425.5	—	425.5	

We may recapitulate the above table without further commentary, for the figures speak for themselves.

[61]

			kilometers		kilometers
From Kratié to Luang-Prabang	High water:	steam launches	867.4	(57%)	1503.4
	"	pirogues	636	(43%)	
	Low water:	steam launches	522.9	(34%)	1503.4
	"	pirogues	980.5	(66%)	

No more need be said in order to show that the problem of commercial transport by steamship on the Mékong is far from being solved.

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A rapid glance at what has been done to make the river navigable will enable us to indicate the work that has been accomplished, the difficulties that have been overcome, and what still remains to be done.

The question of navigation on the Mékong was first raised by Francis Garnier in 1866 when he went up the great river as second in command of the exploratory mission to Indo-China. At this time, steam navigation on the river stopped at Kratié, about 220 kilometers upstream from Pnom-Penh. As a consequence Francis Garnier was immediately led to study the possibility of steam navigation beyond the Sambor rapids, the extreme limit of the hydrographic exploration which had then been done along the Mékong.

"Steam navigation," he said (1), "although strictly practical as far as the foot of the Khône waterfalls, presents a great many difficulties. Between Kratié and the island of Khône it is doubtful whether any channel exists which is deep enough at the low water period. In the high water period sufficient depth is no longer a question, but the velocity of the current reaches its maximum and is great enough to halt the progress of a steamship, or at least impede its movement."

(1) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

These considerations were true at the time when the author visited these parts, but are no longer entirely applicable as concerns navigability during the high water season. Indeed, steam navigation has gradually been transformed and mechanical equipment has been perfected, yet despite all this a period of twenty-two years passed [62] before any serious and effective attempt was made to achieve results for which Francis Garnier's conclusions could not have led us to hope.

In September 1885 Post-captain Réveillère succeeded in passing, in a torpedo boat, the Préa-Tapang rapids which form the principal obstacle on the Mékong, somewhat below [illustration here] the frontier of Cambodia and Laos. In 1886 and 1887 Lieutenant-Commander de Féligny, who was assigned to study the hydrography of the river above Kratié, made a serious study of these rapids and proved that it was possible to pass them in small ships. He first took the gunboat Sagaie to Stung-Treng, and then took the launch Mouette of the Cochinchina River Fleet [Messageries fluviales de

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Cochinchine] as far as the Khône waterfalls, as well as the launch Doc-Phu-ca of the local service.

It remained for his colleague, M. Heurtel, to pass these [63] same rapids in boats of comparatively high tonnage and thus open the regions of southern Laos to trade once and for all. At the end of August in 1889 M. Heurtel passed the rapids for the first time in the side-wheeler sea sloop Alouette, which was no less than fifty meters in length, then a few days later in the packet Cantonnais of the River Merchant Fleet. The latter was forty meters long, made a speed of nine knots and drew 1.9 meters of water, and he took it well above Stung-Treng to the very foot of the Khône waterfalls.

It had been shown that a commercial service by steamship was possible during several months, at the high water season, as far as Khône. Now that the way lay open M. Rueff, the skilful director of the Cochinchinese River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine], hastened to extend a regular line of steam navigation along the great river beyond Kratié, first to Samboc, then to Sambor, and finally to Stung-Treng and Khône (1890).

Since 1891 the Bassac, which was specially built to order for the Cochinchinese River Merchant Fleet by the Dubigeon yards in Nantes so that it could pass rapids and shallows (it draws only .7 meter of water when loaded), has provided regular and rapid communication between Saigon, Pnom-Penh and Khône.

There remained the ticklish question of finding a channel through the Khône rapids. Francis Garnier was quite categorical on this point.

"At the cataracts themselves," he said, "continuous navigation of the Mekong must necessarily stop unless gigantic projects are undertaken." (1)

(1) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

People nevertheless believed that a practicable passage existed, for pirogues arrived in Pnom-Penh each year which came directly from Bassac. It was also learned, at the same time (this was in 1891), that Siamese sloops were navigating on the Moun and would perhaps soon even come down the great river as far as Bassac.

[64] "The work of the Siamese," wrote M. Delaporte, a former

503 member of the Lagrée mission, in 1891 (1), "have resulted in a plan

[113] (1) L. Delaporte, La grande voie commerciale de l'Indo-Chine, 1891.

505 to establish a complete service serving the course of the Mékong, in order to divert its trade to the heart of the kingdom of Siam via the fine Sé-Moun river and then take it by railway to the capital and the sea. This plan is now in the process of full achievement. Two steamships will very shortly be introduced, one on the middle course of the river between Bassac and Kemmarat with its headquarters at Pak-Moun at the river junction, and the other on the Sé-Moun between Pak-Moun and Khorat at the point where the river ceases to be navigabl and this service will be completed by a railway joining Khorat to Bangkok."

505 It was thus a question of out-distancing the Siamese sloops. Governor General Piquet himself became interested in the matter
503 and embarked on board the Cantonnais (October 1891) in the hope of passing the Khône rapids and showing the French flag in the upper
654 reach. The Argus, under the command of Ensign Guissez and serving as a look-out ship for the Cantonnais, reached Khône and tried to reconnoiter the passage. The latter had been shown by the inhabitants to M. Pelletier and Dr. Mougeot, two Europeans who then held the concession to the large island of Ca-Lomnieu, and was accessible at certain times of the year to pirogues coming down the river. But the season was far advanced (it was the end of October). The low water made it impossible to attempt the desired trial, and the Cantonnais had to return to Saigon.

In the meantime the Argus anchored in the pass of Ka-Sedam between the rapids of Tat-Vai and Tat-Lion in order to complete the studies which had been begun and the exploration of the river as far upstream as possible. For more than two years this launch tried to negotiate the passes, but failed because of its large draft, its instability and its lack of speed.

The persevering energy and efforts of its commander were not lost, however, for they prepared the way for the work subsequently undertaken in these parts.

It being impossible to find a suitable passage for [65] [Illustration] [66] [Blank page] [67] steamships, a transshipment railway was built

149: Reinach--48 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

across the island of Khône. It was further necessary to establish two docks, one a tidal dock and the other a launching basin, at South Khône and at North Khône, especially for the transshipment of launch cargoes.

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Lieutenant Commander Simon expressed himself as follows in a lecture which he delivered to the Geography Society [Société de Géographie] on May 15, 1896:

"Believing themselves protected, thanks to this natural barrier, from any repressive measures on our part, the Siamese had crossed the Mékong at Kemmarat, Lakhône and Outhène and were invading Annam little by little and establishing advance posts as little as three days away from Hué. This took place in 1892.

"The government became alarmed, and in order to satisfy solicitations by Cochinchina at the same time, it decided at the suggestion of M. Delcassé in March 1893 to purchase two screw-propelled gunboats, the La Grandière and the Massie, which were intended to exercise surveillance over the upper Mékong.

"These two ships were to be set afloat above the Khône waterfalls. From there they were to negotiate, by any possible means, the Kemmarat gorge which is particularly dangerous for its rapids, and then show their flag at daybreak in the great reach, presumably navigable, which extends from Kemmarat to Vien-Tiane and whose eastern bank includes Annamite Laos.

"Such was the object of the mission which was entrusted to us.

"It was at the same time a hydrographic mission whose work was to take the Khône waterfalls, which steam navigation has today brought within four days' journey of Saigon, as its point of departure and stop only when it was materially impossible to proceed any further.

"As far upriver as possible and as far as possible, these were the orders of the day.

"The ships, which were demountable in five sections, were assembled and set afloat at Saigon in August 1893, and their transshipment past the waterfalls was accomplished in one piece, that is to say without disassembling them, on a carriage which was built for the purpose and which rolled along a track. The track, which was one meter wide, started at the downstream end of the falls, that is to say in the lower basin, and ended in the upper basin after crossing the island of Khône.

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"The administration of public works of Cochinchina was particularly responsible for carrying out the work. The operation was directed by Messrs. Gubiand, the engineering director of public works, and Crouzat, the chief clerk of the department of civil engineering [conducteur principal des ponts et chaussées], and was fully successful despite the haste, the difficulties and the mishaps and tribulations which we had to undergo.

"On October 31, 1893, five months after the mission's arrival in Saigon, two ships, the Massie and the Ham-Luong, had passed the Khône waterfalls.

"The Ham-Luong was a sloop from Cochinchina which was sent at the last [68] moment and in all haste to replace the La Grandière numerically and provisorily, the latter being disabled below the falls as the result of grave damage to the engine."

After they had been floated in the upper reach the Massie and the Ham-Luong pushed on to Bassoc immediately, then to the junction with the Sé-Moun. The Massie finally reached Kemmarat on February 28, 1894, after successfully passing the 120 kilometers of rapids just below it. There the Massie had to wait for high water before it could pass the Keng-Sa, one of the most dangerous obstacles in this region. In the high water season of 1894 it was in the Vien-Tiane reach, where it showed the French flag over an extent of more than 500 kilometers. On September 5, 1894, the La Grandière went to Khône in its turn, on its way from one reach to another, and then in November caught up with the Massie which it soon passed. Finally in August 1895 Lieutenant Commander Simon took the La Grandière through the series of rapids stretching over a distance of 350 kilometers between Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang, which he reached on September 1.

[631
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"This brilliant success demonstrated France's power to the friendly and hostile populations of the banks of the Mékong. Through the more frequent sight of our officers, our weapons and our cruising steamships, which ammounted to ambulatory offices, it strengthened the work accomplished by our diplomats on the left bank, which belonged to us henceforth" (1).

[13]

(1) Lanier, L'Asie, 1898. Selected readings in geography.

We rejoice at being able to render deserved homage here to the abilities of Commander Simon who, in the midst of the greatest

difficulties, was able to complete the daring work which he had assumed. He did not fear to turn his own hand to the task by giving largely of himself and often remaining in a pirogue in the middle of the river, despite the heat of the sun, in order to seek out a passage for his gunboat.

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But Luang-Prabang was not to be the terminus of the La Grandière's journey.

[89] "The difficulties which had long been pending in western upper Laos had just entered into a more acute phase. It was more than ever timely and urgent for us to strengthen our diplomatic arguments with the help of effective justifications of our rights based on accomplished facts.

"We had to show our colors still farther upstream, at least as high as Xieng-Khong, that is to say, in the heart of the territories which others had attempted to detach from our influence by proposing that they remain neutral" (1).

(1) Lieutenant Commander Simon, op. cit. [Lecture delivered to the Société de Géographie on May 15, 1896.]

On September 8, the La Grandière resumed its march upriver.

"Finally we reached our last stage, Tang-Hô, on October 25, 1895. We were a day's journey from Xieng-Lap, at 20° 40' N. latitude, 2500 kilometers from the sea and at an altitude of more than 400 meters. Here the La Grandière was stopped once and for all, for in the present state of things Tang-Hô must be regarded as the limit of all possible ventures in steam navigation, at least when the water level is low" (2).

(2) Lieutenant Commander Simon, op. cit.

These conclusions did not give pause to Lieutenant Commander Mazeran, for he took his gunboat further still. It is now at Xieng-Lap, immobilized and unable to return downriver. There is some question of disarming it and attempting to bring it down to Luang-Prabang by surrounding it with a bamboo sheath. It could at least be used and render some service in Luang-Prabang.

The results of Lieutenant Commander Simon's mission relative to the navigability of the reaches of Bassac and Vien-Tiane enabled the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des

505 Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine] to introduce a regular service
503 of steam launches there. To this end the company signed a contract
654 with the general government of Indo-China, the purpose of which was to organize a complete service from Saigon to Luang-Prabang for passengers and merchandise, using steamships and pirogues by turns, depending on the navigability of the river and on the season. The task was a difficult one, for it was first necessary to enlarge the [70] tidal docks and launching basins and to rebuild, strengthen and correct the railway on the island of Khône to permit the transshipment of three steam launches weighing seventy tons each (1). This [Illustration

(1) The gunboats Massie and La Grandière weighed only twenty-two tons each.

here] was a veritable tour de force which had to be repeated three times. During the high water period of 1893 (2) the operation was

(2) For this transshipment, as for that of 1894, human labor was the driving force. Only since August 1898 has a locomotive run along this railway.

carried out with complete success, [71] [Illustration] [72] [Blank page] [73] thanks to the combined work and efforts of the local administration and the River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des Messageries fluviales]. Today one of these ships, the Garcerie, is assigned to regular service in the Bassac reach between Khône and Pak-Moun. The two others, the Trentinian and the Colombert, have followed the path laid out for them by the gunboats through the Kemmarat rapids and provide service in the Vien-Tiane reach over a distance of nearly 500 kilometers (1).

(1) Just recently the launch Hamluong, which is 22 meters long, has a draft of 1.3 meters and a speed of seven to eight knots, has gone upriver through the Kemmarat rapids under the command of the engineer Jeanneau and has reached Vien-Tiane where it is at the disposition of the Superior Resident.

503 Here, then, is an initial result achieved. During the high water
505 period steamships can provide service from Kratié to Khône. Others

have been introduced in the upper reaches and can easily serve, 503
during the high water period, nearly 200 kilometers in the Bassac
reach and nearly 500 in the Vien-Tiane reach. But during the low 505
water period the stretch between Kratié and Khône is still served by
pirogue over the greater part of the course. Then the navigable reach
of Bassac is reduced to thirty kilometers for steam launches, and
the Vien-Tiane reach requires transshipment by pirogue over some
twenty kilometers between two stretches covered in the above manner.
The two reaches are, moreover, separated by a 160-kilometer strip
which is not navigable in any season.

The impetus has therefore been given, and the way lies open.
Today it remains only to complete the work thus begun and to finish
setting the necessary beacons and clearing the bed of rocks before
navigation, and that is to say trade, can be expanded further. Let
us recapitulate what has been done and what has been proposed.

First of all, from the budgetary point of view, a sum of 87,500 503
francs has so far figured annually in the budget of Laos under the 652
label Studies and projects for the navigability of the Mékong. This
sum was further increased in 1900, and in the budget for public works
in the general interest the following credits appeared:

	francs
Navigability of the Upper Mekong. Purchase of materials for clearing rocks and laying beacons	25,000
[74] Clearing rocks and laying beacons in the lower reach	12,500
Clearing rocks and laying beacons in the middle and upper reaches	62,500
Continuation of studies	25,000
TOTAL	125,000(1)

(1) In 1901 the following figures appeared in the general budget:

Clearing rocks and setting beacons in the Upper Mekong in the lower and middle reaches	75,000
In the upper reach	25,000
Studies	25,000
TOTAL	125,000

It may therefore be assumed that several thousands of francs
have already been spent to make the great river navigable. It must
be admitted that so far the visible results have not compensated for
the sacrifices made, and we prefer to suppose that such credits are

503 predict. It has therefore been decided that, for the moment at least, no more attention should be given to these rapids and that our concern should be restricted to accomplishing the labors necessary to facilitate steam navigation during the low water period in the following reaches:

"1. from Kratié to Stung-Treng and Khône;

"2. between Khône and Pak-Moun;

"3. between Savannakhèt and Sam-Pan-Na."

It might perhaps be understandable that the plan to make these rapids navigable should have been abandoned, if haste were made to build a railway joining the middle Mékong to some port in Annam, when the rapids would become an absolute barrier which we should [138] no longer think of overcoming. But such is not the case, and many long years will still have to pass before the products of the markets of Luang-Prabang and Nong-Khay can reach the Annam coast in any practical way. Moreover, if the work on the navigability of the Mékong continues to go forward at the same slow rate and if we do not take greater advantage of this "moving highway," we shall continue to play into the hands of the Siamese and the market in Bangkok, thanks to the Korat railway, will continue to absorb the Laotian products which should have no other outlets than Saigon, Tourane and Vinh.

d.--DESCRIPTION OF THE DIFFERENT REACHES

1. The Upper Reach

133 505 The Mékong enters Laos where it is joined by the Nam-La, at 21° 40' N. latitude, slightly downstream from Xieng-Hong which is on the 22nd parallel. As far as Xieng-Sèn it flows in an approximately northeast and southwest direction between two ranges of peaks which constrict its bed and make it a torrent rather than a river. In this narrow corridor it has dug a channel which varies, during the high water period, from 150 to 800 meters in width and which sometimes grows as narrow as 50 meters during the low water period. Its bed is generally encumbered with shoals and [79] rocks, and the whirlpools, eddies, currents and counter-currents make navigation impossible. Thus Lieutenant Commander Mazeran's bold and successful venture deserves mention here, for he succeeded in taking the gunboat La Grandière as far as Xieng-Kok, that is to say nearly to the 21st

149: Reinach--56 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

133
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parallel, and 2800 kilometers from the sea.

It was a noteworthy physical effort, but unfortunately a useless one which in no way proves that the Mekong is or ever will be commercially navigable in this region.

Tang-Hô is the point where all ships must stop, no matter what they may be, and not even a Laotian pirogue boatman would venture into the rapids which lie upstream. It may be of interest to quote, in this connection, the opinion of M. Garanger, who was for a long time government commissioner in Vien-Poukha.

"The outlet on the Mékong for the whole region," he says, "is at Tang-Hô at the foot of the famous rapids which are regarded as the terminal point of navigation, since further upstream there are nothing but small pirogues designed for fishing.

"The question of passing the rapids was of too great an interest to the northern part of my commissionership for me not to take some account of the hopes which had been aroused by the successful passage of the La Grandière.

"I was forced to conclude, after following the gunboat's itinerary, that the difficulties remained almost insurmountable. The route followed by the La Grandière is now on dry land in the midst of sand and rocks of a chaotic appearance and some 250 or 300 meters from the rapids. There is water over the bank where passage was found for only two or three months of the year, and it attains an appreciable depth only during the few days which mark the maximum of each rising. The rapids themselves, where all the water is now concentrated, roll on with unheard-of violence in a narrow corridor bordered by two rock walls, and the last attempt to negotiate the passage in a pirogue resulted in the death of one man and the loss of the boat.

"Further upstream, according to the natives, there are still graver obstacles, but they never had any occasion to see them. This information should be accepted only with great reservations, but I myself saw in Xieng-Hong, in 1893, that by using the sandbanks natives were able to cross the great river without ever going further than knee-deep into the water."

Upstream from Xieng-Sèn the Mékong is joined on its right bank by the Nam-Huok, which serves as the frontier between the Anglo-Burmese States and [80] Siam. Slightly downstream from this point it is joined by the Nam-Khôk. From the latter point the river describes a northward curve as far as Xieng-Khong. It then resumes

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its southward course, and just before it reaches the 20th parallel it is joined by its first important left-bank tributary, the Nam-Tha.

The Nam-Tha comes from the northeast and crosses the rich plain of Muong-Luong-Nam-Tha which has been called "the jewel of all Upper Laos," for it is an extremely fertile and well watered region capable of being made into an infinite number of fine rice-fields. The Nam-Tha is navigable in all seasons as far as Sop-Ngim, and as far as Muong-Luong for small pirogues.

The Mékong continues in a sourtherly direction as far as Ban Pak-Kop (19° 45'), then suddenly bends eastward for a distance of 200 or so kilometers as far as Luang-Prabang, as if it were going to flow into the Gulf of Tonkin. In this part of its course it flows between steep hills. It can be navigated by pirogues in all seasons despite the Keng-Li rapids, which require merchandise to be unloaded during the low water period. Upstream from Luang-Prabang it resumes its north and south direction, and towards the 20th parallel its left bank is joined by three large rivers, the Nam-Hou, the Nam-Suong and the Nam-Khan.

In view of the length of its courses and the volume of its waters, the Nam-Hou may be regarded, as we have noted, as one of the branches of the Mékong. Although its mouth is narrow, it soon widens out and takes on the appearance of a great river as far as Muong-Ngoi. At this point it becomes narrow again, only to widen once more until its junction with the Nam-Ngoua. The Nam-Hou could doubtless be negotiated by steam launches during the high water period as far as Muong-Koua (about 150 kilometers from Luang-Prabang), the market where the produce of the region is concentrated. It is navigable in all seasons for pirogues as far as Muong-Houa. From Muong-Houa to Muong-Hahin and Muong-Hou the Nam-Hou can be negotiated only by extremely narrow rafts going downstream. The great rapids of Keng-Louang, situated a day's journey from Pak-Hou, require the cargoes of pirogues to be completely unloaded during middle and low water periods.

[81] By way of the Nam-Ngoua, its left-bank tributary, and its sub-tributary the Nam-Youn, which are navigable in all seasons for small pirogues, the high plateau of Muong-Theng (Dien-Bien-Phu, province of Van-Bu, Tonkin) can be reached. From that point two land routes connect with the Black River at Muong-Lai (Lai-Chau) and Van-Bu.

[48]

487 A particularity which should be noted is that these two land routes which represent some hundred odd kilometers are the only ones which the traveler can take in order to go from Hanoi to Saigon by way of Luang- [Illustration here] Prabang, that is to say by way of the Red River, the Black River, the tributaries of the Mékong and the great river itself, or in order to cover a total distance of approximately 3200 kilometers. These hundred kilometers of land roads are the only ones which merit the name, since all the rest of the journey is made on navigable waterways in steamships, pirogues and rafts.

505 133 The Nam-Suong and its tributary the Nam-Seng can be negotiated in all seasons by pirogues and rafts. Ban-Pak-Seng, at the junction of the Nam-Suong and the Nam-Seng, is the capital of one of the most prosperous cantons in the province of Luang-Prabang.

A day's journey away from Luang-Prabang the Nam-Suong is blocked by [82] a shelf called the Keng-Luang which necessitates complete portage of merchandise and even of pirogues and rafts at certain seasons.

The Nam-Khan is navigable for pirogues and rafts during the greater part of the year, starting at Muong-You which is the ford for the road from Tran-Ninh to Luang-Prabang. It flows into the Mékong in the northern part of this city, one of the suburbs of which it circles.

[361] Luang-Prabang, the capital of the kingdom of the same name, is situated at an altitude of 350 meters above sea level, at 19° 54' 20" N. latitude and 99° 45' E. longitude. From the commercial point of view it is one of the most important centers--if not the most important--in Laos. The city numbers about 10,000 inhabitants and 2000 houses. In Luang-Prabang the river is 350 to 400 meters wide. Just above and below the city it is blocked by sandbanks which leave a channel only 100 meters wide during the low water period, but which is always navigable for pirogues and rafts.

The following table shows the average length of time it takes to travel both up and down the rivers between Luang-Prabang and the posts on this reach.

JOURNEY		High water season		Low water season	
		Number of days Up	Number of days Down	Number of days Up	Number of days Down
Mékong	Luang-Prabang to Xieng-Khong	12	7	12	7
	Xieng-Khong to Tang-Hô	4	2	4	2
	Luang-Prabang to Pak-Lay	4	8	6	13
Nam-Hou, Nam-Ngoua	Luang-Prabang to Dien-Bien-Phu	15	8.5	15	8.5
Nam-Suong	Luang-Prabang to Sop-Sat (Muong-Son road)	8	6	8	6

149: Reinach--60 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

About fifteen kilometers from Luang-Prabang a series of rapids begins which makes navigation as far as Pak-Lay extremely difficult, even in pirogues. The Keng-Kaniok and the Keng-Louang [83] make it necessary to unload merchandise and transport it by land using bearers, while the pirogues pass the rapids empty. 505 133

Between Luang-Prabang and Pak-Lay the river is quite deeply cut into hills and rock masses, the sides of which constrict its bed to a width of only fifty meters at several points during the low water period. But as it approaches Pak-Lay (1) it widens out to 700

(1) Pak-Lay is situated at 18° 12' 20" N. latitude and 99° 5' E. longitude. [361]

or 800 meters.

In this part of the river we should note three tributaries of some importance on its right bank. These are the Nam-Houng, the Nam-Poun and the Nam-Lay, and in their valleys there are many teak trees.

Towards the 18th parallel between Pak-Lay and Xieng-Khan (2)

(2) It is at Ban Houé-Hat, between Pak-Lay and Xieng-Khan, that the Mékong comes closest to Bangkok (470 kilometers as the crow flies).

the Mékong is constricted between rocky headlands. Here it is extremely sinuous, and describes an overall northward bend slightly below the parallel (3). Then in another bend which is broader

(3) There is no tributary worthy of note on the left bank. On the right bank, however, about in the center of the bend and upstream from Xieng-Khan there are the mouths of two water-courses, the Nam-Huong and the Nam-Leui, which water a region of fairly dense population. One particularity to be noted is as follows: the sources of these two rivers are only a few kilometers away and are separated, by rather low ridges, 1) from the Nam-Lom-Sak, the easternmost branch of the Ménam, and 2) from the Klong-Koé-Noï, one of its middle left-bank tributaries.

and less winding, but which turns in the opposite direction, that is

133 to say towards the north, the river is joined on its left bank by the Nam-Sang and the Nam-Thon, the valleys of which are rich in gold
505 and catechu (sisièt). Then it finally leaves its steep gorges and reaches Sam-Pan-Na, the entrance to the great middle reach which extends as far as Savannakhèt.

Although it presents numerous navigation difficulties because of its rapids, native boats are nevertheless very active as far as Luang-Prabang by reason of the large flow of trade from this great market towards Bangkok by way of Pak-Lay on the one hand, and by way of Nong-Khay on the other.

[84] 2. The Middle Reach

133 At Sam-Pan-Na the Mékong leaves the region bristling with mountains which have restricted its course for good and all, and
505 spreads out at its ease in a fine navigable reach nearly 600 kilometers long.

361 It first passes through Vien-Tiane, the old capital of the kingdom of the same name which included, before 1827, all the Laotian territory on both banks of the Mékong between Luang-Prabang and Cambodia. Today the former state of things has been reestablished, and Vien-Tiane is once again the capital of French Laos. In fact, this point is the navigation terminus of the steam launches of the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine], even though the river is accessible to steamships as far as Kok-Peung, which is about 35 kilometers from Vien-Tiane, that is to say above Sam-Pan-Na. It would be true to add that the company would derive no commercial advantage from sending its launches that far up.

Between Vien-Tiane and Nong-Khay the river describes a sharp southward bend which doubles the 22-kilometer distance between the two points by land.

"Nong-Khay, which was founded after the destruction of Vien-Tiane by the Siamese, has partly inherited the importance of this old city. It is the greatest population center to be found on the banks of the Mékong between Pnom-Penh and Luang-Prabang" (1).

(1) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

149: Reinach--62 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina 361
Laotians AM8 133

Today Nong-Khay numbers about 10,000 inhabitants and 2000 505
houses. It is the starting point for the ox-cart caravans which travel [492]
to Bangkok by way of Korat carrying all the products of northern Laos.

From Nong-Khay on the Mékong winds through a plain in a 505
northeast direction. Its banks are densely populated and highly 133
fertile. At Pon-Pissay, on the 18th parallel (2), the river makes

(2) The reader will have noted that the 18th parallel has often been referred to in the foregoing. This stems from the curious fact that, in its meanderings, the great river is theoretically cut seven times by the parallel between Pak-Lay and Saniabouri, that is to say over a distance of 535 kilometers.

another northward bend [85] as far as Keng-Sa-Doc, which is just downstream from Pak-Sane (Patchoum). From this point on the Mékong takes the course which it will keep all the way to the sea, following a line approximately parallel to the Annamitic Chain and to the Gulf of Tonkin.

Somewhat beyond Pon-Pissay the Mékong is joined on its left bank by an important tributary, the Ngûm, a fine river with a peaceful course whose valley is highly populated and gives rise to quite extensive trade. Cinnamon, tobacco and catechu [sisièt] are its chief products. The Ngûm can be navigated by pirogues and rafts in all seasons as far as Tinh-Kéo, where the river is joined by the Nam-Song, about thirty kilometers from Tourakhom. The gunboat Massie went partway up the river during the high water period. It is said that the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine] intends to begin a steam launch service along the river because of its commercial importance.

After the Ngûm on the left bank of the river come first the Nam-Mang, which is of no great interest, and then the Nam-Nhiêp, which might be thought larger than it really is, to judge by its mouth. In fact, its total length is scarcely fifty kilometers, and its valley is sparsely populated. Just downstream from the Nam-Nhiêp is the mouth of the Nam-Sane, which flows into the river at Muong-Pak-Sane (Patchoum). This river, which has a very winding course, can be navigated by pirogues and rafts in all seasons as far as Keng-Louang, to the north of Borikan. It can be navigated by steam launches over a distance of about fifty kilometers during the high water period.

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or as far as Muong-Borikan which is about halfway between the Mékong and the Keng-Louang. At Pak-Sane a road comes from the right bank and leads to Tran-Ninh by way of Borikan.

Downstream from Pak-Sane there is a series of small rapids which can be negotiated in all seasons. One of these is the Keng-Sa-Doc. Below this point the Mékong is joined by an important left-bank tributary, the Nam-Ka-Dinh or Nam-Teûn. Captain Gosselin describes the latter as follows (1):

(1) Captain Gosselin, op. cit. [Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900.]

[86] "The Nam-Ka-Dinh, or Nam-Teûn, has its origin in the center of the muong of Cam-Mon, on a very high and irregular plateau containing the watershed between the basins of the Mékong and of the China Sea. This torrential river, which cuts the plateau of Na-Kaï and receives all its waters, is unusual in that it has navigable tributaries while it itself is not accessible to navigation over the greater part of its course.

"This peculiarity can easily be understood from a glance at the map, where one may note the enormous difference in altitude which its course shows over a distance less than sixty kilometers, immediately downstream from the point where its tributary joins it."

It is possible to travel up the Nam-Ka-Dinh for a two days' journey, as far as the rapids of Keng-Bi.

Throughout this whole reach, as far as Ban Ta-Sa-Kou (right bank) and Hueûn-Hin (left bank), the Mékong retains the appearance of a peaceful river flowing between low banks which are now sandy, and now covered with abundant vegetation. Its width varies between 1200 and 1500 meters, and its waters are deep enough to make steam navigation possible almost all year long. However, the first rapids or Keng-Kassek, which are situated just above Saniabouri, are an obligatory transshipment point during the dry season, although this obstacle does not exist in the period of high waters. After Saniabouri the river passes between Outhène, a quite important market on the right bank, and Pak-Hin-Boun, the capital of a province on the left bank (Cammon).

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The Nam-Hin-Boun, a left-bank tributary, comes from the plateau of Na-Kaï. This river is unusual in that it flows into a tunnel

under the rocks, where it loses itself in an immense grotto. It can be navigated by pirogues in all seasons from Keng-Kièt on. 505 133

The large island of Don-Don is found between Pak-Hin-Boun and Lakhône.

Lakhone is an important center on the right bank located opposite Tha-Khèk, which is the nearest point to the Annam coast on the whole Mékong (1). [361]

(1) From Tha-Khèk to the mouth of the Cua-Nhuong (Hatinh) is reckoned 180 kilometers as the crow flies.

Just below the 17th parallel is found Muong-Panom, the holy city [87] [Illustration] [88] [Blank page] [89] of Laos and a celebrated spot of pilgrimage, by reason a That (1) which is said to contain relics [178]

(1) A that is a kind of stele or four-sided pyramid.

of Buddha. Opposite Panom, on the left bank, the Sé-Bang-Fai flows into the Mékong.

The Sé-Bang-Fai comes from the Annamitic Chain. It has a sinuous and extremely long course, but cannot be navigated in any season except by pirogues as far as Pou-Houa, that is to say for a distance of about eighty kilometers.

Below its mouth, and thirty kilometers upstream from Savannakhèt, is the Keng-Kabao. The latter deserves mention here, for during the low water period it forms an insurmountable obstacle for steam launches, which never go below this point from November to July.

Difficulties in navigation do not begin until after Hueûn-Hin, and the steam launches of the River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des Messageries fluviales] could reach that point during the high water period if there were any commercial advantage to be gained by so doing.

A series of rapids stretches over a length of about 160 kilometers between Hueûn-Hin and Pak-Moun. These are known as the "rapids of Kemmarat" because of the large muong (2) on the right bank which

(2) Muong = province; also means capital of a province. [631]

is located along this part of the river. They are a succession of rapids

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arranged in tiers, which the Mékong descends at speeds which have been found to be as high as eight or nine miles per hour during the high water period. The extremely violent current encounters many rocks and forms whirlpools and eddies which are extremely dangerous to navigation. The pilots and pirogue boatmen must have a great deal of composure and skill in order to direct their great rafts along the upper river through the lashing waves and to prevent them from foundering on the reefs towards which the rapidity of this enormous mass of water impels them.

Francis Garnier speaks as follows of these rapids:

"During the low water period the river here has the appearance of an immense dried-out torrent which has left vast banks of sandstone bare all along its course. An irregular channel [90] winds through the middle of its rocky bed. It is sometimes less than sixty meters wide, while its depth sometimes exceeds a hundred meters at a few points where the current is slow-moving. Each narrowing of the channel produces a rapids or Keng. The latter are the only hazards in this difficult kind of navigation, and each of them has been given a special name by the natives" (1).

(1) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

The rapids which are the most difficult to negotiate and where the greatest number of pirogue accidents occur are, going downriver, the Keng-Mouang and the Keng-Sa above Kemmarat, and below it the Keng-Ngao-Fa-Khop, the Keng-Ka-Niên, the Keng-Kong-Louong (at about 15° 41' N. latitude), the Keng-Nam-Phong, the Keng-Ya-Peut and the Keng-Tha-Kiên. During the high water period the steam launches from the following reach could, if the need should arise, go up as far as Tha-Kiên just below the rapids. This point is of some importance, for it is there that the most direct road between Oubône and Kham-Thong-Niaï and Saravane intersects the river, and Tha-Kiên is less than twenty kilometers from Kham-Thong, that is to say from the Sédone.

Before Pak-Moun the direction of the Mékong, which ever since the mouth of the Nam-Ka-Dinh had been approximately north-northwest and south-southeast, suddenly changes and a spur of Pou-Kang-Huon forces it to curve sharply to the west for a few kilometers,

as far as the mouth of the Moun.

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In this region of rapids the Mékong has only one major tributary, the Sé-Bang-Hièn, which flows into the river opposite Kemmarat.

The Sé-Bang-Hièn (about 250 kilometers in length) derives its importance from the fact that its course and that of its tributary the Sé-Tchépon open a road from Annam to Laos in the middle reach. The Sé-Tchépon is, in fact, navigable from Lao-Bao (Aï-Lao) on during the high water period. Since the latter point is only about 50 kilometers from Maï-Lan, where the river of Quang-Tri is also navigable, it will readily be understood that in 1893, or even 1894, when it was essential at all cost and as quickly as possible to reach the great reach of [91] Vien-Tiane and there fly the French flag on a steam launch, someone should have thought of taking a demountable launch from the Annam coast to the middle basin of the Mékong by way of the depression of Aï-Lao. The plan could not be attempted, until the high water period of 1895.

M. Mercié, a ship's ensign, succeeded in crossing the Aï-Lao gap at an altitude of no less than 410 meters, with his launch taken apart and carried by bearers. When put together and set afloat again on the Tchépon the Fourmi was able to reach the Sé-Bang-Hièn and to negotiate four of its rapids. But it struck bottom in the fifth one, the Pak-Sé-Metch, and was broken up by the rocks just at the moment when it was about to enter the lower Sé-Bang-Hièn, that is to say in a part of its course where the river had only a few unimportant shelves which are covered, in the right season, by more than ten meters of water.

Even supposing that the attempt could have succeeded, the useful and practical advantage to be gained from the venture at the time is not too clear, since the Massie and the La Grandière had already passed the Kemmarat rapids and were in the reach of Vien-Tiane (1),

(1) The La Grandière had even reached Luang-Prabang on September 1, 1895.

which was the first goal to be attained. Moreover, because of the launch's light tonnage and low engine power, even if ship's ensign Mercié's undertaking had succeeded it would not have proved beyond all question of a doubt that the Sé-Bang-Hièn and the Sé-Tchépon were commercially navigable for launches of a practical tonnage.

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Finally, at the junction of the Sé-Bang-Hiên with the great river the Fourmi would have found itself confronted by other and almost insurmountable obstacles before it could gain the navigable reach, such as the Keng-Sa and the Keng-Mouang. We must nevertheless pay homage to the real efforts which were accomplished in a completely disinterested undertaking by this young and daring naval officer.

The following are the average lengths of journeys by river from Vien-Tiane to the nearby posts on this reach:

149; Reinach—68 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[92]

JOURNEY		High Water Season		Low Water Season	
		Upriver	Downriver	Upriver	Downriver
		Number of days by pirogue	Number of days by pirogue	Number of days by pirogue	Number of days by pirogue
Mekong	Vien-Tiane to Pak-Lay	8	4	13	7
	Vien-Tiane to Pak-Hin-Boun	1 (steam launch)	1 (steam launch)	2 (steam launch and pirogue)	2 (steam launch and pirogue)
	Pak-Hin-Boun to Savannakhet	1 (steam launch)	1 (steam launch)	2 (steam launch and pirogue)	2 (steam launch and pirogue)
Nam-Hin-Boun	Pak-Hin-Boun to Keng-Kiet	3	2	3	2
Nam-Sane	Pak-Sane to Tha-Tom	6	3	6	3

1505

149; Reinach--69 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

3. The Inner Reach

505 133 361 438

After being joined by the Moun, the largest tributary on its right bank, the Mékong turns back eastward. As it leaves the narrow gorge of Pak-Moun where its course narrows to as little as 200 meters in width between sheer cliffs, it resumes a general north-northwest and south-southeast direction and spreads out over rich plains as far as the mouth of the Sédone.

Korat (1), the largest market in Siamese Laos, also belongs to the

(1) The Moun passes about 25 kilometers to the southeast of Korat.

Mékong basin through the Ta-Krong. The importance of this center is well-known, and today it is directly connected with Bangkok by a railway. Oubône (2), the other market town which is the storehouse

(2) Korat and Oubône are the seats of two French consulates.

of Lower Laos for Korat and Bangkok, as Nong-Khay is the storehouse of Upper Laos, is situated on the banks of the Moun about 300 kilometers from Korat, and only sixty from the Mékong. Communication between Korat and Oubône is achieved mainly by land, by means of ox-carts. We have seen in the foregoing that [93] steam navigation had been attempted on the Moun during the high water period as early as 1891, and that the Siamese were then planning to send their steamships out on the Mékong in the hope of getting there ahead of us. The launches provide a highly irregular service between Oubône and Tha-Phan-Sang, which is about 25 kilometers downstream from Korat. The trip takes from eight to ten days going upriver, and four to five coming down.

[492]

In its lower course, that is to say between Oubône and Pak-Moun, the Moun is barred near its mouth by shelves which make navigation extremely difficult, even for pirogues, during part of the year. The Chinese merchants of Oubône, however, who go by pirogue to Bassac or out on the Sédone, go up and down the Moun in all seasons. Because of the particular service for which they are used, their pirogues are known by the special name of Hua-Moun, or pirogues of the Moun (1)

(1) See table, Chapter VIII.

of the Moun (1). 000

(1) See table, Chapter VIII.

The most difficult rapid to negotiate is the Keng-Tanah, situated only three kilometers from Pak-Moun. During the low water period it is necessary to unload them completely and transport them by hand across dry land over extremely rough sandstone rocks. It has been negotiated during the high water period by the single-wheeler the Haiphong, and since the current beyond the rapids is weak and the width sufficient (300 meters), steam navigation is possible as far as Oubône for perhaps two or three months. 505 133

Francis Garnier describes this region as follows (2):

(2) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

"From Pi-Moun on the river is once more unobstructed. A very weak current, straight banks and a uniform width give it, in certain spots, the appearance of a canal dug by man."

At Pak-Sédone the Mékong is joined on its left bank by another important tributary, the Sédone. This river, which is about 200 kilometers in length, rounds the northern part of the plateau of the Bolovens. All the roads which descend from this mountain mass end in its valley, and all the products of the region leave it by way of the Sédone. Cardamom, which is the most important of these, is [94] an item much dealt in at the temporary market of Champi. The latter is the terminus of the convoys which come down from the plateau, and from this point on merchandise goes by river to Bassac or Oubône. 438 361 241

The market of Champi had to be established fairly near the mouth of the Sédone, for just upriver and less than thirty kilometers from Pak-Sédone the river is barred by insurmountable waterfalls [Illustration here] fifteen meters in height. From the point of view of navigation the Sédone is therefore divided into two sections: the part situated above the falls and the part situated below. 505 133

To the north of the falls the Sédone has a reach some thirty kilometers in length which can be navigated in all seasons by pirogues

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133

as far as Muong-Khong (1), the point where the roads from Ban-Mouang

(1) During the high water period the Sédone can even be navigated as far as Smia by light pirogues.

to Saravane and from Ban-Mouang to Song-Khone fork. Some pirogues go directly from Kham-Thong-Niaï to Bassac, and in this case [95] the cargo is completely unloaded above the falls and the pirogues are carried overland across steep rocky slopes.

Below the falls the river is accessible to steam launches during the high water period. Before the establishment of steamship service by the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine], the single-wheeler Haïphong provided a regular weekly service for dispatches, travelers and merchandise as far as Champi and Keng-Kok. This lower part of the river's course can be navigated by pirogues in all seasons, but during the low water period the many shelves make navigation extremely difficult.

From the Sédone on, and as far as Bassac, the Mékong is hemmed in by the mountains of Bassac which tower steeply over its right bank and reduce its width to about 500 meters. Francis Garnier characterizes as follows the difference between this gorge and the broad plains which border the river downstream from Bassac (1):

(1) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

"The character of the landscape changes in sudden fashion. Instead of the smiling, uniform plains which the sparkling waters slowly traversed and where they formed hundreds of islands, and instead of the almost submerged banks hidden by long lines of palm trees and houses, there are sheer banks where rocks crop up everywhere and high undulations covered with forests which hem in the rapid black water on all sides."

The river valley then widens out again, and at Bassac itself reaches a width of nearly two kilometers. Bassac is a point of transit where the produce of the region comes to be taken on either for Pnom-Penh or for Oubône. Opposite this center is the large, well-cultivated island of Don-Dèng. From Bassac to Khong, that is to say over a distance of about 100 kilometers, the Mékong flows

in an almost exactly north and south direction through rich and extremely fertile plains where villages succeed one another almost without interruption. Halfway between Bassac and Khong there is another large island, called Don-Saï, which like Don-Dèng is highly populated and well-cultivated. Upstream from the island of Khong the river becomes much wider (eight to ten kilometers) and contains an important [96] group of islands which, by reason of their number, are known as Si-Pan-Don (4000 islands). The island of Khong is by far the most important. It is twenty kilometers long, seven wide, contains several fine villages and has a total population of 10,000 (1).

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[361]

(1) In all Laos, this is the point where the population density is greatest with respect to the area (1500 inhabitants per 100 square kilometers).

[161]

On this island is located the city of Khong, the former capital of Lower Laos. [Illustration here]

[361]

Slightly below the 14th parallel is found the island of Khône, famed for its waterfalls which form an absolute obstacle to navigation. Francis Garnier has given us a detailed description of the falls, which he calls cataracts. A few lines of his description are given below (2):

(2) Francis Garnier, op. cit. [Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine, 1885.]

"The two largest channels and the most beautiful cataracts are found on the outermost arms of the river, the Salaphe branch and the Paphèng branch. There one may see waterfalls more than fifteen meters in vertical height and which [97] sometimes reach a width of one kilometer. The broken line of cataracts has a total extent of twelve or thirteen kilometers. Upstream the river narrows momentarily until it occupies not more than half this extent, then it spreads out again over the immense plateau of rocks which precedes the falls, losing itself in the midst of numberless islands and embracing between its two banks a space of nearly five leagues."

We have already seen that a railway was established from north to south across the island of Khône to serve as a link between the reaches of Kratié and Bassac. [Illustration here]

The reach of Bassac can be navigated by steam launches during

505 the high water period from North Khône to Pak-Moun, that is to say
133 over a distance of nearly 200 kilometers. When the waters fall the navigable extent is reduced, and at low water only a limited service of about thirty kilometers is possible, from Ban-Dong to the southern point of Don-Sal. All the rest of the journey must be made by pirogue, for these small boats can circulate quite easily in this reach in all seasons. Rafts are used only going downriver.

The average length of journeys by river on this reach between Bassac and nearby points is as follows:

	JOURNEY	High Water Season: Upriver — Number of days by pirogue	High Water Season: Downriver — Number of days by pirogue	Low Water Season: Upriver — Number of days by pirogue	Low Water Season: Downriver — Number of days by pirogue
Mékong	Bassac to Pak-Sédone	2-3 hours (steam launch)	1-1.5 hours (steam launch)	1	1/2
Mékong	Pak-Sédone to Savannakhèt	20	5	16 to 18	6 to 8
Mékong	Bassac to Khône	1 (steam launch)	1/2 (steam launch)	3 (steam launch and pirogue)	3 (steam launch and pirogue)
Sédone	Pak-Sédone to Kham-Thong-Niaï	3	2	3	2
Sédone	Kham-Thong-Niaï to Smia	2	1	2	1

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149: Reinach--75 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

4. The Maritime Reach

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Below Khône the Mékong is encumbered by islands, islets and shelves which are more or less difficult to negotiate. During the high water period the river covers most of these hazards. Only the crests of the trees are left above water, and one navigates in a veritable submerged forest which reminds one of an inundation.

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Stung-Treng is an important center, especially by reason of its site, for the city is located at the junction of the Mékong and the Sé-Khong, somewhat below the point where the latter joins the Sésane, which is itself swelled near its mouth by the Ton-Lé-Srépok. The produce of the region of Attopeu naturally finds its way to Stung-Treng, for it is the commercial intermediary between this region and Cambodia.

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At Thboung-Kla, thirty kilometers below Stung-Treng, the Mékong enters Cambodian territory. Then begins a long series of rapids which impede its course and make it difficult [99] [Illustration] [100] [Blank page] [101] negotiate, but which do not constitute an insurmountable obstacle for steam launches which have sufficient speed. The first important post in Cambodia is at Kratié, and steamships can go up as far as this point in all seasons.

The Sékhong, the Sésane and the Srépok form a basin which is noteworthy for its extent, being equal in area to all of Cochinchina. Unfortunately, the population density and importance of trade in the basin are not in proportion to so considerable an area. The valleys are sparsely populated and traffic there is, in consequence, quite limited. Finally, these watercourses are difficult to negotiate.

The Sékhong is a river whose course stretches over about 400 kilometers. Its sources lie near the 16th parallel, some hundred kilometers to the southwest of Hué, in the orographic nucleus of the Annamitic Chain which also gives rise to one of its large tributaries, the Dak-Poyo.

The upper course of the Sékhong bears the name of Dak-Mout. This river crosses an extremely rough region where towering rocks hem in its torrential bed. Beyond Koum-Kang the valley of the Sékhong widens out and small pirogues can navigate there.

At Muong-Mai, that is to say somewhat below the 15th parallel, the Sékhong is joined by the Sé-Kémane, an important tributary which, under the name of the Dak-Poyo, has its origin in the same mountain mass as the Dak-Mout. After it, like the Sékhong, flows past steep

149: Reinach--76 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

rocks which tower precipitously over its course, the Sé-Kémane widens out as it is joined by the Dak-Bla, the sources of which, like those of its chief tributary the Sé-Souk, are near the Sésane. The Sé-Kémane is hardly navigable for pirogues except from Muong-Kao on. The latter is the most important center in the region and is generally known by the name of Attopeu. Pirogues can ply back and forth between this point and Stung-Treng in all seasons, but the many rapids with which the Sékhong is encumbered, mainly as far as the Sé-Pien, make its course extremely torrential and navigation very difficult. Before it reaches Siempang the Sékhong is joined on its right bank by the Sé-Pien which, like its [102] tributary the Sé-Kampho, comes from the plateau of the Bolovens. When they leave their gorges these two rivers water marvelous plains which are slightly hilly towards the north and which could serve as pasture land for immense flocks. From Siempang on the Sékhong can be navigated by steam launches during the high water period.

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Before it reaches the Mékong the Sékhong is joined, less than ten kilometers from its mouth, by its chief tributary the Sésane, which with its 400-kilometer course is of no less importance and interest than the Sékhong itself.

The Sésane comes from a mountain mass which dominates the amphitheater of Cong-Bol just above the 15th parallel. Its deep valley is called Poco by the natives. Like all the upper valleys of the watercourses in this region, it is encumbered with rapids and waterfalls and deeply cut between rock walls. On its left bank the Poco is joined by the Bla, the valley of which is followed for some distance by the road joining Attopeu to Qui-Nhon by way of Kon-Toum. The Sésane then traverses all this gold-bearing region which is still little-known and, so to speak, unexploited to this day. In its valley are found the mining posts of Ban-Phi, Ruhleville and Bokham. It can be navigated by pirogue in all seasons from Kong-Sédam on. The latter point, slightly above Ban-Phi, has a militia post stationed there to provide security for the works of the Attopeu Gold Mining Company [compagnie des Mines d'or d'Attopeu].

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Some twenty-five kilometers from its mouth the Sésane is joined by the Ton-Lé-Srépok, a large tributary. This river, also known as the Sé-Bang-Khan, comes from the south, not far from the plateau of Lang-Bian. It passes close by Darlac, the capital of the province of the same name, and through Ban-Don, from which point it is

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navigable during part of the year.

The Ia-Drang, whose valley is inhabited by the Djarai tribe, is one of its principal tributaries. For that matter, the most important Kha tribes are settled in the valleys of the watercourses which have been dealt with in the foregoing. Thus we find the Lovè Khas between the Sé-Khong, the Sé-Souk and the Sésane; the Niaheun Khas and a few Alaks in the valley of the Sékhong; the Souk Khas in those of the Sé-Pien, [103] [Illustration] [104] [Blank page] [105] the Sé-Kampho and the lower Sékhong; the Salangs between the Sésane and the Sé-Souk; the Bahnars and the Rognaos in those of the Bla and the other left-bank tributaries of the Poco; the Penongs in the deep valley of the Srépok; the Djarais in the middle valley of the Sésane and in that of the Ia-Drang; and the Braos and the Tiam-Poueun in the lower Sésane. Those [Illustration here] of the Kha tribes which have been pacified work the gold-bearing alluvia of these rivers and pay their taxes with the gold dust which they extract.

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Upriver from Stung-Treng and as far as the waterfalls the Mékong can be navigated at low water by steam launches. At high water the large steamers of the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine] which provide service between Saigon and Pnom-Penh can go up as far as Khône. Below Stung-Treng and as far as Kratié the river can be navigated only by pirogues at low water. The following table [106] shows the average length of journeys by river between Stung-Treng and nearby points on this reach:

JOURNEYS		High Water Season		Low Water Season	
		Upriver	Downriver	Upriver	Downriver
		Number of days by pirogue	Number of days by pirogue	Number of days by pirogue	Number of days by pirogue
Mékong	Stung-Treng to Khône	3 hrs. (steam launch)	1.5 hrs. (steam launch)	1/2 hr. (steam launch and pirogue)	1/2 hr. (steam launch and pirogue)
Mékong	Stung-Treng to Kratié	6 hrs. (steam launch)	3 hrs. (steam launch)	3	2
Sékhong	Stung-Treng to Attopeu	18	4	12	6
Sésane	Stung-Treng to Ban-Phi	12	4	15	6
Srépok	Stung-Treng to Ban-Don	18 to 20	8	--	--

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[114] of what has been observed, and because no better expression of the facts could be hoped for.

THE THAI RACE

142 "Laotians. Of all the Thais, the Laotian is the one who has
144 remained the purest, although he has a much higher proportion of Aryan blood than the other varieties, with the exception of the Lus. Fairly tall in stature, his hair cut short, elegant in his movements and more refined than all the other inhabitants of the land, he is the aristocratic type of Laos. His upbringing, his education, his religion and even his vices have a mark of distinction which make
438 them stand out above those of his neighbors. An excellent boatman, and a trader rather than a farmer, he is the one who seems the master
• 505 of the land, as much by virtue of his commercial aptitudes as by the
484 ease with which he ranges the country. Mounted on his long and narrow shaped pirogue, made in one piece of a tree trunk hollowed out by fire, he goes great distances to visit peoples of the most varied races [175] [Illustration] [176] [Blank page] [177] and serves as a link between all the human varieties which populate Laos. He is at home and at his ease everywhere, standing out clearly above all his countrymen in this respect.

[361] "The Laotian prefers to settle along navigable watercourses and in proximity to plains of ricefields. He is glad to have his land
[241] worked by mercenaries or by dependents of inferior race, and some-
[567] times by slaves (at least before our arrival). He himself, with quite an extensive knowledge of the needs and resources of the other inhabitants of the land, particularly likes to traffic in all kinds of merchandise. He it is who goes to buy forest products and cereal grains on the spot from the mountainfolk or from sedentary farmers, and sells them cloth, salt, tobacco, earthenware, farming implemen
[439] etc. in exchange. He it is who exports the products of Laos to neighboring countries and brings back the things which Laotian industry cannot produce. His business as a commercial traveler, which he likes and which gives him a good standard of living, occupies him for only a few months of the year but brings him into contact with all the neighboring peoples and also with the Europeans and Chinese in the Siamese, Annamite and Cochinchinese trading posts. Thence arises his veneer of civilization which strikes one at first glance.

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435 The following table shows the considerable discrepancy between purchase prices within the country and sale prices on transit and European markets.

In the last seven years Laos has become a French possession, but [505] the interior conditions of trade and exchange have not varied. A single modification has been the fruit of our occupation, the creation of a line of steam transport on the Mekong. This service, although still not perfect, nonetheless constitutes [427] [Illustration] [428] [Blank page] [429] the most economical route from Luang-Prabang or Nong-Khay to Cambodia and the sea. Unfortunately, the customs barrier is there to stop the products which our industries do not yet manufacture but which our merchants could import into Laos in competition against those brought in through Siam, Burma and Yunnan.

Markets	Sticklac per 100 kilograms	Benzoin per 100 kilograms	Cardamom per 100 kilograms	Rubber per 100 kilograms
	francs	francs	francs	francs
Hua-Pahn (Laos)				1st quality 166 to 208 2nd quality 85 to 115
Nong-Khay, Vien-Tiane (Laos)	50 to 60	150 to 250	55 to 60	1st quality 250 to 280
Bassac (Laos)	38 to 40		92 to 100	
Pnom-Penh and Cholen (Cambodia & Cochinchina)	54 to 70		133 to 165	1st quality 540 to 625
Korat (Siam)	75 to 95	250 to 280	85 to 110	
Bangkok (Siam)	125 to 135	300 to 350	140 to 180	
London (England)	220 to x	500 to 700	250 to 310	1st quality 750 to 835
Hamburg (Germany)				1st quality ~800 to 1000 2nd quality 450 to 600

439 178 [437] The conclusion to be drawn from the preceding tables is not favorable toward orienting Laotian trade towards the ports of French Indo-China. It is evident that the export trend of animals and products shows a marked tendency to move towards Oubone and Siam. Indeed, Siam's share of total exports from Lower Laos (merchandise and animals), which was 179,627 francs in 1898, rose to 381,185 francs in 1899. This was an increase of more than double.

On the other hand, we see that the share of Annam, Cochinchina, and Cambodia in this same traffic, which was 699,712 francs in 1898, fell to 466,477 francs in 1899, representing an approximate decrease of one-third.

[196] The causes of this persistent and increasing orientation of Laotian trade towards Siam are perhaps to be sought in the opening of the railroad from Bangkok to Korat (1) as well as in the customs system of

(1) The king of Siam inaugurated this line on December 21, 1900.

French Indo-China.

439 497 505 There is no question but that the railroad constitutes a considerable improvement over the old means of transport, as much by virtue of the lower costs and shorter travel time as by the suppression of the dangers and bothers of the cart road from Korat to Bangkok (domestic duties, exactions of the local authorities, robberies, etc.). But are these reasons sufficient to explain or justify the admitted fact?

The River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales] service is, as we have previously noted, the most rapid and least expensive means of transporting merchandise from Luang-Prabang to Saigon. Why then is this service, which is superior even in its present imperfection, scorned by exporters in general and used mainly by importers for products destined for the Europeans in Laos? The answer is a simple one. Exporters would not hesitate to use the Mekong route and to transport their products to Pnom-Penh or to Saigon-Cholon if, as they can do at Moulmein, at Xieng-Mai, at Nong-Khay, at Bassac, at Oubone, at Korat and at Bangkok, they could obtain [438] supplies there of imported merchandise from various sources to make up the counterpart of their exports. But, besides the fact that they would not be able to find certain special merchandise which is indispensable to them in the French marketplaces, they could not obtain the rest except at an increase of fifty or sixty percent or even more over the ordinary prices in the markets of Siam and Burma which we have just cited.

492 and some are even trained to trot. It may be reckoned that the average distance covered daily by a team of two oxen, on flat ground, naturally, is from 15 to 20 kilometers.

501 505 2. BY WATER. Besides the natural method of floating, or of floating improved by bamboo air jackets (used for rough timber), steamships, pirogues and rafts are used in Laos for trips and for transport.

Steamships. The steamships in Laos at present are:

1. The Lagrandière, a 100 metric ton gunboat which is at present immobilized at Xieng-Kok, just above Xieng-Lap.

2. The fleet of the superior residency, including the Argus, the Haiphong and the Ham-Luong.

3. The commercial fleet of the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [Compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine], composed of the following ships: the Trentinian, the Colombert, the Garcerie and the Vien-Tiane, each of 105 tons' burthen, and the Massie of 100 tons (1).

(1) See Appendix XXX.

Pirogues. Pirogues are used for trips and for transporting merchandise, particularly in an upriver direction.

There are pirogues on the Mekong and its chief tributaries which are capable of covering great distances and which vary in size and in tonnage. They are from 10 to 25 meters long and can transport from 1 to 6 tons of merchandise. Depending on their size and the difficulty of the journey, these pirogues are manned by a sufficient number of men, generally varying from four to ten. [445] They are maneuvered by oars and poles going downstream, and by poles and towlines going upstream.

Rafts. There are two kinds of rafts. Some are formed of two pirogues which are joined side by side, covered with a floor and lightened on the sides by packets of bamboo, while the others are composed solely of bundles of bamboo which are solidly joined and then covered with a floor. Both kinds are used going downstream only. The former are dismounted when the journey is over. [Illustration here] The pieces of bamboo are removed, and the disjoined pirogues are ready to go back upstream separately.

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The rafts which are composed solely of bamboo are demolished upon their arrival, and the material which went into them is sold for various uses, particularly for making tiles of crushed bamboo.

Depending on their dimensions the rafts made up of two pirogues will have a crew of six to twelve men, who also serve as pirogue boatmen on the return trip.

The bamboo rafts have a similar crew, although their progress is necessarily much slower than that of the above rafts.

The following is a list of the various kinds of pirogues and rafts used in Laos:

149: Reinach--365a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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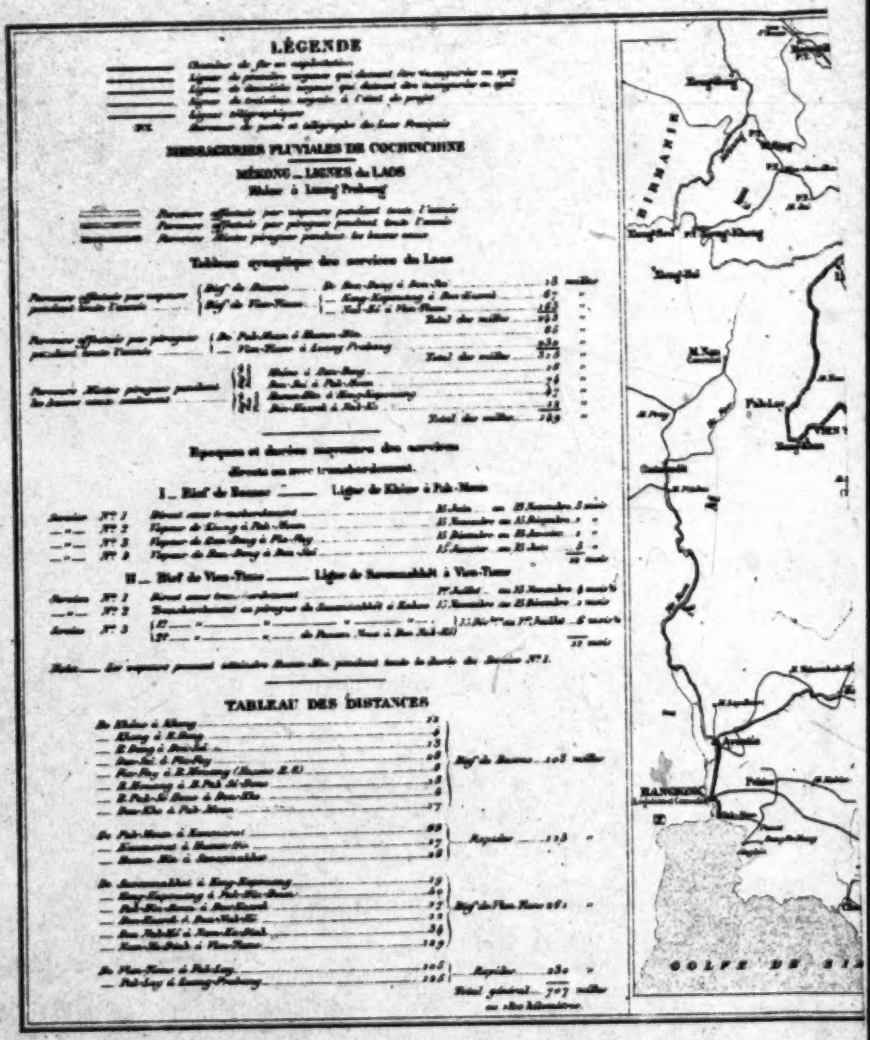

Map of means of communication by river, by postal and telegraph service and by railway in 1900.

149: Reinach--365b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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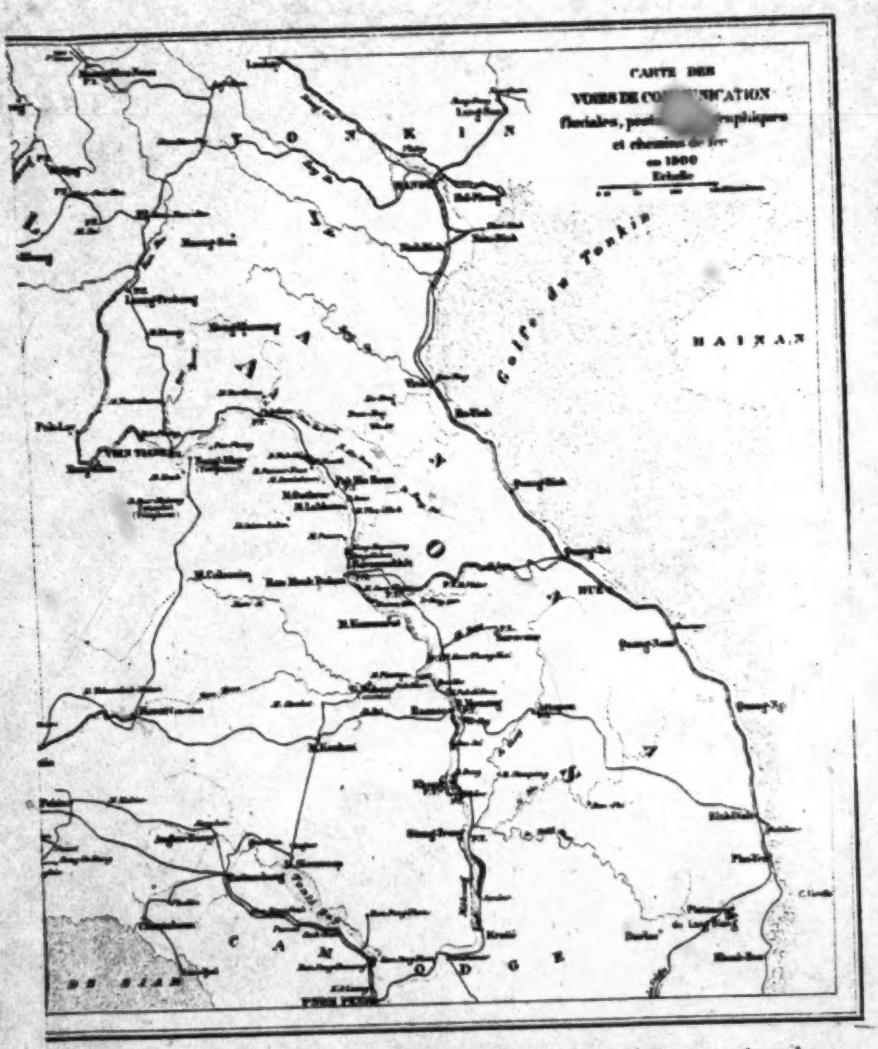

Map of means of communication by river, by postal and telegraph service and by railway in 1900.

Plate 6, Part B /between pp. 480-1/

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[113]

which the difficulty of communications is now impeding."
(Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, loc. cit.)
[Translator's note. Probably refers to December 1900 issue, "Rapport du Résident supérieur sur le Tran-Ninh."]

5. POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH SERVICE

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The telegraph network in Laos is quite complete. At the present time only three commissionerships are not served by a telegraph line, those of Tran-Ninh, the Hua-Pahn and Darlac. All the other provinces possess one or several telegraph offices, where postal service is also provided.

Examination of Plate VI will show the extent of the telegraph network in Laos. The lines are divided into two sections: the northern one which is under the jurisdiction of the Annam-Tonkin central office, and the southern one which is attached to the Cochinchina-Cambodia central office. [484] The two sections are not connected with one another, but soon will be. Tonkin will then be in communication with Cochinchina by means of a line which will cross all of Laos from north to south.

When this result has been achieved, that is to say when the Luang-Prabang-Vien-Tiane section has been completed, the Laotian network will be 2,283 kilometers long: 1,168 in Upper Laos and 1,115 in Lower Laos.

[505] By the terms of a contract between the administration and the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [Compagnie des Messageries Fluviales], the latter was made responsible for the transport of postal dispatches on the Mekong as far as Luang-Prabang (1). Outside

(1) This company receives an annual subsidy of 300,000 francs from the government of Indo-China for this purpose.

of the region of the river, and even in certain stretches served by the Company where service can be made more rapid, the administration has recourse either to human carriers or to pirogues.

6. SERVICE BY THE RIVER MERCHANT FLEET [MESSAGERIES FLUVIALES]

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Transport for merchandise and passengers is provided on the Mekong as far as Luang-Prabang by the Cochinchina River Merchant

• 505 Fleet Company [Compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine].

Although the organization of this service is not perfect, it cannot be denied that the company has made an outstanding contribution to the development and prosperity of Laos, where its ships travel more than 20,000 marine leagues annually. M. Lagrillière-Beauclerc, in his interesting book A travers l'Indo-Chine (2), has given an

[113] (2) Lagrillière-Beauclerc, A travers l'Indo-Chine, Paris, 1900.

excellent report, as follows, of the results obtained:

"To return to the considerable development of production occasioned by the establishment of the first regular service on the great river in the direction of Kratie and Laos, and to the business activity which has been the consequence thereof, it will suffice to say that the regular subsidized service, which was only weekly in the beginning and provided by an ordinary launch, is now provided twice weekly by [485] means of two rapid ships (1) and has competition in the form

(1) The Bassac and the Vien-Tiane.

of a large number of steam launches belonging to Chinese for the most part. These launches take on merchandise every day and transport hundreds of native passengers, Malays and Chinese, both upstream and downstram between Pnom-Penh and Kratie. Both banks of the river, where villages used to be widely scattered, are today populated and cultivated almost continuously.

"We should note, however, that so far these latter launches [Illustration here] have not gone upriver beyond Kratie. The first rapids of the river have frightened their owners, who leave it to the vessels of the River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales] to provide postal and commercial communication with Laos.

"This service, which was begun in 1891 and which has the Bassac, a special steamship with a shallow draft and high speed, can only be provided during the high water period. It connects with that which the River Merchant Fleet organized in 1896 on the Mekong beyond Khone, serving Lower and Upper Laos as far as Luang-Prabang, and whose economic results are beginning to be felt. Indeed, an appreciable movement of exports to Cambodia and Cochinchina [486] is taking shape more and more in the Mekong valley. Even as early as 1897 and 1898, the vessels were scarcely sufficient to the need during the high water period. Large quantities of nep (rice suitable

505 Large quantities of nep (rice suitable
438 for making alcohol), hides, horn, cardamom, wax, benzoin, various gums, etc. were shipped from Bassac, from Pakse, from Savannakhet, from Vien-Tiane and from other Laotian centers which had formerly traded exclusively with Bangkok by way of the Nongkay-Outaradit route on the Menam and by the Korat route on the Se-Moun.

505 "Passenger traffic, which was almost nil when the new services
484 were established, is increasing every day. The natives are beginning to become familiar with this rapid, convenient and inexpensive manner of traveling which the steamship represents and they are making more frequent use thereof, a fact which can only contribute to the broadening of relations between the various posts scattered along the great river and increase trade in their products of all kinds" (1).

(1) See, in Appendix XXX, the transport rates between France and Indo-China and between Saigon and Laos.

[487] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER XI
1. SOCIAL STATUS. SLAVERY

[565] Upon our arrival in Laos, we found a hierarchial society com-
567 prised of nobles, commoners and slaves. We could not do better than to preserve all features of the political, social and administrative
178 organization just as it had been. In this respect we took our inspiration from our predecessors the Siamese, leaving our new subjects the
177 utmost liberty and respecting their traditions, customs and mores insofar as these were compatible with our own institutions.

Thus we were at times forced to recall certain native officials who had compromised themselves with the Siamese, or who through their exactions had made themselves unworthy of their office. Moreover, we have always acted tactfully and mildly, [488] leaving the choice of officials to election, in accordance with custom.

But above all, we took radical measures by completely suppressing the slave trade and by regularizing a very mild form of slavery for debt.

[556] There used to be slavery in Laos, as in Siam, in the form of slavery by capture, by purchase and for debt. It yielded high profits for those who engaged in the traffic, for the children and grandchildren of slaves were slaves themselves at birth, a fact which increased the fortunes of their masters to that extent.

314 which range from the size of a nut to the size of a billiard ball. These specimens are not sticky, do not deteriorate very much and are far superior to the preceding ones. I believe that it was a specimen of this last category which M. de Reinach, the government commissioner in Laos, sent to Paris, where it was valued at 7 francs per kilogram.

Since this specimen was sent we have sent two others for trial and evaluation to the business house Michelin et Cie., a large rubber manufacturer in Clermont-Ferrand.

The Superior Resident in Laos informs us that the Khua-nhut-niai, the liana which produces rubber, is found in all the thick forests along the banks of the Mekong. It grows in great numbers in the forests of the Bolovenes massif and on the sides of the great chain in the provinces of Saravane, Song-Khone and Cam-Muon. M. Tournier estimates that it can reproduce easily, [134] either by seeds or by cuttings. He believes it would also be easy to induce the natives in these regions to engage in the regular exploitation of the plant whenever they found a certain and remunerative market for the product.

To sum up the above observations, we have noted that Indo-China possesses at least two plant varieties which can yield rubber of excellent quality. These two varieties are the Parameria glandulifera in Cochinchina and the south of Cambodia, and an as yet undetermined species of Apocynaceae in Annam and Laos. Both the one and the other grow in such numbers that they hold forth hope of a veritable source of wealth for the colony. Up to the present time, only the lianas of the second variety have been exploited, and I should like to call attention to those of the first variety.

439 The customs statistics for exports from Tonkin for the whole of 1898 show that France received from this country 1,545 kilograms
314 of crude rubber with a value estimated at 2,020 francs, and that other countries received 619 kilograms with a value estimated at 947 francs, making a total of 2,164 kilograms with a value of 2,967 francs (1).

[505] (1) It should be noted that the greater part of this product leaves Vinh, in Annam, by coastal vessels, and that Hai-Phong is given as the port of embarcation on the Tonkin export lists.

For the first quarter alone of the current year, we find the following exports from Tonkin: to France, 13,623 kilograms with a value

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

INTO THE MÈO COUNTRY

489 It was fitting that at Luang Prabang the impetus of travel should
509 have spent itself. Not even convoys ever came as far as this. Groups of unfortunate men occasionally set off on foot and walked for as long as three weeks through jungle trails to relieve isolated posts. Other arrivals and departures were by a weekly D.C.3 plying between Luang Prabang and Vientiane. It was booked up well ahead.

505 Down at the riverside the story was much the same as at Vientiane. There were pirogues which supposedly made regular journeys, but no one was prepared to commit himself to positive information about them. One authority went so far as to say that it was out of the question to hope to travel north by pirogue because the river was too low at this time of the year. I had just thanked him when the engine of what looked like a totally abandoned hulk, lying in an oily pool not far away, suddenly burst into wheezy activity. One of the crew of two said that they would be leaving in half an hour. Bound for where? – Vientiane? No . . . Xieng
701 Khong – for the unnavigable north, of course. All the space had been reserved for a body of ex-pirates who had changed sides and had now, it was said, demanded to be sent back to fight their former allies.

While I was slowly piecing together this jig-saw of information in pidgin-French, the brand-new patriots arrived for embarkation; a most apathetic looking body of men. In their ill-fitting uniforms they were standardized; deprived of individuality by a common factor of misery, an ingrained habit of expressionless stoicism. Silently they filed up the gang-plank and filled the dim interior of the pirogue. It was difficult to believe that the fire of conviction burned in any of these breasts, and I felt sorry for the French N.C.O. who was being sent back in charge.

000 But Monsieur Leveau said that there would also be a pirogue going south one day, and to save me from being victimized by Chinese cat-and-mouse tactics he sent for the owner and asked him when the boat would leave. With gentle satisfaction the Chinese

facing: COCHIN-CHINA: THE SEARCH FOR SMALL FISH

6: Goudal--174 [2] S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians
116, 463, ~~511~~

"In Laos, indigenous industries are very little developed, for the needs of the inhabitants are very slight. With few exceptions, there are no workers engaged in any given trade connected with the building of houses, the manufacture of utensils, the making of hunting and fishing gear or of spinning equipment, the dyeing or weaving of materials, or any other activity connected with housing, furniture, clothing, household articles, etc."

10: d'Orleans--307 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 461, 463, 511, 556

[LSS: at Luang Prabang] "The men do but little work, labour in the mines and the cultivation of the soil being left to the Kas and it is only in the towns that they are found engaging in any artistic occupation, such as the making of jewellery or the chasing of silver. Even those who do work rarely do so for more than seven hours a day, and the woman keep the pot boiling by spinning silk and making various materials, though they do not overwork themselves. When a household is very hard pressed the men seek employment as boatmen, and are very expert, making enough in a month or two to keep them the rest of the year, so that if there are few large fortunes, most of the inhabitants have enough to live upon in comfort, preferring freedom and tranquillity to an excess of labour, which would only give them what they do not want. Moreover, when they do happen to have put by a decent sum of money, they go and spend it at the pagoda, either in fulfilment of a vow or in payment of some religious ceremony. This is their only luxury, nor, indeed, do they regard it as one, for they reckon upon profiting by it in another world."

10: d'Orleans--316 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 175, 197, 241, 511, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"In speaking of the inhabitants of the principality of Luang Prabang, I referred to the Lus, the Meos and the Chinese, and a few words must be said about all three.

The first mentioned strike me as being, from an ethnographical point of view, very similar to the Laotians, whose language they speak, with a few slight differences of dialect, but they are smaller, punier and in a more poverty-stricken state. We saw one of their villages, just behind Luang Prabang, and its poverty was the most salient feature about it. Coming originally from Sibsompanas, where they form the principal element of the population, they have been driven south by Chinese wars and invasions, and several of them told me that they had not the means of returning home. Moreover, they are just as well off where they are, for, like the Kas, they cultivate the soil, planting rice fields for the Laotians."

23; Franck--332 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 511, 609 Ethnic subgroup

"The Kha villages I saw were the lowest type of human dwelling; filth and stupidity seemed to be the prevailing characteristics. All our romantic yarns about the simple life of savages leave us with the false impression that they are hardier than civilized people, and the writers rarely mention the dirty, the truly animal conditions in which they live. The Kha are as innocent of any idea of cleanliness as the lowest class of Chinese, in great contrast to the Tai about them, and it is not strange that they have more smallpox than the rest of the population. Some were so timid that I had to drive them out of their reed and grass huts into the light necessary for photography, just as one might drive some wild animal out of its warm but dirty lair, so timid that I had to manhandle a group of both sexes that came along the trail one day, ~~before they~~ gave up their temptation to run away without posing for my dreaded camera."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

slaughterers are obliged to work by flares, which is responsible, the 253
French think, for an unusually picturesque effect. It is 'not done' to 825
go along while the actual killing is in progress, but shortly after, when the carcasses are suspended from hooks to be cut up, and the workers, stripped to their loincloths, and garishly splashed, paddle about in a vermilion sea. Cars are stationed just beyond the reach of the steaming odours, and one is recommended to see the thing as one views a nude in a picture gallery – that is, divorced from all but a disinterested abstraction, in this case the colour.

The possibilities of Vientiane, it was clear, would be quickly 292
exhausted. Thao Nhouy, the Laotian Minister of Education, lent 301
me his jeep to see some of the surrounding villages, but the roads 535
were so appalling that it broke down after being driven for about five miles. He then suggested that I might like to see the local schoolgirls dancing, and when I said that I would be delighted, and asked for permission to take photographs, the girls were sent off home, on their bicycles, to get their best clothes. An hour or two later they began to trickle back, wearing their mothers' jewellery as well as their own and with their silk finery done up in paper parcels. When they had dressed and were ready they made a glittering sight. One girl wore a scarf ornamented with real gold thread said to be worth about £50 in English money. They danced under the supervision of a teacher whom I recognized as a professional actor, from the *boun*,[1] and who occasionally intervened when a girl failed in some minor feat, such as bending her fingers back at an expressive ninety degrees from the palm.

All these girls, dressed as they were like princesses, came from 493
shacks in the forest. Each one had a bicycle – infallibly fitted with 511
dynamo lighting, and sometimes 3-speed gears. It seems that a bicycle for his daughter is one of the essentials for which a Laotian will work. It is considered ill-bred and irreligious in Laos to work 241
more than is necessary. The father of a family cultivates an amount 461
of land, estimated, by a bonze who is expert in such matters, to be 511
792

1 [i.e., Laotian religious 255
festival. -- Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

241 sufficient for his requirements. If there are six members of the
461 family, six standard, equal sized portions of land will be cultivated.
●511 If a child is born into the family another piece of land is cleared and
792 worked. When a member of the family dies, whether it be a baby or the grandfather, cultivation of his portion will be stopped. Just enough is produced for the family to eat and to provide a small surplus sold in the market — *with the bonze's approval* — to buy occasional strict necessities, like a silk shawl and a bicycle for the
735 daughter. There is no social insurance and there are no poor. The
556 old and the sick are supported by the young, or, where they are
792 left without able-bodied providers, by the community, and the
771 bonzes give instructions for the necessary land to be placed under cultivation for them. The accumulation of wealth which is not to be used for definite, approved purposes, causes a man to lose prestige among his neighbours, just, as in the West, the process is reversed. The main difference, it seems, between Buddhism in Indo-China, and Christianity — apart from any question as to their relative merits — is that, whether we admire it or not, the former is largely put into practice.

It is a stimulating reflection that the Western millionaire, obsessed for the sake of social distinction with the amassing of enormous possessions — little of which he can personally consume — would attain the same ends of personal celebrity under a Laotian Buddhistic order of things by his priestly austerities — by embracing the most abject and prestige-conferring form of poverty.

181 For this reason perhaps the local Evangelist missionary and his
771 wife have made no converts. Like all who have lived among the
785 Laotians they are charmed with them — although, of course,
797 disappointed at their blindness. They also deplore their immorality.

In the matter of converts the Evangelists have been no more unsuccessful than their Portuguese, Spanish and French forerunners. The Laotians having little capacity for abstractions, either in their

caught even on the other side of the watershed and then delivered as 567
slaves to the Burmese, Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian merchants of the low country. The barbarity of their mores has been greatly lessened since our arrival in Laos, but traces of it still exist and manifest themselves in rivalries and attacks between tribes. The police force which [260] we have organized in the land in the form of a native militia, the influence of the missionaries who have settled among the turbulent Khas, and also the help and example of the tribes which have submitted to our tutelary authority will soon cause this abnormal state of things to disappear. Finally, our increasingly effective occupation of the land, which has been completed by the organization of the province of Darlac, and the strict protectorate which we exercise over Cambodia, the chief purchaser of slaves, have begun to bring order in an effective fashion to this shameful traffic in human flesh (1).

(1) See § I of Chapter XL.

It should be noted that the Djarais and the Rades are the only 197
Khas who speak Cham, that is to say a greatly corrupted Malay tongue which they have preserved for centuries.

The men's clothing consists of a loin-cloth, and that of the 291
women consists only of a short skirt knotted around the waist or under the armpits, the torso left bare.

Both men and women have long hair wound in a coil. Both 301
sexes, but mainly the men, wear jewels of a crude shape, made of tin or brass, in the form of bracelets, neckbands, ear pendants or cylinders and hairpins. They are also very fond of glass bead necklaces.

These Khas smoke tobacco, either dried or green, as well as 276
bamboo shavings impregnated with nicotine. They make terra cotta pipes with highly worked bowls and also use imported brass pipes. They do not blacken their teeth.

From the point of view of diet and housing, practically the same 511
conditions obtain as we have seen above except that the houses are built with greater care and arranged in the form of a circular camp.

In the middle of Cedang and Rognao villages there is a large 342
house some twenty to thirty meters long by twelve to fifteen meters 883
wide, with a high pointed roof. This is the common house where all the boys of the locality live from the age of nine or ten until the day of their marriage.

Se-Bang-Fai. But studies are not yet sufficiently advanced for us to be able to give any useful information. 316

We have nevertheless felt that we should mention these deposits, in order to establish the importance of all this part of Laos from the point of view of mineral wealth.

[327] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER VII

I

SCAVENGING

We have seen that the inhabitants of Laos are apathetic and little inclined to work. They nevertheless find, although they go to scarcely any trouble, enough to supply their needs easily. 461 241

Indeed, with the exception of a few annual crops such as tobacco, cotton and indigo which are grown on the ever-renewed alluvia of the watercourses, the production of rice and of maize are the only occupations which require--and even then during a relatively short time--any degree of work or perseverance. We may mention the opium poppy, ramie, hemp and the mulberry tree merely as a reminder, for only a small part of the population devotes its time to these crops, which are still not at all extensive. [249]

Yet, it may be objected, the native has an easy life, dresses adequately, [328] lives in a house which is solid and comfortable from his point of view, has various tools and utensils, weapons, and sometimes even valuable cloth goods, jewels, etc. He spends money for celebrations and for offerings to the bonzes and pagodas. He pays taxes, he supports court costs which are often large with respect to the question at issue, and he is subject to the exactions of his mandarins to a greater or less degree. Finally, the commercial transactions of Laos involve quantities and sums which are quite high in comparison to the sparse population. 511 [438]

How are we to reconcile all these factors, and how is it that the Laotian, who produces so little with his labor, nevertheless has all he needs to get along on?

This is due to the fact that Laos is above all else a scavenging country. 314

10: d'Orleans--308 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 183, 512, 641, 831

"It may be asked how do the Laotians spend their time if they are lazy and have scarcely any occupation? The answer is easy--the greater part of their days and nights being employed in paying court to the young ladies and in services at the pagoda.

Formerly there was a law dispensing the young men from military service and taxation upon the ground that their first duty was towards the young women and although this law is repealed de jure, it still serves as a rule of conduct and reveals the spirit of this people."

10: d'Orleans--262-263 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 513, 563, 825 Ethnic subgroups

"Our men [LSS: Kha from Laos] lie down upon mats and this evinces a more advanced stage of civilisation than we have found amongst the Thai's; in the middle of the night they suddenly jump up, [263] light a lamp and start in search of an animal, that has taken flight, to judge from their movements, though I do not see it. They afterwards explain their manœuvres; one of them had seen a long myriapod, which they were anxious to destroy, as it is a dangerous insect. They say, that when it crawls over the skin it leaves traces of its passage, in long red painful and unhealthy streaks. I do not know whether this assertion is true, but at all events, they seem much afraid of the insect."

10: d'Orleans--368-369 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 249, 314, 513

[LSS: in the village of Muong Liep (Diap)] "In front of the huts pods gathered from the trees are drying, full of seeds which are surrounded by a silky down like those of some of our poplars. It is known as nghioue, and it is used here for pillows and mattresses.

I note, also, on the dryers, tobacco in shreds. [369] This plant grows well here, and one sees it everywhere about the villages, rank as weeds."

naturally be "water." These two elements, opposed though they are 593
to one another, nonetheless go together. If you should happen to 647
raise your voice, see to it that it does not reach the ears of your 565
neighbors who will be sure to laugh at your domestic misunderstanding.
There is a good way to appease your anger: that is to go out and get
some fresh air. A moment of distraction will calm your irritation.
This precious and effective remedy is called, according to a Laotian
expression, "to caress one's heart with a hand drenched with fresh
water."

On a walk and on a visit.--Formerly it used to be considered 574
a disgrace for a mandarin to go for a walk by himself or to visit minor 647
functionaries. Nowadays this is no longer the case. A Laotian 565
Minister goes out alone without being accompanied by the traditional 178
retinue. He visits all classes of society without being criticized for
it by anyone at all.

At a private gathering.--In contrast to the customs of former
times, present-day mandarins accept the invitation of a simple
citizen. The host very often organizes various diversions: dances, /533/
lamvong, orchestras, songs etc. The Ministers willingly participate /535/
in these; they sing, dance, and pay their respects to the phousaos
while they mingle with the crowd. Certain Laotians whom I consider
backward criticize the liberal manner on the part of our Ministers.
Our great mandarins are their own masters. Let them turn a deaf
ear to these carpings. /978/

Honor Laotian Women

Some people consider the Laotian woman as an inferior 562
creature.

Certain women, it appears, are not permitted to eat with
their husband. Miserable husbands! You consider then that your
better half is like an animal?

Certainly, tradition says: "The woman must sleep with her /513/
head lower than her husband's. She must go to bed after him and
she must get up before him. The husband must have eaten three /264/
mouthfuls of rice before the wife can begin to eat in her turn."

These counsels of our fathers are valuable, but they are far
from indicating that the woman is inferior to the man. They recommend,

23: Franck--289-290 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 291, 286, 314, 515

"The women were usually the first to see us, for they were constantly bathing themselves and their naked urchins in the stream, and they were clever at getting into or out of their barrel-like single garment without unduly exposing themselves. I saw more bathing on that journey down the Nam-khan than during my two years in China, and less uncleanliness in all Laos than in the smallest Chinese village. The women of Luang Prabang, especially along the rivers, are no burden to their fathers and husbands so far as clothing is concerned. In every village we visited they were naked to the waist, and did not know it; at least [290] they did not seem to be conscious that in other, often less modest lands, such a costume might be frowned upon. They wore a single piece of cloth, spun from cotton grown on the spot, and woven on hand-looms under their long-legged houses. Colored in the thread with dyes made from nuts and vegetable growths of the region, this strip is simply wrapped about the waist. Or, in the case of a few of the youngest, which in that backward land still means the more modest women, the unmarried perhaps, or at least those who had not yet borne a child, it is wrapped about the lower two thirds of the breasts, with correspondingly more of the legs showing. Thus one recognized the girls of flapper age by their shapely brown legs and the matrons by their resemblance in costume to the Venus of Milo. Once a child has arrived, the exposure incident to suckling it seems to overcome virginal modesty, or in the absence of offspring pride no doubt soon joins carelessness in casting

23: Franck--289-290 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-2
116, 291, 286, 314, 515

out the habits of maidenhood, so that there were displayed the scrawny pendent udders of the sterile as well as the withered rags of old age. The sight of a white man appeared to move some of the women to cover their breasts, a mere matter of deftly raising the garment. Whether this gesture was a recognition of the susceptibility of the French--who surely could not have issued non-exposure decrees! --or a mere matter of politeness, like the male squat, there was no means of knowing."

23: Franck--294 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 501, 515

"Bamboo rafts, with little houses on them, made their way more slowly down the stream, so placid now that it mirrored the ever-lower hills densely covered with jungle-forest, networks of lianas, some trees completely shrouded in vines, whole hillsides of huge banana-plumes, flashes of birds across them. Women wearing nothing but skirts were getting water from the river; others, especially at sundown, were bathing themselves and their naked children. Bonzes in dirty yellow robes, loafing, or horse-playing to use up the energy their calling does not permit them to waste in work or domestic happiness, showed themselves here and there along the way. The people seemed darker, burned to an almost Madrasi color."

23: Franck--341-342 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 342, 361, 515, 779

"The uncrowded, simple, but commodious houses of these Laosian villages are always set well apart and high above the ground, back among palm-trees, banana-plants, and the like. They do not have to crowd together and save all the arable land for rice to feed too numerous mouths, for here a gentle Buddhism takes place of an ancestor-worship so [342] ardent that offspring must be had at any effort and cost. Most families have round or square granaries like huge covered baskets made of wide woven splints and covered by a big thatch roof, all raised off the ground out of reach of rats. The simple houses themselves were of similar materials, a ladder or half a dozen bamboo or pole rungs leading up to the big porch at one end, and close to the floor, a tiny window or two that can be pushed open to one side. Such a village is a thousand per cent more pleasant than a Chinese town, even when there is no public stopping-place except in the same room with slightly supercilious priests who sometimes break sound sleep with their devotions. There is an incredible amount of bathing and great quiet compared to densely packed Chinese existence. Such a village is like a country home in its atmosphere, while those of China resemble tenement-living on the worst of East Sides."

68: Mouhot--272 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 155, 834, 515

"The men of this nation [HD: i. e. Luang Prabang] are dull and apathetic and full of small vices. The women are generally better, and some of them are even pretty in spite of their yellow skins, but they have little idea of modesty. The men and women all bathe together without any clothing. But for the people, Louang Prabang would be one of the most charming places in the world: the lake of Geneva does not present scenes more beautiful than many here by the river."

A DRAGON APPARENT

000 There was a recognized place about a mile up the river, which was free from weed and rock, and once again, because the water was deep and swiftly running, it was very cold and refreshing. We had
● 515 been swimming round for an hour or so when we noticed a number of Laotian girls hanging about. They were not watching us, but sauntering backwards and forwards in twos and threes, chatting to each other. By the time there were twelve of them, Dupont, keeping well in the water called to them and asked if we were disturbing them in any way. One of the girls came to the edge of the bank, bowed, and looking down at her feet said that it was their usual bathing time, but that there was no hurry, of course. Dupont asked the girls if they would retire for a moment, and they walked a short distance away and stood in a preoccupied circle while we got out of the water. We then dressed quickly and walked on down the path leading to their village. After about a hundred yards we looked back. All the girls, quite naked, were in the water. At that moment two bonzes were strolling slowly along the bank past them; but the girls paid no attention. The bonzes were wrapped in the mantle of holy invisibility.

622 When we reached the village, Dupont asked punctiliously for
304 the headman, making the excuse that he wanted to visit the pagoda. It was quite evident that this headman was in the good graces of the garrison, and probably supplied them with labour. He was very dignified and had a fine house, with European furniture. Although barefooted, he wore a French suit. On the suggestions of the soldier from the camp he took down his trousers and showed us his legs, which from ankles to thighs were tattooed, in the local manner, so
796 closely that he seemed to be wearing stockings. The annual *boun* 1/
782 had just been celebrated at the local pagoda and a bonze was in the
532 act of sweeping into a heap the votive offerings with which the floor
285 of the courtyard was littered. There was a great collection of elephants, buffaloes, peacocks and tigers, all woven in basket-work. The kind of thing that Picasso produces when he is not painting, but perhaps rather better. They seemed to me to be of

1/ [i.e., religious festival.--Analyst]

10: d'Orleans--267 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 226, 516

"Below Muong-Ngoï the river widens to 100 or 150 yards in breadth. In the narrower places some fishing traps have been erected: some bundles of three posts each are tied together at the top forming a faggot, in the centre is a basket full of stones, their weight keeping them in place. Between one bundle and the next a triangular net is placed, point in front; a man raises it by means of a long pole, which acts as a lever; when at work the fisherman squats, head downwards, upon a small terrace formed of bamboos. Several have covered their heads with a red veil, and their position reminds me of Mussulmans at their prayers. Here they are watching the water, and when a fish is caught they suddenly raise the net. I have sometimes counted seven or eight terraces across the river."

10: d'Orleans--337-338 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 516, 643

"Upon a sign from the king, tea and cigarettes are brought us, and the servants fan us. The other servants, who are dressed like the common people, remain in a crouching attitude, and if they move about the room do so on their hands and knees. It is humiliating to see men dragging themselves about like animals; but we do not witness the sight long as our visit is a brief one, and it is not until some time after this that we see the father, a fine old man of eighty-two, whose white hair is cropped close, and whose face is very intelligent, though owing to the loss of his teeth the chin is rather elevated.

His position as a semi-divinity enables him to speak his mind very freely, and he takes great interest in our journey, giving us some advice as to [338] our descent of the Mekong. He seems very grateful to M. Pavie, who once saved his life, and he makes even more favourable an impression upon us than his son, though both seem well disposed towards the Europeans--if they were free to act. But Siam plays the same part towards them that China does to Thibet, and one would hope that the era of liberty is at hand which, in delivering the two countries from the yoke which oppresses them, will open a valuable field of study to our science and fresh outlets to our commerce."

149; Reinsch--92a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 34 /p. 123/ A celebration at Khong. --Group of Laotians.

149: Reinach--101a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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911
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Fig. 36 /p. 135/ Typical Khas of the province of Stung-Treng.

149: Reinach--133a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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516

149: Reinach--136a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 46 /p.181/ A Laotian Tasseng of Upper Laos.
(Courtesy of M. Besson.)

149; Reinach--176a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

291

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Fig. 50 (no date). Laotian Nobles. Chief's wives. (Courtesy of M. Besson.)

149: Reinach--185a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 68 /p. 255/ Typical Kha dancers, at Muong-Son.
(Courtesy of M. Besson.)

149: Reinach--188a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 71 /p. 261/ Typical Khas of the province of Stung-Treng. (Photographed at Saigon in 1898.)

149: Reinach--189a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AMS

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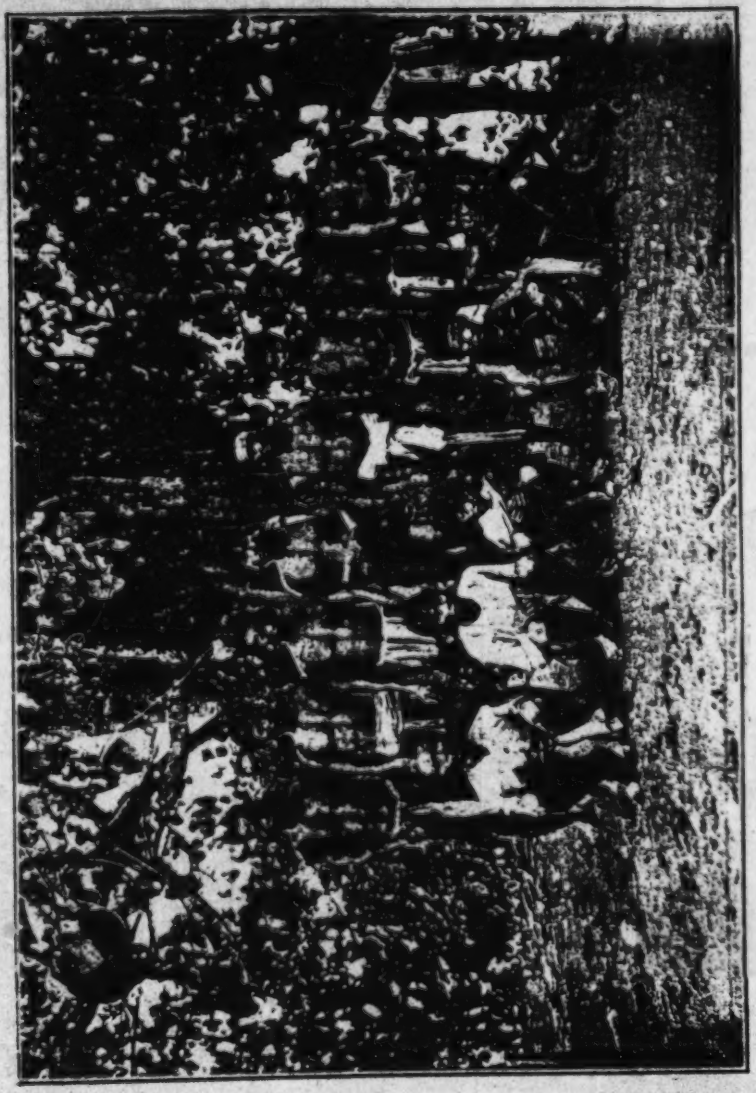

Fig. 72 /p. 265/ Khas of the region of Siempang (Lower Laos).

619 traditions and the annals which I have been able to consult, they are
643 the descendants of the last kings of the land before the Cham invasion.
[648 The kings of Cambodia have had to appeal to them for help on one
175] or two critical occasions, and it was in return for services rendered
563 that the king of Cambodia, up until recent times, used to send them
presents every year (annual tribute, according to them, payment of
which stopped only five years ago).

[726] They have never been willing to recognize our authority. The
king of Pa-Tac-la, who is situated on the Laotian side, twice attacked
the Government Commissioners of Stung-Treng when the latter were
making a tour of inspection in this region, first in December 1894
and a second time in January 1897. They were given a severe lesson
this second time, for the village was entirely destroyed and they
suffered many losses. The Sadete Loum (the Master of water) settled
on the Annamite side alongside the Master of fire after the affair,
and since that time has given no further orders to our faithful Djarais.

[108]

APPENDIX XIX
NOTE ON THE MEOS

563 The Meo has a savage and distrustful character. He does not
609 like the presence of foreigners, or even of people of his own race.

Clinging to the side of a mountain, and always as high up as possible, he asks only to be allowed to live in peace in his wild solitude and bodes no ill to anyone provided he is left alone and independen

He is a great hunter of wild beasts and large game. More in-
433 dustrious than the Thais, he makes all his farming implements him-
241 self (picks and shovels), as well as his wooden buckets and mills for
grinding maize and paddy. He raises fine poultry, pigs, oxen, goats
231 and horses with particular care and success. If he stays in one place
for any length of time he also produces, in addition to the maize
and rice which form the basis of his food supply and the opium which
he smokes, very fine eggplants, gourds, sweet potatoes and non-
sweetened batatas very much like the common potato, sorrel, green
beans and all the French vegetables whose seeds are given him. On
his heights he cultivates the fruit trees which merely vegetate in
the plains, such as the peach tree, and the peaches which he harvests
can compete without any fear with those of our own country.

516 The Meo climbs like a cat. Over sheer paths, up ladders com-
417 posed of a single bamboo pole standing upright in which notches are
cut at regular intervals which are large enough for two toes, the Meo

516 progresses at an even, elongated pace, carrying as much as 30 kilo-
417 grams in his pack without even seeming to suspect the feats of strength,
[132] suppleness and balance which he accomplishes. As long as he remains on high ground his resistance to fatigue is very great indeed, but he cannot go down to the lowlands without danger, especially in the hot season.

101 Certain authors claim that the word "Meo" which, when pronounced with a certain intonation, means cat in several Indo-Chinese languages, was given to these folk by reason of their agility. However, we must note that in [109] Laotian the word "Meo" used to designate these mountainfolk is neither written or pronounced like the word meo which is used to designate cats. There is the same difference between these two words as there is in French between the words maitre and metre.

342 A Meo house is built at ground level on slightly leveled ground. The walls are made of puddled clay or of ill-fitting boards, and the house is roofed with thatch or crudely-squared wooden shingles. The doors are made of wood which has been shaped with an ax, and there
[592] are no windows. Often several families live in the same house, and then each has a fireplace to itself and a compartment which serves it as a bedroom. In the common room there is an oven and fireplaces above which objects are placed to dry on a bamboo framework. Behind the house a narrow passageway is left free separating the
[343] building from the sheer mountainside. In front there is a narrow veranda where the horses are kept when they are not housed in a stable built on piles and overhanging the mountainside, as are the animal barn and pig sty, the rice granary and the goat pen. This system has the advantage of protecting the animals from the dampness of the ground, since the planks which form the floor jut out over empty space on their solid piles.

[101] Inside the house there are a few furnishings, as among all peoples of Chinese origin. There are benches, tables, camp beds, dishes,
352 iron and copper cooking utensils and opium smoking accessories, all so repulsively filthy that even the least delicate would hesitate to
356 enter and stay in these hovels, where vermin swarm under the protection of the ancestors' altar.

Although amongh themselves and with their families the Meos
178 speak a rather unharmonious language, nearly all the men can understand and speak Qouane-hoa, the language of the Chinese mandarins,
312 which is the official language in Yunnan. They can neither read nor write Chinese characters, and have no system of writing of their own.

10: d'Orleans--279-280 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 517, 584, 832 Ethnic subgroups

"Here we shall have a first glimpse of the customs of Laos; this strange country where love is held in such great respect, that it might be called the kingdom of the flirt. We walk up to the town, and find in the centre a square platform raised upon four posts; from [280] a fireplace formed of stones held in position by woven mats a few logs are throwing a feeble light over the scene. A young girl is seated, a scarf of orange silk knotted upon one shoulder, cleaning cotton by separating it from the seed by hand. Near her stands one of our boatmen, in a small white cloth jacket ornamented with European copper buttons, he is paying compliments to her. Holding one of her hands, he takes out the flowers she has placed in her hair, and passes them through the lobe of his ear. Further on, upon the terrace of a house, another young girl is talking to her lover; a small lamp gives them light, and they are playing at dinner or preparing betel for each other. They will, perhaps, chat together every night, in this way, for several months, simply exchanging ideas before coming to a definite understanding --a marriage generally follows."

10: d'Orleans--315 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 181, 517, 609

"... They are a curious people; lazy without being fools; of equal fortune, as a rule, without great wealth or great distress; of a fairly pacific character; well disposed towards foreigners without exhibiting the intolerable curiosity of the Chinese; very religious, more, perhaps, from habit than from strong convictions; and, what is so rare in the East, treating women and girls with deference. For, while very free in their morals, they have their serenades and their 'Courts of Love,' reviving in the midst of Indo-China practices which belong rather to the Europe of the Middle Ages. There is something poetical, chivalrous and French, or, to go back to an earlier period, something Athenian in the inhabitants of the Laos; and if they have not the artistic feeling of the Greek, they have no desire for a knowledge of luxury. Having very little to earn, they do not work much and their existence is more unfettered."

10: d'Orleans--351-352 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 521, 527, 534, 832

[LSS: during the Ngones ceremonies which are part of the Laotian New Year celebration.] "Facing the girls were seated one or two groups of young men playing upon the guitar, the tam-tam and a sort of Laotian organ made of bamboo. Several of them are singing, but when they do so they put a corner of their scarf over their head so as not to be seen, while others take up the chorus. While the singing is in progress, conversation is allowed to go on between the young men and the girls, each of [352] the former taking up his place opposite the girl of his fancy. This goes on until two in the morning, being much like the flirtation of other countries, with this difference that there is no dancing and that conversation with the unmarried girls is more free than with married women."

10: d'Orleans--279 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 522, 533, 563, 832 Ethnic subgroups

"They [LSS: Kha boatmen in the service of a Laotian] are in good spirits, and chat from one pirogue to the other, or sing in answer to the women, who are bathing at the water's edge. The men inquire if they are married, and invite them to follow them, in case their hearts are free. The songs, often improvised, are upon subjects referring to love. They also try to frighten the buffaloes that, half hidden in the water, only show their back and the head which they hold horizontally; but the great stupid animals pay no attention to the shouts, they let us pass, contemplating us with an air of fatalistic resignation; but they do not move. In the evening our boatmen ask permission to go to the village. We grant it and follow them, however a few are left behind to keep watch over the pirogues."

10: d'Orleans--281-282 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 262, 522, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Our men, [LSS: Kha boatmen in the service of a Laotian] have one resource, which I cannot make up my mind to try; they have picked up a kind of cricket on the banks, and after amusing themselves by making it chirp as they hold it between [282] two fingers, they throw it into the saucepan, and eat it stewed."

25: Brodrick--101 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 181, 522, 577

"The Laotians like to laugh, that is to say that they like to enjoy the circumstances which move them to mirth and then they like to go on laughing because laughing makes them, as all of us, feel happy...And, if it is incongruity which moves us most to laugh, then those are most happy who live in a society full of conventions whose breach is ridiculous, provided, of course, that such a breach is not such a sin, such a crime and such a misdemeanour that laughter outlaws us. The Laotian has plenty of conventions, but he feels they are made to be breached. Happy people.

The Laotian is cheerful and serene and contented, perhaps from some strange physiology of his glands, of his bodily make-up and of his environment, or of all of these, but he is most of all happy because he has but few needs."

149: Reinach--142 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[157] 844

"When a woman feels her first pains she abstains from taking baths and swallows quantities of salt and spiced drinks. She summo a midwife and fastens a cotton thread from the bonzery around the latter's wrists. This precaution might be called the 'sanctification of hands.'

"The midwife comes to stay in the house of her client until after delivery. She is given the choicest food and commands the utmost respect. She may wash her hands only with water which has been perfumed (by means of a variety of mint). Finally, when labor pains begin, the woman sits down with her legs folded and spread wide apart. Her underskirt must be pulled down over her legs and taken in sharply at the waist by a belt. This last precaution is taken so that during the mother's efforts to deliver the child it will not go upwards towards her thorax. The midwife remains in front of the parturient woman, while relatives, friends or, more often, young men hold the woman up and try to divert her with extremely licentious remarks. Some of the young men bring musical instruments, and others bring phalli to which they address such witty reproaches that the patient, despite her pain, responds with an outburst of laughter. There is gambling, drinking and singing, and during all this time the work goes on and the woman gives birth in the midst of the gaiety. [522]

"No one sees the actual delivery, not even relatives. Only the midwife passes her hands under the skirt and watches attentively so as to intervene if necessary. The child is taken from the mother on a mat, the midwife draws it gently towards her and makes ready to cut the umbilical cord. The latter is cut between two ligatures made with cotton threads, and the actual section made on a weaver's shuttle with a knife which may be more or less ornate depending on the state of the family's fortune (2). The foetal part (about eight

(2) In northern Laos the cord is cut on a cylinder of green bamboo, closed at one end by a joint. The knife is a strip of bamboo cut at a sharp angle so that the siliceous bark forms the cutting edge. All iron or steel instruments are strictly forbidden. (Author's note.) [412]

centimeters in length) is rolled in leaves of an astringent variety and folded back on the abdomen. The child is then rubbed with slightly spiced oil.

149: Reinach--146 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Then comes the feast. A suckling pig, a hen, a cock, two bowls of cooked rice, two hardboiled eggs, two small jars containing brandy, a handful of cotton threads and lighted wax candles are placed on a copper platter before a kind of altar erected in the middle of the house. In certain parts of Laos cakes and flowers take the place of these offerings, except for the rice, eggs, candles and cotton thread. These latter are obligatory, according to Laotian custom.

[193] The bride and groom kneel down before the altar, and the marriage ceremony begins. An elderly man, a sorcerer, or the man who has been the go-between in the marriage recites prayers and performs certain ritual practices. Then he attaches cotton threads to the wrists of the bride and groom so as to form bracelets. These are supposed to be "fetishes of happiness." Finally the newlyweds pour out a libation of brandy and all those present drink from the same cup after them, passing it from hand to hand.

In families of notables the bride's parents give back part of the dowry to their son-in-law after he has given it to them, as a mark of esteem and great confidence.

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If the son-in-law is to live with the bride's parents then the dowry is decreased in accordance with custom, in compensation for the labor which he will furnish to the community (1).

(1) A custom which is quite widely observed decrees that the groom shall live with his in-laws and help them with their work like a son until the time when he has a child. He is then free to go elsewhere and found a new family home. This custom is extremely ancient in origin and contributes greatly to strengthening the bonds of kinship between the groom and his in-laws.

There are cases, however, where the groom already has a house and takes his wife to live there after the marriage ceremony. The newlyweds are then accompanied by their friends. The young men take along noisy instruments with which they make a great racket, while the young women carry the bride's clothes and bedclothes to her new home.

When they reach their home a celebration takes place in which there is no shortage of brandy and during which the bride runs and shuts herself in her room so as to escape the extremely licentious remarks made by those present, who are somewhat drunk after their many libations.

[522 273]

10: d'Orleans--332 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 524, 778, 793

"Outside the principal building, in the courtyard of the pagoda, [LSS: the pagoda of Ouate Maï in Luang Prabang] are a series of ongmong, or small buildings which contain the statues of the gods; pyramids (Tâte) containing the bones of prominent bonzes or members of the Royal Family, and plaster bells like the lotus flower, behind all these buildings, hidden among the trees, being the houses of the bonzes, whose pupils we remark at play, the game at which they play, with a hollow ball made out of bamboo canes twisted together, being one which requires great skill."

10: d'Orleans--352 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 524, 527

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"There are also certain games played one of these being very much like that known to us as 'questions and answers,' while there is another played with bits of paper, which resembles that of 'mother goose.' "

10: d'Orleans--370-372 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 524, 533, 584

[LSS: in Paklay] "In the evening the Siamese lieutenant invites us to a particularly original fête. Upon a small terrace in front of our verandah sit a dozen young girls, their [371] busts draped in gold-thread scarves of native make. Opposite them a dozen young men take their places. A man carrying a Laotian organ, which he has difficulty in setting up, follows them. The pipes of the organ are so long--nearly 14 feet--that he is finally obliged to cut a hole in the roof, but the damage can be easily repaired.

We are about to assist at a good game of repartee, between the men and the women, a sort of literary joust.

Each camp has its champion. On one side a young man, with a rather expressive face, contorts his facial muscles so as to produce every sort of mimicry. Opposite is an old woman with a wrinkled and pockmarked skin, though her ugliness down not prevent her, from possessing the gift of quick retort. The organ plays continually on a grave key in a sort of bass, while the persons present accompany it by clapping their hands at certain measures.

When the woman rejects her questioner's propositions,the latter takes two small candles, made of a little wax coiled round a few threads, holds them fixed with the thumb nail, and gesticulates, turning his hands and moving his arms in passes like those of a hypnotiser. To these movements correspond certain shruggings of the shoulders, contractions of the mouth, distortions of the nose and wrigglings in consonance with the

measure of the organ music. When the grimaces are funny the women mark their satisfaction by bursting into peals of laughter.

Of the group of young men some interrupt to support or excite their champion, or they repeat a refrain in chorus. It is generally some popular phrase, [37Z] the meaning of which is not clear to either the Siamese lieutenant or the interpreter. There is also a series of exclamations, which one repeats twice, these cries corresponding to our shouts of encouragement: 'Keep it up,' 'don't flinch,' 'steady,' and the like: Aou'. aou! aoua! ioua! pemma! sempa! satna!

Sometimes the singing is in crescendo time and the singer seems to be in a hurry. The company becomes excited, encouraging and urging him on. A brass bowl is continually passed round, flowing over with tchoum-tchoum. The animation becomes greater and greater and the party breaks up amid a general hubbub. [LSS: for the text of some of the dialogue, see Laotians, category 539, p. 372-373.] "

Sports and games. These are widespread in Laos. 526

"Boxing has fervent disciples there, as does flat-handed wrestling. Some of the champions have remarkable professional skill, agility and cleverness which never lose their elegance.

"The Laotians play with balls and shuttlecocks, but without using either their hands or rackets. Any other part of the body, for example, from the foot to the head, may be used to return a ball or shuttlecock. Nearly all young people play this extremely graceful game, which requires great suppleness, a quick eye and perfect ease of movement, which in this game should be neither jerky nor violent (1).

(1) This game is also played in Burma, whence it was doubtless imported into Laos. The ball is made of large-mesh rattan latticework and is spherical in form with a diameter of ten to twelve centimeters. The shuttlecock is half-spherical. It is of similar construction, covered with cloth and provided with feathers along the edge. (Author's note.) [171]

"Like all Orientals, Laotians have a passion for games of chance in any form. This is the race's only real vice, and the French administration is obliged to maintain active surveillance over it. 525

"A form of chess, more complicated than the game played in Europe, is widely played, and a few players are highly reputed for their perfect grasp of the game." (Le Laos français.) 524

Celebrations and festivals. In addition to the legal public holidays, the temperament of the Laotians leads them to celebrate a great many others, for the most diverse and the most futile reasons. In principle, the Laotian makes no expenditures to ameliorate his daily fare and the pleasures of the table, as far as choice foods go, are indifferent to him. This does not prevent him, however, from organizing celebrations among relatives, friends and neighbors which anyone can attend without being specially invited. This custom of giving public festivities, or "Ngans" to use the native term, where everyone eats and drinks, has a good time, jokes and makes love, shows the friendly side of the Laotian character and the extreme sociability of the people. Those whose personal resources are too limited to cover the expenses of a "Ngan" either join with others in similar straits or go skirmishing through the city or village in search of the money, food, brandy and wax needed to accomplish their plan. 527 [476]

village and those of ancestors. Prayers for the dead are said, and 782
when they are over the head and feet of a goat, crude clay statuettes 769
representing two men, two buffalo and two oxen, and numeroux wax
candles are placed on a raft made of banana trees. The raft is
launched full into the current of a river while men collect on the
banks and fire salvos of shots and shoot off fireworks.

The musical instruments of the Thais are the "Kene" and [240] 534
a kind of clarinet with two tubes, reinforced by gongs and tom-toms.

Their songs are not at all noisy and are much more like mono- 538
tonous chants.

The Thais have a very characteristic game, and this is the game 524
of the "inexhaustible jar." A jar of rice beer is placed on the floor
of a house and five bamboo tubes stuck in it to serve as straws. Five 273
men take positions around the jar, and each of them puts a tube in
his mouth. Into each of the jars, and above a kind of porous stopper
made of pressed paddy husks, water is poured by means of an ox
horn with a hole in the end. At a given signal both men and women
begin to suck conscientiously while the contents of the ox horn are
poured into each jar three times in succession. The ones who empty
their jar first win, and the losers have to drink the contents of ten
horns of water poured over what is left of the beer in their jar.

The Thai beer does not have a bad taste, and its alcoholic
strength is equivalent to that of hard cider, which it closely resembles
in flavor. Although the additions of water decrease the beverage's
percentage of alcohol it nevertheless produces a slight intoxication,
due primarily to the speed with which it is sucked through the straw.
But the inebriety never degenerates into a quarrel, and provokes
nothing but laughter, songs and unadulterated merriment.

Who would believe that the Thais have the custom of throwing 527
"confetti"? Nothing is more true, however, for in the celebrations
at the end of harvest, which take place in December or January,
the merrymakers throw cotton seeds mixed with paddy, with husks,
and sometimes also with ashes.

389 the rockets are naturally in proportion to the size of the latter. For large rockets, they are made up of a kind of broad, triangular ladder, the top of which is leaned against a tree top.

524 527 Hot air balloons. In northern Laos, balloons are constructed out of paper which is either made locally or imported from China. They are cylindro-spherical in shape and a little gondola of rattan cane is suspended from them by a cotton thread. In the gondola there is an oil cup filled with lard and provided with two or three cotton wicks, and these are lit in order to keep the air in the balloons hot for a given length of time.

Since they are generally launched in the evening at the time of the great holiday of the twelfth month (October-November), the absence of wind makes it possible to follow their aerial course as long as the cotton wicks continue to give off light.

[469] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER X

1. PRESENT ROUTES OF COMMUNICATION BY LAND

487 We have already dealt in Chapter II with the routes of communication by river, and so shall deal here only with land routes (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVII.

In Laos they are of three kinds:

1. The cart roads negotiable by ox-carts and wagons;
2. The mule tracks over which elephants, horses, mules and oxen can pass.
3. The paths or even mere trails which can be used only by travelers on foot.

[481] [470] As a consequence of the ingrained habit which both animals and people have of always walking in single file, the roads of Laos, like those of many other lands, are reduced to the width of a path which is marked on the ground either by the trampling animals and men, or by two deep ruts into which the wheels of carts sink. In the forest, depending on how wide and how high a path has been cleared through the undergrowth, a road may be practicable for elephants, men on horseback, oxen or only for travelers on foot.

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Then the royal retinue proceeds to the That Luang where the king must spend the night in a sala. He is accompanied by his ministers and in principle may not leave until they come and fetch him.

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On the morning of the fifteenth day, the king, carried by his guards, goes to make his offerings to the bonzes, and the whole day is devoted to public rejoicing, of which one form deserves to be mentioned. It is the game of the Thi khi.

Its origin, so far as we know at present, remains obscure. The Pra Lak Pra Lam tells us that Indra and Rama played Thi Khi together, and that since that day it has been played at Vientiane.

Let us observe that the game was unknown at Luang Prabang. It was imported from the south. Tradition required that it be played on horseback, when it was played like polo.

At the present time it is played on foot with a stick with the end bent over like a crosier and a ball the size [47] of a child's head and is similar to hockey. There are two opposing sides, the office-holders and the people. The latter should in principle win two victories out of three games. The game has no rules, there is no umpire and no limit to the ground played on. Sometimes the ball goes off into the shrubbery, and all the players go and look for it. Only a hypothetical line indicates the limit of the enemy side. [641]

The feasts of Vat Inpeng and of Vat Ong Tu merely repeat those of Vat Simuong and That Luang.

[48]

THE SECULAR CEREMONIES

The Sou Khouan can be considered as the transition between the purely religious ceremonies and the secular feasts. [527]

Actually Sou Khouan means "call and reception of the soul." The Laotian has a profound belief in the transmigration of the soul. According to him, the human body is inhabited by thirty-two khouan (spirits) each of whom presides over the function of a member, an organ or an intellectual faculty. [725]

When a human being dies, all of the thirty-two souls leave his body. According to the merits which have been acquired, they go either to the heaven of the gods, or to the province of the dead. Certain beings who have died in an abnormal manner, by suicide, drowning, etc., become wandering souls. They are to be feared, because they return to earth in order to torment the living, and one must make numerous sacrifices to them.

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525 GAMBLING--laying of wagers on games, athletic contests, and spectacles; betting; lotteries; special gambling devices (e.g., roulette wheels); calculation of odds (e.g., bookmakers, parimutuel machines); informal gambling; gaming houses and their operation; gambling as a method of finance (e.g., government lotteries, church bingo games, hospital sweepstakes, club slot machines); specialists (e.g., gamblers, croupiers); prevalence of and attitudes toward gambling; restrictions and regulations; etc. See also:

Debts 426
Speculation 455
Horse racing 541
Illicit gambling establishments 548
Conception and manipulation of luck and chance 777

10: d'Orleans--300-301 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 436, 455, 525, 651, 177.52 Siam
636.52

"In addition to the forced labour, there is, the capitation tax, the opium tax, and the monopoly of the tchoum-tchoum, but the monopoly of gaming, which is the source of large revenue in Siam itself, has been suppressed here by the Siamese as being immoral. It is the same with the speculation upon the money exchange, which is not yet resorted to in Luang Prabang. In the valley of Ménam, more especially, the money in use is composed of earthenware counters, the circulation of which is suspended or the value altered by a Government decree, large profits being thus secured in very arbitrary fashion. Another source of profit [301] for the treasury of Luang Prabang is the produce of the customs, there being a tax of three per cent. upon the merchandise and of a basket of salt upon each canoe, which comes up from the south with a load of it."

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Tribal Tai
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s the long pirogue, and the jockeys are the oarsmen. Nor will it be in vain to remark that, as in our races, heavy wagers are often laid by the owners and the lovers of this kind of sport.

Thais or Phou-Thais. The Thais or Phou-Thais are divided into four distinct groups. These are:

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1. The Khao-Thais (white);
2. The Dam-Thais (black);
3. The Deng-Thais (red);
4. The Neua-Thais (northern).

The Khao-Thais are the result of marriages between Chinese men and Dam-Thai women, or vice versa, although the former case is the most frequent. They do not form large agglomerations, but only isolated family groups in the midst of the surrounding population. They are found only in the northern part of the Sib-Song-Chau-Thais, a territory which is dependent on Laos from the ethnographic point of view but administratively attached to Tonkin.

The following is what is known of their origin: [229] [Illustration] [230] [Blank page] [231]

"Around 1600 a rebel Chinese leader assembled a few partisans, set sail from Canton and landed at Haiphong. From there he went on to Bac-Ninh, continually increasing the number of his men. At Bac-Ninh the rebel leader received an envoy from the king of Annam, who asked him to help put down the Thais and the Muongs of the Black River. The Chinese leader accepted, and after leaving Bac-Ninh he went to Lao-Kay, from which point he soon entered the province of the Sib-Sing-Chau-Thais. After defeating the Thais and the Muongs he was given this province out of gratitude for his help. His troops, worn out by the campaign, settled in the country and lost no time in marrying Thai women. It was from such unions that the white Thais were born" (1).

(1) E. Picanon, op. cit. [Le Laos français, Paris, 1901.]

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Dam-Thais and Deng-Thais. These two varieties have a common origin and belong to the same family (2). The different names which

(2) Thais are found in nearly all of Laos, where they are scattered among the Laotian population. They are particularly numerous in the Hua-Pahn, where they are in the majority in certain muongs.

7: Thompson--373-374 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 526, 535

"Unlike the Cambodians, the Laotians hold the dance in little honour. Only at certain fêtes do male dancers mimic like the Indians, and they are always accompanied by song. There are no professional dancers as in the royal and mandarinal palaces of Cambodia. The only corps de ballet that exists is at Luang-Prabang, and it is made up of little boys. Games of skill are much more pleasing to the Laotians. Boxing and wrestling, ball games, [374] and, above all, boat races take place at every festival, or as often as the Laotians can think of an excuse to have them. There is something in the temporary competitive and voluntary character of the effort required by games, as well as the change to bet on the outcome, that makes such activity irresistible to the Laotians, who hate the routine drudgery of daily toil, which is inexplicably enough the Occidental ideal."

23: Franck--297-298 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 226, 501, 526

"Huge fish are caught in the Mekong, weighing a hundred and fifty, two hundred, sometimes even two hundred and fifty--not pounds, but kilograms, fish so big that it takes ten men to carry one of them and one man to carry a severed head. It is easy to understand what the flap of such a fish-tail sometimes means to the fishermen in their frail vine-tied canoes. But it is just the fishing for such a people in such a climate; for every time they catch a fish they can--and usually do--[298] rest for a week without going hungry. Racing pirogues as much as twenty paces long lie bottom up on bamboo-horses under little thatch roofs here and there upon the high weed-grown river-bank at the edge of the capital, being used only in November during the annual regattas. For rowing--more exactly paddling--is the athletic sport of Luang Prabang."

764 some forty meters long folded across its width until it was the size of a man's hand (with thumb and little finger spread). The strip was unrolled ahead of the coffin and was held by the youngest of the dead person's sons, who led the mourning. Then the bonzes, relatives, officials and best friends of the deceased took positions on each side and held on to the strip with one hand, as we would hold on to pall-bearers' cords. Thus constituted, the procession set off ahead of the coffin, drawing it along in a manner of speaking.

Tom-toms, gongs, cymbals, clarinets and the Laotian organ were heard during the processional, as well as songs and improvisations. When it reached the funeral pyre the procession circled it three times and deposited the coffin on it.

The spectators then took up positions under sheltering bushes, in shady spots or even in full sunlight, depending on their rank. All was in readiness to light the fire, which was to be provided by the Governor of the province, a delegate of the king of Luang-Prabang who is the "master of life" (1), for the deceased was a high official.

[643] (1) The king of Luang-Prabang bears the title Tiao-Tsi-Vit, master of life.

[208] One important rite still remained to be performed: the last ablutions of water and brandy on the face, chest and hands of the body.

Then men climbed up on the pyre and removed the canopy of the catafalque, leaving the bamboo frame showing through the torn wrapping. They broke the lid of the coffin into splinters with great ax blows and thus exposed the body of the deceased, which exuded such a strong odor that all the spectators on the leeward side fell back.

The final toilet took place at this time. The men who do this work absorb such quantities of brandy to drive off miasmas and stimulate their own courage that their gestures and merriment, at such a time and place, would seem to us to be out of place. But here things are not seen in the same light, and the gesticulations of all these folk armed with axes and various containers and their grotesque attitudes around the open coffin merely stimulate the spectators' joy. The songs and music had not ceased, and wrestling matches and animal combats were about to take place. The wrestlers took the measure of one another and came to grips with their hands flat open, while the

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boxers pummeled one another with their fists. Their hands were smeared with a mixture of oil and soot so that they would leave a mark wherever they hit. The tilters were hot and eager, but did not greatly hurt one another, for their chief effort was to attract attention by means of gestures and plastic attitudes which would impress the girls and women with their supple, nervous and muscular bodies, shining like bronze under the sun because of the sweat which the effort of fighting brought on.

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Combats between buffaloes followed these amusements, then cocks were brought on and the whole audience crowded around. Passions rose to a fever pitch in the whole mass of spectators, who had been imbibing brandy freely. Ironic clamors rained down on the men who had let themselves be beaten and whose faces were smeared with black on their return, while enthusiastic shouts greeted the victors. In spite of all the excitement, the sun, the heat and the brandy, the whole mass of people remained quite moderate and the festivities [209] [Illustration] [210] [Blank page] [211] always kept a gay and gracious air. The enthusiasm for the fighters, the shouts and the bravos only lasted for a moment, and all of them, both lucky and unlucky, were sponged, given drink and cherished with equal solicitude so that they soon forgot their momentary rivalry.

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Children of both sexes then approached the pyre. They had all fastened their sampots and skirts in view of what was to happen next. Sacks were brought which were full of copper coins, to which a few silver coins had been added. Members of the family of the deceased then climbed up on the pyre and threw this small change broadcast into the horde of children. An indescribable tumult followed, accompanied by sharp cries. There was quarreling and fighting, and many little pairs of hands could be seen grabbing for the same copper coins. All of them would have liked to get the few white coins.

The parents and older people watched the coin hunt, which reminded them of the time when they were children and at the same time reminded them of the name of a dead man whose family had been generous to them once in similar circumstances.

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Now all the ritual ceremonies had been accomplished and it remained only to proceed to the last one: setting fire to the pyre.

Stiff lengths of rattan were attached to the four corners of the catafalque and fastened to the ground with stakes. Rockets slid along the lengths of rattan, and when the time came they would shoot up and supposedly light the pyre. In reality this is only a

Sports and games. These are widespread in Laos. 526

"Boxing has fervent disciples there, as does flat-handed wrestling. Some of the champions have remarkable professional skill, agility and cleverness which never lose their elegance.

"The Laotians play with balls and shuttlecocks, but without using either their hands or rackets. Any other part of the body, for example, from the foot to the head, may be used to return a ball or shuttlecock. Nearly all young people play this extremely graceful game, which requires great suppleness, a quick eye and perfect ease of movement, which in this game should be neither jerky nor violent (1).

(1) This game is also played in Burma, whence it was doubtless imported into Laos. The ball is made of large-mesh rattan latticework and is spherical in form with a diameter of ten to twelve centimeters. The shuttlecock is half-spherical. It is of similar construction, covered with cloth and provided with feathers along the edge. (Author's note.) [171]

"Like all Orientals, Laotians have a passion for games of chance in any form. This is the race's only real vice, and the French administration is obliged to maintain active surveillance over it. 525

"A form of chess, more complicated than the game played in Europe, is widely played, and a few players are highly reputed for their perfect grasp of the game." (Le Laos français.) 524

Celebrations and festivals. In addition to the legal public holidays, the temperament of the Laotians leads them to celebrate a great many others, for the most diverse and the most futile reasons. In principle, the Laotian makes no expenditures to ameliorate his daily fare and the pleasures of the table, as far as choice foods go, are indifferent to him. This does not prevent him, however, from organizing celebrations among relatives, friends and neighbors which anyone can attend without being specially invited. This custom of giving public festivities, or "Ngans" to use the native term, where everyone eats and drinks, has a good time, jokes and makes love, shows the friendly side of the Laotian character and the extreme sociability of the people. Those whose personal resources are too limited to cover the expenses of a "Ngan" either join with others in similar straits or go skirmishing through the city or village in search of the money, food, brandy and wax needed to accomplish their plan. 527 [476]

527 Those desirous of obtaining special graces give similar celebrations
182 which last several days and several nights, and the offerings are more beautiful and more varied. It is generally on occasions of this sort that assumptions of the habit by bonzes and their pupils are particularly likely to occur.

Being present at these ceremonies confers certain indulgences, and that is why they are so punctually followed and why all those who take part try [224] to help in celebrating them by offerings of all sorts.

[196] On the spot where the celebration is to be held, a sort of pulpit is constructed beforehand where the bonzes stand as they come up by turns to read passages chosen for the occasion from the sacred books. They never allow themselves to be disturbed by the surrounding noise, but stand as if transfixed in the middle of the songs and shouts.

It is readily understandable that this should be an agreeable way to procure one's salvation, but since it is very costly it is not within
[565] everyone's means. Fortunately, there are ways of compromising with heaven which enable even the poorest to associate themselves in these great celebrations, in accordance with their resources, by means of even very modest offerings and to benefit therefrom both spiritually and materially.

There is no doubt but that a belief in the efficacy of plenary and partial indulgences enters into their consideration, but it is equally reasonable to suppose that the attraction of the profane pleasures which one enjoys in the course of these gatherings is not the least of the motivating causes which lead the Laotian people to frequent them so zealously.

[171] Pirogue races. We have seen that pirogue races and regattas took place during some of the legal holidays, and a few words of
•526 explanation on this matter are given below.

501 This custom must have been introduced by the Malays and then handed down from the Kmers to the Laotians, following an ascending direction from south to north.

The pirogues used in the "Souang-Hua" (1) regattas are specially

(1) Literally, pirogues which run.

built and exclusively reserved for this use. Sometimes as much as twenty-five meters in length, they are hewn out of specially chosen wood and have most elegant delicate and elongated lines. Their extremities are armed with what appear to be slender gilded horns. The exterior is lacquered black with gold ornamentation and the

inside is lacquered red.

The pirogues are manned by forty or fifty oarsmen who half [225] [Illustration] [226] [Blank page] [227] crouch and half sit in pairs on what amount to thwarts made of bamboo and joined to a framework. The oarsmen face forward as they paddle, holding their blade in both hands and not supporting it on any point of the boat. A pirogue chief, usually a mandarin, is in the prow, and in the stern is the pilot, who jumps about and stimulates the whole crew with his shouts and gestures. Amidships there are sometimes musicians, with kene, gong and tom-tom, and two or three trained men who, their belts [Illustration here] adorned with enormous jointed "lingams," dance the "Phallic" standing up with their feet on the edges of the pirogue and declaim occasional odes and improvisations the terms of which are extremely crude.(1). In their songs they invite beings,

(1) In southern Laos the men who perform these dances hold grotesque masks in front of their faces with their hands.

plants and elements to unite, combine and fertilize one another so as to maintain "Life" in all its forms on the surface of the earth.

The crews of the different racing pirogues are clothed in different colors, like the jackets of our jockeys, and they vie ardently with one another, making the water fly to surpass their own efforts. The crew which reaches the finish line first manifests its enthusiasm by [228] standing up in the pirogue, uttering shouts of triumph and brandishing the oars. Oftentimes all these uncoordinated movements result in throwing everybody into the water, but the pirogue is soon righted and emptied to the accompaniment of roars of laughter and the crew members take up their posts again, ready for a new race.

Racing pirogues are not launched until the time when they are to be used. Ordinarily they are stored on sawhorses and under sheds on the grounds of certain pagodas whose bonzes are responsible for their upkeep, and for storing the oars and accessories and clothing of the oarsmen.

Certain pirogues are held in common by the inhabitants of a village, while others are the property of particular rich men, muong chiefs or high mandarins who have had them built at their own expense and pay for their upkeep and for that of their crew of oarsmen. In Laos a man will become the owner of a racing pirogue as in France one might become the owner of a racing stable. The racehorse

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Tribal Tai

is the long pirogue, and the jockeys are the oarsmen. Nor will it be in vain to remark that, as in our races, heavy wagers are often laid by the owners and the lovers of this kind of sport.

Thais or Phou-Thais. The Thais or Phou-Thais are divided into four distinct groups. These are:

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1. The Khao-Thais (white);
2. The Dam-Thais (black);
3. The Deng-Thais (red);
4. The Neua-Thais (northern).

The Khao-Thais are the result of marriages between Chinese men and Dam-Thai women, or vice versa, although the former case is the most frequent. They do not form large agglomerations, but only isolated family groups in the midst of the surrounding population. They are found only in the northern part of the Sib-Song-Chau-Thais, a territory which is dependent on Laos from the ethnographic point of view but administratively attached to Tonkin.

The following is what is known of their origin: [229] [Illustration] [230] [Blank page] [231]

"Around 1600 a rebel Chinese leader assembled a few partisans, set sail from Canton and landed at Haiphong. From there he went on to Bac-Ninh, continually increasing the number of his men. At Bac-Ninh the rebel leader received an envoy from the king of Annam, who asked him to help put down the Thais and the Muongs of the Black River. The Chinese leader accepted, and after leaving Bac-Ninh he went to Lao-Kay, from which point he soon entered the province of the Sib-Sing-Chau-Thais. After defeating the Thais and the Muongs he was given this province out of gratitude for his help. His troops, worn out by the campaign, settled in the country and lost no time in marrying Thai women. It was from such unions that the white Thais were born" (1).

(1) E. Picanon, op. cit. [Le Laos français, Paris, 1901.]

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Dam-Thais and Deng-Thais. These two varieties have a common origin and belong to the same family (2). The different names which

(2) Thais are found in nearly all of Laos, where they are scattered among the Laotian population. They are particularly numerous in the Hua-Pahn, where they are in the majority in certain muongs.

796 723 a hermit and said to them: "If you think of your mother, build little illuminated boats and let them be carried away by the current on the fifteenth day of the eleventh month."

This rite is common to all the Asiatic countries of the monsoon. It is found in Lower Burma where it is said to celebrate the victory of the monk Oupagoutta over Mara. It is also practised in Cambodia, southern China at Amoy, in Borneo and in Japan.

Actually we are dealing with what Sir J. Frazer called the expulsion of the emissary he-goat. "These little rafts loaded with offerings attracted the evil genii who had been in contact with the living during the rains. They are driven away on board these frail skiffs." The expulsion of the emissary goat is often accompanied by licentious scenes similar to those of ancient Saturnalia and Bacchanalia.

[526] The race of the dugouts was originally intended to bring about the fall of the waters, but apparently it seems that in Vientiane, in spite of offerings made to the Nagas of the Nam Passak, the original idea has been lost, and the dugout race has become simply a sporting event.

The Feasts of the Twelfth Month.

796 643 When King Asoka had completed the 84,000 shrines which he had built to contain the ashes of the Buddha, he made a great feast of the That on the fifteenth day of the crescent moon of the twelfth month. The feasts of the That Luang are celebrated in memory of this pious deed.

At Vientiane they are preceded by the feast of Vat Si Muong and conclude with those of the Vat Ong Tu [46] and Impeng (see appendix: Vientiane). They always involve the same ceremonial, circumambulation around the pagoda with small sticks of wax and incense, offerings to the bonzes, etc....

The day before the feast of That Luang, on the fourteenth day of the crescent moon, the Great Oath takes place. The king goes to the pagoda of Vat Ong Tu. All the high dignitaries and principal office-holders of the kingdom are present. The bonzes chant the ritual prayers. Two Kha guards in red tunics and green sampots, red berets with a pompon on their heads similar to the headdress worn by warriors represented at the Bayon of Angkor Thom, plunge the points of the sabres, guns and lances into four begging bowls containing lustral water. The master of ceremonies recites the oath written on palm leaves three times. Then the water in which the weapons have been dipped is distributed to the principal dignitaries who drink it.

10: d'Orleans--344 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 805

"April 11th

This is a day of great rejoicing, being the celebration of the Mahason crane pai (the calendar being finished goes away), the change of year being observed here in the fifth month, instead of in the fourth as at Nan. This and the rejoicings in the twelfth month are the two most important of the fêtes held in nearly every week of the year. This fête is very similar to that of the Annamite Têt, except that here it extended over nearly a fortnight."

10: d'Orleans--344-345 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 443, 527, 556

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"We pay an early visit to the market and find the streets crowded, the women being attired in their finest things, and being loaded with bracelets and necklaces of gold, while the market itself is full of [345] birds in cages, which it is considered to be a very meritorious act to purchase and let loose. This Laos custom is very general among the Buddhists, and I remember seeing at Batang a Chinese soldier who, as he caught his fish, put them into a bucketful of water, the Thibetans giving him money at the close of the day to put them back into the river."

10: d'Orleans--345 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 231, 252, 262, 527

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"I notice also some iguanas, the flesh of which is said to be excellent, but they are so quick in their movements that they can only be caught by dogs trained to the work. Flowers, including piles of gardenias picked in the gardens, four varieties of orchid and red and white flowers from different trees, are also bought in large quantities for the decoration of the pagodas, and at the stalls set up in the open is sold vermicelli cooked with grasshoppers, a small bag made out of banana leaves answering the purpose of a cup."

10: d'Orleans--345 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 796

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"There is great animation in the streets, nearly all the inhabitants finding their way into the main thoroughfares, shouting, buying, discussing, eating, and smoking until the religious ceremony begins. The bonzes have brought into the open all their gods, excepting the large statue at the further end of the pagoda, and proceed to put them through their toilet. The women, in the meanwhile, are visiting the pagodas, the general rule being to go to those situated in another parish to that to which they belong. The evening is spent in shouting and singing, like the last."

10: d'Orleans--346 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 782, 796, 821

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.] "April 12th
As we cross the stream, we notice all along the banks tiny rafts conveying presents, notably rice, and these are offerings made by the boatmen in order that they may take plenty of fish, and be favoured by the weather while out with their boats.

In the town the statues are still out in the open, or rather they are placed under a small scaffolding, the sacred water conduit pouring out its contents drop by drop through the dragon's mouth in which it terminates at one end, while the other end is in the pagoda and is being fed by the priests, long tapers with strips of paper bearing the donor's name are burning before the altar."

10: d'Orleans--346 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 796, 822

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"In the main street we encounter a cortége which is coming from Ouate Tâte to Ouate Sieng Tong, and this is supposed to be the old year which is being thus escorted. It is curious, in this connection, to note that the old year is fetched from the west, while the new year will come from the east, but I do not know whether this is due to chance or is a matter of tradition."

10: d'Orleans--346-347 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, ~~527~~, 541, 796

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"The order and composition of the procession are regulated by rites of very long standing. At the head of the procession march young men with flowers in their hands, then two rows of bearers of red and white umbrellas for the temple, behind them coming six or eight men carrying upon their shoulders one of those gilt chairs which are used in the pagodas as pulpits, and upon which one of the principal bonzes is seated. He is accompanied by two guards, who have in their hands [347] a bamboo with a mat at the end of it shaped like a lotus leaf. Following him comes a cortége of bonzes and students in yellow, belonging to six pagodas, singing in chorus or making response to one another, while at an interval of about fifty yards, a number of young girls march in regular order, the smallest coming first. They all have a yellow scarf over their dress, and each has a parasol according to her size, from the tiny European sunshades to the vast Chinese umbrellas of oiled paper, and each of them carries a silver jar full of flowers for the pagodas or of water for the libations. Picturesque as this spectacle is, it is not the most curious part of this 'festival of the women ' as it might well be called."

10: d'Orleans--348 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 532, 527, 773, 796

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]
"The dances begin, and two men emerge from the pagoda enveloped in vast cloaks coming down to their heels which are meant to designate the skin of some wild animal, while they have on their heads a mask of black wood representing some monster with enormous eyes, large mouth with very sharp teeth, very long ears and a lower jaw which can be moved at will. Behind the head is a long mane of coarse hair, and we are told that they are known as Pi Konge, or devils with a cruel face, while the old bonze says that they are the chiefs of the tigers, or the Pi Sua (race of devils). The Siamese Colonel adds that in the Laos they are known as Pou Yen (from Pou, father) or Ya Yen (from Ya, mother), and there is a legend that men of this kind once lived in a large forest, and that though they inspired great terror two of them were captured, these monsters representing the captive pair. It is interesting to compare this native tradition with the assertion of several travellers that the Laos was formerly inhabited by a hairy race of men."

10: d'Orleans--351-352 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 521, 527, 534, 832

[LSS: during the Ngones ceremonies which are part of the Laotian New Year celebration.] "Facing the girls were seated one or two groups of young men playing upon the guitar, the tam-tam and a sort of Laotian organ made of bamboo. Several of them are singing, but when they do so they put a corner of their scarf over their head so as not to be seen, while others take up the chorus. While the singing is in progress, conversation is allowed to go on between the young men and the girls, each of [352] the former taking up his place opposite the girl of his fancy. This goes on until two in the morning, being much like the flirtation of other countries, with this difference that there is no dancing and that conversation with the unmarried girls is more free than with married women."

10: d'Orleans--352 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 539, 832

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]
"In one of the pagodas we visit, I can hear the prayers of the bonzes mingling with the soft whisperings of the love-stricken swain, one of whom delivers himself thus:--

'Oh! my love, you who are my very own heart, I love none but you. It is you only whom I love. You are white and green like the eggs of a crow. I implore of you to be my life.' "

10: d'Orleans--352 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 524, 527

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"There are also certain games played one of these being very much like that known to us as 'questions and answers,' while there is another played with bits of paper, which resembles that of 'mother goose.' "

10: d'Orleans--352 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527

"The same festivals are celebrated on April 13th and 14th, except that it is the eastern pagodas which bring in the new year and conduct it westward to Ouate Tâte Loung". [LSS: for a description of the king's tour of the streets on April 15, see category 116, pp. 352-355.]

10: d'Orleans--347-348 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 783, 796, 823

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"Women sprinkle water over the chief bonze, and others bolder still, come and pour the contents of their jar over some young student. This custom of sprinkling or pouring water, which is also to be met with at certain festivals in Siam and Burmah, would not be so suprising if it were confined to the priests, but here the girls pick up mud and plaster the faces of the young men, whoever they may be, and our white dresses tempt them so much that we are obliged to assume a very stern look in order to keep them at a distance. The young men, however, are too gallant to resent these attentions, and as for the bonzes, they get something better than water offered them, as presents are made them in the shape of pans full of food, which are handed to two men who accompany the chair.

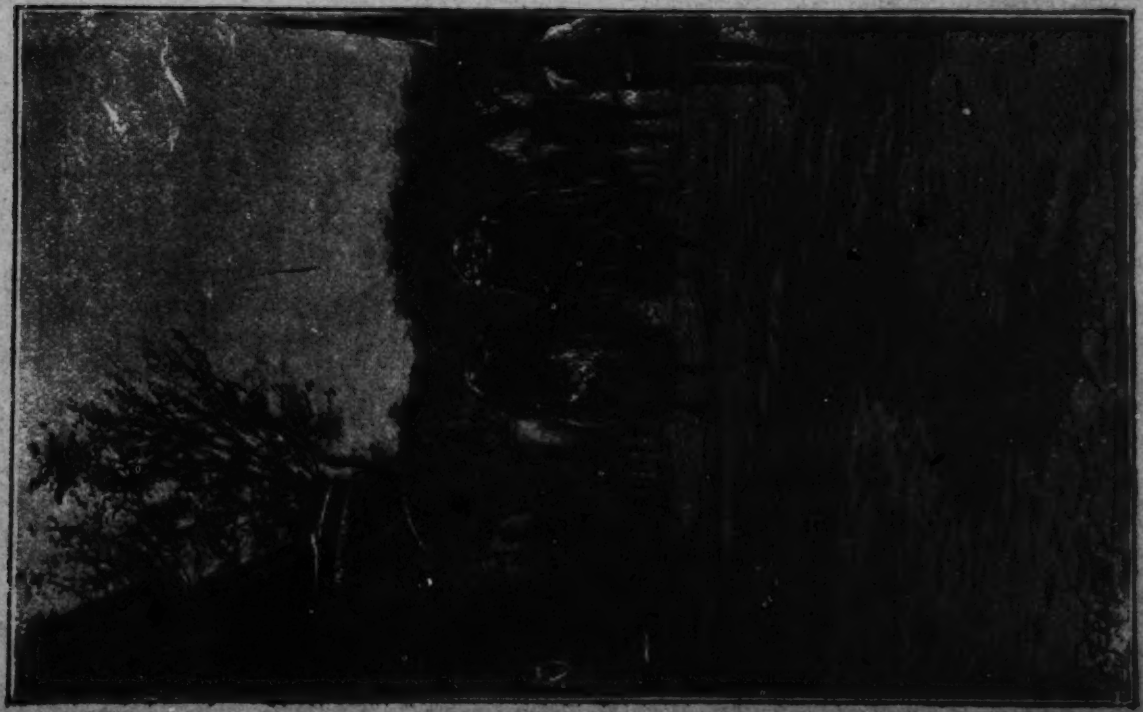
When the procession reaches Ouate Sieng Tong, it enters the courtyard, and the bonzes, after reciting [348] the usual prayers, enter a sort of shed surrounded by planks and having upon the top the same water conduit which has been used for sprinkling water over the gods. The women pour their water into this conduit, which flows down over the priests, who emerge from the shed purified and washed, but dripping wet, though this they do not seem to mind."

10: d'Orleans--348-351 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 171, 527, 535, 796

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"Whatever be the origin of these two 'monsters,' [LSS: dancers in masks] they seem to amuse the crowd very much, and when after having knelt in front of the pagoda and wished the spectators a happy new year, they begin to dance, I am surprised beyond measure to find that it is the [pages 349 and 350 contain illustration] [351] self-same dance which I saw when travelling through Thibet with M. Bonvalot two years before. The steps and the attitudes are exactly the same, and it would be interesting to know whether this is a mere chance or due to the existence of the same traditions between peoples living so far apart. The tam-tam, which is beaten by hand, without any rhythm, is the music used as an accompaniment, and from time to time the monsters make a charge and send the crowd flying, one of them chasing a young girl round a tree. I can see only Laotians among the spectators, the Kas holding aloof. When the dances are over, the procession starts on its way back, the priests being escorted back to their several pagodas."

10: d'Orleans--349 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 535, 563 Ethnic subgroups



NEW YEAR DANCES AT QUATE SIENG TONG, LUANG PHABANG.

10: d'Orleans--355 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527

"April 16th

This is a day of rest, so far as the official fêtes are concerned, but, as one of the chief bonzes puts it, 'the women are pleased, and therefore they sing.' "

23: Franck--321-322 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 644, 527, 796

"There are ceremonial occasions when the king comes to the home of the commissaire, not by Ford but on an elephant, and is carried up the steps seated on his throne, white parasols over him and a great retinue about him. The French residents condoled with me particularly because I had not reached Luang Prabang quinze jours--a fortnight--earlier. For in the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha New Year's [322] had fallen on April 12 that year, and with it comes the ceremony of the petit serment, as distinguished from the grand serment in November; that is, the swearing of fealty to the French and to the king--please note the order. Then the king rides on several elephants, I gathered, though probably only one at the time, and is carried through the town on his throne, followed by long processions of notables and mandarins in white jackets and sampots of every color of the rainbow, if not indeed several which it lacks. The common people, all the inhabitants of the capital except the Annamese and the French, kneel and bow their heads to the earth, for then they must not look upon their king, though it is said a few of the least reverent sometimes do get a glimpse à la dérobée. To judge by the pictures French residents had taken of the recent ceremony it was a sight worth coming two weeks earlier to see. In them all the inevitable cigarette was dangling from the king's lips; no ceremony is so solemn, no place so sacred, that Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah will go without his smoke. As many a photograph of the few remaining

European monarchs and their possible successors shows, he has good precedent for thus openly indulging. Perhaps it is a sign of increasing democracy, or such informal and plebeian habits may always have been shared by kings, though our expurgated histories do not mention them. Cigarette or Ford, however, the people of Luang Prabang take their king very seriously, more seriously than he does himself. The native doctor at the government hospital, educated in Hanoi and outwardly entirely French except in complexion, kneels and touches his forehead to the floor before he gives medicine to one of the king's sons in the palace nursery."

25: Brodrick--99-100 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-2
116, 527, 535, 796

"...it is difficult to spend only a few days in the Laos without living a Laotian feast-day. Take the Boun Dueun Ha, that is the New Year festival, and also that of the Little Oath (of allegiance that is). The festivities are held at the beginning of April, thus at the time of year when the days are hottest and the nights most suave.

In every village there will be a procession headed by youths bearing branches of flowers. Then will come two files of men carrying the sacred umbrellas. Afterwards six or eight men bearing upon their shoulders a palanquin, in which sits the chief of the local pagoda. The monks and their acolytes holding urns full of flowers and jars filled with lustral water, bring up the rear. So far, so good, it all seems an orderly and decent religious procession.

But as the cortège advances, the women on either side of the way throw buckets of water on the processionists, while the girls pelt them with mud. When the cortège has reached the pagoda, the whole people stand round joining in the antiphonies of praise sung in honour of the Blessed One and then fall back in a circle to watch the dances.

And these dances are not at all Buddhist. There are three main performers. There is the dragon Sing, and there is the Ngo Gneu, and then there is the Pou Gneu. These two last represent 'ancestor' spirits and their impersonators wear curious masks and their bodies are covered with beasts' skins. The wooden masks are black and swathed in streaming hair which twirls as the dance moves on. Pou Gneu has a pumpkin-like

25: Brodrick--99-100 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-2
116, 527, 535, 796

face with a huge toothy, grinning [100] mouth such as you may see in a Hallowe'en goblin. And the ancestors' ghosts come back to plague men in animal guise."

25: Brodrick--100 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 273, 527, 534, 541

"In May is the Feast of Fireworks, that begins with a decorous temple service and then, after nightfall, the big drums start to throb. All night long men hammer at the buffalo-hide tambours, breaking off only to make the rounds of the village where, at each house, they drink rice-alcohol, and so the Firework Festival goes on, with rockets whizzing in the sky and the bass drums rumbling, a holiday of drunkenness and gaiety prolonged for three whole days.

The Festival of the Great Waters, in July, is not unlike that in Cambodia, but more spontaneous and fairy-like. Then there is the Cake Feast in October and then at the Hunter's Moon, the Festival of the Great Oath.

These are some of the official court festivals in the realm of Luang-Prabang, but the local, village feasts are more revealing of the Laotian as he is. The Courts of Love, singing all night long, and the funerals..."

25: Brodrick--109 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 346, 527, 641

"The Moon City [HD: i.e. Vientane] was once a town of sanctuaries and held, they say, over eighty pagodas, but there are now only twenty-four, most of which are in ruins. The place was thoroughly sacked by the Siamese in 1827. The Sisaket pagoda has been more or less restored, and here take place twice a year the ceremonies of the Great and of the Little Oath, [HD: of allegiance] this time to the prevailing government in France and not to the Lord of the Elephants and the Umbrella. [HD: i.e. the king of Luang Prabang]"

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM 1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

132 started cellular constructions in the window shutters and armies of
485 cockroaches marched across the floors. Precious, expensive water was brought in large pots and left in the subdivision of the room where, using a gourd with a hole in its bottom, you could take a shower. The main advantage of having this open pot of water in the room was that it collected a gauzy layer of mosquitoes which were content to stay there in harmless concentration, unless disturbed. The Mekong could be seen from the window, a sallow strip of water across half a mile of whitened river-bed. Perhaps this drought had something to do with the town's electrical generating system, because only occasionally – and never at night – would the filament of the electric light bulb consent to glow feebly. Whenever the hot wind sprang up, stirring the trees round the house, great dry leaves as big as dishes came tumbling down and fell with a crash in the layer already deposited on the earth. It was the death-rattle of the year, which in Laos expires in croaking senility, to be re-born with the raging storms which were about to break.

346 Vientiane is a religious centre, one of the two ancient capitals of Laos. It abounds with pagodas, many of them deserted and in ruins; and colossal Buddhas, with dusty half-obliterated smiles, sit in the tumbled brickwork.

527 Since at this time[1] when the earth had dried up, there was no
794 work to be done anywhere, it was the season of *bouns*; the Laotian festivals. Each pagoda holds one, as a means of collecting funds. They last for three days, and although an attempt is made not to hold two *bouns* at the same time, there are so many pagodas that duplication cannot always be helped; so that every night for several weeks the sky over one or more districts of Vientiane glows with the reflection of thousands of lights, while from a distance one catches the gusty, carnival sounds of Laotian rejoicings. *Bouns* start at about eleven, and go on all night.

527 The first night after my arrival I went to a *boun*, which I found by

[1] [late March. -- Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

following a crowd. It was about two miles from the town's centre 527
and I passed several pagodas on the way, where carpenters were working by lamplight in preparation for a future festival.

An enclosure had been built round the pagoda in which every 354
kind of light, from hurricane lamps to fluorescent tubes, had been 527
concentrated in an anarchic glare. The pagoda had hired a generator 545
for the occasion. There was no entrance fee, but young ladies with demurely lowered eyes waited just inside to accept donations, in return for which you received a candle, a posy of Japanese lilac and two joss-sticks in a bamboo container. Among the many attractions was a free theatre show, lasting for many hours, indistinguishable, except to an expert, from the theatre of Siam. Actors remained on the stage for what seemed interminable periods, occasionally advancing or retreating a few steps. Meanwhile their babies played happily round their feet, and quite frequently a stage-hand would walk across and interrupt a scene for a few seconds to pump up the pressure in the hurricane lamps.

On a nearby platform the *lap ton* was being danced. Once again 292
it was the major attraction, but as it was still incorrect for Laotian 301
girls to dance in public, religious enterprise had arranged for 535
hostesses to be brought over from Siam, just across the river. The 562
pagoda hired the girls for the three nights and lodged them in a 527
nearby building. It cost a piastre to cavort round the stage for about fifteen minutes with one of them. They were dressed in hideous knee-length frocks, and some seemed to have permanent waves. The backward Laotian girls in their dowdy finery, their silk scarves, their skirts woven at the hem and waist-band with silver and gold thread, and their abundant jewel-decked chignons, could only look on wistfully. As I arrived the organizers were having 403
trouble with the microphone – indispensable adjunct to any social 527
occasion in the new Far East. A young man chanted a soft, nasal melody which could only be heard within the *boun* enclosure itself. But suddenly the electricians were successful with their tinkerings and all Vientiane was flooded with a great, ogrish baying. The

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

403 electricians hugged each other, and, enchanted by the din, the
527 audience began to drift away from the theatre and make for the dancing floor.

527 The second attraction in order of popularity was a love-court. A
584 quadrangular arrangement of tables had been formed, covered by a
782 thatched roof raised on posts decorated with woven bamboo
793 representations of animals, weapons and phallic emblems. Seated round the tables in the interior of the square were the girls, and their suitors sat facing them. Between the couples had been placed offerings of food, brought by the girls. Originally a tribute to some ancient, forgotten fertility god, a primeval Thai Venus, the offerings would be given, next day, to the bonzes. All through the night the bantering of witticisms, the singing and the exchange of improvised verse would go on, accompanied by the accordion-like
[534] wheezings of the Kène, the Stone Age gourd pipes of Laos. Sometimes through a happy fault in the circuit the splutter and bellow of the loud-speakers would suddenly lapse, and you heard the beehive dronings of the communal love-making, the kènes, and the voice of the presiding bonze, preaching continually in an archaic, incomprehensible language from the wicker cage into which he had been fastened. The cage symbolized the protection of his religion from these earthly distractions. As soon as inspiration failed he would be relieved by the next on the rota of preachers, waiting now to take his place.

584 Love-courts are the accepted preliminary to the consummation of
[533] affairs of the heart, which — despite European conviction that
576 romantic love is a Western invention — are accompanied in Laos by much versifying and mild, self-imposed frustrations. When, for instance, a well-known beauty is wooed by a number of suitors, a serenading match may be arranged on the veranda of her house to permit her to test under competitive conditions the poetic and musical capabilities of each of them. Complete pre-marital freedom
[836] is recognized, but much outward reserve is maintained. There is a time and place for everything. It is incorrect, for example, to

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

000 the point of respecting in a light-hearted way all the superstitions of East and West combined; sometimes perplexed when they were in conflict, as happens, for example, with Friday the 13th; since in Indo-China all odd days are fairly lucky, and Friday is the luckiest day of the week. He carried a Laotian sorcerer's stick, engraved with signs and symbols enabling him to cast a rapid horoscope, but was only affected by verdicts in support of decisions he had already taken. Dupont was in a great hurry to get back to Luang Prabang, because his wife was pregnant and he was afraid that she would hurt herself on her bicycle, although he had dismantled it and had
494 hidden some essential parts. We were supposed to stay in the convoy until the Xien Khouang embranchment was reached, about a hundred miles from Luang Prabang, but Dupont said that if I had no objection we would clear off on our own at the first possible opportunity. He then made some fatalistic remarks about death and predestination.

494 At the convoy assembly-point, we found a great show of discip-
722 line. Tight-lipped officers were walking up and down examining tyres and checking guns and ammunition. Drivers were assembled and lectured on convoy discipline. A soldier's Laotian wife, being observed to be pregnant, was refused permission to travel. The infantry escort was carried in five or six lorries and as many others were loaded with supplies. A dozen jeeps were placed in the middle of the convoy, which was guarded at each end by an armoured car. Dupont was turned back when he tried to bluff his way to the head of the column behind the leading armoured car, from which position he had hoped to be able to sneak away at an early opportunity

527 Although by the time we got under way it was shortly before dawn, all Vientiane was still awake. Grinding our way through the streets we passed a *boun* in full swing with its temple-dancers still trapesing round their stage, and the magnified sobbings of a crooner not quite drowned in the roar of thirty exhausts. The streets were full of torch-carrying crowds.

115: Le Boulanger--74 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

"But in regard to the kingdom's laws, it is a certain fact that 671
there are very few of them, because, in my opinion, there is no 571
great need of any in order to live in accordance with the customs 626
of the land. The people are brought up to work, to have very little
to do with foreigners, not to undertake anything which might dis-
turb them and to live an idle and /115/ listless life although not
lacking any of the things necessary to preserve it. The king's will,
which does not greatly interfere with his people, takes the place
of a great many laws for them. . . . The manner in which the in-
habitants of the land live with one another is highly civil and
obliging. Unfriendliness and quarrels are banished. . . they all have
enough to live on and get along on, so that one does not hear of
thieves except as a thing quite out of the ordinary. . . . But the /565/
mandarins do not behave in the same way. Indeed, their insolence
and their insulting and criminal conduct dim the praise which the
common people merit on this account, because they abuse the
power which they have in the kingdom, and when they see some-
thing which pleases them. . . they act in such wise as to find means
for taking possession of it.

"But if we should now pass to the person of the king in order to 643*
describe him, there is no monarch, no matter how powerful, whom 174
he does not regard as beneath him, and it would indeed seem that 648
he affects not to yield in any particular to the emperors of China. . .
Only rarely does he appear in public. . . preferring to be worshiped
by his people as a hidden God rather than as a man like themselves
and of the same nature. . . He allows himself to be seen only twice
/116/ a year, for a period of three days, by his people, who re-
ceive this grace from their prince with such gratitude and joyous
sentiments that he forgets nothing on these occasions which might
contribute to their amusement. For this purpose there are several /527/●
elephants which are trained to do a thousand little tricks and several wild
animals which are kept chained and made to fight. . . finally there
are wrestlers and gladiators and others, with their skirmishes which
last until last until evening and terminate all this rejoicing. . .

"Of all the prerogatives which he (the king) has, and which are 643*
a further mark of the extent of his power, that of having several 576
petty tributary kings in his dependency who come to his court to do
him homage and acknowledge him as their sovereign and who give
him superb presents, is by no means the least. He receives these
ambassadors in a great parlor seated on an extremely high throne
and garbed in his ceremonial robes, and replies to their civilities

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(Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

Besides these major holidays there are a certain number of others which are more religious than secular in character and which fall in between the ones dealt with above.

In the course of the sixth month (April-May), for example, a religious holiday is celebrated in memory of the first leaders of the Buddhist religion.

At the end of the eleventh month, on a date which is fixed in accordance with the rites and which varies from one year to another, a celebration takes place in the pagodas in honor of the men who first introduced Buddhism into Indo-China.

Finally, after the twelfth month (November or December), comes the feast of penitence which applies to all the faithful. During a [174] kind of Lent which lasts for nine days, true believers must abstain from certain foods and from all sex relations.

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Since our establishment in Laos the province capitals and all the centers where Europeans live have celebrated the National Holiday on July 14 which the natives call Boun-Phi-Falang-Sete (Holiday of the French Genie) or, by onomatopoeia, Boun Ka-Tor-Yu-Yet. [C. A. M. Translator's note. The latter term seems to be an approximation of the French Quatorze juillet ("July 14").]

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MORES AND CUSTOMS

By reason of their diverse origins and the relations into which they have entered with neighboring peoples, as well as by the cross-breeding which has taken place, the races of Laos necessarily have characteristics, costumes, dwellings and, in a word, mores and customs which differ to a greater or less extent from one race to another (1).

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(1) On this question of mores and customs we shall have recourse from time to time to a notice entitled Le Laos français which was written by the Superior Resident in Laos and based on reports and local monographs which were provided by our administrators and are in consequence authoritative.

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If we have consistently reproduced here extracts from the above work, this is because they provide an admirable summation

149: Reinach--136 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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who work gold mines--and by the inhabitants of several regions, [563]
whose state of fortune would nevertheless enable them to use a more precious metal.

Jewelry and examples of the goldsmith's art are found in different forms and types which vary greatly with the region and race, as will be seen by the nomenclature given in Chapter IX.

Food. The Laotian scorns the pleasures of the table, and is 262
generally a moderate eater and drinker. Steam-cooked glutinous rice forms the basis of his food supply. To this he adds salt, peppers, various other spices, fresh or preserved fish, etc. Besides these, but less frequently, his day-to-day diet may be varied with poultry, eggs, buffalo meat, beef and pork, as well as venison. To be sure, it is mainly on the occasion of public or private festivals, which are fairly numerous in the course of the year, that the Laotian improves on his usual rather frugal fare in this way.

The customary beverage is water which may be taken directly 271
from the rivers or first be hastily decanted into jars or water-coolers 273
of porous earthenware. In general, Laotians prefer water taken directly from the river to that which has been filtered. Finally, the people of Laos consume rice brandy which is obtained by distillation, and a kind of beer made by cold fermentation of rice mixed with paddy husks.

The use of these drinks, aside from rare exceptions, is reserved [527]
for holidays.

Physical appearance, character, occupations. The Laotian's 152
character is, in general, mild, friendly and happy. His physiognomy is [181] open and smiling. Not quarrelsome by nature, he even shrinks from coming to blows in extreme cases and prefers to end a dispute with an outburst of laughter rather than with blows.

Since, all in all, it has few needs and inhabits a land with luxuriant vegetation which is abundantly favored with products to be had for the scavenging, this happy people can easily satisfy its needs and be content with its fate. [Illustration alongside text here.]

It is assuredly lazy, but out of indifference much rather than 461
out of any deliberate intent. It cannot grasp the advantage or utility of a regular and prolonged effort beyond what is strictly necessary to provide it with a living and a few distractions to which, in reality, its own joyous disposition makes the greatest contribution.

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To the men are reserved the chief tasks, which have a more virile and noble character than those which are the women's lot. 241

346 Pagodas are always built on ground which has been perfectly leveled, is quite extensive and is surrounded by a wooden palisade or brick wall of elbow height.

[485] Within the pagoda enclosures there are bonzeries and dependent structures to serve as quarters for the bonzes, schools for their pupils and hostelries for travelers.

735 The construction and upkeep of pagodas are entirely dependent on the generous liberality of the faithful. Thus these edifices can be used
346 as a criterion for discovering both the state of prosperity of a region and the religious faith of its inhabitants.

[778] As used to be the case for our churches, Laotian pagodas and even their enclosures are, according to the customs of the land, sanctuaries which confer immunity against legal prosecution for certain crimes and misdemeanors.

[527] It is also in the enclosure and sometimes under the cloisters and verandas of the pagodas that the inhabitants gather on the legal holidays, and also private holidays, which are known as "Ngans".

844 Childbirth. Dr. Estrade describes the delivery of a woman of southern Laos as follows. The preliminaries, the operation itself and post-delivery procedure are the same, with only slight differences in detail, in northern Laos, and we may therefore quote Dr. Estrade's description as applicable to all of Laos in general.

"Childbirth never takes place in the house inhabited by the pregnant woman or her direct relatives, but always in the home of a neighbor or distant relative who gives hospitality to the patient until she is up and about again. The duration of pregnancy is counted in moons, as in all calculations of time, the moon being the essential element for the Laotian in the measurement of time and the occurrence
777 of a great many phenomena. When a woman reaches the last moon of her pregnancy she takes certain precautions all tending to delay
821 delivery until the first phase of the new moon, since births during the last phases are signs of misfortune [189] such as the death of the child,
[782] deformity, etc. These prejudices have such force that parents are careless in caring for any child born during the last phases of the moon, and in such a case all of their effort goes into prayers, offerings to the bonzes and the making of votive offerings (1)

(1) This assertion should not, however, be taken too literally or in any general sense. This is a prejudice which is kept up by the bonzes in their own self-interest, and is easy to see through. (Author's note.)

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wax candles decorated with flowers, cigarettes and a sum of money. (Author's note)

the family from the hands of her patient.

"Two or three days after her confinement ends the mother must go to the pagoda and give a few presents to the bonzes, who give her in return a few cotton threads which she fastens to her wrists " (4). [751] [792]

(4) Dr. Estrade, 1895. Dictionnaire et Guide franco-laotien. [113]

Cases of dystocia and other childbearing difficulties are very rare in Laos, thanks to the physiological law which decrees that childbirth shall occur all the more naturally insofar as one comes closer to the primitive type and as one's body has not been deformed either by certain professional attitudes or by artifices of dress. [191] But when any difficulty of this type does occur the Laotian midwives are extremely skilful. Their hands take the place of the steel instruments in our gynecological and surgical arsenal, and their results are usually successful both for mother and child. 844

When the newly delivered mother is allowed to get up there occur traditional feasts and celebrations, the brilliance of which varies with the status of the young mother's parents. It is generally during these happy gatherings that the bonzes or sorcerers choose the name which the newborn child is to bear. They usually base their choice on some peculiarity of the coloring or eyes, or on a phase of the moon. The name will be replaced by another if the child falls sick, for in this case, as they say, the old name was unpleasing to his "Phis," that is to say to his personal tutelary spirits. [554] 846 527 551

Infanticide. Scarcely any cases of infanticide can be cited in Laos, and abortions are extremely rare or at least very well hidden. For when cases do occur it is among members of a class which, because of the rank it holds, is anxious to conceal its faults from the mass of the people. 847 [554]

In popular belief abortion, whether voluntary or natural, is regarded as a punishment of heaven or as a case of aberration which cannot fail to draw down the utmost scorn on the guilty parties and their accomplices.

Marriage. Marriage in Laos is made ready for long in advance, thanks to the liberty which young people of both sexes enjoy. The latter meet one another at every celebration and can communicate 584

149: Reinach--154 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

The members of the family and the local officials w[illegible]head 764
with the ablutions and last toilet of the deceased. They wrapped the body in a shroud of white cotton material, and it was then placed temporarily on a mattress surrounded by green branches, flowers and a large number of yellow wax candles which were kept constantly lit and replaced as necessary.

A shed was built in the garden of the house to serve as a kitchen, for it would be necessary to prepare various foods--rice, cakes, etc.--both day and night without any respite. This food would be offered to all comers--relatives, friends, neighbors and even passersby--up to the day of cremation.

Visitors soon began to stream in, and no one arrived with empty hands. Everyone brought an offering proportionate to his means. Some brought a bouquet of flowers or some fruit, others brought pieces of cotton cloth, wax, firewood, rice, pork or buffalo meat, brandy, fish, etc.

Grief took up very little of the time of the dead person's relatives 76
and friends, for the latter quickly busied themselves with keeping 764
their guests occupied, treating them well and being in several places at once so that the guests would lack for nothing. No sadness, moreover, was to be seen among the visitors who arrived in great hordes to profit by the windfall and take part in the funeral feasts now being prepared.

[204] In their Pythagorean philosophy, the Laotians regard death much as any other of the vital functions which normally participates in transformations of matter, as for example conception and birth. In addition to this they are fervent disciples of Epicurus without realizing it, and love life in all its forms for the pleasures which, in spite of its brief span, it holds for individuals who can limit their needs and moderate their desires. Although they dread death during their years of youth and virility, this is not because they are afraid of it but mainly because they see in it an end to the many pleasures of life. What is more, they are old hands at finding pretexts for enjoying such pleasures and at discovering all possible propitious occasions for organized rejoicing.

Funeral ceremonies are celebrations in the same way as marriages, 764
assumptions of garments, births, cutting children's hair and the other
public festivals which occur regularly each year at fixed times. In 527
Laos everything ends in libations, songs and feasts, with unfettered merriment and a profusion of flowers and cloth materials whose

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[584]
colors are bright and harmonious. It is during these days of rejoicing that the first amorous intrigues often spring up between young people
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which, generally speaking, end in marriage.

Preparations for the funeral celebration went on, and dusk had
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not yet fallen when music and singing began to be heard and plates of food were passed around, as well as jars full of rice brandy.

Immediately after the death, men went to the forest to select the dead, but not decaying, tree whose trunk was to serve for making the coffin. Others prepared the pedestal on which it was to be placed and the roof which would surmount it.

The coffin was finally finished. Trapezoidal in shape, with the base uppermost, it rested on a wooden pedestal decorated with carvings.
[531]
The roof placed above it was copied from the roofs of pagodas. The frame was made of bamboo lattice covered with glued calico, and the whole was ornamented with gold paper cutouts, streamers and multicolored cotton floss.

[205] The body was sealed in its coffin, where it rested on a bed of aromatic branches and leaves. It was fully dressed and surrounded by bedclothes. A sliding cover was dovetailed into place, and all joints sealed with an indestructible caulking compound made from lime, clay, albumen and paddy husks. [Illustration alongside text here]

The catafalque stood in the middle of the room, one of the walls of which had been removed, as we have seen. It was surrounded by flowers, green branches, lighted candles and stick incense perfumed with powdered benzoin.

In the course of the next four days the province bonzes and officials arrived, and all recited the ritual prayers in Pali around the catafalque without understanding anything of what they said but scrupulously observing the consecrated rhythm and intonation.

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In the meantime a funeral pyre had been built on the sandy bank of the Mékong, left bare by the low waters, using about three [206]
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steres of dry wood which had been impregnated with resin, wood oil and kerosene.

Solidly held in place at the side by six heavy stakes of green wood, the pyre was surmounted by a high canopy or rectangular pavilion, the roof of which rose in tiers and was covered with flowered cotton cloth and decorated with gold paper garlands, cutouts and many-colored streamers.

This pavilion, supported by four posts decorated in the same taste, would presently serve to shelter the coffin.

764 some forty meters long folded across its width until it was the size of a man's hand (with thumb and little finger spread). The strip was unrolled ahead of the coffin and was held by the youngest of the dead person's sons, who led the mourning. Then the bonzes, relatives, officials and best friends of the deceased took positions on each side and held on to the strip with one hand, as we would hold on to pall-bearers' cords. Thus constituted, the procession set off ahead of the coffin, drawing it along in a manner of speaking.

Tom-toms, gongs, cymbals, clarinets and the Laotian organ were heard during the processional, as well as songs and improvisations. When it reached the funeral pyre the procession circled it three times and deposited the coffin on it.

The spectators then took up positions under sheltering bushes, in shady spots or even in full sunlight, depending on their rank. All was in readiness to light the fire, which was to be provided by the Governor of the province, a delegate of the king of Luang-Prabang who is the "master of life" (1), for the deceased was a high official.

[643] (1) The king of Luang-Prabang bears the title Tiao-Tsi-Vit, master of life.

[208] One important rite still remained to be performed: the last ablutions of water and brandy on the face, chest and hands of the body.

Then men climbed up on the pyre and removed the canopy of the catafalque, leaving the bamboo frame showing through the torn wrapping. They broke the lid of the coffin into splinters with great ax blows and thus exposed the body of the deceased, which exuded such a strong odor that all the spectators on the leeward side fell back.

The final toilet took place at this time. The men who do this work absorb such quantities of brandy to drive off miasmas and stimulate their own courage that their gestures and merriment, at such a time and place, would seem to us to be out of place. But here things are not seen in the same light, and the gesticulations of all these folk armed with axes and various containers and their grotesque attitudes around the open coffin merely stimulate the spectators' joy. The songs and music had not ceased, and wrestling matches and animal combats were about to take place. The wrestlers took the measure of one another and came to grips with their hands flat open, while the

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boxers pummeled one another with their fists. Their hands were smeared with a mixture of oil and soot so that they would leave a mark wherever they hit. The tilters were hot and eager, but did not greatly hurt one another, for their chief effort was to attract attention by means of gestures and plastic attitudes which would impress the girls and women with their supple, nervous and muscular bodies, shining like bronze under the sun because of the sweat which the effort of fighting brought on.

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Combats between buffaloes followed these amusements, then cocks were brought on and the whole audience crowded around. Passions rose to a fever pitch in the whole mass of spectators, who had been imbibing brandy freely. Ironic clamors rained down on the men who had let themselves be beaten and whose faces were smeared with black on their return, while enthusiastic shouts greeted the victors. In spite of all the excitement, the sun, the heat and the brandy, the whole mass of people remained quite moderate and the festivities [209] [Illustration] [210] [Blank page] [211] always kept a gay and gracious air. The enthusiasm for the fighters, the shouts and the bravos only lasted for a moment, and all of them, both lucky and unlucky, were sponged, given drink and cherished with equal solicitude so that they soon forgot their momentary rivalry.

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Children of both sexes then approached the pyre. They had all fastened their sampots and skirts in view of what was to happen next. Sacks were brought which were full of copper coins, to which a few silver coins had been added. Members of the family of the deceased then climbed up on the pyre and threw this small change broadcast into the horde of children. An indescribable tumult followed, accompanied by sharp cries. There was quarreling and fighting, and many little pairs of hands could be seen grabbing for the same copper coins. All of them would have liked to get the few white coins.

The parents and older people watched the coin hunt, which reminded them of the time when they were children and at the same time reminded them of the name of a dead man whose family had been generous to them once in similar circumstances.

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Now all the ritual ceremonies had been accomplished and it remained only to proceed to the last one: setting fire to the pyre.

Stiff lengths of rattan were attached to the four corners of the catafalque and fastened to the ground with stakes. Rockets slid along the lengths of rattan, and when the time came they would shoot up and supposedly light the pyre. In reality this is only a

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Sports and games. These are widespread in Laos.

"Boxing has fervent disciples there, as does flat-handed wrestling. Some of the champions have remarkable professional skill, agility and cleverness which never lose their elegance.

"The Laotians play with balls and shuttlecocks, but without using either their hands or rackets. Any other part of the body, for example, from the foot to the head, may be used to return a ball or shuttlecock. Nearly all young people play this extremely graceful game, which requires great suppleness, a quick eye and perfect ease of movement, which in this game should be neither jerky nor violent (1).

(1) This game is also played in Burma, whence it was doubtless imported into Laos. The ball is made of large-mesh rattan latticework and is spherical in form with a diameter of ten to twelve centimeters. The shuttlecock is half-spherical. It is of similar construction, covered with cloth and provided with feathers along the edge. (Author's note.) [171]

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"Like all Orientals, Laotians have a passion for games of chance in any form. This is the race's only real vice, and the French administration is obliged to maintain active surveillance over it.

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"A form of chess, more complicated than the game played in Europe, is widely played, and a few players are highly reputed for their perfect grasp of the game." (Le Laos français.)

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Celebrations and festivals. In addition to the legal public holidays, the temperament of the Laotians leads them to celebrate a great many others, for the most diverse and the most futile reasons. In principle, the Laotian makes no expenditures to ameliorate his daily fare and the pleasures of the table, as far as choice foods go, are indifferent to him. This does not prevent him, however, from organizing celebrations among relatives, friends and neighbors which anyone can attend without being specially invited. This custom of giving public festivities, or "Ngans" to use the native term, where everyone eats and drinks, has a good time, jokes and makes love, shows the friendly side of the Laotian character and the extreme sociability of the people. Those whose personal resources are too limited to cover the expenses of a "Ngan" either join with others in similar straits or go skirmishing through the city or village in search of the money, food, brandy and wax needed to accomplish their plan. [476]

149: Reinach--166 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Since there is not, so to speak, any class of salaried workers in Laos except in certain types of work and in transport by pirogues and rafts, the inhabitants of any given center lend one another their help in farming, harvesting, building houses or pirogues, etc. Taking turns, the one who has asked help of his neighbors will put on a celebration for them when the work is over, and will himself receive an invitation from someone else in return for help which he has given.

Laotian celebrations, in which the bonzes are never forgotten, are usually given under the verandas of the pagodas or in their dependencies, unless they take place in the host's own home or under sheds specially constructed for the purpose on one side. The latter is always the case in a "Ngan" given for those who have helped in building a house, and the same is true for a birth or marriage.

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Celebrations generally begin towards four or five in the afternoon when the heat is beginning to wane. They last all night and sometimes resume on the following day after the guests have relaxed for a few hours. Some "Ngans" go on in this way for nearly a week and are interrupted only by the coming of the Laotian sabbath, a day of absolute rest when only the preparation of food is permitted, and no work or pleasure. By the light of kerosene lamps borrowed here and there, or of resinous torches, the girls, who are decked out in all their finery, are stationed in a line squatting down against a wall or partition. Before them there are [221] vases made of copper, silver or porcelain. They all pretend to be busy with minor tasks and may imitate, for example, the preparation of food. But in reality this is only their way of keeping some kind of countenance.

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The adults and children of both sexes are massed at each end of the row of girls. Then the young men, their heads covered with scarves, come and squat down opposite the girls and with their heads still covered begin an animated conversation which soon turns into regular flirting. If there is enough space the orchestra takes up its position nearby and in the center, between the young people, are the singers, improvisers and "Kene" players. Cakes, fruit, quids of betel, cigarettes, rice brandy and various condiments are passed around.

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Spectators who have not been specially invited come and stand behind the young people, as do passersby who drop in for a quid, a cigarette, a cup of brandy or a bowl of rice, or to listen to the songs and music for a little while.

527 From time to time a girl will get up and leave the celebration.
836 She is soon followed by a young man, and both disappear into the
584 shadows, escorted for form's sake by a little boy or girl. This is the beginning of a liaison and will doubtless end in marriage, unless the young gallant is in too much of a hurry, clumsy or flighty and finds himself faced with paying one of the special fines if he compromises the girl and refuses to make up for it.

782 Offerings to the pagodas. There are other "Ngans" which have a
527 half profane and half religious purpose. That is to say, they are
531 established either to thank heaven for a lucky event or to solicit its clemency. They may occur, for example, either to celebrate a return to health after a long illness, or the success of a trading season or hunting or fishing expedition, or to call down blessings from on high on a trip which is being made or planned, etc. These types of "Ngans" then involve offerings to the pagodas and to the bonzes, offerings which bear the name of "Tone-Pheung" (literally, wax cut in pieces). They are so named because of the wax imitation flowers which decorate [222] a kind of pyramid or small pagoda supporting them, called "Pha-Sate" (in French, Faithful to God).

These little edifices are built and decorated by the friends or guests with a rapidity, a taste and an elegance which would be astounding if we did not know the degree to which artistic feeling is innate in the Laotian, and if we were not aware of the prodigious skill with which he is endowed.

Built on a bamboo framework covered with pieces of banana wood, carved with festoons and ornamental moldings, and arranged in tiers of roofs, in minarets and in columns, these "Pha-Sate," which are always between one and two meters in height, seem to be made of ivory and affect an extraordinary variety of forms each of which is more graceful than the last and which seem to be inspired by the architecture of the pagodas of India, Cambodia and Burma.

It will not be in vain to note that the only purpose of these ephemeral edicules, which will keep their new look for only a short while, is merely to present the wax offering in a less banal and more artistic manner than if it had been given in the form of thick, heavy, massive blocks.

The "Pha-Sate" are mounted on stretchers which are carried by men. Besides their wax flowers, they are decorated with natural

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flowers, pompoms and multicolored cotton streamers. Thick wax candles are stuck to the uprights, into which coins, gold nuggets, gold leaf and precious stones are sunk.

The wax is destined for worship purposes and the other offerings will be used for the upkeep of pagodas or for ornamenting sacred statues. The bonzes are not forgotten, for on the platform of the "Pha-Sate," either between the uprights or in special baskets ad hoc, there are articles of clothing, bedclothes, kettles, talaps, betel accessories, etc.

The day preceding the delivery of the "Tone-Pheung" to the pagoda is spent in making all kinds of preparations--cooking food, making betel quids, cigarettes, cakes and other necessary items [223] for the morrow's celebration. In the evening there is a kind of rehearsal for the "Ngan" in which the singers and musicians practice until an extremely late hour while the mothers and married women continue to work in the presence of the young men and girls talking merrily.

On the morning of the day when the "Tone-Pheung" is to be presented to the pagoda the bonzes are invited to a copious feast which continues long after their departure among relatives, friends and neighbors. The bonzes come back in the afternoon to bless the "Tone-Pheung" and to say certain prayers. Then, towards five in the afternoon, the procession forms and five or six bearers, depending on the weight, take the stretcher supporting the offering and raise it to their shoulders. The men follow first after the procession, and then the women, and the latter carry lighted wax candles in their hands. Musicians bring up the rear, and the whole crowd moves toward the pagoda by the longest route. There the "Pha-Sate" or the "Tone-Pheung" is taken around the enclosure three times and finally put down at the entrance to the pagoda. Those present place their candles in a special holder at the foot of the great statue of Buddha, and then withdraw while the bonzes recite prayers in the presence of whoever is making the offering and his relatives.

The guests then return to the home of their host, where the celebration goes on all night and sometimes even lasts into the following day.

The bonzes remove the wax from the "Pha-Sate" and use it to make candles for worship purposes. The flowers are placed at the feet of Buddha, and the coins and precious stones are put aside.

527 Those desirous of obtaining special graces give similar celebrations
182 which last several days and several nights, and the offerings are more beautiful and more varied. It is generally on occasions of this sort that assumptions of the habit by bonzes and their pupils are particularly likely to occur.

Being present at these ceremonies confers certain indulgences, and that is why they are so punctually followed and why all those who take part try [224] to help in celebrating them by offerings of all sorts.

[196] On the spot where the celebration is to be held, a sort of pulpit is constructed beforehand where the bonzes stand as they come up by turns to read passages chosen for the occasion from the sacred books. They never allow themselves to be disturbed by the surrounding noise, but stand as if transfixed in the middle of the songs and shouts.

It is readily understandable that this should be an agreeable way to procure one's salvation, but since it is very costly it is not within everyone's means. Fortunately, there are ways of compromising with
[565] heaven which enable even the poorest to associate themselves in these great celebrations, in accordance with their resources, by means of even very modest offerings and to benefit therefrom both spiritually and materially.

There is no doubt but that a belief in the efficacy of plenary and partial indulgences enters into their consideration, but it is equally reasonable to suppose that the attraction of the profane pleasures which one enjoys in the course of these gatherings is not the least of the motivating causes which lead the Laotian people to frequent them so zealously.

[71] Pirogue races. We have seen that pirogue races and regattas took place during some of the legal holidays, and a few words of
526 explanation on this matter are given below.
501 This custom must have been introduced by the Malays and then handed down from the Kmers to the Laotians, following an ascending direction from south to north.

The pirogues used in the "Souang-Hua" (1) regattas are specially

(1) Literally, pirogues which run.

built and exclusively reserved for this use. Sometimes as much as twenty-five meters in length, they are hewn out of specially chosen wood and have most elegant delicate and elongated lines. Their extremities are armed with what appear to be slender gilded horns. The exterior is lacquered black with gold ornamentation and the

586 the Laotians." (Le Laos français.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

764 Deaths, Funerals. Everything takes place among the Thais
769 as among the Laotians. The poor are buried, while well-to-do people are cremated in great pomp. Celebrations take place at which animals are sacrificed, there is a great deal to eat and quantities of rice brandy and rice beer are consumed. But here there is ancestor worship, and so the altar of the "Phis" of the house and the body itself receive offerings as long as the funeral feasts last.

After cremation, which, as in India, is practiced on a raised pyre at the bottom of a pit dug in the ground, the ashes and burnt bones are sealed in a jar with a few silver coins placed there to pay for the dead person's food during his wanderings through "space."

The jar is buried on the site of the pyre. Then [237] [Illustration] [238] [Blank page] [239] the mattresses, bolster and pillow of the deceased are placed on top, as well as food and a drinking vase full of water. All of his clothes are fastened to poles planted fan-wise on one side of the tomb. Sometimes a fence closes off the site of the tomb.

In some regions the jar containing the remains and ashes of the deceased is buried in a hidden place in the mountains, known only to the dead person's closest relatives.

This procedure, which is not a ritual one, is doubtless intended to place the mortal remains beyond the reach of any profaners of sepulchres who might be attracted by the temptation of the few coins mixed with the ashes.

Finally, a little house is often built over the tomb which is supposed to represent the dwelling place of the deceased.

Games, Celebrations, Festivals. Like their Laotian brothers, the
•527 Thais are great lovers of celebrations. The chief holiday, one which is celebrated in May or June every year and during which all work ceases for four days, is that of the dead or Boun-Phi-Tai.

Animal sacrifices are made to the different genii, and are
782 accompanied by prayers in honor of the dead. The favor of each
769 genie or "Phi" spirit is gained by sacrificing a particular animal, as a dog for the "Phi" of tigers, chickens and pigs for the "Phis" of the mountains, a goat for those which watch over the roads leading to watercourses, and buffalo and oxen, finally, for the "Phis" of the

village and those of ancestors. Prayers for the dead are said, and 782
when they are over the head and feet of a goat, crude clay statuettes 769
representing two men, two buffalo and two oxen, and numeroux wax
candles are placed on a raft made of banana trees. The raft is
launched full into the current of a river while men collect on the
banks and fire salvos of shots and shout off fireworks.

The musical instruments of the Thais are the "Kene" and [240] 534
a kind of clarinet with two tubes, reinforced by gongs and tom-toms.

Their songs are not at all noisy and are much more like mono- 538
tonous chants.

The Thais have a very characteristic game, and this is the game 524
of the "inexhaustible jar." A jar of rice beer is placed on the floor
of a house and five bamboo tubes stuck in it to serve as straws. Five 273
men take positions around the jar, and each of them puts a tube in
his mouth. Into each of the jars, and above a kind of porous stopper
made of pressed paddy husks, water is poured by means of an ox
horn with a hole in the end. At a given signal both men and women
begin to suck conscientiously while the contents of the ox horn are
poured into each jar three times in succession. The ones who empty
their jar first win, and the losers have to drink the contents of ten
horns of water poured over what is left of the beer in their jar.

The Thai beer does not have a bad taste, and its alcoholic
strength is equivalent to that of hard cider, which it closely resembles
in flavor. Although the additions of water decrease the beverage's
percentage of alcohol it nevertheless produces a slight intoxication,
due primarily to the speed with which it is sucked through the straw.
But the inebriety never degenerates into a quarrel, and provokes
nothing but laughter, songs and unadulterated merriment.

Who would believe that the Thais have the custom of throwing 527
"confetti"? Nothing is more true, however, for in the celebrations
at the end of harvest, which take place in December or January,
the merrymakers throw cotton seeds mixed with paddy, with husks,
and sometimes also with ashes.

Tribal Tai

291 cover their bust with a small short jacket which is very close-fitting and bright in color. It has a heart-shaped opening on the chest and, like the men's jacket, is ornamented with galloons and passementerie. For celebrations and ceremonies Lu women wear a heavy turban on their head which is folded flat or pleated, shaped like a mitre and generally made of black silk spangled with gold.

301 Both men and women pierce the lobes of their ears [246] with a broad opening, into which they introduce hollow gold or silver cylinders which are sometimes as large as three centimeters in diameter.

306 Great lovers of jewelry, the Lus number skilled jewelers and goldsmiths among them who make hair coil plaques, ear cylinders, flat braided metal belts with wide chased and checkered buckles, bracelets, rings, hilts and sheaths for daggers and swords, etc. [Illustration alongside text here]

411 The Lus almost always wear daggers and swords. Each of them, so to speak, possesses a rifle, generally flintlock, which by the shape of
293 the stock, the length of the barrel and the many bands which adorn it greatly resembles the long Moukhala so dear to our Arabs in Algeria.

[361] Lu villages are clean, and the houses are arranged in a checkerboard pattern.

[33] The Lus have a high reputation as breeders of oxen and horses.

527 A great lover of celebrations and parades, this boisterous people sets off gunpowder at every opportunity, and there is no festival, private or public, so small that it is not accompanied by salvos and fireworks.

[77] From their contact with the Burmese the men have retained a [247] [Illustration] [248] [Blank page] [249] taste for dancing and for
535 sword fights mingled with dance steps in which they manifest a real grace and elegance.

"Among other forms of amusement, the men execute, with a truly remarkable suppleness and skill, sword dances which are perfectly elegant. Naked to the waist, with their trousers rolled up and bunched and a wooden sword in each hand whose cutting edge has been dipped in dye so that the thrusts will leave a mark, the two champions confront one another. Moulinets, parries and returns follow one another without apparent effort, and the movements are undulating and rapid but without any abruptness. The men seem to be caressing one another, not fighting, and yet the slashes leave their colored traces on the skin of the vanquished. Direct thrusts are forbidden, but the entire body from head to foot is fair game for the opponent. Thus during the

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Years	Number of animals exported	Average purchase price in Laos	Sale price at outlet markets
		francs	francs
1898	103 Horses	50	112.50
1899	185 Horses	From 30 to 125	From 88.50 to 225
	14 Mares	From 30 to 75	From 40 to 95

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Finally, we recommend the introduction of donkeys into Laos, with a view toward producing mules by coupling the donkeys with Laotian mares. The mules of Yunnan, which are highly reputed, reach heights as great as 1.32 meters. Extremely sturdy, they can readily carry a net weight of ninety kilograms of merchandise, not counting the saddle and pack-saddle. It is obvious that much use might be made of these animals in Laos for all kinds of transport.

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Buffalo. Buffalo breeding is much in honor throughout all of Laos. It supplies the needs of agriculture and of food consumption, which [403] absorbs a large number of these animals, particularly young ones. Many of them, in fact, are sacrificed on the occasion of celebrations and various ceremonies, while others are used daily for food in some of the larger centers.

It may truly be said that buffalo are raised everywhere, and since this animal is extremely hardy it can always find enough to eat, even in the forests.

The administration is encouraging the raising of buffalo in a most effective way, and since our arrival in Laos the work has grown by such proportions that exports of buffalo to nearby regions has assumed genuine importance. (4,721 head in 1898 and 3,144 in 1899.) When we entered into possession of Laos, however, the land had been largely depopulated of its animals. They had been removed by the Siamese, and it is nothing short of miraculous that the herds have been restored in so short a time despite the considerable losses caused by periodic outbreaks of epizootic disease, often extremely violent.

These favorable results have been achieved thanks to the wise foresight of the higher authorities, who prohibited all exports and imports as long as the bovine plague lasted.

272 The distillation methods used are good ones, but the equipment used leaves much to be desired and does not make it possible to obtain rectified alcohol of a high degree. By taking 25 or 28 proof native alcohol and distilling it for a second time with European equipment, a fairly good-tasting alcohol can be obtained which is 68 to 72 proof.

389 Powder-making. The inhabitants of Laos make the powder themselves which they use for hunting and for fireworks. They know how to proportion and triturate the ingredients--charcoal, saltpeter (1)

[317] (1) The saltpeter which is collected in grottoes containing calcareous rocks is chiefly made up of masses of droppings from birds and bats. The bat is called "Kiea" and saltpeter "Khi-Kiea," or, literally, Droppings of bats.

and sulphur--in order to make either explosive powder or fusing powder.

792 The bonzes are the fireworks-makers par excellence who make the many and varied fireworks without which no celebration is really 527 complete. Bombs, firecrackers, Roman candles, serpents, pinwheels, 389 etc. and, in a word, almost all the usual fireworks are made using rudimentary processes and local products.

389 The rockets (Bang-Fai) deserve special mention. They consist of a body containing fusing powder, to which is attached a wick several meters long and made of spun cotton or sometimes even of paper. The latter is smeared with mealed gunpowder mixed with gum, and the whole is fastened to a directing shaft. If the rocket is an Aeolian one, its rear is provided with a kind of Pan's pipe made of bamboo tubes which gives forth a harmonious sound as it describes its trajectory in the air.

The rockets vary greatly in size. In some the powder weighs only a few decagrams, and [468] the guide shaft is from two to three meters long. Other larger ones carry a "Mune" of powder (about 12 kilograms) and sometimes more, and the guide shaft is a whole stalk of bamboo some 15 meters long and from 12 to 15 centimeters in base diameter.

Rockets are generally decorated with gilded or colored paper. With the application of rice paste motifs, some of them manage to look very like a dragon with threatening jaws and terrifying eyes, and in these the body envelops the shaft and the head contains the Aeolian harp as well as the powder cylinder. The stands used for launching

389 the rockets are naturally in proportion to the size of the latter. For large rockets, they are made up of a kind of broad, triangular ladder, the top of which is leaned against a tree top.

524 Hot air balloons. In northern Laos, balloons are constructed
527 out of paper which is either made locally or imported from China. They are cylindro-spherical in shape and a little gondola of rattan cane is suspended from them by a cotton thread. In the gondola there is an oil cup filled with lard and provided with two or three cotton wicks, and these are lit in order to keep the air in the balloons hot for a given length of time.

Since they are generally launched in the evening at the time of the great holiday of the twelfth month (October-November), the absence of wind makes it possible to follow their aerial course as long as the cotton wicks continue to give off light.

[469] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER X

1. PRESENT ROUTES OF COMMUNICATION BY LAND

487 We have already dealt in Chapter II with the routes of communication by river, and so shall deal here only with land routes (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVII.

In Laos they are of three kinds:

1. The cart roads negotiable by ox-carts and wagons;
2. The mule tracks over which elephants, horses, mules and oxen can pass.
3. The paths or even mere trails which can be used only by travelers on foot.

[481] [470] As a consequence of the ingrained habit which both animals and people have of always walking in single file, the roads of Laos, like those of many other lands, are reduced to the width of a path which is marked on the ground either by the trampling animals and men, or by two deep ruts into which the wheels of carts sink. In the forest, depending on how wide and how high a path has been cleared through the undergrowth, a road may be practicable for elephants, men on horseback, oxen or only for travelers on foot.

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Then the royal retinue proceeds to the That Luang where the king must spend the night in a sala. He is accompanied by his ministers and in principle may not leave until they come and fetch him.

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On the morning of the fifteenth day, the king, carried by his guards, goes to make his offerings to the bonzes, and the whole day is devoted to public rejoicing, of which one form deserves to be mentioned. It is the game of the Thi khi.

Its origin, so far as we know at present, remains obscure. The Pra Lak Pra Lam tells us that Indra and Rama played Thi Khi together, and that since that day it has been played at Vientiane.

Let us observe that the game was unknown at Luang Prabang. It was imported from the south. Tradition required that it be played on horseback, when it was played like polo.

At the present time it is played on foot with a stick with the end bent over like a crosier and a ball the size [47] of a child's head and is similar to hockey. There are two opposing sides, the office-holders and the people. The latter should in principle win two victories out of three games. The game has no rules, there is no umpire and no limit to the ground played on. Sometimes the ball goes off into the shrubbery, and all the players go and look for it. Only a hypothetical line indicates the limit of the enemy side. [641]

The feasts of Vat Inpeng and of Vat Ong Tu merely repeat those of Vat Simuong and That Luang.

[48] THE SECULAR CEREMONIES

The Sou Khouan can be considered as the transition between the purely religious ceremonies and the secular feasts. [527] [725]

Actually Sou Khouan means "call and reception of the soul." The Laotian has a profound belief in the transmigration of the soul. According to him, the human body is inhabited by thirty-two khouan (spirits) each of whom presides over the function of a member, an organ or an intellectual faculty.

When a human being dies, all of the thirty-two souls leave his body. According to the merits which have been acquired, they go either to the heaven of the gods, or to the province of the dead. Certain beings who have died in an abnormal manner, by suicide, drowning, etc., become wandering souls. They are to be feared, because they return to earth in order to torment the living, and one must make numerous sacrifices to them.

846 Next to her the child lies in a kadong (Indochinese van). Between the mattress and the kadong lies a dagger if it is a boy, a needle with some sewing thread if it is a girl, so that later the child may become a strong and brave man or a woman skilled in domestic arts.

[844] The accoucheur, who is also a sorcerer, hangs on the roof a fishnet which reaches the ground and must completely cover the bed of the woman and the kadong of the newborn child. An incantation is recited intended to protect the mother and child from the Phi Phai, the souls of women who have died in childbirth or while pregnant, and which take the form of a night bird. The sorcerer stretches a white cotton thread around the bed and the hearth which will act as a barrier to the Phi Phai, and which also has the property of preventing the mother and child from having attacks of nausea [les bourbouilles].

846 In addition to the very frequent affusions and sitz baths, the woman takes every day two or three aromatic vapor baths. Her meals taken
262 inside the fishnet consist of rice, grilled chicken or pork seasoned with grilled salt and mixed with houa kha (a kind of gingerbread). She may drink only [55] hot decoctions of the root of a wild vine which has diuretic properties.

846 During the You Kam people take turns day and night helping the family watch over the mother and child. In order to keep awake they read aloud, make music, sing or play. This is the custom of
[527] the vigil, the ngan which takes place whenever there is a feast or any other event.

The You Kam finishes at the end of eight days in Lower Laos, but lasts more than twenty days in the north.

Churching of Women. A day of ceremony is chosen for the woman who is leaving her childbed (ok Kam). This ok kam always takes place in the morning. The woman takes her bath in the river, while all the accessories which have served for the kam are removed. When she returns to the house, she attends the ceremony of the Sou Khouan. After this she takes up her normal life again, although she is obliged to abstain from certain foods which are liable to bring on post partum hemorrhages. When the mother and child are in good health, these alimentary precautions are relaxed fairly soon, and by the end of the second month many of these rules
[853] are broken. Laotian mothers are in the habit of giving their children, as soon as the ok kam is performed, chewed rice, seasoned with salt, wrapped in a banana leaf and warmed on hot ashes. The newborn usually stand this diet fairly well.

301 The use of these magic shirts is also known in Cambodia. The designs
262 usually consist of flowers, geometric figures, tools, flowers, vegetable
751 branches, and of animals. Sometimes pictures drawn from Buddhist iconography can be recognized.

[174] Apparently the origin of tattooing is to be found in totemism. By
analyzing the Laotian tattooing designs, [63] it has been possible to
301 recognize traces of sun worship, as well as the mythological role of the dog. But at the present time Laotians seem only to value tattooing as an artistic ornament.

The Divining Rod.

787 Among the curios which the tourist looks for in Laos, the most
easily found is a carved bamboo cane. Immediately below the head,
823 which is often of chased silver, there is a sort of checkered diagram
825 made up of twenty-five little squares. Below this divining diagram are found, in succession from top to bottom, a zebu, a horse, a rakshasha or ogre, a tiger, a buffalo, a deer, an elephant. These animals correspond respectively to the days of the week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

It should be noted that, except for the buffalo and the deer, the others are the symbolical animals of the zodiac and correspond to the different cardinal points.

The Laotians consult these figures at different actions of their lives: choice of a wedding day, the hour for burial, etc. The diagram is used to calculate the hour, and the animals indicate the cardinal point which should be followed.

This cane is also found among the Man.

[64] THE NEW YEAR AND THE FEASTS OF THE FIFTH MONTH

527 The Laotian New Year always takes place between the 6th day
805 of the crescent moon of the 5th month and the 5th day of the crescent moon of the 6th month. The very core of the feast includes three days: the last day of the past year, the intermediate day and the New Year's day, properly so-called. The most picturesque ceremonies are those of Luang Prabang, for there tradition has been best preserved.

The programme of the feasts begins with a procession of royal
527 elephants. Their heads ornamented with red and black painted designs, their drivers dressed in red tunics with yellow lapels, on their backs, the fifteen elephants go to the pagodas of Xieng Tong, Vat

May, and Vat Visun to render homage to the protecting genii of the village and chase away the evil spirits. 527

During three days the Laotians do no cooking. Fish, turtles, bird etc., are bought in the big market and then set free as a sign of penitence and redemption of sins committed either voluntarily or not against living beings during the past year. 782

Possibly there is here a survival of the origin of the cycle of animals. According to Finot, at a very remote period, the custom of curing sick children by letting an animal go free had arisen. When a child was saved in this manner, he was said to have been born from this animal because he owed it life. He was forbidden to kill it, and the year of the child's birth was given the same [65] name as the animal. It is thus that the cycle of twelve years was established. 825 771

In the dry beds of the Mekong and of the Nam Khan, small that made of sand are built. Each one wishes the other a long life, whose number of years will equal the number of grains of sand forming the that, and great prosperity, for ill-luck has fled with the last day of the past year, and the New Year should bring as many riches as there are grains of sand in the that. Often around the principal that, other much smaller ones are erected, their number corresponding to the age of the builder. They express the wish of the one who has built them that he will see many more years added to those he has already lived. Actually these little that around the central mound are a reproduction of Mount Merou surrounded by different worlds (Cf. the symbolism of the That Luang). 521 805

In the pagodas the statues of Buddha are taken down from the altars and placed in little wooden prasat. They are sprinkled with perfumed water which flows in the hang-lin (a kind of gutter of gilded wood whose extremities represent the head of an aquatic monster), for the year now ending must be completely exhausted, and a minute cleansing, both material and spiritual, must leave a strictly clear way for the New Year. In the streets the young girls sprinkle not only the [562] bonzes whom they honor, but all the young men, to compensate for all the minor vexations they have endured from the men during the past year. The high dignitaries are not exempt from these showers of more or less clean water. Sometimes their faces are rubbed with lampblack or mud, when they have the ill luck of meeting a group of young girls. Do we have a survival of the theme of the svayamvara here (free choice of the man by the young girl)?

[66] The day in between, the day before New Year's day, is one of complete rest. All the events which occur during this day will determine

527 805 the course of the year for good or for bad. On the day of the New Year, a bassi is offered to His Majesty the King by the ministers and high dignitaries. Then a delegation of bonzes is admitted to the palace where, after receiving the ritual offerings, they are sprinkled in a cabin by His Majesty the King and members of the royal family.

Outside in the town the aspersions continue more than ever during [643] the whole week. During these feasts the King goes in a dugout to the grottoes of Xieng Men, opposite Luang Prabang, and to those of Pak Ou where he sprinkles the statues there. Then he comes to make the ritual aspersion of the Phra Bang, palladium of the kingdom, at the pagoda of Vat May.

527 7B During these feasts of the New Year, the dance of the Phou Gneu Gna Gneu takes place. These are legendary individuals considered the ancestors of the Laotians, whose story is as follows:

When Phou Lan Xong had pierced the gourd, the king of heaven sent his son Khoum Bolom to organize the country. While he was performing the mission entrusted to him by his father, a vine was seen to rise from the earth. It grew rapidly and soon covered the whole world with its shadow. Men ceased to see the sky and were deprived of light and heat. The king ordered this monstrous vine to be cut down, but nobody dared to risk doing this. Finally an aged couple [deux vieux époux] Phou Thao Gneu and Me Ngam, armed with a hatchet and preceding the son of heaven, come down to earth, announced that they were willing to undertake this perilous task. But they stipulated that after their death they would receive offerings and would be invoked at the beginning of meals and other business. Everybody [67] agreed to this. Then they attacked the vine with blows of the hatchet. At the end of three months and three days, the vine fell and crushed them in its fall, but the sun shone again on the world.

The agreement has been kept. Since that day the dance of the Phou Gneu Gna Gneu is one of the principal elements of the Laotian feast of the New Year.

527 825 The two dancers wear enormous cardboard masks. They listen on their knees to prayers read aloud to them, while alongside of them a lion waves its paws nonchalantly. This lion has rather a peculiar role. Apparently it is another survival of the legend of the cycle of animals. Not having any toys to give their children, the first ancestors had the idea of modeling one year a rat, another year an ox, then a tiger, a hare, a dragon, etc. The name of each animal designated the year during which it was used as a toy. Finally these little figures became alive and became the ancestors of the present day species. At

the present time only the lion is kept, for apparently its role is no longer very well known. 527 825

[68] THE HARVEST FESTIVAL

This takes place after the harvest, during the first and second months, and is held in the open countryside. Its purpose is to glorify "the soul of rice." 527 243

It is not until the threshing has been completed and the rice piled up in heaps that the master of the harvest consults his neighbors and chooses with them the day of celebration. Light shelters must then be built on his field around the threshing area to accommodate the guests. On the top of the pile of paddy a sort of pulpit is erected from which the bonzes will recite their prayers.

On the morning of the feast day, the master of the house slaughte an ox from which is made the traditional lap, a dish consisting of raw meat and chopped up peppers mixed with various chopped up green vegetables the whole held together with a soup of pa dek. In the evening a court of love is held and the mo lam (professional singers) are also invited. At the end of this first night, the bonzes climb into the pulpit before daybreak to read the legend of Nang Kho Sop. [262] 527 773

"In the olden days a grain of rice was as big as a gourd. It was cut down with an axe. Then Nang Kho Sop (the soul of rice) became angry at this barbarous treatment and flew away. Since then this feast has been celebrated so that the soul will return."

The reading closes as day breaks, and offerings are made to the bonzes. At the close of the prayer, each one of the faithful, before rising, sprinkles a few drops of water on the ground so that Nang Thorani may bear witness to their alms and so that the goddess may not forget to count it among the merits he has acquired for his future lives.

[69] The owner takes a basket filled with boiled chicken, alcohol, sweet potatoes, and all kinds of tuberous roots. He goes by himself into his rice field and walks over it in every direction, at the same time calling the soul of rice to thank it for having made his fields bear fruit and to beg it to continue being equally generous to him in future years. He offers it all the food in the basket saying: Soul of Rice, here are tuberous roots for thee, here are buds of cabbage palm, and good alcohol made from thy grain. Soul of Rice, descend on us and preside over the feast I am giving in thy honor! 243 527

527 He then places his basket at the base of the pile of paddy and
243 the me-tao come and welcome the rice whose soul the owner of the rice is supposed to have brought back.

The master of the house then brings a straw mannequin personifying rice. Immediately the old women make a bassi before it, and tie white cotton threads to its gilded wrists. They then congratulate the rice on its return and beg it never to leave the granary again.

787 An old man, known for his powers of divination, takes the boiled
527 chicken from the basket, examines minutely its beak and claws, and from signs he discovers in them, reads the fate of the coming harvest.
243 When the prophecy is completed, he slides the entrails of the animal into the stomach of the little straw man as well as all the food from the basket.

527 The Rice figure thus adorned and restored is raised to the top of
243 the pile of paddy whence it will preside over the remainder of the feast.

Before the end of the festival, the wagons are brought out. When they are loaded with the Rice figure enthroned on the first wagon, the paddy is brought into the granaries. When the final load is under shelter, the owner places on its summit the mannequin which, still personifying the soul of Rice [70] will watch over the granary, keep away fire and lightning, and "see that the pile will never diminish or become level with the floor, however many baskets are filled from it."

The master of the harvest is careful to remove a sufficient supply of paddy to last a few weeks, then closes the granary and decorates the door with branches of khoun (to bring luck) and of som seune (gaiety). These will keep luck and gaiety in the house. Hereafter, under no pretext whatever, may the door of the granary be opened before the "third day of the third month," because then "the frog has no mouth and the dragon no anus," and consequently no voracious animal will dare come and devour the harvest.

The Feast of the Khao Chi

527 According to S. Karpelès this ceremony takes place once a year
792 in every quarter of Luang Prabang. It consists of going to the neighborhood of the capital with the bonzes of the pagoda of the designated quarter. A large procession leaves the town, headed for a plateau at the entrance to the forest. While the women are busy with the cooking, the men settle the venerable old men on rugs. The young men and novices cut down branches, clean off the bark leaving a plume of

leafage, and arrange them in bundles. In the evening everyone returns in a procession to the town, and the wood which has been gathered is put out to dry in the courtyard of the pagoda. A month later, the wood is ready to burn, and another feast takes place at the pagoda. The day before all the women assemble to prepare the offerings of food for the bonzes. They take the wood cut the previous month to cook the ball of rice as big as one's fist on which oil and the contents of an egg are poured so as to form a light surrounding crust. The old people take advantage of this wood- [71] cutting and of its burning to hear additional sermons. The Hit Sip Song Khong Sip Si tell a legend of the origin of this feast, which takes place in memory of an old woman who met a bonze while going to gather wood in the forest. She offered him a ball of rice on which lay an egg. After having done this charitable deed, she was bitten by a snake and died. Since that day the Khao Chi is celebrated.

527 792

[773]

[72] ANNUAL RITES OF THE FISHING OF THE PA BEUK

Every five years the fishing of the pa beuk takes place in five different places. This fish, belonging to the Siluridae family, has a long smooth silvery-white body, without any scales and may attain a weight of 200 kilograms. The five places are Ang (about 25 kilometers upstream from Vientiane) from the 13th to the 15th day of the crescent moon of the 3rd Laotian month, between January and February; at Luang Prabang (in the middle of the river opposite the town) from the 6th to the 7th Laotian months between May and June; at Nong Khieu (about 22 kilometers upstream from Paklay) on the 15th day of the crescent moon of the 3rd Laotian month (February); at Nong Theo (about 30 kilometers upstream from Paklay) between the 4th and 5th Laotian months, without any fixed date; at Ban Seo (about 27 kilometers upstream from Houei Sai) from the 6th to the 7th Laotian month, between May and June.

527 226

In the section of the river at Vientiane, as early as the 9th day of the crescent moon, the Chao Muong of the province or his representative leaves the capital to organize the festival. He goes by small stages in a dugout as far as Ang, a sort of wide cove or creek favorable to pa beuk fishing. First the Chao Muong and his retinue stop at Ban Si Khay, "village of the lower orders" ["village de la crasse" may have the above meaning or it may mean "village of filth"--Translator] where lives the village genie who has a wide reputation, and who is continually worshipped by the sorcerers living to the north of the

226 village. At the foot of the tree which is supposed to contain the
[782] dwelling of the genie, there is an altar about two meters high. Here,
the Chao Muong, surrounded by all the fishermen, places five roasted
chickens, two bottles of [73] rice alcohol, six coconuts, some betel
527 leaves, some areca nuts, some cakes, some small sticks of incense,
some beeswax candles. These he offers to the genie, asking him to
intervene in his favor so that the fishing this year be fruitful.

787 The genie is addressed by the intermediary of one of the village
sorceresses. As soon as she is "possessed" by the genie, she goes into
527 a trance. She is then unconscious of what is happening around her
and the genie answers through her mouth to the questions asked of her
226 by the fishermen. Invariably the genie's answer is the same: the
catch will be fruitful if traditions peculiar to the fishing of the pa beuk
are followed. The possessed woman, surrounded by a circle of fisher-
men, is at first standing up and is holding a cup in which are flowers,
small sticks of incense, and ten beeswax candles. Her hands begin to
[292] tremble when the genie enters into her; she then sets the cup down at
her feet, and, on top of her own clothes, puts on those of the fishermen
who present her with them on a tray for the sacrifice: an ordinary
sin, a cotton shirt dyed red, a belt and a turban also of cotton dyed
red to which are added a metallic piaster, and two yards [brasse]
of white cotton cloth for her personal use. After turning all around,
she squats down, her bust moving in a gyrating motion, and from
this moment she speaks in the name of the genie.

On the 10th day of the crescent moon the Chao Muong and the
preachers arrive at Kao Lieu, "the nine windings" of the Mekong,
where there is a very famous genie who is much more powerful than
that of Ban Si Khay. Forming a large procession, they fetch the
village sorceress with parasols, lances, swords and gongs. Piled high
on an offering tray are nine bars of silver, two kilograms of beeswax,
ten candles, four coconuts, some betel leaves, some areca nuts,
[74] a metal piaster, two yards [brasse] of white cloth, a raw hen's
egg, a bottle of rice alcohol. The procession returns with the sorcer-
ess to the front of the altars which are regular houses, and everyone
settles down in them. The entrance is to the west, that is, opposite
[782] the town. The offerings for the genie are four times greater than at
Ban Si Khay as each altar receives nine roast chickens, nine bars of
silver, four coconuts, some areca, some betel, candles, small
sticks of incense. In addition, every three years, a buffalo is sacri-
ficed, and in the years between, a pig. There are the same questions
and the same answers as at Ban Si Khay.

173: Deydier--48 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

527 782 226

In the night of the 11th to 12th day of the crescent moon, the stop is at Hat Hin Siou where some offerings are made to the local genie: two coconuts, two chickens, etc., with the request that he be favorable to the fishing. There are two more stops before arriving at Ang which must be reached on the 12th day of the crescent moon, at eight o'clock in the morning. In the evening all the fishermen go to the village to question the sorceress. There is no procession, but the same gifts as at Ban Si Khay; same questions, same answers. On the 13th day, at seven in the morning, they go to the altar of the genie with offerings to invite him to come and live in the temporary shelter which has been erected on the sandbank at Ang, north of the village, and to beg him to favor the fishing. The whole procession then goes toward the temporary altar and deposits its offerings.

On the 13th day of the crescent moon, the fishing starts at the precise moment when the moon disappears behind the mountain, that is at about four o'clock in the morning.

The gong is struck and immediately the 384 fishing dugouts go into the harbor. Each dugout is decorated with leafy branches, with seven untwisted cotton threads and with a bottle of rice alcohol, and is occupied by two fishermen. They throw a net measuring three meters in width and six meters in length which sinks down to a depth of [75] 35 brasses [70 meters] by means of lead sinkers. The first fish caught is offered to the genie. It is laid gently on its side, its head turned towards the rising sun, its tail lifted towards the setting sun. Some flowers are laid on its cheek and sprinkled with alcohol, while the master of ceremonies says: "The moment of celebrating the feast of Ang, which is your feast, has arrived. The ritual offerings have been made to you. To bring this feast to a happy close we beg you to give the fishermen pa beuk in great quantities."

The fish is then killed with a pointed bamboo which is sunk between the fish's eyes. It is then divided in two. The prepared liver is offered to the genie after it has been fixed in various ways according to ritual recipes, while candles and small sticks of incense decorate the nine offering trays each of which bears the bowl of food.

00 advised for persons who suffer from any weakness in any of these organs.

132 Although situated in the tropical zone, Laos has regions where a climate like that of Europe prevails during several months of the
529 year and where Europeans who were fatigued by their stay in the low plains or hot valleys might go each year to recover and regain strength and vigor.

We may mention, among other regions, the plateau of the Bolovens, which is recommended by Dr. Harmand, but especially the plateau of Tran-Ninh and the high valleys of the Hua-Pahn.

In Tran-Ninh and the Hua-Pahn, particularly from November to March, that is to say over a period of five months, the thermometer falls as low as nearly 2° and rarely rises above 25°.

[122] The morning, the late afternoon and evening, and the night are delicious on these plateaus, while the middle of the day is quite similar to springtime in the south of France. The air is healthy and dry, walking is pleasant and the views varied.

There are already European groups in Xieng-Khouang and Muong-Son, since these are province capitals. A few supplementary buildings would be enough to turn them into sanatoriums, without aiming at all that the word implies in the way of equipment, but merely at the establishment of rest spots where officials and colonists from other regions could spend a few months or weeks of healthful vacation time.

5. HEALTH SERVICE

744 Health service in Laos is in the hands of three colony physicians who direct infirmaries located at Khong, Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang.

In each of these infirmaries consultation and hospitalization services are provided for Europeans, civil guards, Annamite and Laotian interpreters and scholars, and for native employees.

The costs are partly paid out of receipts from payments made by the colonists and native employees for each day of treatment and, in Luang-Prabang, out of a levy on the Royal Treasury.

The Khong infirmary is equipped with an ice machine which supplies the needs of the medical service and those of the Europeans in the region, in return for a fee. The Vien-Tiane infirmary was to have received one in 1900, and it is to be hoped that Luang-Prabang will soon be similarly equipped.

10: d'Orleans--265-266 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 531, 712

[LSS: at Muong Ngoi] "On the summit of a hillock that overlooks the valley stands a polygonal embankment formed of red [266] earth in which some openings have been made, a wall in the centre surrounds a block of masonry seven or eight yards in diameter which supports a dome of white plaster, with gilt ornaments. Above it, there is a cone made of seven gilded circles, surmounted by a point, the whole edifice may be about fifteen feet high, and I remark some small reliquaries containing rough statuettes, of which the faces are half obliterated. The natives, whom I question, tell me that it is a fort, and in truth, a few cannons in that position, could easily command both sides of the valley, but at present they are missing. However, in my opinion, the monument is of religious origin; it reminds me of similar edifices in Thibet; but I cannot obtain any information either upon the date or the object of its construction."

10: d'Orleans--287-288 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 531, 778

"While our men rest, we are carried to the right bank of the stream, where there is a grotto in the middle of a calcareous cliff; in front of the opening there is a kind of balustrade cut in the stone, and a staircase leads to the celebrated sanctuary of Pakou, already described by Garnier; here only one room is found, and that is not very deep, but it is filled with religious objects similar to those at Nam Ou; and we have the same experiences as upon that day, for we can hardly step in the midst of this field of gods for fear of crushing some of them with every movement. I notice several banners, some floating and others rolled up, most of them represent two divinities standing upon lotus flowers; there is a small gilt chest in the form of a tabernacle; and, higher up, a bell in gilt plaster, a form derived from the lotus bud; on the sides of the room are white dragons with goggle eyes, showing their teeth. They are of Chinese design, a man (all are in plaster) [288] with his hands on his hips, is on horseback upon a pedestal, he also has tusks, round eyes and extraordinarily large ears; and on the ground, in the midst of fragments of innumerable prayers written in Laotian upon palm leaves, lie innumerable statues, some of them wearing chasubles; a few gods are riding upon elephants; while chariots are also represented by small wooden vehicles placed upon four wheels, and ornamented with pieces that overhang them like rostra. A series of small divinities are carved, each in separate medallions, upon painted panels of wood fastened in pairs."

10: d'Orleans--321 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 288, 531, 548

"The scarves which are celebrated in Indo-China, embroidered by hand with a great variety of design, and in very harmonious colours, denote great taste. After the saleswomen have folded their goods and packed them up to take away, some of them lag behind and tell us that they are themselves for sale at twenty-five or thirty rupees."

10: d'Orleans--353 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 411, 531, 644

"Men of the king's household bear swords, the sheath of which is of chased gold, while the handle is of horn studded with precious stones. These swords are over 200 years old, and very fine, but the blade is common. Others carry lances with wooden shafts and silver bands at the top, the iron of the lance being encased in a red sheath. I also notice a javelin, the iron of which is crescent shaped with a notch at the lower end."

"While prince, sergeant, and I looked in vain for the rushing stream to cast up the canteen, the coolies went bathing. They were all of the 'black paunch' tribe, as distinguished from the 'white paunch,' or untattooed ones, though it is not really the paunch that is decorated. The man of this branch of the Laosian or Tai race is never without his pants, even when he is stark naked. Nearly all of them are solidly tattooed in blue--invisible alas to the ordinary camera--from the waist to the knees, a wide tattooed belt with lacy ends about the floating ribs and a lacy effect like ruffles just below the bend of the knees. The design of this hip and thigh covering is always 'lions' within squares with rounded corners, all touching one another, either as a protection against or to give the wearer the bravery of the lion. With the figures are mingled sacred texts, said to be Pali in Laosian or Siamese script. The priests especially are covered with these sacred writings, it is said, but one can never really know what is under the yellow robe. Women seldom if ever wear these tattooed substitutes for the Scotchman's kilt, say [329] those who should know, perhaps because they are in no danger from evil spirits, or cannot be saved anyway. Some of the men also had red tattooing on the upper part of the body, red squares on the chest, all sorts of things on the back, though none of them obscene nor as crude as the tattooing on some of our sailors. One of my men was overrun with red lizards; some were whole picture-books or comic supplements or intricate

23: Franck--328-329 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-2
116, 531, 304

signs of the zodiac. There was one fellow whose whole back was covered with a lesson in arithmetic or geometry, even trigonometry for all I know, as if a small brother or a schoolmaster had used him as a slate. Others had only one leg tattooed, generally the left, or both of them only on the buttocks, or simply the fronts of the thighs, or merely spots here and there, all according to personal caprice , taste, swank, or an attack of cowardliness before the job was finished. Unlike most tribal decorations of the sort this tattooing may be put on at any age, whenever courage is ripe."

25: Brodrick--105-106 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-2
116, 346, 531

"The that, or Laotian stupa, is as imposing in size as the vat, or temple. Sometimes, but rarely, the that is just a dome, like the stupas of Ceylon, then, again, it may be bell-shaped as in Siam and Burma, but the peculiar Laotian form is bulbous and elongated into a sort of spire which, however, shows a peculiar section, ridged at four corners and bulbous between them. This shifting outline lends a pleasingly impermanent air to the pinnacles jutting up above the feathery fronds of the garden-city. So, despite botching in the Siamese taste, and manifest foreign influence, the Luang-Prabang pagodas with those of the Tran-ninh province, have retained much of their archaic character. But although there may be buildings in ancient style there are no very ancient monuments. The oldest still in use cannot date farther back than 1500.

The plan of the viharas, or temples, is similar to that of the Cambodian. The familiar fig-tree spreads its glistening leaves over the sacred enclosure. But the architecture is quite different. Gone are the twisting, twining eaves, the fragile, delicate fretwork of the modern Khmers. Here the temples are rectangular and white-washed-over brick. The roofs are high and deep and drop far down, giving the whole structure a queerly Oceanian or South Seas appearance. Within, the walls are richly frescoed with floral arabesques and geometrical designs on a red background. The doors and shutters are adorned with presentments of giants, garudas, polycephalous serpents and the phantasies of Indian legend. A rich, and often lavish, display of

enamelled lead-work, gilded stucco and panelling inlaid with chips of looking-glass, does not detract from a general appearance of elegance and strangeness, due not a little to the curious Laotian convention of battened openings. Windows and doors all have sides converging from base to top and even the pillars and columns taper. Here must be some lasting tradition of wooden-hut architecture still preserved intact by more primitive peoples of Indo-China and Indonesia.

It seems that in the olden days, when the Laos lands were rich [106] in gold, the temples were sheathed in gold sheets so that the sanctuaries seemed precious reliquaries.

And, within, at the far end, in the half-gloom you will see a great image of the Buddha, often of lacquered and gilded brick, an image quite different from the representations of the Blessed One in any land or at any time for the last two thousand years. The narrow long face, the jutting aquiline nose, reminding you sometimes of the curves you see on masks from the Sepik region of New Guinea, the daemonic expression, the short head (the Laotians themselves are predominantly short-headed), the visage all features and expression and almost no face. You are a long way from any other interpretation of the Hellenistic inspired Buddha image. Here, in the Laos, you have a South Seas Buddha, a Buddha assured indeed but active and not contemplative."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

acknowledge in the street a lady with whom one happens to be on 584
particularly good terms. These things in Laos are fraught with an 576
etiquette which is the legacy of a highly organized society not too
far gone in decay.

The charm of Vientiane lies in the life and the customs of the 346
people. Unless one is an amateur of pagoda architecture there is 531
little else to be seen. The Laotians have preferred to work in wood,
rather than stone, and their art, confined chiefly to the decoration by
religious artists of the doors, pillars and interiors of pagodas,
quickly perishes in such a climate.

Outside the town there is a great, grey, half-decayed *stupa*, built 771
as a tomb for a hair of the Buddha. It is surrounded by a cloister, 755
containing perhaps a thousand Buddha images; a collection of 778
which the people of Vientiane are very proud. But even here,
where the religion is practised in its purest form, there is a little
degeneration, a little backsliding from the lofty philosophic conception; and the taint of magic practices shows itself. Selecting one of
the numerous images as a personal tutelary divinity, the devotee
subjects it to a kind of bribery similar to that sometimes practised
in Southern Europe with images of the saints. In this case the image's
chief function is healing, and when the sufferer recovers from any
complaint he hastens to the pagoda to apply gold-leaf to the part of
the Buddha corresponding to that where he has felt the pain in his
own body. I was interested to deduce from this practice that the
people of Vientiane are much plagued by headaches – perhaps [164]
those which accompany malaria.

Standing in a corner of the sanctuary was an ancient ithyphallic 778
statue, an old Hindu divinity, no doubt, which had been worn 789
smooth in the appropriate parts by the feminine adoration of a 842
thousand years. I was told that the women of the French colony
who wish for a child frequently emulate their husbands' pose of
Laos-ization by coming here secretly to pay their respects. I 000
wondered whether this clandestine tribute might not be extended

115: Le Boulanger--81 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

"The wooden panels which formed the walls, the corbels, and 341
the beams were all carved with great delicacy. This pagoda was 346
as pretty in the fineness of its details as it was elegant in its gen- 172
eral lines.

"But nothing is left of it" (1).

1. Cf. G. Maspero, L'Indochine /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930/, p. 186.

Sculpture. For these sanctuaries, the Laotians made hordes of 532
statues out of stone, brick, and especially bronze, which were 175*
wholly or partly covered with gold. Of the latter, which were al-
ways molded from wax models, some attained gigantic size. /127/
All of them strike the various attitudes of the Buddhist liturgy. The
bodies are sketchily draped and may be seated, standing, walking
or lying down, their arms outspread. The faces are surmounted by
a sort of tiara and are frozen in a hieratic smile which is not very
expressive and seldom varies.

Painting. As for the fresco paintings which brighten the walls
of certain pagodas, they are not of any special interest. Most of /177/
them were "primarily the work of Burmese, Cambodians or Chinese
of whom the native artists (were only) the pupils" (1).

1. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 342.

The art of the gold and silver smith. On the other hand, the 326
Laotian jewelers and silversmiths knew and still know, with only
the most meager of tools, how to work gold and silver admirably--
primarily silver--and how to chase and engrave it. Their motifs
show an attractive decorative invention, and it is chiefly in this
"minor art" which borders on small-scale industry that we find the
most original manifestations of old-time Laotian life /128/ --
betel services, vases, cups, sword and dagger hilts; bracelets,
necklaces, rings, headpins, earrings, etc.

Basketwork and weaving. Finally, "like all the peoples of the 285
Far East, the Laotians are skilled in all kinds of basketwork. A 531
very pretty object which seems to be peculiar to this land is the
small basket for women in which the basketwork is covered with

304 produced with an implement bearing several fine points which are dipped in India ink or diluted cinnabar. Depending on the coloring matter used, the tattoos are dark blue or brick red in color. The tattoo artists give their taste and fancy free rein and produce the most varied designs which, for example, represent intertwined snakes, dragons, lions, tigers and imaginary animals. Oftentimes there is only one overall color which makes the tattooed person look like a man wearing a close-fitting blue bathing suit.

304 885 The practice of tattooing is a very old one and its origin is lost in [186] dark antiquity. It is at once a kind of coquetry and a proof of courage because of the suffering which the operation causes and the dangers it involves in a land where antisepsis is unknown to the natives and where the tools used are as dirty as the operators. [Illustration here]

In some localities a man who is not tattooed is regarded as lacking in virility, and as a sign of his inferiority he may not bathe upstream from women.

562 304 Laotian women are not tattooed. This custom is practiced only by the Youn and Kha women, where tattoos are usually limited to lines, stars or reptiles on the hands, imitations of rings on the fingers, etc.

301 [187] Personal adornment. In all seasons both men and women wear flowers on their ears or in a string around their coil of hair. This gracious custom, which flatters both the eye and the sense of smell, must be extremely ancient in origin. It is to be found in many parts of the globe which have no relation to Laos, and particularly in Polynesia. [Illustration here]

346 531 Pagodas. Laotian pagodas are as numerous as they are varied in respect to type of construction, architecture, dimensions and ornamentation. In sparsely populated villages and poor muongs the pagodas are built like the houses, either of wood, thatch or bamboo lattice, although with greater care and a few slight additional decorations. Elsewhere, in the larger centers, the pagodas are built of brick, roofed with tile, enhanced by many-colored and gilded ornaments of carved wood and embellished with pseudo-sculptured motifs made of staff. On the inside, the walls are covered with brightly colored frescoes [188] which often picture, against a gold background, religious or warlike scenes taken from the Ramayâna and other more realistic ones which often borde[illegible] obscenity.

149: Reinach--149a G-3 (no date)1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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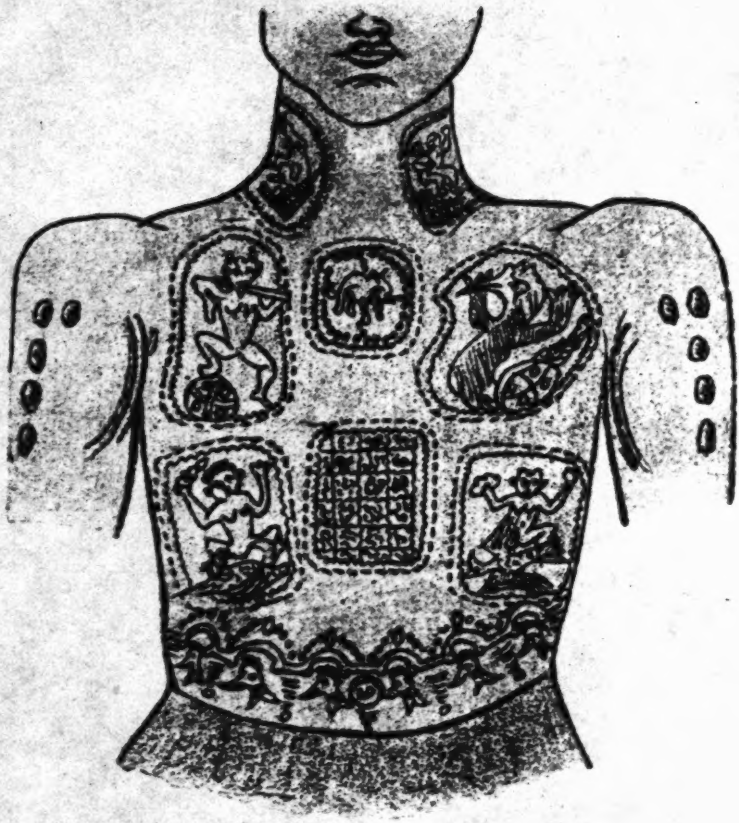

Fig. 48 /p.186/ Chest tattoos of a Burmese or Lu man (blue and red in color).

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Fig. 49 /p.187/ a, a', a" -- Tattoos of Youn women;
b -- Tattoos on the hands of Kha women (blue in color);
c, c' -- Tattoos of slaves.

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colors are bright and harmonious. It is during these days of rejoicing that the first amorous intrigues often spring up between young people which, generally speaking, end in marriage.

Preparations for the funeral celebration went on, and dusk had not yet fallen when music and singing began to be heard and plates of food were passed around, as well as jars full of rice brandy.

Immediately after the death, men went to the forest to select the dead, but not decaying, tree whose trunk was to serve for making the coffin. Others prepared the pedestal on which it was to be placed and the roof which would surmount it.

The coffin was finally finished. Trapezoidal in shape, with the base uppermost, it rested on a wooden pedestal decorated with carvings. [531] The roof placed above it was copied from the roofs of pagodas. The frame was made of bamboo lattice covered with glued calico, and the whole was ornamented with gold paper cutouts, streamers and multicolored cotton floss.

[205] The body was sealed in its coffin, where it rested on a bed of aromatic branches and leaves. It was fully dressed and surrounded by bedclothes. A sliding cover was dovetailed into place, and all joints sealed with an indestructible caulking compound made from lime, clay, albumen and paddy husks. [Illustration alongside text here]

The catafalque stood in the middle of the room, one of the walls of which had been removed, as we have seen. It was surrounded by flowers, green branches, lighted candles and stick incense perfumed with powdered benzoin.

In the course of the next four days the province bonzes and officials arrived, and all recited the ritual prayers in Pali around the catafalque without understanding anything of what they said but scrupulously observing the consecrated rhythm and intonation.

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In the meantime a funeral pyre had been built on the sandy bank of the Mékong, left bare by the low waters, using about three [206] steres of dry wood which had been impregnated with resin, wood oil and kerosene.

Solidly held in place at the side by six heavy stakes of green wood, the pyre was surmounted by a high canopy or rectangular pavilion, the roof of which rose in tiers and was covered with flowered cotton cloth and decorated with gold paper garlands, cutouts and many-colored streamers.

This pavilion, supported by four posts decorated in the same taste, would presently serve to shelter the coffin.

527 From time to time a girl will get up and leave the celebration.
836 She is soon followed by a young man, and both disappear into the
584 shadows, escorted for form's sake by a little boy or girl. This is the beginning of a liaison and will doubtless end in marriage, unless the young gallant is in too much of a hurry, clumsy or flighty and finds himself faced with paying one of the special fines if he compromises the girl and refuses to make up for it.

782 Offerings to the pagodas. There are other "Ngans" which have a
527 half profane and half religious purpose. That is to say, they are
531 established either to thank heaven for a lucky event or to solicit its clemency. They may occur, for example, either to celebrate a return to health after a long illness, or the success of a trading season or hunting or fishing expedition, or to call down blessings from on high on a trip which is being made or planned, etc. These types of "Ngans" then involve offerings to the pagodas and to the bonzes, offerings which bear the name of "Tone-Pheung" (literally, wax cut in pieces). They are so named because of the wax imitation flowers which decorate [222] a kind of pyramid or small pagoda supporting them, called "Pha-Sate" (in French, Faithful to God).

These little edifices are built and decorated by the friends or guests with a rapidity, a taste and an elegance which would be astounding if we did not know the degree to which artistic feeling is innate in the Laotian, and if we were not aware of the prodigious skill with which he is endowed.

Built on a bamboo framework covered with pieces of banana wood, carved with festoons and ornamental moldings, and arranged in tiers of roofs, in minarets and in columns, these "Pha-Sate," which are always between one and two meters in height, seem to be made of ivory and affect an extraordinary variety of forms each of which is more graceful than the last and which seem to be inspired by the architecture of the pagodas of India, Cambodia and Burma.

It will not be in vain to note that the only purpose of these ephemeral edicules, which will keep their new look for only a short while, is merely to present the wax offering in a less banal and more artistic manner than if it had been given in the form of thick, heavy, massive blocks.

The "Pha-Sate" are mounted on stretchers which are carried by men. Besides their wax flowers, they are decorated with natural

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flowers, pompoms and multicolored cotton streamers. Thick wax candles are stuck to the uprights, into which coins, gold nuggets, gold leaf and precious stones are sunk.

The wax is destined for worship purposes and the other offerings will be used for the upkeep of pagodas or for ornamenting sacred statues. The bonzes are not forgotten, for on the platform of the "Pha-Sate," either between the uprights or in special baskets ad hoc, there are articles of clothing, bedclothes, kettles, talaps, betel accessories, etc.

The day preceding the delivery of the "Tone-Pheung" to the pagoda is spent in making all kinds of preparations--cooking food, making betel quids, cigarettes, cakes and other necessary items [223] for the morrow's celebration. In the evening there is a kind of rehearsal for the "Ngan" in which the singers and musicians practice until an extremely late hour while the mothers and married women continue to work in the presence of the young men and girls talking merrily.

On the morning of the day when the "Tone-Pheung" is to be presented to the pagoda the bonzes are invited to a copious feast which continues long after their departure among relatives, friends and neighbors. The bonzes come back in the afternoon to bless the "Tone-Pheung" and to say certain prayers. Then, towards five in the afternoon, the procession forms and five or six bearers, depending on the weight, take the stretcher supporting the offering and raise it to their shoulders. The men follow first after the procession, and then the women, and the latter carry lighted wax candles in their hands. Musicians bring up the rear, and the whole crowd moves toward the pagoda by the longest route. There the "Pha-Sate" or the "Tone-Pheung" is taken around the enclosure three times and finally put down at the entrance to the pagoda. Those present place their candles in a special holder at the foot of the great statue of Buddha, and then withdraw while the bonzes recite prayers in the presence of whoever is making the offering and his relatives.

The guests then return to the home of their host, where the celebration goes on all night and sometimes even lasts into the following day.

The bonzes remove the wax from the "Pha-Sate" and use it to make candles for worship purposes. The flowers are placed at the feet of Buddha, and the coins and precious stones are put aside.

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306 Gold and silver smiths and jewelry-making. In nearly all the large centers there are gold and silver smiths who are also jewelry-makers. They work either on their own behalf manufacturing articles which they then sell, or else on order for individuals who wish to transform silver coins which they have saved over the years, or native gold which they have obtained by gold-washing or purchase, into gold and silver articles or jewelry.

The Laotian silversmiths and jewelers use very few tools. A bellows, a crucible, a few pairs of tongs, some drawplates, caulking chisels, graving tools and hammers are all they need to cast, forge, braze, draw, laminate, chase, and checker gold and silver.

The different phases of the work include casting the metal either with or without alloy (1), laminating it with a hammer and drawing

(1) The alloys are tin and copper for silver, and always silver for gold.

it partly with a hammer and partly with a drawplate, embossing it, chasing it, checkering it, brazing on filigree or globular ornaments, and giving a patina to and burnishing the finished product.

The patina is obtained on silver by dipping it in lemon juice and tempering it while hot in a strong alum solution.

Gold jewelry is usually covered with a reddish patina which has a very warm color. This is obtained by tempering it in boiling water containing, by weight:

2 parts of saltpeter.
3 parts of salt.
1 part of alum.
Sufficient quantities of sulphur.

[531] [456] All the artists work from uniform models. The decorative motifs are taken from Brahminic tradition, with a few modifications arising out of the introduction of certain elements which are derived from Chinese art.

Yet the Laotians are capable of producing work which is not based on their usual models. Thus a great many jeweler-goldsmiths can reproduce designs which are different in shape, appearance and style from the common types which are handed down from father to son or from master to pupil.

The usual gold and silver articles include betel services, vases, cups, boxes, knife handles and sword hilts. Generally these objects are made of silver, but sometimes also of gold. The jewelry includes

degree.

289 **Paper.** The manufacture of paper using the bark of a tree called "Kok-Sa" (1) is limited to a single region of northern Laos.

(1) See Chapter VII.

It is not of any great importance, since it does not even suffice for local consumption.

The manufacturing processes are those familiar to everyone as being used in China, in Japan, in Annamite lands and in Burma.

321 531 **Wood and ivory carving.** Here we no longer have to deal with an industry, but with an art. The men who practice it are few in number, are highly paid, work slowly and are generally inveterate opium smokers.

Like the goldsmiths and jewelers, the wood and ivory carvers of Laos reproduce, ad infinitum, immutable models which their predecessors have handed down. They are, however, able to execute motifs from any given design. To be sure, they are inferior to their Burmese, Annamite, Malay, Chinese and especially Japanese colleagues as regards the movement, harmony, purity of form and finish of their work.

532 **Fresco painting.** The pagodas of Laos, which have been left untended for many long years, contain curious fresco paintings set off with gold, but lack of care and exposure to the weather have partly destroyed them. This art has very few practitioners in Laos, and it should be added that most of the existing frescoes are mainly the work of Burmese, Cambodians and Chinese of whom the native artists are only the pupils.

396 [438] **Pirogue carpenters.** Nearly all the inhabitants who [464] live on the banks of the big river or its principal tributaries are able to carve out a pirogue. Certain villages, however, have a monopoly in this industry.

When it is a matter merely of hewing out a pirogue which is to be used only for crossing the river, fishing or agricultural service, everyone does a fairly good job. But for the large pirogues which are reserved for regattas, voyages and commercial transports, recourse must be had to specialists. Only they know how to give their products

536 There is no scenery. The costumes and headdresses vary according to the characters represented. The masks of colored lacquer worn by the actors, their accessories (weapons, scarves, etc.) being traditional and invariable enable the fictitious characters on the stage to be identified.

/178 The theatre of animated shadows, similar to the shadow theatre
101/ of China and Java, tends to disappear little by little.

Laotian Decoration.

Laotian decoration is characterized by a somewhat mannered
531 elegance which can be noticed in the motifs of the pagoda doors and
178 windows. The Laotian artisan is, however, endowed with an extremely well developed artistic sense, but the present day demands do not enable him any longer to live by his handiwork, and the importation of manufactured articles tends to make the artist disappear. /89/ He can only survive by royal patronage. The royal palace for this reason shelters sculptors on wood and ivory as well as goldsmiths, but
/644/ their produce is not sold and the tourist will hardly be able to bring back with him typical Laotian objects.

However, the weaving of silk materials of divers shades, often laminated with gold or silver, is still done on a sufficient scale to
/236/ satisfy the passing tourist.

The Sin

This is a skirt reaching from the hips to the ankles. It is of a
291 rather somber color with a design of vertical stripes very close together and not very evident. This skirt is decorated on its lower edge with a flat trimming of two or three rows of gold or silver braid. At the top of the skirt a belt of red cloth, more or less embroidered, relieves the rather dark tone. This garment is a regular cylinder having the same width on its entire length. When the woman emerges from her bath she lifts her skirt, gathered into the shape of a crown, above her head and lets it slide down the length of her body. She fixes it without hooks or fasteners to her belt by means of a turned in pleat tied in front leaving most of her belly exposed. A bright colored scarf of cotton or silk thrown over one shoulder and completely covering the breasts completes the costume. The most beautiful scarves come from Samneua, Luang Prabang and Khong. The jewelry most frequently seen consists of
301 silver bracelets, necklaces and buttons, rings, long crossed over chains /chaînes-sautoirs/, flat clasps, and belts usually of silver but sometimes of gold.

/Pages 90 to 135 not translated/ /136 blank/

173: Deydier --70 H.B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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Fig. XIII. Luang Prabang. Vat Visun. Door wing of the northern facade. (Cl. E.F.E.O.)

173: Deydier--71 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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Fig. XIV. Luang Prabang. Vat Pakhe, Door-wing of the Dutch (Cl. Presse Information).

7: Thompson--374 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 306, 341, 532

"The seventeenth century was an era of peace that permitted the Laotian arts to flourish. The insouciance, which is a Laotian characteristic, explains the fragility of their innumerable monuments. In the South, Khmer influence predominates; in the North, Burmese. Under this double aegis temples, libraries, and reliquaries have been built by the Laotians without originality but always with grace and elegance. The pitiless tropical vegetation has strangled almost all of them: even the Vat Prakeo, which the French have tried to save, seems doomed to destruction. The wood sculpture is of gigantic proportions and fashioned in the expressionless attitude of the Buddhist liturgy. The painting, which consists of frescoes in the pagodas, was the work of foreign artists of whom the Laotians were only the pupils. It is in jewellery and the working of precious metals that the Laotians have shown their most inventive artistry. Like all Far Eastern peoples they are very clever at basketry and weaving."

10: d'Orleans--272-274 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Labs-1-3
116, 532, 778

"An hour's halt is sufficient, and we soon enter a wilder country. On our right stands a perpendicular calcareous cliff, and a series of strata appear vertically on the surface. A fissure between two of them, like the one already noticed at Sou La, also marks the entrance to a grotto. The Tham Pa Kouang (grotto of the great stag) is celebrated, and it well repays a visit. [273] A staircase about twenty yards high leads to it; on the right a ruined house which leans against the rock is occasionally used as a lodging by some priests; red devils with large heads, armed with sabres, are carved on both sides of the entrance. The first hall is spacious; it is fifteen yards high, and the natural irregularities have been respected and even turned to account; the walls are decorated with green moss, and the ceiling is made of large stalactites joined and rounded. Upon the ground, upon the steps, upon isolated stones and in the hollows, everywhere, in the midst of the greatest disorder, a people of gods of every shape and every size has found a home. Statuettes from one yard high, to one or two inches, of black or gilt wood, of marble, bronze, or copper; gods standing with their hands raised as though in benediction; stout Buddhas, with bare heads, squatting down, their arms folded across their stomach, their shoulders often covered with a piece of stuff arranged like a cape; bonzes, saints, prophets and their servants, showing the same type as the idols of Siam. The whole Buddhist Olympia is united here, and when the idols are carefully examined, one believes that traces may be found amongst them of all religions and of all nations; here something from Greece, there a reminiscence of Egyptian art, while

further on a marble head ornamented by a raised diadem, reminds one of the Khiner monuments. All these gods lie about everywhere, turned in every direction, hidden or fallen, often covered with dust; there is not a corner without its deity, and niches are often cut by the hand of man and ornamented with carvings of gilded wood, to shelter an exceptionally venerated saint. Even [274] animals are represented; in one rock two elephants are cut out and dyed green, each carrying a personage. In another corner stands a white elephant, one of the incarnations of Buddha. The body, which is about a yard and a half high, is made of wood and stuff, and the whole is covered with calico. Some small earthen cones, surmounted by a stick, are arranged in front of the sacred animal, forming a miniature garden with a tiny staircase. I believe they represent something analogous to our ex-votos. If I can believe the interpreter's explanations, these earthen cakes are placed here by people who have been ill and wish to thank heaven for preserving their life; the number of the cones corresponds with their age. The entrance hall, which at the first glance resembles an old curiosity shop, is lighted from the outside; it leads to other galleries, which we explored with a lantern. Corridor succeeds corridor, it seems as though the grotto were endless, and it must really extend for a great distance. Legend relates that it communicates with Lai Chou. Sometimes the passages are so narrow that we are forced to crawl through them, sometimes the rooms are large enough for us to stand upright. In some of them a bamboo bed

10: d'Orleans--272-274 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-3
116, 532, 778

denotes the sojourn of some pilgrim or belated fisherman. One division, which is reached by a rectangular entrance, is filled with a multitude of small divinities of the same size and form. This must be a reserve stock, for the walls are covered with red and gilt paper."

10: d'Orleans--325 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 316, 346, 532, 821

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "When we land on the left bank, we notice a number of people stooping down, with their feet in the water, engaged in washing out the sand; these are gold finders, who earn but a scanty living, though they sometimes come upon an old coin or two which has been washed down stream. A climb of about fifty feet up decrepit steps, which in summer are under water, brings us to the town. Close upon the left is a small pagoda, Ouate Poune Saï, which is only remarkable for the fresco above the entrance gate, this representing Kop, the sun, eating the moon; in other words, the fresco is intended to designate an eclipse."

10: d'Orleans--330-331 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 532, 778

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "The market occupies the principal artery of the town, with numerous pagodas and palaces to the right and left, one of those on the left being Ouate Mal, ouate being the word used in Laotian, Siamese, and Burmese, to signify temple, while mal means new. The pagoda itself from 100 to 130 feet long by fifty to seventy feet broad, with whitewashed walls and a tile roof. The interior is very similar to that of a Catholic church, with pictures on the walls representing religious legends, and at the end an altar, upon which are accumulated ornaments of all kinds and statues of gods in every variety of pose, while in the centre, as in all the other temples, is a golden figure of Buddha seated, from seven to ten feet high. The features are the same in all these statues of Buddha, and, with his legs crossed, and his hands resting upon his thigh the statue which is more the outcome of high strung religious feelings, and represents the very spirit of the races which have [331] succeeded one another upon this soil for so many centuries, than the work of any great artist, seems to have concentrated in it attitude, its countenance, and its gaze, the essence of the moral beliefs, the object of existence, and the reason of death, as they were conceived by one-half of the old world."

10: d'Orleans--331-332 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 173, 532, 778

"With the exception of the principal statue, the gods are not seated, and in this pagoda of Ouate Mai, the divinity held in the greatest veneration is one with outstretched hands as if in the act of giving the benediction. This is the Prabang or 'Buddha of the gold washings,' as he is made out of the gold found in the district. Tradition has it that this deity was brought here by the Laotians, when they emigrated from Muong-Theng, and that, after being carried off to Bangkok by the Siamese, it was brought back to Luang Prabang about twenty years ago. Another legend is that the statue was sent about 200 years ago by the king of Cambodia; but in any case it has given its name to the town, and it is covered with embroideries and chasubles, and placed in the recess of a reliquary to which diverse ornaments are suspended. In front of this is a movable bronze grating, ending in two dragons with intertwined tails, called Nâk, while to the left of the altar is a pulpit very similar to a sedan chair, from which the bonzes [332] give their lessons and recite their prayers."

10: d'Orleans--333 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 532, 778, 793, 177.35

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "Above the market and built against the hill is the residence of one of the four leading bonzes from whom we had a visit yesterday; and upon going to see him there we find that the interior is ornamented with coloured designs and pictures, given him by Frenchmen, of the Eiffel Tower and so forth, with a small chapel in one corner and a library of religious books, many of which are rolled up in palm leaves. The only curious object in the adjoining pagoda is a wooden statue of Buddha (Pasine), in a crouching attitude, like that of a monkey when scratching his chin. The skull is very depressed and misshapen; and it is possible that those who offered the image were desirous of depicting the incident in his life, when having complained to God of the temptation which the flesh evoked in him, he received by way of reply a violent blow on the head in order to crush his carnal appetites."

10: d'Orleans--333-334 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 532, 177.53

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "Among the other pagodas are Ouate Tiomsi, which contains nothing remarkable, and Ouate Pahope, with a good deal of wood carving and frescoes representing animals and scenes in the life of Buddha, to say nothing of pictures of Frenchwomen in the dress of the First Empire, which may possibly have been brought here by the traveller Monhot some forty years ago. Beyond these are Ouate Paphay and Ouate Pakay, both of which are very graceful and have beautifully carved facades. The whole effect reminds me in a remote measure of the Hindoo architecture, and among the figures on the wood-carving of the doors is [334] one of Nangmanouba, a woman standing up on a dragon, and another of a personage wearing a costume very similar to that which was in vogue with us during the middle ages."

10: d'Orleans--339-340 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 361, 532, 778

"Part of the town is very sparsely inhabited, a few ruins on the track indicating the site [340] of the ancient ramparts, while turning back in the direction of the river, we have on our left the grounds of several houses belonging to mandarins, and on the right, at the foot of the hill, a group of pagodas well worth a visit.

The most important of these is Ouate Uisoune, so named after the king who built it. Dating, as the Siamese Colonel tells us, from the fourteenth century, it is in a very decrepit state, but there is much in it worth seeing; notably the gates which are of carved wood and gilt. To the right in Pra Noriei, the fourarmed goddess, borne up by Kroute, the god of the birds, and in the centre are two women, one of whom is being carried by five elephants, while to the left a god standing erect upon a buffalo is supposed to represent the chief of the coolies who weed the courtyards of the pagodas. In the interior are a number of wooden columns covered with gilded designs and others of masonry, together with pictures representing the history of Pra Uetsandaha and of Guadama. Upon the altar is a large gilt statue called Pratiao Ong Luong (great god)."

10: d'Orleans--348 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 532, 527, 773, 796

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"The dances begin, and two men emerge from the pagoda enveloped in vast cloaks coming down to their heels which are meant to designate the skin of some wild animal, while they have on their heads a mask of black wood representing some monster with enormous eyes, large mouth with very sharp teeth, very long ears and a lower jaw which can be moved at will. Behind the head is a long mane of coarse hair, and we are told that they are known as Pi Konge, or devils with a cruel face, while the old bonze says that they are the chiefs of the tigers, or the Pi Sua (race of devils). The Siamese Colonel adds that in the Laos they are known as Pou Yen (from Pou, father) or Ya Yen (from Ya, mother), and there is a legend that men of this kind once lived in a large forest, and that though they inspired great terror two of them were captured, these monsters representing the captive pair. It is interesting to compare this native tradition with the assertion of several travellers that the Laos was formerly inhabited by a hairy race of men."

25: Brodrick--109 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 177, 346, 532

"The Phra-Keo Pagoda or Temple of the Emerald Buddha, [HD: in Vientane] is, by tradition, supposed to have been founded in A.D. 814, but it was razed by the Siamese and the Emerald Buddha was carried off to Bangkok where it may still be admired in its gorgeous temple. Needless to say, the Emerald Buddha is not carved out of emerald. It is fashioned in green jasper and is undoubtedly of Laotian workmanship, for the image, as you can behold it in the Siamese capital, has a most Laotian face, vehement, cunning and, it may be, lecherous.

The sight of Vientiane to-day is the That-Luong. This large stupa is some mile and a half outside the city and is set in a palm grove. The buildings seem to date from about 1567 and were put up to shelter a relic of the Buddha. The sanctuary was spared by the Siamese. However, in 1874, the Chinese Yünnan land-pirates, who feared neither God nor man, plundered and ravaged the shrine. It was botched up unskilfully, but a few years ago, was restored to its pristine appearance through the efforts of the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient. The stupa not only shows the curious bulbous spire we noted at Luang-Prabang, but the whole place is uncommonly complicated in plan. It is surrounded by a cloister in the Siamese mode and the stupa itself rises from a series of rectangular terraces set round with numerous pinnacles joined together by an arcade."

25: Brodrick--109-110 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 325, 532

"Some of the Vientiane and the Luang-Prabang temples still contain a number of bronzes, mostly of the Buddha, seated, upright or reclining. These figures, which have only just begun to appear in the European market, are already rather keenly sought after and soon may become quite rare. The Laotian bronzes show a high degree of stylization. The long fingers are as supple as tendrils, while the feet are harsh and squared as though hacked out with a hatchet. The chest is taut and rounded, the waist exceedingly [110]slender. The heads and faces are of the same style as those of the stone or lacquer images we saw at Luang-Prabang. Under the curved nose, the thick lips are pursed up into a rather disdainful pout, which in some statues takes on what must be called a leer. From the topknot flares up a burst of flames conventionalized so as to resemble a budding daffodil--all rather super-realist.(1)

1. The ancient Laotians seem to have been skilled in the difficult art of large-scale bronze-casting. From what remains of the Buddha in the Vat Manorom at Luang-Prabang, the original image must have stood over eighteen feet without its pedestal. Often the Laotian Buddhas have a date engraved upon them but it is only a cyclic era date so that no absolute chronology can be established."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

000 eventually to the Buddhas to solicit their curative powers; and if so what we should learn from it about the prevalence of disease among Europeans.

217 The museum of Vientiane, which I visited in the hope of learning
532 something of the living art of the country, has also little more to
771 show than a collection of Buddhas. There is a tranquillity, a lack of compulsion in the Hinayanist Buddhism of Cambodia and Laos — so different from the neurotic deformation practised by the later Khmer kings — which is not propitious to the development of religious art. There was no violence or drama in the life of Buddha comparable to that of Christ, and the Indian Epics have been eschewed in Laos as improperly secular. It has been enough to carve Buddhas, and more Buddhas *ad infinitum*, seeking perhaps to multiply in this way the magic virtues which each image contains. The curator takes you round, explaining the characteristic postures — there are seven or eight — all of which can be appreciated in five minutes. After that there are minute differences of physique and physiognomy to be noted that reflect the influences of India, of Java, of Thibet or of Ceylon. That is all.

177 By the time the museums turn to the art of the people, the
532 grotesque animals in bamboo, the carved movable figures which
782 are obscene to European eyes — all of which become a pagan burnt-offering at the end of each *boun*[1] — it will be too late. The microphone is an infallible sign of what is to come. Nothing of this kind will survive the era of materialism, under whatever form it arrives.

253 These are the sights of Vientiane, but in addition there is a
825 spectacle which is popular with Europeans, who, remote, isolated, and living under difficulties, tend to shut themselves up within the protective social rituals of people in exile.

This spectacle is the slaughterhouse at work. I do not know whether or not it is illegal in Laotian law to kill animals, but certainly it is thought shameful, and the killing for Europeans is done at the dead of night on the outskirts of the town. The

[1] [Laotian religious festival. -- Analyst]

A DRAGON APPARENT

000 There was a recognized place about a mile up the river, which was free from weed and rock, and once again, because the water was deep and swiftly running, it was very cold and refreshing. We had
515 been swimming round for an hour or so when we noticed a number of Laotian girls hanging about. They were not watching us, but sauntering backwards and forwards in twos and threes, chatting to each other. By the time there were twelve of them, Dupont, keeping well in the water called to them and asked if we were disturbing them in any way. One of the girls came to the edge of the bank, bowed, and looking down at her feet said that it was their usual bathing time, but that there was no hurry, of course. Dupont asked the girls if they would retire for a moment, and they walked a short distance away and stood in a preoccupied circle while we got out of the water. We then dressed quickly and walked on down the path leading to their village. After about a hundred yards we looked back. All the girls, quite naked, were in the water. At that moment two bonzes were strolling slowly along the bank past them; but the girls paid no attention. The bonzes were wrapped in the mantle of holy invisibility.

622 When we reached the village, Dupont asked punctiliously for
304 the headman, making the excuse that he wanted to visit the pagoda. It was quite evident that this headman was in the good graces of the garrison, and probably supplied them with labour. He was very dignified and had a fine house, with European furniture. Although barefooted, he wore a French suit. On the suggestions of the soldier from the camp he took down his trousers and showed us his legs, which from ankles to thighs were tattooed, in the local manner, so
796 closely that he seemed to be wearing stockings. The annual *boun*[1]
782 had just been celebrated at the local pagoda and a bonze was in the
532 act of sweeping into a heap the votive offerings with which the floor
285 of the courtyard was littered. There was a great collection of elephants, buffaloes, peacocks and tigers, all woven in basket-work. The kind of thing that Picasso produces when he is not painting, but perhaps rather better. They seemed to me to be of

[1] [i.e., religious festival.-- Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

the greatest artistic interest. I asked the headman if it would be 796
possible to take any, as the bonze was crumpling and smashing them 782
vigorously with his broom. But the chief shook his head regretfully. 532
Buddhism had degenerated in these remote provinces and was 285
swamped with re-emergent spirit cults. These objects had been dedicated to the *phi*[1] and would have to be burnt in a ritual fire. The *phi* would also receive the burnt essence, I noticed, of a large, very obscene, and no doubt magically valuable picture.

At about this time when the bonze was treading underfoot the 669
village's artistic output of several months, a party of Issarak or Viet- 726
Minh, timing their action to coincide with the convoy's arrival at 731
Moung Kassy, had set fire to the forest just south of the post. A steady breeze was blowing from that quarter, and the fire, started over a width of about a mile and fanning out as it advanced, moved slowly towards the fort.

Coming up over the river bank it took us some time to realize what was happening. There was a haze; but then there was always a haze in Laos, although by this time of day it should have been clearing and not thickening. And then we heard the crackling, punctuated with the sharp pops, which might have been distant rifle fire, but which were the explosions of thick stems of bamboo. Looking up then we saw the curtain of smoke hanging over Muong Kassy, white at the top, and black at its base and streaked occasionally by lance-points of flame, which were still two miles away.

We ran to where the car was parked, started it and tried to drive down the road towards the fire. Dupont was as pleased with it as July 14th. In about fifty yards we got tangled up with the convoy and had to leave the car on the side of the road and run on. The fire was advancing on a ragged front and was as irresistible as a volcano. Black smoke was being blown before it so that at first the flames were out of sight; but when they came through they were two hundred feet high – twice the height of the tallest tree. It went forward in zigzagging rushes; eating its way quickly through the bamboo

[1] [i.e., spirits. — Analyst]

633 Lunet de la Jonquiere has deduced that the ramparts of
643* Vientiane were composed of brick walls from four to six
175* meters in height with an earth banquette inside. They in-
172 cluded three sections, the salients of which were provided
/712/ with circular forts about eight meters high. Two gates which were fortified and crowned with spearhead ornaments gave entrance to the second section, one on the east towards the That-Luong, and the other on the west at the exit of the present Luang-Prabang road.

royal palace in the pagoda of which the emerald Buddha (Pra-Keo), the sign of power and command /82/ which he had brought from Xieng-Mai in 1548 (1), was placed.

/778/ 1. The emerald Buddha was in reality cut from a block of green jasper. The Siamese were to capture it in 1778 and take it to Bangkok, of which it became the tutelary divinity and where the sumptuous temple which rises today in the first court of the royal palace was built for it in 1785.

172 Of the eighty some pagodas which Vientiane was to boast, the
633 Wat Pra-Keo was assuredly one of the greatest and most beautiful.
175* "The trees which veil it (today), the lianas which tie it to the columns and spread a mysterious shadow over its ruins make the visitor feel something of what the soul of the ancients felt on the threshold of a sacred wood. Brick openwork forms the enclosure and monumental staircases lead to the parvis. A dragon writhes on the ramps and raises its menacing head in a last coil. The columns of the gallery are graceful, tall, slender and without a base, but end in a capital of long, sharp leaves which fold outwards and look as though they were raised by the weight which they bear..." (2).

2. De Carne, op. cit. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois. Paris, 1872./

175* The sanctuary was built on a terrace with three levels. The facade
172 opened onto a monumental portico whose three gateways and side
346 windows were richly framed /83/ /Page 83 is devoted to an illustra-
532 tion: "Ruins of the Pra-Keo at Vientiane"--Translator./ /84/ with many-colored sculptures. The whole edifice was entirely gilded on the outside.

The roof, the greater part of which still existed when Pavie 175*
went to Vientiane, has since collapsed and the two colossal statues 172
of Buddha which sit on the abandoned altar remain exposed to the 346
elements. Even as it is this grandiose ruin is wonderfully allied to 532
the natural vegetation which holds it in its grasp and one cannot, without some emotion, evoke before it the past splendor of the kingdom of Lan-Xang.

But the capital accomplishment of Setthitharath is the That-Luong, located about two kilometers away from the city. It is /341/
doubtless also the masterpiece of this Laotian architecture which has no powers of endurance but which cannot be denied grace and elegance. Miraculously spared by the Siamese at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the That-Luong was overthrown in 1873 by the Yunnanese pirates and partly restored, in rather a clumsy manner, in 1897-1898.

This pyramidal edifice, called the "plume of the world" by its founder, was the "reliquary of the kingdom" and is still a highly frequented center of pilgrimage. A stele commemorating its erection bears /85/ the date 1566, and according to legend the original 'that' was built about the eleventh century on one of Buddha's hairs.

The first enclosure, which has today crumbled away, is almost confused with the large group of ruined temples which surrounds it. It was formed by an open cloister which was colored with frescoes and in which the faithful and the priests assembled. The second enclosure is formed by a ledge along which runs a garland of bulging ornaments. "One would be tempted to call them the petals of a gigantic lotus bloom on the point of opening. Heavy pedestals covered with inscriptions support thirty-four slender pinnacles. Leaning on these pedestals as on buttresses, the mass on which the pyramid is set begins to deploy its curves and the pyramid itself springs from a sheaf of broad leaves, like the stem of a plant. . . . It once sparkled with gold applied on a lead base, shreds of which can still be seen" (1).

1. De Carne, ibid. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois. Paris, 1872./, quoted by Aymonier, Voyage dans le Laos. See below, Laotian Architecture, p. 124.

First Burmese invasion (1563-1565). Solidly entrenched in his 643*
new capital, Setthathirath waited to see what the turn of events 648*
would be. /86/ He did not have long to wait, for Bureng-Naung 726
175*

115: Le Boulanger--81 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

"The wooden panels which formed the walls, the corbels, and 341
the beams were all carved with great delicacy. This pagoda was 346
as pretty in the fineness of its details as it was elegant in its gen- 172
eral lines.

"But nothing is left of it" (1).

1. Cf. G. Maspero, L'Indochine /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930/, p. 186.

Sculpture. For these sanctuaries, the Laotians made hordes of 532
statues out of stone, brick, and especially bronze, which were 175*
wholly or partly covered with gold. Of the latter, which were al-
ways molded from wax models, some attained gigantic size. /127/
All of them strike the various attitudes of the Buddhist liturgy. The
bodies are sketchily draped and may be seated, standing, walking
or lying down, their arms outspread. The faces are surmounted by
a sort of tiara and are frozen in a hieratic smile which is not very
expressive and seldom varies.

Painting. As for the fresco paintings which brighten the walls
of certain pagodas, they are not of any special interest. Most of /177/
them were "primarily the work of Burmese, Cambodians or Chinese
of whom the native artists (were only) the pupils" (1).

1. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 342.

The art of the gold and silver smith. On the other hand, the 326
Laotian jewelers and silversmiths knew and still know, with only
the most meager of tools, how to work gold and silver admirably--
primarily silver--and how to chase and engrave it. Their motifs
show an attractive decorative invention, and it is chiefly in this
"minor art" which borders on small-scale industry that we find the
most original manifestations of old-time Laotian life /128/ --
betel services, vases, cups, sword and dagger hilts; bracelets,
necklaces, rings, headpins, earrings, etc.

Basketwork and weaving. Finally, "like all the peoples of the 285
Far East, the Laotians are skilled in all kinds of basketwork. A 531
very pretty object which seems to be peculiar to this land is the
small basket for women in which the basketwork is covered with

285 lacquer -- red on the inside and black on the outside -- and deco-
532 rated with a fine gilt design which makes a border, like a galloon" (1).
175*

1. Cf. G. Maspero, ibid. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930/, pp. 190-191.

286 Even today weaving remains women's work, and is done solely in
462 the home. The materials, which may be silk or cotton, striped or
532 splashed with colors, embroidered or spangled with gold and silver thread, nevertheless acquire, under the action of light and carefree hands, chatoyant, harmonious or dazzling tones, and yet the looms which are used are simple in the extreme. Patterns "are obtained, as before the invention of the Jacquard loom, by alternately isolating or raising certain woof threads by means of thin bamboo splints" (2).

2. Cf. L. de Reinach, ibid. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 333.

181 Thus did the Laotian of the seventeenth century live in peace, respecting the law of the least effort with an amiable perserverance amidst his laughter and his games. . . . The princes were perhaps the
/565/ only ones in the whole kingdom to know any of the worries which power and its exigencies bring, and it was for not having wished to compromise with his authoritarian principles that King Souligna, towards the end of his reign, compromised the destinies of his people forever.

643* Condemnation of the heir apparent to death. He had three chil-
175* dren, a son Tiao Ratsabout and two daughters. His son married Nang-
648* Tian-Koumali, who gave birth in her turn to two children, King-Kitsarath and Intha-Som. Nang-Tian-Koumali was the sister of a prince of the Sip-Song-Panas who had been driven out of his country by a Chinese invasion and whom the king of Lan-Xang had welcomed in Vientiane together with his family. Tiao Ratsabout, however, committed the imprudence of seducing the wife of the chief palace page. In accordance with his edict which punished the crime of
/684/ adultery by death, Souligna pitilessly referred the deceived husband's complaint to the royal tribunal and allowed his son to be sentenced to capital punishment

The result was that at the king's death, which occurred /130/ in 1694, the direct heirs to the crown were his grandsons King-Kitsarath

369 Anou had built the new temple of Sisaket not far from the deconse-
175 crated Prakeo "with the purpose of attracting the grace of Heaven
/346/ to the souls of his parents as well as to those of all his relatives and to all the souls which people Hell and the world" (2). The corner-

2. Cf. inscription on the stele.

stone was laid on "Thursday, the ninth day of the waxing moon of the year Kap-San" (1824), in the midst of a large assembly of the populace.

778 Inauguration of the temple of Sisaket (1824). On this occasion
796 the king made innumerable gifts to the bonzes (clothing, sandals,
346 fans, iron pen points to write on latania leaves, mats, mattresses,
175* copper betel services, rice baskets, vases, metal drinking cups, carafes, goblets, etc.). He gave /163/ pieces of cloth to the poor, and generous bounties to artisans and musicians. The people walked in procession around the royal palace, carrying oriflammes and effigies of animals which were flowered and perfumed with incense. The holiday lasted three days, to the accompaniment of general rejoicing (1).

1. Ibid. /Inscription on the stele./

346 This temple was the only one which the French found still standing when they reached Vientiane. Of the first enclosure there remain two 'that's', which have recently been restored, and an elegant square pavilion-library whose quadruple pinnacled roof is supported by a graceful colonnade. Three other pavilions have disappeared (2).

2. A bath pavilion, one for worship and one for the tom-toms and gongs.

A cloister pierced by a porch on each side surrounds the central sanctuary, the outer gallery of which discloses a gateway and finely worked windows under the triple porch roofs. The inside walls are
/532/ illuminated by frescoes surmounted by many niches in the form of lotus leaves where thousands of statuettes are grouped in pairs. A wooden ceiling is embellished with gilded panels, and on the altar stands a giant Buddha entirely covered with gold leaf.

149: Reinach--156 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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831

Ever since the death, singers and improvisers of both sexes accompanied by volunteer musicians had recounted the merits, qualities and exploits of the deceased at great length and with emphasis before a numerous audience which remained attentive and never grew tired. They boasted of his good deeds, listed his particular habits and tastes and enumerated his many children and grandchildren.

They dwelled with great satisfaction on the intimacies which he had taken with the fair sex up to quite an advanced age, and in support of their remarks showed brightly illuminated drawings painted on long streamers of glazed calico. These drawings, as much by the truth of the attitudes shown as by their outrageous realism, were the joy of the spectators. Both children and adults roared with laughter as they listened to the highly spicy commentary of the improvisers.

A curious fact was that this exhibition did not occasion any obscene or even suggestive gesture on the part of the audience.

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792

The bonzes, who are the only art students in this country, are the ones who color these pictures. If published in our own land, the latter would certainly call down all the rigor of the law on their author.

764

The day of cremation finally came, and the funeral proper began.

One of the sons of the deceased first set free two pairs of partridges and turtledoves, pet birds which he had had. The poor creatures were unaccustomed to flight and refused to leave their cage, but then beat their wings and clumsily escaped to a perch a few meters above ground on one of the trees [207] in the garden. A trail of ashes was spread all around the fence surrounding the house of the deceased in order, as popular belief has it, to prevent his spirit from escaping into the nearby region and tormenting the living.

175

A solid bamboo stretcher which twelve hardy men would carry on their shoulders was placed on the ground to await the catafalque. Attendance was heavy, and people of all ages came from a distance. They wore their holiday clothes with vivid, light and iridescent colors. They wore flowers in their ears and hair and carried multicolored streamers, wax candles and sticks of incense in their hands.

292

The members of the family, the officials of the Muong and the bonzes were also there in force.

The catafalque was carried from the house by hand and put down on the stretcher, which the porters then raised to their shoulders. At its base, near the feet of the deceased, was fastened a strip of calico

323 The potters' methods and equipment do not differ from those which are in widespread use everywhere.

The method of firing depends on the nature of the article, and firing may be done either in kilns dug out of the clay soil, in the banks of watercourses, or under stacks of rice straw. Wood or rice straw is used to fire the kilns.

In some regions articles are given a shiny black patina resembling graphite by firing them for a second time in paddy husks.

778 411 415 **Brass-founding.** One has only to explore the pagodas of Laos in order to realize that brass-founding used to be held in honor. Religious statues can be found which are sometimes of great [458] weight and usually of quite fine workmanship and taste, taking into account, to be sure, the quite special manner in which they conceive esthetics.

Although the crucibles have not been fired for many long years for casting such large pieces, the industry of brass-founding continues to be exercised by a certain number of specialists who are content with producing religious statuettes, necessities for betel, bells for elephants and livestock, various kinds of vases, cuspidors, etc.

This industry is an extremely ancient one in the land. It was certainly practiced during the Bronze Age, as is attested by the spear-heads, daggers, hatchets and halberds which have been found in northern Laos and which can now be seen in the Saint-Germain museum.

[821 172] It is interesting to note that the inhabitants of Laos attribute a meteoric origin to objects of the Bronze Age, as also to those of the Age of Polished Stone. They believe that these objects fall from the sky when it thunders, and that they are produced by lightning.

The following are some of the methods used by Laotian founders. Casting is always done by the lost wax process.

325 532 **Casting statues.** On an initial rough clay model, the artist applies a layer of fine, soft and well-pugged clay which he shapes in a more careful manner. Then after covering the statue, which is already much more than a rough draft, with a layer of bees-wax of the proper thickness, he finishes modeling the statue on the wax, inserting all the details and all the ornaments which it is to include. Polishing a bit here, engraving there, setting precious stones or simply glass between the eyelids to represent eyes, and inserting gold lips where the mouth is to be located, he gives the

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325 model the appearance which it will have when cast.

[323] On this wax surface a very thin layer is first overlaid of clay which is finely pugged, well diluted with water and quite similar in appearance and consistency to the kaolin from which utensils of thin porcelain are molded. When this [459] [Illustration] [460] [Blank page] [461] first layer is dry, a second is applied which is made up of coarser clay, then a third which is still thicker. Finally, when the whole is no more than a mass which has the vague shape of the original model, a good thickness of fire clay which has been kneaded together with chopped straw, buffalo dung and paddy husks is applied by hand. The mold is then ready for pouring as soon as the outer layer dries.

At certain carefully chosen points in the less conspicuous parts of the model, wax plugs have been inserted at the correct angle through the different layers of clay so that they come out to the surface. Some of these will be vent holes to give passage to the vapors which will be emitted when the statue is cast, and the others are the spouts through which the molten metal will be poured from the crucibles.

The mold has been prepared in an excavation in the ground which is as deep as the statue is tall. When everything is ready, the excavation is filled with dry sand which is well tamped down. Finally the crucibles are arranged all around the mold, in greater or less numbers depending on the size of the object to be cast. Each of these has a bellows and sometimes two so as to be prepared for accidents, to hasten melting and to obtain perfect equality of fluidity and heat in the metal in all the crucibles.

When the time comes the metal is poured into all the spouts at once, and if the mold does not burst because of excess humidity, the bronze soon replaces the wax inside the walls of the mold. It is allowed to cool, then the mold is removed. If the operation is successful the statue then appears, smooth and pure and perfectly identical with the wax model. Only the junction points of the spouts and vent holes need any retouching, but the main parts usually come out admirably well.

325 415 Casting various utensils. Small utensils are cast in just the same way, except that the crucible containing the molten metal is connected to the mold and packed in a common covering--a mixture of buffalo dung, chopped straw and paddy husks. Between the mold and the crucible two small lateral openings have been carefully made, the purpose of which is both to allow vapors to escape and to permit judging the degree of fusion of the metal.

degree.

289 **Paper.** The manufacture of paper using the bark of a tree called "Kok-Sa" (1) is limited to a single region of northern Laos.

(1) See Chapter VII.

It is not of any great importance, since it does not even suffice for local consumption.

The manufacturing processes are those familiar to everyone as being used in China, in Japan, in Annamite lands and in Burma.

321 531 **Wood and ivory carving.** Here we no longer have to deal with an industry, but with an art. The men who practice it are few in number, are highly paid, work slowly and are generally inveterate opium smokers.

Like the goldsmiths and jewelers, the wood and ivory carvers of Laos reproduce, ad infinitum, immutable models which their predecessors have handed down. They are, however, able to execute motifs from any given design. To be sure, they are inferior to their Burmese, Annamite, Malay, Chinese and especially Japanese colleagues as regards the movement, harmony, purity of form and finish of their work.

532 **Fresco painting.** The pagodas of Laos, which have been left untended for many long years, contain curious fresco paintings set off with gold, but lack of care and exposure to the weather have partly destroyed them. This art has very few practitioners in Laos, and it should be added that most of the existing frescoes are mainly the work of Burmese, Cambodians and Chinese of whom the native artists are only the pupils.

396 [438] **Pirogue carpenters.** Nearly all the inhabitants who [464] live on the banks of the big river or its principal tributaries are able to carve out a pirogue. Certain villages, however, have a monopoly in this industry.

When it is a matter merely of hewing out a pirogue which is to be used only for crossing the river, fishing or agricultural service, everyone does a fairly good job. But for the large pirogues which are reserved for regattas, voyages and commercial transports, recourse must be had to specialists. Only they know how to give their products

178: Deydier--74 H, 8-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Lectians AM2
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Fig. XVII. Vientiane. Frescoes of the Vat Sisaket. Story of Bokhalapat (Cl. Presse-Information).

7: Thompson--373 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 533

"There is almost no Westerner with soul so dead that he has not succumbed to the charms of Laotian music. The occasions for hearing it are multiple. Every festival and ceremony as well as impromptu meetings serve as excuse for a song fest. Their music has been lyrically described as 'the purest manifestation of the Laotian soul' (1)

1. Le Boulanger, P., Histoire du Laos Français (Paris, 1930), p. 119.

and it even made Billotey forget 'all the earth, those I love, and indeed myself.' (2) The

2. Billotey, P., Sao-Keo (Paris, 1930), p. 138.

few instruments that exist, notably the khène, are of Malayan or Chinese origin. Both sexes share the honours as singers and improvisors. Songs are taken from poems which are the country's folklore, and the improvisations are recitatives either in Siamese or the vernacular. They are repeated like litanies, with a ritualistic intonation that requires much training as well as stamina, for these recitals often last twelve hours. Everything is grist to their improvising mill. The old is mixed with the new with a caustic verve and licence which is both crude and artistic. There is no method of notation, only memory and routine guide the musicians in selecting from their large repertoire."

10: d'Orleans--277 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 2D2, 212, 533, 563, 802 Ethnic subgroups

"From their [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] own account, they have no special songs, but they use the Laotian music.

Writing is unknown to them; but they keep their accounts, or send their messages by means of small pieces of bamboo, marked with notches which are made at closer or longer intervals according to the signification that has been arranged. This is like our bakers' sticks. (1)

1. M. Harmand has found amongst the peoples of the south of Indo-China the same method of correspondence that Father Crabouillet discovered amongst the Lolos of Setchoun. (Cf. 'Note on the Writing of the Indo-Chinese Khas,' by M. P. Lefèvre-Pontalis, L'Anthropologie, Mars-Avril, 1892.) "

10: d'Orleans--279 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 522, 533, 563, 832 Ethnic subgroups

"They [LSS: Kha boatmen in the service of a Laotian] are in good spirits, and chat from one pirogue to the other, or sing in answer to the women, who are bathing at the water's edge. The men inquire if they are married, and invite them to follow them, in case their hearts are free. The songs, often improvised, are upon subjects referring to love. They also try to frighten the buffaloes that, half hidden in the water, only show their back and the head which they hold horizontally; but the great stupid animals pay no attention to the shouts, they let us pass, contemplating us with an air of fatalistic resignation; but they do not move. In the evening our boatmen ask permission to go to the village. We grant it and follow them, however a few are left behind to keep watch over the pirogues."

10: d'Orleans--308 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 533, 562, 832

"The men gossip with the girls, give them flowers, play to them, recite verses, sing them songs and play at cards with them, but never dance with them. Men and women walk through the streets singing, in groups where the two sexes are apart, or sit opposite the one to the other at the entrance to the pagodas. I shall have an opportunity of recurring to these peculiar love-makings, and I have noticed that, in contradistinction to what generally takes place in the East, here it is the young women who dominate the men, who go through the form of beating them, if necessary, and who condescend to cast an amorous glance at them or to respond to their compliments."

10: d'Orleans--370-372 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 524, 533, 584

[LSS: in Paklay] "In the evening the Siamese lieutenant invites us to a particularly original fête. Upon a small terrace in front of our verandah sit a dozen young girls, their [371] busts draped in gold-thread scarves of native make. Opposite them a dozen young men take their places. A man carrying a Laotian organ, which he has difficulty in setting up, follows them. The pipes of the organ are so long--nearly 14 feet--that he is finally obliged to cut a hole in the roof, but the damage can be easily repaired.

We are about to assist at a good game of repartee, between the men and the women, a sort of literary joust.

Each camp has its champion. On one side a young man, with a rather expressive face, contorts his facial muscles so as to produce every sort of mimicry. Opposite is an old woman with a wrinkled and pockmarked skin, though her ugliness down not prevent her, from possessing the gift of quick retort. The organ plays continually on a grave key in a sort of bass, while the persons present accompany it by clapping their hands at certain measures.

When the woman rejects her questioner's propositions,the latter takes two small candles, made of a little wax coiled round a few threads, holds them fixed with the thumb nail, and gesticulates, turning his hands and moving his arms in passes like those of a hypnotiser. To these movements correspond certain shruggings of the shoulders, contractions of the mouth, distortions of the nose and wrigglings in consonance with the

measure of the organ music. When the grimaces are funny the women mark their satisfaction by bursting into peals of laughter.

Of the group of young men some interrupt to support or excite their champion, or they repeat a refrain in chorus. It is generally some popular phrase, [372] the meaning of which is not clear to either the Siamese lieutenant or the interpreter. There is also a series of exclamations, which one repeats twice, these cries corresponding to our shouts of encouragement: 'Keep it up,' 'don't flinch,' 'steady,' and the like: Aou! aou! aoua! ioua! pemma! sempa! satna!

Sometimes the singing is in crescendo time and the singer seems to be in a hurry. The company becomes excited, encouraging and urging him on. A brass bowl is continually passed round, flowing over with tchoum-tchoum. The animation becomes greater and greater and the party breaks up amid a general hubbub. [LSS: for the text of some of the dialogue, see Laotians, category 539, p. 372-373.] "

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

403 electricians hugged each other, and, enchanted by the din, the
527 audience began to drift away from the theatre and make for the dancing floor.

527 The second attraction in order of popularity was a love-court. A
584 quadrangular arrangement of tables had been formed, covered by a
782 thatched roof raised on posts decorated with woven bamboo
793 representations of animals, weapons and phallic emblems. Seated round the tables in the interior of the square were the girls, and their suitors sat facing them. Between the couples had been placed offerings of food, brought by the girls. Originally a tribute to some ancient, forgotten fertility god, a primeval Thai Venus, the offerings would be given, next day, to the bonzes. All through the night the bantering of witticisms, the singing and the exchange of improvised verse would go on, accompanied by the accordion-like
[534] wheezings of the Kène, the Stone Age gourd pipes of Laos. Sometimes through a happy fault in the circuit the splutter and bellow of the loud-speakers would suddenly lapse, and you heard the beehive dronings of the communal love-making, the kènes, and the voice of the presiding bonze, preaching continually in an archaic, incomprehensible language from the wicker cage into which he had been fastened. The cage symbolized the protection of his religion from these earthly distractions. As soon as inspiration failed he would be relieved by the next on the rota of preachers, waiting now to take his place.

584 Love-courts are the accepted preliminary to the consummation of
[533] affairs of the heart, which — despite European conviction that
576 romantic love is a Western invention — are accompanied in Laos by much versifying and mild, self-imposed frustrations. When, for instance, a well-known beauty is wooed by a number of suitors, a serenading match may be arranged on the veranda of her house to permit her to test under competitive conditions the poetic and musical capabilities of each of them. Complete pre-marital freedom
[836] is recognized, but much outward reserve is maintained. There is a time and place for everything. It is incorrect, for example, to

115: Le Boulanger--76 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

Era of prosperity. It is a certain fact that the country was per- 175*
fectly happy at this time. Feeling protected by a dreaded sovereign, the Laotians cultivated their native unconcern which resulted at once from the moderate nature of their /119/ desires and from the fertility of their soil. Living without any dire needs, all things were for them a ground for rejoicing, and their peaceful character naturally inclined them towards the satisfactions of the spirit and particularly towards music which constitutes the purest manifestation thereof (1).

1. Cf. M. Galerne, Courrier musical, 1925.

Music in Lan-Xang. They therefore held song in special favor 533
and mingled it with dances whose expressive mimicry was related 535
to the pantomime dances of India. The plots were based almost exclusively on love, which Laotians took pleasure in exalting under its most variegated aspects. They sometimes took the form of charming "courts of love" which remind one of those held in our French provinces in the Middle Ages, were sometimes given on the occasion of funeral ceremonies which were in no way envisaged in the same atmosphere of sadness as they are among us, or sometimes on the occasion of the inauguration of a pagoda, the construction of a house or the harvesting of a crop.

The khene. In all these circumstances either instrumental or 534
vocal music had a place. /120/ The most common instrument was the khene, which is still widely used today. The khene is "formed of a series of bamboo tubes which are small in diameter, of various decreasing lengths and arranged in pairs, like two large pipes of Pan, usually in seven consecutive rows. The bamboo tubes are joined together by two half-gourds, fastened with wax, which form an air chamber and are provided with a small circular orifice which serves as a mouthpiece. Inside the bamboo tubes are pierced by holes, some of which let the air in, while the others are blocked with the fingers as the need arises in order to obtain notes, while the palm of the hand grasps the curve of the half-gourd. The air which elicits the notes strikes against metal reeds which are inserted in the upper part of each bamboo tube (1).

1. Cf. M. Galerne, Courrier musical, 1925.

115: Le Boulanger--77 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

534 "The oddest thing about the functioning of the khene is the simultaneity of several notes and their absolute continuity. This results from the fact that air can pass, depending on the fingering, through several tubes at the same time, and that the player breathes in and out by turns. . . . The sounds of the khene, whose /121/ combinations are based on the chief 'harmonics,' are very sweet and are in between those of the harmonium and those of the accordion (1).

1. M. Galerne, op. cit.

"With the khene there was a series of secondary instruments also made of bamboo -- a large flute, a flute with a reed or kind of flageolet, and a flute with a single hole. The orchestra was completed by the ranavastron (2), the gong, the gong-vong or sort of

2. The ranavastron is found in all the countries of the Far East. Invented in Ceylon, it is the ancestor of all instruments played with a bow.

xylophone with a double circular sector, cymbals, a tom-tom and finally bells which were primarily designed to ward off the evil 'Phis.'

533 "As for vocal muxic, it manifested itself in singsong recitatives or choral chants with fascinating musical lines." Even today, thanks to the "French peace," groups of boys and girls, their heads garlanded with flowers, can be seen walking in the villages on moonlit nights and repeating refrains with a harmonious rhythm in unison after verses which have a narrative quality and are usually improvised by the soloist (3).

3. The scale such as we conceive of it does not exist in Laotian music. One nevertheless has the sensation of three distinct "modes": one which has no thirds or sevenths, another which lacks only sevenths, and a third which has a diatonic appoggiatura in fifths. (Cf. M. Galerne, op. cit. /Courrier musical, 1925/.)

/122/ Three distinct characteristic rhythms can be counted: the Love Song which is improvised or handed down by tradition from generation to generation; the Pirogue-men's Song which has

a certain basic licentiousness and is accented by a final sharp 533
cheer; and the singsong in the strict sense which has no great development and to which were applied words, at the whim of the man or woman singing, to celebrate a welcome or any kind of event (1).

1. M. Galerne, op. cit. /Courrier musical, 1925/

Here is one of the love songs, "from which springs all the sentimentally exquisite poetry of the Laotian soul":

The moon is rising; come, o my beloved, and speak to us under the rays of the twinkling star;

O flowers, which exhale your pure perfumes at this hour, come and tell me of his good qualities;

O my heart, why do you beat so strong?

I think of my beloved.

Come, come quickly; I am alone under the roof of my house; why do you leave me thus?

I am languishing, my beloved. Come, then, and press this heart which beats so strongly for you and ask it for the essence of my thoughts.

Come, come quickly.

/123/ Page 123 is devoted to an illustration: "A khene player." -- Translator/ /124/

We must regretfully cut short this rapid excursion into the melodious garden of these people who are instinctively artistic and who lost the joy of living together with their independence through the fault of their leaders' tearing one another to pieces, and also because there cannot for long be any place here below for individuals, as well as for peoples, whom the Germans themselves, although they are nevertheless deeply musical, have scornfully called "mandolin players" (1).

1. The Laotian theater scarcely deserves mention. It de- 545
rives exclusively from the Cambodian and Siamese theater /177/
and is likewise made up of extremely long plays -- epics, warrior legends and romances, and religious tales taken from the Vedas, the Ramayana or the Mahabharata. "To this repertoire are joined the purely Kmer plays and various adaptations of Burmese origin, which are played in classical costumes and in which a good bit of comedy and modernism

115:Le Boulanger--79 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

533

Fig. 8. A Khene player.

/Facing p. 122/

115: Le Boulanger--140 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

000 If death had not placed a brutal term on his wanderings a few weeks later, the serious Mouhot might also have been the first man to question the impassive Buddhas on the mysterious past of this remote land, felt the infinite charm of its melodious nights when the khenes give voice to their moving chords, and -- who can say? -- sung the grace of the pretty girls with bare and gilded breasts who in their carefree way weave multicolored scarves under their flowered huts.

105 He contents himself with noting rapidly: "Fortunately this is not like Siam, and I can get help from the natives. . . . The /225/ Laotians are peaceable, submissive, patient, sober, trusting, credulous, superstitious, faithful, simple and naive. They naturally
/685/ hold robbery in horror. The story is told that one of their kings had thieves fried in a cauldron of boiling oil, but since the ravages of the last wars a certain number of thieves are beginning to be found among them who have been driven to rapine by poverty or by the spirit of vengeance.

/685/ "Besides cultivating rice and maize the Laotians grow batatas,
/241/ gourds, red peppers, melons and other vegetables. . . . They sell
/438 the Chinese ivory and pelts from tigers and wild animals. They
434/ also trade gold dust, silver and copper ore, gamboge, cardamom, lac, wax, dyeing wood, cotton, silk and all the products of their soil for heavy porcelain, small glassware and other small commodities of Chinese industry.

"The Laotians are not made for war. Ever since the beginning they have been subjected to the neighboring kings, and have never been able to shake off this heavy yoke.

"They seem to be more industrious than the Siamese and to
/101/ possess more of the spirit of adventure and trade. Although both peoples /226/ have many points of resemblance, both physical and moral, the Laotians can nevertheless be distinguished by their dialect and especially by their customs, which are simpler and more amiable.

533 ". . . Their music is very sweet, harmonious and sentimental.
101 Only three people are needed to make a melodious concert. One plays a bamboo organ, the second signs romances with the accent of a man inspired, and the third strikes strips of a sonorous wood together in rhythm, the clicking sounds of which have a striking effect" (1).

1. This praise of Laotian music should be compared with the

judgment which he pronounced in October 1858 on Siamese 533
music, in connection with a dramatic presentation at the 101
court of Bangkok: "Deafening music served as the overture to the play. The orchestra distinguished itself by a dreadful racket and a complete absence of harmony... the same musical phrase was played to us for five full hours by the clock, to the great content of the king and his courtesans. I can almost believe that the whole science of music in Siam is limited to this terrible melody, for the other presentations which I was condemned to attend elsewhere always used these unique and discordant notes."

He left Luang-Prabang on August 9 to continue his entomo- 000
logical research in the valley of the Nam-Khane. The fifteenth, "on a splendid night," he camped on the bank of the river, but no matter how "charming" the countryside seemed he felt "sad, pensive and unhappy." "I /227/ miss my native soil. I should like a little life. The continued solitude weighs on me."

On September 3 he reached the village of Na-Le where he killed a tigress and went on a rhinoceros hunt. He was recalled to Luang-Prabang on the 18th by an order of the "Senate" (he does not say why) and turned back on October 15, but after three days of march he had to stop for he was stricken by a violent access of fever. On the 29th he traced this supreme exclamation in the log of his route with a trembling hand: "Have pity on me, O my God!... ." On November 7 he fell into a coma which was intermittently broken by delerium, and on the 10th he passed away about seven o'clock in the evening.

His remains were buried on the following day, "in accordance 114
with the European ceremony," by his faithful servants Phrai and Dong. Three months later the latter brought back his collections, his effects and his papers, together with their account of their master's last moments, to the French consul in Bangkok (1).

1. Cf. the Ferdinand de Lanoye edition, published by Librairie Hachette et Cie., 1882.

Mouhot's tomb (1867). The pious homage deserved by this 000
precursor, this hardy pioneer who fell victim to his devotion to science, was paid to him in April 1867 by the leader of the expedition to explore the Mekong which was organized /228/ by Admiral

as a blessing.

One fact worthy of note is that the "Phi-pop"--men, women and even adolescents--are extremely intelligent folk with lively eyes and full of a strong will and energy. They know [Illustration here] a host of recipes and therapeutic formulas which have been handed down to them by their parents. They might be described as bonesetters or people who have medicine as a sideline, and who act on weak minds and nervous temperaments by the power of suggestion. "Phi-pop" women and girls are usually quite pretty. 791 755 156

One of the methods most widely used to gain the favor of the "Phis" is to play deafening music. 755

"It is not at all unusual to hear diabolic and uninterrupted music in a Laotian house for several days and nights running. In this house there is a person who is seriously ill. All the noise is designed to frighten or to assuage the spirit in the sick person's body and to persuade or force it to [153] leave the body of the invalid. The sick person generally succumbs under the waves of this curative but noisy harmony" (1). 533

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.] [113]

Religion of the Thais. They have neither pagodas nor bonzes, but practice ancestor worship and have a great veneration for the "Spirits or Genii," to whom they make offerings on all occasions. 771 769

In the first room of the house there stands a bamboo altar. The "Spirits" or "Phis" of dead forbears are supposed to inhabit this altar, which is composed of two different levels, the highest one for the male Phis and the other for the female Phis. At its foot there is an opening covered with an elliptical wooden ornament shaped like a mouth. It is there, on this "ancestors' mouth," that the head of the family places offerings and prayers, especially when a member of the family is sick. In principal an animal is never killed without some scrap of food or a few drops of blood being offered to the ancestors' mouth.

"Spirits, whether genii or demons, are everywhere--in the sky, on earth, in the forests, in the water. They are the object of a widespread cult over which individuals who might be described as 776 793 755

764 the fire collapsed. In a great shower of sparks, in the middle of a
787 long blue flame, the coffin tottered and fortunately leaned to the right side. The dead man's spirit was satisfied, and it was also an excellent omen for the prosperity of the Muong.

764 [214] Now the pyre, the catafalque, the coffin, the corpse and all were nothing more than an immense live fire, an incandescent mass which projected bizarre flashes on the motley crowd and gave to it, in the evening twilight beside the great river, a phantasmagorical air.

From time to time one of the posts of the canopy could be seen in the center of the fire, rising towards the sky like a gigantic torch. The coffin toppled, and for the space of a second the corpse seemed to appear grimacing and twisting in the middle of the flames, like a salamander.

The whole fire fell in, and the crackling noises lessened. Two or three tongues of flame shot out here and there, only to be extinguished immediately. The coals finished burning themselves out, and soon nothing was left of the pyre and of the whole edifice, so bizarrely decorated, but a pile of gray ashes in the middle of which a few whitish and incompletely burned bone fragments could still be seen. With night the last gleams of the pyre disappeared, the last coals went out and the only light remaining was that of the twinkling stars.

Early the next day the bonzes went to the spot where the pyre had stood. They collected the ashes which had been cooled by dew during the night and then, after throwing a few handfuls to the four winds, they used the rest to draw a crude human face on the ground. The few whitish bones which were still left and which crumbled at the touch were collected and placed in a jar of ordinary earth, which would be buried in the enclosure of a pagoda at the foot of a sacred "ficus."

Later on, since the deceased had been well-to-do and his family
[585] was wealthy, the latter would be helped by the people of the province to build a brick pyramid called "That" inside the pagoda enclosure.

A few ashes in an urn and, in some, the memory of a great celebration and a few good meals...and that is all that remained of the man who had long been a great leader in his province.

•533 Music. "Instrumental music holds a place of honor in Laos.
534 The instruments are few in number, and are of Malayan and Chinese origin.

534 meters in diameter. By striking the gongs with these two hammers or brushing against the gongs with them, musicians succeed in playing certain local airs which, although their sounds are somewhat sharp to the ear, are nonetheless harmonious at a distance.

"These various instruments are frequently joined together to form orchestras which play in comparative harmony.

533 "There is no method of musical notation. Memory and routine are the performers' only guides. Their memory is adequate enough and their mastery of the instruments sufficient to provide their listeners with a fairly varied repertory." (Le Laos français.)

[216] Songs and singers. Songs and improvisations enjoy a great vogue in Laos, and are an obligatory feature of every feast and every ceremony. They also serve to keep up the spirits of boatmen and to break the monotony of traveling.

Talents as singers and improvisers are generally shared by both sexes. The same person will often have both these abilities, which are to some extent the heritage of certain families.

538 The songs consist of poems which form a kind of anthology or "Folk-Lore" of the land. Everyone knows some snatches of these
533 stories, which they hear over and over again without tiring of them and which are handed down intact or embellished with new parts from parents to their children and from the old to the young.

The improvisations are recitatives in the vulgar tongue or in Siamese which are composed according to circumstances. Certain songs are delivered in a language unknown to the Laotians, but which they repeat like the litanies of Buddhism with, so to speak, a ritual cadence and intonation.

Singers and improvisers of both sexes are called Mô-Lam or Mô-Kab-Lam, and the poems which they recite are called Kam-Kong. These artists are very well trained and are capable of singing aloud for twelve hours at a stretch without showing any trace of fatigue or lassitude, whereas even the hardiest kene players cannot blow on their instruments for more than about an hour.

Love stories, invocations, inspirations, memories, news items, legends, prophecies, voyages, catastrophes, etc. are all matters for improvisation. All these songs are arranged, amplified or distorted to suit the particular turn of mind, the fancy, the spirit or the merriment of the author and to suit the occasion and the moment.

538 With his somewhat caustic but not malicious verve, the improviser excels in mixing the modern with the ancient. He takes particular

Kha

586 684 and to the family of his accomplice. In a case of flagrante delicto, however, he has the right to kill the guilty parties.

[462] Kha women, when married, are renowned for their austerity, and their conduct is usually exemplary. Moreover, they are very soon disfigured by precocious and repeated childbearing, as well as by the difficult work which they do, and after two or three years of marriage the poor women are no longer tempting to anyone.

764 Deaths. Cremation is not practiced by the Khas. They bury their dead in as summary a fashion as the Lus, and for a few days bring food to the freshly filled grave. Then the latter is abandoned.

When a chief or a rich man is to be buried, the body is placed in a coffin hewn from a tree trunk.

181 Character. Like all oppressed peoples, the Khas are reserved and timid. They are afraid of innovations and new faces. But in intimate gatherings with their own people they are just as merry and love music, dances, celebrations and festivals just as much as the other peoples of Laos.

535 536 Music and dancing. They know certain dances imitated from the Lus, pantomimes (1) which resemble the I-Ke of the Burmese,

(1) They also have the habit of performing scenes in pantomime, rather like extremely primitive ballets. We shall describe one such scene:

"A group of girls, guarded by two respectable men, are pursuing the pleasures of dancing. A rogue comes up and tries to make off with one of the girls. After a few unsuccessful attempts he succeeds in eluding the guards' vigilance, jumps forward to seize the girl on whom he has designs, and clasps her in his arms. But his happiness is too much for him and he falls senseless at the feet of the girl he wanted to abduct." (Le Laos français.) - [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

and [255] singsong legends in which the r's and k's roll out in terrible fashion. 533 They also have songs which they accompany on flutes, clarinets and single-stringed violins. Some tribes have xylophones, these being instruments composed of bamboo tubes of [Illustration here] different thickness and length, each of which produces a tone varying with its size. It will be seen that by striking with a [256] stick of wood on these tubes, a combination of more or less harmonious sounds will

149: Reinach--186 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Kha

result. But the Kha ideal is to possess a battery of gongs of different 533
sizes and timbres, and with these they manage to obtain quite perfect chords.

Industry. Withdrawn in their mountains where they live in small 433
isolated groups, the Khas use their leisure time to make many basket-work and hollow-ware products which have a mark of elegance and a great deal of delicacy. Other tribes make paper from wood pulp, weave mats from rattan and bamboo bark, etc. They use all these products in trade.

Finally, certain Khas exploit deposits of iron ore and transform 316
it into farming implements, while others wash gold-bearing sands.

In general, although the Khas are industrious they work only to 461
procure what is strictly indispensable. They cannot resign themselves to staying away from home for any length of time and dread any stay in the low country, which they say is unhealthy for them. Since they [313]
have particular aptitudes for woodcutting, however, they have been successfully employed to cut teak wood in the forests on the right bank of the Mekong which are situated in Siamese territory. But it must be admitted that there they are in mountainous country and in the midst of forests, as in their native region.

The Khas of southern Laos. In southern Laos Khas are found who differ very little from those of Upper Laos. We shall not concern ourselves with them, but shall deal briefly with the many more numerous ones who have particular mores and customs.

The Djarais, the Rades, the Bahnars, the Cedangs, the Peunongs, [619]
the Rognaos (1), etc. are the principal types of these Kha tribes,

(1) See Appendix XVIII.

which for the most part are still independent.

These people are proud, large and muscular, supple, trained in 181
all forms of bodily exercise, bold, warlike and brave.

These qualities, moreover, have been developed by their pe- 567
culiar way of [257] [Illustration] [258] [Blank page] [259] life.
Accustomed to hunting slaves from which they extracted large profits 721
by selling them on the banks of the Mekong, these Khas have had to resort to continual expeditions in order to obtain their human game.

For many long years, in fact, they could acquire [Illustration 567
here] the gongs, buffalo, metals, textiles, etc. which they needed only by selling captives, generally Annamites, whom they went and

149: Reinach--188 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

101 [261] [Illustration] [262] [Blank page] [263] As far as marriages, deaths, etc. go, we find practically the same customs among the Kha tribes of southern Laos as among their fellows in northern Laos.

231 It should be noted that the Rades breed a variety of small horses which are highly prized in Annam, Laos and Siam.

439 "These Khas love music and dancing. Their favorite instruments

[533] are gongs and bells.

"A set of gongs consists of seven, nine or twelve single ones.

534 Made of copper and often very beautiful, these gongs take the shape of a cylinder from forty to eighty centimeters in diameter, only one end of which is closed by a vibrating plate. The cap worn by our judges and professors, although on a smaller scale, gives a fairly clear idea of the shape of these instruments. A few of the instruments are artfully cast and ornamented with much elegance. There is a solid ring about a third of the way along the gong's length which is part and parcel with the rest of the gong and makes it possible to hang it up on a side of the house, at about the height of a man's head, by means of a rattan thong fastened to the frame.

"The performers stand facing the battery and pummel it with their fists, taking care to strike the vibrating plate in the center so that it will emit a true tone. This procedure produces perfect musical notes, which are accompanied by the dull resonances of the tom-toms and the sharp sonorities of the bells made of a copper and tin alloy. The gongs bring a high price, and when it is a fine one a complete series is worth from 1,200 to 1,500 francs.

"In some villages the performers each take an instrument and hold it in a sling fastened to their shoulder, then form a column in single file. This Indian-style procession marches from the center of the house towards one of its extremities, striking more and more gently as it moves away from its point of departure. Then it returns to the center, unleashing a compensating crescendo. The maneuver begins again towards the other end of the house, and the musical promenade continues until the musicians are exhausted.

535 "When the Khas begin to play and perform the Kimlang (a very stirring war dance) and the warriors grow excited from dancing and

272 from drinking rice wine, it is wise to make them stop as soon as they

579 begin to pick up their weapons, for when drunk with alcohol and enflamed with ardor they are no longer masters of themselves.

714 "War dress includes feathers in the hair and a sort of cross of Saint Andrew formed of cloth rolled and crossed on the chest. Weapons, quivers, arrows, crossbows, bucklers, spears and swords complete their equipment.

naturally be "water." These two elements, opposed though they are 593
to one another, nonetheless go together. If you should happen to 647
raise your voice, see to it that it does not reach the ears of your 565
neighbors who will be sure to laugh at your domestic misunderstanding.
There is a good way to appease your anger: that is to go out and get
some fresh air. A moment of distraction will calm your irritation.
This precious and effective remedy is called, according to a Laotian
expression, "to caress one's heart with a hand drenched with fresh
water."

On a walk and on a visit.--Formerly it used to be considered 574
a disgrace for a mandarin to go for a walk by himself or to visit minor 647
functionaries. Nowadays this is no longer the case. A Laotian 565
Minister goes out alone without being accompanied by the traditional 178
retinue. He visits all classes of society without being criticized for
it by anyone at all.

At a private gathering.--In contrast to the customs of former
times, present-day mandarins accept the invitation of a simple
citizen. The host very often organizes various diversions: dances, /533/
lamvong, orchestras, songs etc. The Ministers willingly participate /535/
in these; they sing, dance, and pay their respects to the phousaos
while they mingle with the crowd. Certain Laotians whom I consider
backward criticize the liberal manner on the part of our Ministers.
Our great mandarins are their own masters. Let them turn a deaf
ear to these carpings. /978/

Honor Laotian Women

Some people consider the Laotian woman as an inferior 562
creature.

Certain women, it appears, are not permitted to eat with
their husband. Miserable husbands! You consider then that your
better half is like an animal?

Certainly, tradition says: "The woman must sleep with her /513/
head lower than her husband's. She must go to bed after him and
she must get up before him. The husband must have eaten three /264/
mouthfuls of rice before the wife can begin to eat in her turn."

These counsels of our fathers are valuable, but they are far
from indicating that the woman is inferior to the man. They recommend,

538 inscriptions, some of which go back to the fourteenth century and are
[172] in the Laotian language. For the earlier period we have seen above that these inscriptions were either in Sanskrit or in Khmer (Cf. Stele of Sayfong, appendix: Vientiane).

Music

533 Laotian songs belong to the field of poetry and are of two kinds:
538 the one consists of poems celebrating the exploits of legendary heroes,
883 transmitted from father to child, from master to pupil, and often expanded by imaginary improvisations; the others embroider the love theme.

[86] Alternate chants are used, particularly in the courts of love. A young girl sings, a boy answers. These songs have become a traditional game whose social function has been forgotten. They consist of a series of questions and answers. Often the questions are even real puzzles or simple guessing questions. By asking each other questions, the young people try to get to know each other.

It seems as if the origin could be found here of what the Indians call the svayamvara which is the choice of the husband by the woman. This custom is very persistent among the white Thai of the Phongtho region.

534 While vocal music is very prevalent in Laos, there exists also instrumental music which should not be neglected. We summarize here the excellent account given by his Highness Tiao Souvanna Phouma on Laotian music.

"There are three kinds of instruments: a) wind (the khouy and the khene), b) string (the So I and the So O), c) percussion (the Nang Nat and the Khong Vong).

The khene consists of a series of thin bamboos of various and decreasing lengths placed side by side in pairs like the flutes of Pan. Usually these are in seven consecutive rows. These bamboos are joined together by two half gourds attached with wax which form the blowing chamber and have a small circular opening to serve as mouthpiece. On the inside, the bamboos are pierced with holes. The most curious thing about the way the khene functions is that several notes are simultaneous and are absolutely continuous.

The khouy is a flute without any keys, generally made of bamboo and giving very clear tones.

The so, violins with two strings, consist of a long carved wooden handle and a sounding box. [87] The latter is a half coconut closed by

a thin wooden plate for the So O, or a simple cylinder of may dou 534
whose extremity has a stretched boa skin for the So I.

The So Bang is nothing but a bamboo tube in a crude handle. Its register is small, and it is never used in an orchestra.

In all these violins, the bow is made of animal hair and passes between the strings.

Among the percussion instruments, the Nang Nat or Rang Nat is the most popular. It is a real xylophone and is made of wooden plates of different thicknesses suspended above a boat-shaped concave piece of wood which forms the sounding box.

The Khong Vong consists of sixteen bronze cymbals arranged on a semicircular frame made of rattan. In order to play these two instruments the musician uses two mallets whose head is made of elephant skin for the Khong Vong with which he strikes the keys by sliding them over the latter.

The Laotian orchestra has two forms: 1st) the Seb Noi or Ma Ho Ry consisting of several So, a varying number of khene, a Rang Nat, a Khong Vong and tambourines. The role of the Seb Noi is to accompany in an undertone a chorus or a solo; 2nd) the Seb Gnai (yai) is made up of the same instruments as the Seb Noi. Along with the so and the khene it also includes some large drums and a sort of clarinet or pi. This orchestra never accompanies singing. Its place is in the royal retinue or in a religious procession. Occasionally it is used in war dances of an episode taken from the Ramayana.

The performers always play from memory. Musicians are educated purely by ear and by intelligence.

[88] Laotian music uses only the octave with seven tones corres- 533
ponding to the scale of a khene. There are a variety of tunes composed by individual musicians whose names are lost. At the present day the most popular is the Lam Vong.

The Theatre

With more ballet and pantomime than real theatre, the Laotian 536
theatre, just as in Cambodia, is an intimate and complicated assembly of literature and music with orchestra and chorus, mimed scenes, dance and dialogue. The subjects of the classical theatre played at court are drawn from the Ramayana or other equally popular local works. The drama is presented with gestures learned and regulated beforehand, since each of the plastic phrases expressed by the actor or actress has necessarily a length determined by that of the musical phrase played by the orchestra or sung by the chorus.

7: Thompson--373 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
177, 534

"The few instruments that exist, notably the khène, are of Malayan or Chinese origin."

10: d'Orleans--280 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 534

"In the square, a man is holding one of the Laotian bamboo instruments that resemble an organ; this one is two yards long, and the artist produces from it sweet solemn notes, which mingle with some faint songs. The listeners accompany the music by striking one hand against the palm of the other; instead of following the rhythm in three time used in Central Asia and amongst the Mussulmans, the clapping here continues uniformly and regularly. It is more monotonous."

10: d'Orleans--287 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 286, 301, 462, 534

"As soon as we are fairly in Mekong, we stop on the left bank for luncheon, near a small village hidden among the cocoa-trees. A good road traverses it, and leads to the pagoda; the women are working at the cotton, carding it with a sort of small bow, spinning and weaving it; the children impress me by the fairness of their skin; a great many wear bracelets on their feet. Hanging in the courtyard of the pagoda, I notice a bell at least two yards long, made from the hollow trunk of a tree, it is struck every morning and evening."

10: d'Orleans--351-352 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 521, 527, 534, 832

[LSS: during the Ngones ceremonies which are part of the Laotian New Year celebration.] "Facing the girls were seated one or two groups of young men playing upon the guitar, the tam-tam and a sort of Laotian organ made of bamboo. Several of them are singing, but when they do so they put a corner of their scarf over their head so as not to be seen, while others take up the chorus. While the singing is in progress, conversation is allowed to go on between the young men and the girls, each of [352] the former taking up his place opposite the girl of his fancy. This goes on until two in the morning, being much like the flirtation of other countries, with this difference that there is no dancing and that conversation with the unmarried girls is more free than with married women."

10: d'Orleans--353 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 534

"The orchestra is reinforced by flute players, their instrument consisting of a simple bamboo cane pierced with holes and having at one end a notch upon which the player rests his upper lip."

10: d'Orleans--354-355 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 292, 534, 644

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"With the Laos soldiers, preceded by six trumpeters, comes the guard dressed in yellow tick and wearing round caps, striped blue and white. The [355] standard of Luang Prabang is white, with a particoloured dragon like that of China, while a second white flag with a red border, upon which can be traced the outlines of an elephant, must be Siamese.

The soldiers are followed by the musicians and certain instruments, such as the drums and the cymbals, are placed upon a wooden square which is suspended by ropes from the shoulders of several bearers, the player marching in the centre. Then come more soldiers, naked to the waist, sword-bearers, lance-bearers, and cane-bearers, the canes being tied up with some red material in bundles.

Last of all comes the king, seated upon a very small gilt throne with no dome to it and borne by eight men, facing the king being two children on their knees. He is wearing a small white jacket, a silken langoufi and a rather dirty old gray helmet, with an European sunshade in his hand; the rear guard is formed by young Laotians, intoxicated with tchoum-tchoum, many of them bearing upon their faces marks of the mud thrown by the young girls."

25; Brodrick--100 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 273, 527, 534, 541

"In May is the Feast of Fireworks, that begins with a decorous temple service and then, after nightfall, the big drums start to throb. All night long men hammer at the buffalo-hide tambours, breaking off only to make the rounds of the village where, at each house, they drink rice-alcohol, and so the Firework Festival goes on, with rockets whizzing in the sky and the bass drums rumbling, a holiday of drunkenness and gaiety prolonged for three whole days.

The Festival of the Great Waters, in July, is not unlike that in Cambodia, but more spontaneous and fairy-like. Then there is the Cake Feast in October and then at the Hunter's Moon, the Festival of the Great Oath.

These are some of the official court festivals in the realm of Luang-Prabang, but the local, village feasts are more revealing of the Laotian as he is. The Courts of Love, singing all night long, and the funerals..."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

403 electricians hugged each other, and, enchanted by the din, the
527 audience began to drift away from the theatre and make for the dancing floor.

527 The second attraction in order of popularity was a love-court. A
584 quadrangular arrangement of tables had been formed, covered by a
782 thatched roof raised on posts decorated with woven bamboo
793 representations of animals, weapons and phallic emblems. Seated round the tables in the interior of the square were the girls, and their suitors sat facing them. Between the couples had been placed offerings of food, brought by the girls. Originally a tribute to some ancient, forgotten fertility god, a primeval Thai Venus, the offerings would be given, next day, to the bonzes. All through the night the bantering of witticisms, the singing and the exchange of improvised verse would go on, accompanied by the accordion-like
[534] wheezings of the Kène, the Stone Age gourd pipes of Laos. Sometimes through a happy fault in the circuit the splutter and bellow of the loud-speakers would suddenly lapse, and you heard the beehive dronings of the communal love-making, the kènes, and the voice of the presiding bonze, preaching continually in an archaic, incomprehensible language from the wicker cage into which he had been fastened. The cage symbolized the protection of his religion from these earthly distractions. As soon as inspiration failed he would be relieved by the next on the rota of preachers, waiting now to take his place.

584 Love-courts are the accepted preliminary to the consummation of
[533] affairs of the heart, which — despite European conviction that
576 romantic love is a Western invention — are accompanied in Laos by much versifying and mild, self-imposed frustrations. When, for instance, a well-known beauty is wooed by a number of suitors, a serenading match may be arranged on the veranda of her house to permit her to test under competitive conditions the poetic and musical capabilities of each of them. Complete pre-marital freedom
[836] is recognized, but much outward reserve is maintained. There is a time and place for everything. It is incorrect, for example, to

115: Le Boulanger--76 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

Era of prosperity. It is a certain fact that the country was per- 175*
fectly happy at this time. Feeling protected by a dreaded sovereign, the Laotians cultivated their native unconcern which resulted at once from the moderate nature of their /119/ desires and from the fertility of their soil. Living without any dire needs, all things were for them a ground for rejoicing, and their peaceful character naturally inclined them towards the satisfactions of the spirit and particularly towards music which constitutes the purest manifestation thereof (1).

1. Cf. M. Galerne, Courrier musical, 1925.

Music in Lan-Xang. They therefore held song in special favor 533
and mingled it with dances whose expressive mimicry was related 535
to the pantomime dances of India. The plots were based almost exclusively on love, which Laotians took pleasure in exalting under its most variegated aspects. They sometimes took the form of charming "courts of love" which remind one of those held in our French provinces in the Middle Ages, were sometimes given on the occasion of funeral ceremonies which were in no way envisaged in the same atmosphere of sadness as they are among us, or sometimes on the occasion of the inauguration of a pagoda, the construction of a house or the harvesting of a crop.

The khene. In all these circumstances either instrumental or 534
vocal music had a place. /120/ The most common instrument was the khene, which is still widely used today. The khene is "formed of a series of bamboo tubes which are small in diameter, of various decreasing lengths and arranged in pairs, like two large pipes of Pan, usually in seven consecutive rows. The bamboo tubes are joined together by two half-gourds, fastened with wax, which form an air chamber and are provided with a small circular orifice which serves as a mouthpiece. Inside the bamboo tubes are pierced by holes, some of which let the air in, while the others are blocked with the fingers as the need arises in order to obtain notes, while the palm of the hand grasps the curve of the half-gourd. The air which elicits the notes strikes against metal reeds which are inserted in the upper part of each bamboo tube (1).

1. Cf. M. Galerne; Courrier musical, 1925.

534 "The oddest thing about the functioning of the khene is the simultaneity of several notes and their absolute continuity. This results from the fact that air can pass, depending on the fingering, through several tubes at the same time, and that the player breathes in and out by turns. . . . The sounds of the khene, whose /121/ combinations are based on the chief 'harmonics,' are very sweet and are in between those of the harmonium and those of the accordion (1).

1. M. Galerne, op. cit.

"With the khene there was a series of secondary instruments also made of bamboo -- a large flute, a flute with a reed or kind of flageolet, and a flute with a single hole. The orchestra was completed by the ranavastron (2), the gong, the gong-vong or sort of

2. The ranavastron is found in all the countries of the Far East. Invented in Ceylon, it is the ancestor of all instruments played with a bow.

xylophone with a double circular sector, cymbals, a tom-tom and finally bells which were primarily designed to ward off the evil 'Phis.'

533 "As for vocal muxic, it manifested itself in singsong recitatives or choral chants with fascinating musical lines." Even today, thanks to the "French peace," groups of boys and girls, their heads garlanded with flowers, can be seen walking in the villages on moonlit nights and repeating refrains with a harmonious rhythm in unison after verses which have a narrative quality and are usually improvised by the soloist (3).

3. The scale such as we conceive of it does not exist in Laotian music. One nevertheless has the sensation of three distinct "modes": one which has no thirds or sevenths, another which lacks only sevenths, and a third which has a diatonic appoggiatura in fifths. (Cf. M. Galerne, op. cit. /Courrier musical, 1925/.)

/122/ Three distinct characteristic rhythms can be counted: the Love Song which is improvised or handed down by tradition from generation to generation; the Pirogue-men's Song which has

149: Reinach--1b G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 2 [p. 1]. Laotian musicians and dancers.

764 the fire collapsed. In a great shower of sparks, in the middle of a
787 long blue flame, the coffin tottered and fortunately leaned to the right side. The dead man's spirit was satisfied, and it was also an excellent omen for the prosperity of the Muong.

764 [214] Now the pyre, the catafalque, the coffin, the corpse and all were nothing more than an immense live fire, an incandescent mass which projected bizarre flashes on the motley crowd and gave to it, in the evening twilight beside the great river, a phantasmagorical air.

From time to time one of the posts of the canopy could be seen in the center of the fire, rising towards the sky like a gigantic torch. The coffin toppled, and for the space of a second the corpse seemed to appear grimacing and twisting in the middle of the flames, like a salamander.

The whole fire fell in, and the crackling noises lessened. Two or three tongues of flame shot out here and there, only to be extinguished immediately. The coals finished burning themselves out, and soon nothing was left of the pyre and of the whole edifice, so bizarrely decorated, but a pile of gray ashes in the middle of which a few whitish and incompletely burned bone fragments could still be seen. With night the last gleams of the pyre disappeared, the last coals went out and the only light remaining was that of the twinkling stars.

Early the next day the bonzes went to the spot where the pyre had stood. They collected the ashes which had been cooled by dew during the night and then, after throwing a few handfuls to the four winds, they used the rest to draw a crude human face on the ground. The few whitish bones which were still left and which crumbled at the touch were collected and placed in a jar of ordinary earth, which would be buried in the enclosure of a pagoda at the foot of a sacred "ficus."

[585] Later on, since the deceased had been well-to-do and his family was wealthy, the latter would be helped by the people of the province to build a brick pyramid called "That" inside the pagoda enclosure.

A few ashes in an urn and, in some, the memory of a great celebration and a few good meals...and that is all that remained of the man who had long been a great leader in his province.

533 Music. "Instrumental music holds a place of honor in Laos.
534 The instruments are few in number, and are of Malayan and Chinese origin.

149: Reinach--161 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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"The most common of these instruments (the kène or Laotian organ) is a sort [215] of Pan's pipe of a peculiar shape, a kind of organ in which the wind is supplied by the lungs. A series of bamboo pipes of very small diameter (10 to 12 millimeters) placed two by two and juxtaposed until there are as many as ten or twelve in all, are joined together at a point some 25 or 30 centimeters from the bottom of the instrument by a wooden collar provided with a mouthpiece. Each pair of pipes is longer than the pair preceding it, and the bottoms of all the pairs are aligned. The pipes are hollow from one end to the other and communicate with the frame member, which serves the function of a bellows, through holes which cannot be seen. Just above the frame each tube is pierced by a hole on its outer face (the two shortest ones are also pierced just above the mouth of the frame, on the narrow side of the instrument).

"To play the instrument, the musician brings the mouthpiece to his lips. With both hands held flat and his fingers placed over the holes, he holds the instrument in a nearly vertical position. The musician blows, and by using his fingers as he would on the holes of a flute he obtains sounds which remind one of those of the harmonium.

"The smallest of these instruments measure from forty to fifty centimeters in height, while some are as much as three meters in height.

"The flageolet, the small flute without a key, the Chinese violin with a long handle mounted on a gourd which serves as a sounding box, the cymbals without a key, the bass drum, the tambourine, the gong, the xylophone (a harmonica with wooden sounding-bars) and finally the piano-gong (kong-vong) are the principal instruments. The latter instrument merits a description. The frame is circular, taking the form of a horseshoe, and consists of two concentric galleries 25 centimeters in height, with an outer diameter of one to 1.2 meters and an inner diameter of eighty centimeters to a meter. On this frame sixteen small gongs are mounted flat along the top, like stones in a necklace. The gongs bulge out in the center, and each of them has a different pitch so that they form an irregular scale, at least by our musical standards. To play the instrument the musician stands in the center, leaving the opening through which he entered the circle behind him. In each hand he holds a striker shaped like a thick, flat mushroom, the handle of which is wooden and the head formed by a disk of elephant hide from one to 1.2

534 meters in diameter. By striking the gongs with these two hammers or brushing against the gongs with them, musicians succeed in playing certain local airs which, although their sounds are somewhat sharp to the ear, are nonetheless harmonious at a distance.

"These various instruments are frequently joined together to form orchestras which play in comparative harmony.

533 "There is no method of musical notation. Memory and routine are the performers' only guides. Their memory is adequate enough and their mastery of the instruments sufficient to provide their listeners with a fairly varied repertory." (Le Laos français.)

[216] Songs and singers. Songs and improvisations enjoy a great vogue in Laos, and are an obligatory feature of every feast and every ceremony. They also serve to keep up the spirits of boatmen and to break the monotony of traveling.

Talents as singers and improvisers are generally shared by both sexes. The same person will often have both these abilities, which are to some extent the heritage of certain families.

538 The songs consist of poems which form a kind of anthology or "Folk-Lore" of the land. Everyone knows some snatches of these
533 stories, which they hear over and over again without tiring of them and which are handed down intact or embellished with new parts from parents to their children and from the old to the young.

The improvisations are recitatives in the vulgar tongue or in Siamese which are composed according to circumstances. Certain songs are delivered in a language unknown to the Laotians, but which they repeat like the litanies of Buddhism with, so to speak, a ritual cadence and intonation.

Singers and improvisers of both sexes are called Mô-Lam or Mô-Kab-Lam, and the poems which they recite are called Kam-Kong. These artists are very well trained and are capable of singing aloud for twelve hours at a stretch without showing any trace of fatigue or lassitude, whereas even the hardiest kene players cannot blow on their instruments for more than about an hour.

Love stories, invocations, inspirations, memories, news items, legends, prophecies, voyages, catastrophes, etc. are all matters for improvisation. All these songs are arranged, amplified or distorted to suit the particular turn of mind, the fancy, the spirit or the merriment of the author and to suit the occasion and the moment.

538 With his somewhat caustic but not malicious verve, the improviser excels in mixing the modern with the ancient. He takes particular

149: Reinach--177 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

village and those of ancestors. Prayers for the dead are said, and 782
when they are over the head and feet of a goat, crude clay statuettes 769
representing two men, two buffalo and two oxen, and numeroux wax
candles are placed on a raft made of banana trees. The raft is
launched full into the current of a river while men collect on the
banks and fire salvos of shots and shoot off fireworks.

The musical instruments of the Thais are the "Kene" and [240] 534
a kind of clarinet with two tubes, reinforced by gongs and tom-toms.

Their songs are not at all noisy and are much more like mono- 538
tonous chants.

The Thais have a very characteristic game, and this is the game 524
of the "inexhaustible jar." A jar of rice beer is placed on the floor
of a house and five bamboo tubes stuck in it to serve as straws. Five 273
men take positions around the jar, and each of them puts a tube in
his mouth. Into each of the jars, and above a kind of porous stopper
made of pressed paddy husks, water is poured by means of an ox
horn with a hole in the end. At a given signal both men and women
begin to suck conscientiously while the contents of the ox horn are
poured into each jar three times in succession. The ones who empty
their jar first win, and the losers have to drink the contents of ten
horns of water poured over what is left of the beer in their jar.

The Thai beer does not have a bad taste, and its alcoholic
strength is equivalent to that of hard cider, which it closely resembles
in flavor. Although the additions of water decrease the beverage's
percentage of alcohol it nevertheless produces a slight intoxication,
due primarily to the speed with which it is sucked through the straw.
But the inebriety never degenerates into a quarrel, and provokes
nothing but laughter, songs and unadulterated merriment.

Who would believe that the Thais have the custom of throwing 527
"confetti"? Nothing is more true, however, for in the celebrations
at the end of harvest, which take place in December or January,
the merrymakers throw cotton seeds mixed with paddy, with husks,
and sometimes also with ashes.

149: Reinach--188 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

101 [261] [Illustration] [262] [Blank page] [263] As far as marriages, deaths, etc. go, we find practically the same customs among the Kha tribes of southern Laos as among their fellows in northern Laos.

231 It should be noted that the Rades breed a variety of small horses which are highly prized in Annam, Laos and Siam.

439 "These Khas love music and dancing. Their favorite instruments [533] are gongs and bells.

"A set of gongs consists of seven, nine or twelve single ones. 534 Made of copper and often very beautiful, these gongs take the shape of a cylinder from forty to eighty centimeters in diameter, only one end of which is closed by a vibrating plate. The cap worn by our judges and professors, although on a smaller scale, gives a fairly clear idea of the shape of these instruments. A few of the instruments are artfully cast and ornamented with much elegance. There is a solid ring about a third of the way along the gong's length which is part and parcel with the rest of the gong and makes it possible to hang it up on a side of the house, at about the height of a man's head, by means of a rattan thong fastened to the frame.

"The performers stand facing the battery and pummel it with their fists, taking care to strike the vibrating plate in the center so that it will emit a true tone. This procedure produces perfect musical notes, which are accompanied by the dull resonances of the tom-toms and the sharp sonorities of the bells made of a copper and tin alloy. The gongs bring a high price, and when it is a fine one a complete series is worth from 1,200 to 1,500 francs.

"In some villages the performers each take an instrument and hold it in a sling fastened to their shoulder, then form a column in single file. This Indian-style procession marches from the center of the house towards one of its extremities, striking more and more gently as it moves away from its point of departure. . Then it returns to the center, unleashing a compensating crescendo. The maneuver begins again towards the other end of the house, and the musical promenade continues until the musicians are exhausted.

535 "When the Khas begin to play and perform the Kimlang (a very 272 stirring war dance) and the warriors grow excited from dancing and 579 from drinking rice wine, it is wise to make them stop as soon as they begin to pick up their weapons, for when drunk with alcohol and enflamed with ardor they are no longer masters of themselves.

714 "War dress includes feathers in the hair and a sort of cross of Saint Andrew formed of cloth rolled and crossed on the chest. Weapons, quivers, arrows, crossbows, bucklers, spears and swords complete their equipment.

149: Reinach--408 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Meo

[197] The Meos have several dialects in their particular language.
Their musical instruments are reduced to two: a kind of bagpipe
534 resembling the Laotian organ, but in which the frame is metal and the sounds sharper; and a smaller instrument which is nearly identical with the toy known in France as a jew's-harp.

535 To the accompaniment of their instruments, the Meos dance something reminiscent of the bear dance. (Le Laos français, 1900, Schneider Hanoi.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), Notice sur le Laos français.]

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Mai-tiou		12	.5 to .6	Same as above.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Very soft wood, white, slightly grayish, of inferior quality, cannot withstand rain; fine grain; well-grown tree. Lasts about 7 years.
Mai-koung		15	.6 to .8	Boards and traverse beams. The dried leaves are used to make pirogue roofs and partitions for Laotian houses.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Fairly hard wood, slightly reddish, well-grown; plentiful.
Mai-kha-thang		25 to 30	.25 to .3	Beams	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Hardwood, slightly yellowish, plentiful, quite well-grown.
Mai-tong		35	.5	Coffin planks.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Softwood, white, acid fruit; plentiful.
Mai-keng-seng		15	.6	Planks, studs for partition walls and doors.	Yes	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Softwood, heartwood dark red; plentiful in the valleys.
Mai-man-pa		15	.25	House columns.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Hard and resistant wood, grayish-yellow, fairly easy to work; plentiful, unlimited life.
Mai-hat	Cai-xoai (Annamite)	25	.4	Wooden bells, mediocre traverse beams and columns; little used in building.	No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Rather unresistant, yellowish-white wood; plentiful, unlimited life.

[table continued over]

588 inscriptions, some of which go back to the fourteenth century and are
[172] in the Laotian language. For the earlier period we have seen above that these inscriptions were either in Sanskrit or in Khmer (Cf. Stele of Sayfong, appendix: Vientiane).

Music

533 Laotian songs belong to the field of poetry and are of two kinds:
538 the one consists of poems celebrating the exploits of legendary heroes,
883 transmitted from father to child, from master to pupil, and often expanded by imaginary improvisations; the others embroider the love theme.

[86] Alternate chants are used, particularly in the courts of love. A young girl sings, a boy answers. These songs have become a traditional game whose social function has been forgotten. They consist of a series of questions and answers. Often the questions are even real puzzles or simple guessing questions. By asking each other questions, the young people try to get to know each other.

It seems as if the origin could be found here of what the Indians call the svayamvara which is the choice of the husband by the woman. This custom is very persistent among the white Thai of the Phongtho region.

534 While vocal music is very prevalent in Laos, there exists also instrumental music which should not be neglected. We summarize here the excellent account given by his Highness Tiao Souvanna Phouma on Laotian music.

"There are three kinds of instruments: a) wind (the khouy and the khene), b) string (the So I and the So O), c) percussion (the Nang Nat and the Khong Vong).

The khene consists of a series of thin bamboos of various and decreasing lengths placed side by side in pairs like the flutes of Pan. Usually these are in seven consecutive rows. These bamboos are joined together by two half gourds attached with wax which form the blowing chamber and have a small circular opening to serve as mouthpiece. On the inside, the bamboos are pierced with holes. The most curious thing about the way the khene functions is that several notes are simultaneous and are absolutely continuous.

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In all these violins, the bow is made of animal hair and passes between the strings.

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The performers always play from memory. Musicians are educated purely by ear and by intelligence.

[88] Laotian music uses only the octave with seven tones corres- 533
ponding to the scale of a khene. There are a variety of tunes composed by individual musicians whose names are lost. At the present day the most popular is the Lam Vong.

The Theatre

With more ballet and pantomime than real theatre, the Laotian 536
theatre, just as in Cambodia, is an intimate and complicated assembly of literature and music with orchestra and chorus, mimed scenes, dance and dialogue. The subjects of the classical theatre played at court are drawn from the Ramayana or other equally popular local works. The drama is presented with gestures learned and regulated beforehand, since each of the plastic phrases expressed by the actor or actress has necessarily a length determined by that of the musical phrase played by the orchestra or sung by the chorus.

7: Thompson--373-374 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 526, 535

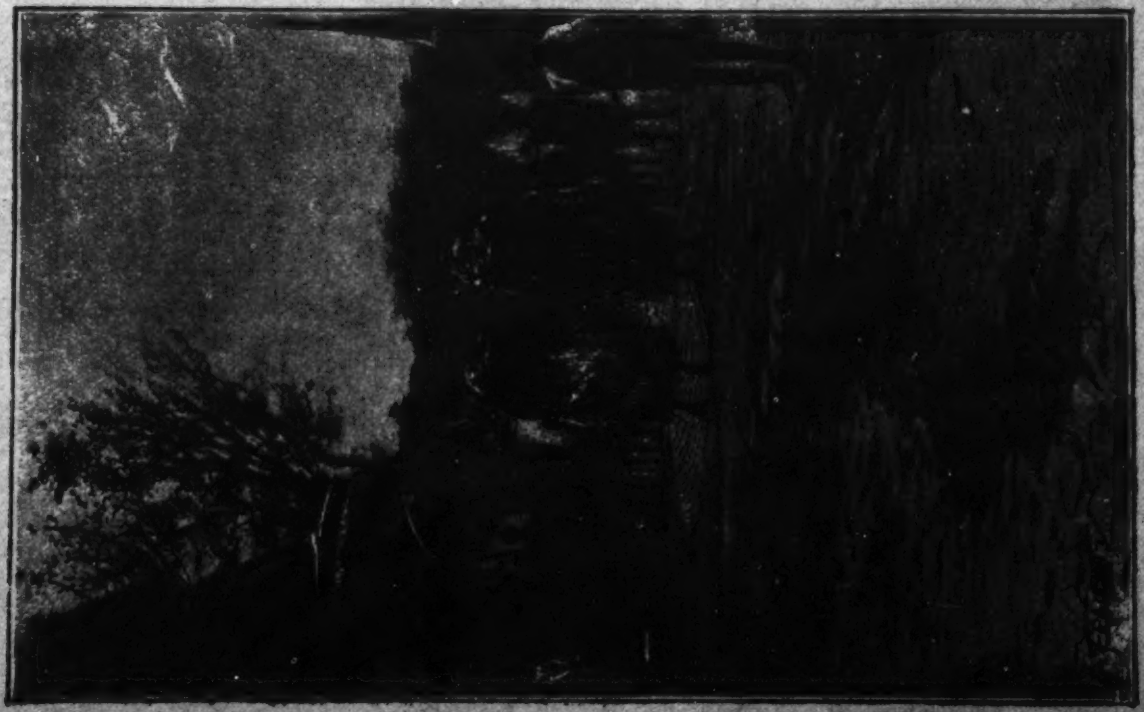
"Unlike the Cambodians, the Laotians hold the dance in little honour. Only at certain fêtes do male dancers mimic like the Indians, and they are always accompanied by song. There are no professional dancers as in the royal and mandarinal palaces of Cambodia. The only corps de ballet that exists is at Luang-Prabang, and it is made up of little boys. Games of skill are much more pleasing to the Laotians. Boxing and wrestling, ball games, [374] and, above all, boat races take place at every festival, or as often as the Laotians can think of an excuse to have them. There is something in the temporary competitive and voluntary character of the effort required by games, as well as the change to bet on the outcome, that makes such activity irresistible to the Laotians, who hate the routine drudgery of daily toil, which is inexplicably enough the Occidental ideal."

10: d'Orleans--348-351 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 171, 527, 535, 796

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"Whatever be the origin of these two 'monsters,' [LSS: dancers in masks] they seem to amuse the crowd very much, and when after having knelt in front of the pagoda and wished the spectators a happy new year, they begin to dance, I am surprised beyond measure to find that it is the [pages 349 and 350 contain illustration] [351] self-same dance which I saw when travelling through Thibet with M. Bonvalot two years before. The steps and the attitudes are exactly the same, and it would be interesting to know whether this is a mere chance or due to the existence of the same traditions between peoples living so far apart. The tam-tam, which is beaten by hand, without any rhythm, is the music used as an accompaniment, and from time to time the monsters make a charge and send the crowd flying, one of them chasing a young girl round a tree. I can see only Laotians among the spectators, the Kas holding aloof. When the dances are over, the procession starts on its way back, the priests being escorted back to their several pagodas."

10: d'Orleans--349 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 535, 563 Ethnic subgroups



NEW YEAR DANCES AT OUATE NIENG TONG, LUANG PRABANG.

10: d'Orleans--352-353 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 535, 644, 782

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"The 15th [LSS: of April] is a more interesting day for us, as the king is to make a progress through the streets, the event being announced early in the morning by two of the four guns which the Siamese have mounted here.

When we arrive at the pagoda of Ouate Uisonne, we find that the crowd is already very great, and that women are bringing to the pagoda flowers and meats placed in large dishes. From the street to the entrance of the temple the path is covered with bamboo mats; the peristyle is draped with yellow [353] silk, beneath which the king is seated and is taking tea, while the bonzes are reciting prayers inside. The same dances described above are again performed, with the addition this time of a third figure, viz., that of a dragon with a golden head and jaws like a crocodile, the body being formed of material which has a blue stripe down the middle of the back. There are two men inside, and the monster, which goes through the most extraordinary contortions, is called Tsinng (the lion)."

23: Franck--315-316 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 535

"The decoration speech over, the king ordered out his dancing-girls, deathly pale with hastily floured faces, and his male entertainers, in masks meant to be terrifying, the gaudy colors of their festive garments contrasting with the scarcity of soap discernible through the crevices of their costumes. They posed rather fearfully. Some of the girls were as young as ten, I am sure, and certainly none of them were [316] over twenty, for the king has a Broadway taste in these matters. Dancing-girls and masked male figures alike wore an elaborate headdress in the form of a pagoda--the Rangoon style of pagoda, not those of China--which suggested a close cultural relationship between Luang Prabang and Cambodia. As to the welter of colors that flashed forth from them in the blazing tropical sunshine I shall not even attempt to say anything; just let the bootlegged imagination run riot, so long as you do not forget the reddish teeth and the swollen lips driveling with betel-nut that gave them the look of ghouls that had just eaten a warm corpse, or of harmless childish-faced trolls that had been caught in the act of gorging themselves with currant jelly in the royal jam closet."

25; Brodrick--99-100 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-2
116, 527, 535, 796

"...it is difficult to spend only a few days in the Laos without living a Laotian feast-day. Take the Boun Dueun Ha, that is the New Year festival, and also that of the Little Oath (of allegiance that is). The festivities are held at the beginning of April, thus at the time of year when the days are hottest and the nights most suave.

In every village there will be a procession headed by youths bearing branches of flowers. Then will come two files of men carrying the sacred umbrellas. Afterwards six or eight men bearing upon their shoulders a palanquin, in which sits the chief of the local pagoda. The monks and their acolytes holding urns full of flowers and jars filled with lustral water, bring up the rear. So far, so good, it all seems an orderly and decent religious procession.

But as the cortège advances, the women on either side of the way throw buckets of water on the processionists, while the girls pelt them with mud. When the cortège has reached the pagoda, the whole people stand round joining in the antiphonies of praise sung in honour of the Blessed One and then fall back in a circle to watch the dances.

And these dances are not at all Buddhist. There are three main performers. There is the dragon Sing, and there is the Ngo Gneu, and then there is the Pou Gneu. These two last represent 'ancestor' spirits and their impersonators wear curious masks and their bodies are covered with beasts' skins. The wooden masks are black and swathed in streaming hair which twirls as the dance moves on. Pou Gneu has a pumpkin-like

25: Brodrick--99-100 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-2
116, 527, 535, 796

face with a huge toothy, grinning [100] mouth such as you may see in a Hallowe'en goblin. And the ancestors' ghosts come back to plague men in animal guise."

25: Brodrick--100 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 535, 764, 782

"...the funerals in the Laos are gay ceremonies. When a man dies his body is covered in perfume-soaked sawdust piled into a hardwood coffin--the Laos is a land of fine, hard-grained woods--and the whole is placed upon a catafalque near the house. The bier is watched day and night by youths and maidens who sing songs, improvise poems, crack jokes, make love, and play musical instruments, while, from time to time, but not too often, the Buddhist monks come and read sutras of the Good Law. Cremation is not so strictly observed as in Cambodia, but most bodies are burned, at least in the towns and larger villages. After the incineration comes the Feast of the Appeasement of the Spirits. A covered altar is set up near the dead man's house, and on the altar are offerings to the manes or ghosts, offerings of frangipani flowers, of rice, of betel, of alcohol and of swords. And all night long, the women dance archaic-sounding, rhythmic measures to the tunes strummed out by an orchestra."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM2 Indochina
Laotians AMB
535
292

Laotian Dancers

[facing title page]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Cambodians AM4

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Top: Laotian dancers amused by the camera
Bottom: Audience in Angkor

[facing p. 241]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

following a crowd. It was about two miles from the town's centre 527
and I passed several pagodas on the way, where carpenters were
working by lamplight in preparation for a future festival.

An enclosure had been built round the pagoda in which every 354
kind of light, from hurricane lamps to fluorescent tubes, had been 527
concentrated in an anarchic glare. The pagoda had hired a generator 545
for the occasion. There was no entrance fee, but young ladies with
demurely lowered eyes waited just inside to accept donations, in
return for which you received a candle, a posy of Japanese lilac and
two joss-sticks in a bamboo container. Among the many attractions
was a free theatre show, lasting for many hours, indistinguishable,
except to an expert, from the theatre of Siam. Actors remained on
the stage for what seemed interminable periods, occasionally ad-
vancing or retreating a few steps. Meanwhile their babies played
happily round their feet, and quite frequently a stage-hand would
walk across and interrupt a scene for a few seconds to pump up the
pressure in the hurricane lamps.

On a nearby platform the *lap ton* was being danced. Once again 292
it was the major attraction, but as it was still incorrect for Laotian 301
girls to dance in public, religious enterprise had arranged for 535
hostesses to be brought over from Siam, just across the river. The 562
pagoda hired the girls for the three nights and lodged them in a 527
nearby building. It cost a piastre to cavort round the stage for
about fifteen minutes with one of them. They were dressed in
hideous knee-length frocks, and some seemed to have permanent
waves. The backward Laotian girls in their dowdy finery, their
silk scarves, their skirts woven at the hem and waist-band with silver
and gold thread, and their abundant jewel-decked chignons, could
only look on wistfully. As I arrived the organizers were having 403
trouble with the microphone — indispensable adjunct to any social 527
occasion in the new Far East. A young man chanted a soft, nasal
melody which could only be heard within the *boun* enclosure itself.
But suddenly the electricians were successful with their tinkerings
and all Vientiane was flooded with a great, ogrish baying. The

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

slaughterers are obliged to work by flares, which is responsible, the 253
French think, for an unusually picturesque effect. It is 'not done' to 825
go along while the actual killing is in progress, but shortly after, when the carcasses are suspended from hooks to be cut up, and the workers, stripped to their loincloths, and garishly splashed, paddle about in a vermilion sea. Cars are stationed just beyond the reach of the steaming odours, and one is recommended to see the thing as one views a nude in a picture gallery – that is, divorced from all but a disinterested abstraction, in this case the colour.

The possibilities of Vientiane, it was clear, would be quickly 292
exhausted. Thao Nhouy, the Laotian Minister of Education, lent 301
me his jeep to see some of the surrounding villages, but the roads 535
were so appalling that it broke down after being driven for about five miles. He then suggested that I might like to see the local schoolgirls dancing, and when I said that I would be delighted, and asked for permission to take photographs, the girls were sent off home, on their bicycles, to get their best clothes. An hour or two later they began to trickle back, wearing their mothers' jewellery as well as their own and with their silk finery done up in paper parcels. When they had dressed and were ready they made a glittering sight. One girl wore a scarf ornamented with real gold thread said to be worth about £50 in English money. They danced under the supervision of a teacher whom I recognized as a professional actor, from the *boun*,[1] and who occasionally intervened when a girl failed in some minor feat, such as bending her fingers back at an expressive ninety degrees from the palm.

All these girls, dressed as they were like princesses, came from 493
shacks in the forest. Each one had a bicycle – infallibly fitted with 511
dynamo lighting, and sometimes 3-speed gears. It seems that a bicycle for his daughter is one of the essentials for which a Laotian will work. It is considered ill-bred and irreligious in Laos to work 241
more than is necessary. The father of a family cultivates an amount 461
of land, estimated, by a bonze who is expert in such matters, to be 511
792

1 [i.e., Laotian religious festival. -- Analyst] 255

115: Le Boulanger--76 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

Era of prosperity. It is a certain fact that the country was per- 175*
fectly happy at this time. Feeling protected by a dreaded sovereign, the Laotians cultivated their native unconcern which resulted at once from the moderate nature of their /119/ desires and from the fertility of their soil. Living without any dire needs, all things were for them a ground for rejoicing, and their peaceful character naturally inclined them towards the satisfactions of the spirit and particularly towards music which constitutes the purest manifestation thereof (1).

1. Cf. M. Galerne, Courrier musical, 1925.

Music in Lan-Xang. They therefore held song in special favor 533
and mingled it with dances whose expressive mimicry was related 535
to the pantomime dances of India. The plots were based almost exclusively on love, which Laotians took pleasure in exalting under its most variegated aspects. They sometimes took the form of charming "courts of love" which remind one of those held in our French provinces in the Middle Ages, were sometimes given on the occasion of funeral ceremonies which were in no way envisaged in the same atmosphere of sadness as they are among us, or sometimes on the occasion of the inauguration of a pagoda, the construction of a house or the harvesting of a crop.

The khene. In all these circumstances either instrumental or 534
vocal music had a place. /120/ The most common instrument was the khene, which is still widely used today. The khene is "formed of a series of bamboo tubes which are small in diameter, of various decreasing lengths and arranged in pairs, like two large pipes of Pan, usually in seven consecutive rows. The bamboo tubes are joined together by two half-gourds, fastened with wax, which form an air chamber and are provided with a small circular orifice which serves as a mouthpiece. Inside the bamboo tubes are pierced by holes, some of which let the air in, while the others are blocked with the fingers as the need arises in order to obtain notes, while the palm of the hand grasps the curve of the half-gourd. The air which elicits the notes strikes against metal reeds which are inserted in the upper part of each bamboo tube (1).

1. Cf. M. Galerne, Courrier musical, 1925.

satisfaction and finds a pleasant test of his abilities in setting words 538
to refrains whose meaning is unknown and in stimulating laughter
or pleasant and amusing ideas in his audience, either by vaunting
the joys of love and the plastic perfections of the human body, or by
recalling [217] useful or pleasant memories, or by honoring justice
and goodness. The morals of these folk, who are indolent because 538
they are content with very little and are happy and healthy, and to
whom all our subtleties are unknown, permit the greatest license in 831
songs and improvisations and the greatest realism and crudity in the
expression of thoughts.

In spite of this, there is not the least unhealthy intention in
either the poet or his audience. As we have seen above in connection
with burials, children of both sexes attend all these festivities ac-
companied by their parents. They all take pleasure in the same
refrains and laugh at the same funny sayings, not because they are
vicious but because they are pure pagans for whom enjoyment and
pleasure are like gods. The songs are animated by graceful gestures, [535]
and together with the music form a whole which is poetic according
to their particular esthetic canons and which is simply a manifestation
of art and not an indication of loose morals.

Theater. The Laotians also have a dramatic repertory consisting 536
of longwinded plays, epics, religious and warlike stories, romantic
tales, ancient legends, etc. These poems are played by several
actors, with an orchestra and supernumeraries, and require many very
ornate costumes which have not varied in form since the earliest
times. Usually, however, the costumes are mere tinsel.

Like the Cambodian and Siamese theater from which it comes, [171 178]
the Laotian theater interprets age-old works taken from the Védas,
the Ramayana or the Mahabharata. To this repertory are added
purely Kmer plays and various adaptations of Burmese origin which
are performed in the classical costumes and in which a strong tinge
of comedy and modernism and a bit of satire are mingled with the
ancient traditions.

Women are excluded from the theater, and the female roles are [462]
played by young men. As in the case of songs and improvisations,
dramatic knowledge, the repertory of plays and the art of acting are
handed down from father to son. The actors are called Lakhone and
plays are called Kam-Kong-Lakhone or Kam-Kong [218] Fone-Lakhone
if they include dances or ballets. Finally, one last dramatic genre

536 of Burmese origin is called I-Ke or Lakhone-I-Ke.

There are also animated shadow theaters in Laos, like the Chinese or Javanese shadow theaters. The figurines in them are quite large, completely articulated and strikingly lifelike in all their attitudes and in their gestures, which correspond perfectly to the words of their manipulators. Some of these shadow figures are so well articulated that they scrupulously reproduce the movements of the mouth, nose, eyes, etc. Finally, so that they need envy no one, the Laotians also have a puppet theater [Guignol] like our French puppet theater of Lyons. The puppets represent local types and costumes, banter certain social classes with their sarcasm and ridicule certain personages who lend themselves easily to criticism. The artists who make these little wooden knaves function have as much verve, malice and wit as their colleagues in Europe, and although their wit is usually somewhat coarse it is perfectly adapted to the milieu. The puppets enjoy great public favor, and so their performances, which last far into the night, are among those most enjoyed by an audience which is always numerous and attentive. Old men, adults and children come and stay for hours at a time, gasping and lifting their faces towards the opening out of which the puppets' heads and shoulders protrude. The witty sayings, jokes of all kinds and even the gestures of these puppets often shake the whole audience with a fit of uncontrollable laughter.

•535 462 857 Dancing. The dance (fone in Laotian) finds little favor with the Laotians. Scarcely any but men engage in this pastime, and they dance a kind of Pyrrhic during the feast of rockets and a Phallic at the time of the pirogue regattas. During festivals singers and songstresses often mix dancing with their songs, but it is limited to a few rhythmic gestures of the hands and upper part of the body, without any movement of the feet.

There are no professional women dancers in Laos as there are in Siam or Cambodia. I know of only one ballet corps, [219] that of Luang-Prabang, which is composed exclusively of children and very young people. This group, which is nicely costumed, is developing under the direction of one master and several supervisors. It executes figures and a few steps which are always very graceful, while carrying multicolored lanterns in the shape of balloons or flowers. The dances are accompanied by songs and form a most harmonious and pleasant ensemble.

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inside is lacquered red.

The pirogues are manned by forty or fifty oarsmen who half [225] [Illustration] [226] [Blank page] [227] crouch and half sit in pairs on what amount to thwarts made of bamboo and joined to a framework. The oarsmen face forward as they paddle, holding their blade in both hands and not supporting it on any point of the boat. A pirogue chief, usually a mandarin, is in the prow, and in the stern is the pilot, who jumps about and stimulates the whole crew with his shouts and gestures. Amidships there are sometimes musicians, with kene, gong and tom-tom, and two or three trained men who, their belts [Illustration here] adorned with enormous jointed "lingams," dance the "Phallic" standing up with their feet on the edges of the pirogue and declaim occasional odes and improvisations the terms of which are extremely crude.(1). In their songs they invite beings,

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(1) In southern Laos the men who perform these dances hold grotesque masks in front of their faces with their hands.

plants and elements to unite, combine and fertilize one another so as to maintain "Life" in all its forms on the surface of the earth.

The crews of the different racing pirogues are clothed in different colors, like the jackets of our jockeys, and they vie ardently with one another, making the water fly to surpass their own efforts. The crew which reaches the finish line first manifests its enthusiasm by [228] standing up in the pirogue, uttering shouts of triumph and brandishing the oars. Oftentimes all these uncoordinated movements result in throwing everybody into the water, but the pirogue is soon righted and emptied to the accompaniment of roars of laughter and the crew members take up their posts again, ready for a new race.

Racing pirogues are not launched until the time when they are to be used. Ordinarily they are stored on sawhorses and under sheds on the grounds of certain pagodas whose bonzes are responsible for their upkeep, and for storing the oars and accessories and clothing of the oarsmen.

Certain pirogues are held in common by the inhabitants of a village, while others are the property of particular rich men, muong chiefs or high mandarins who have had them built at their own expense and pay for their upkeep and for that of their crew of oarsmen. In Laos a man will become the owner of a racing pirogue as in France one might become the owner of a racing stable. The racehorse

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Tribal Tai

291 cover their bust with a small short jacket which is very close-fitting and bright in color. It has a heart-shaped opening on the chest and, like the men's jacket, is ornamented with galloons and passementerie. For celebrations and ceremonies Lu women wear a heavy turban on their head which is folded flat or pleated, shaped like a mitre and generally made of black silk spangled with gold.

301 Both men and women pierce the lobes of their ears [246] with a broad opening, into which they introduce hollow gold or silver cylinders which are sometimes as large as three centimeters in diameter.

306 Great lovers of jewelry, the Lus number skilled jewelers and goldsmiths among them who make hair coil plaques, ear cylinders, flat braided metal belts with wide chased and checkered buckles, bracelets, rings, hilts and sheaths for daggers and swords, etc. [Illustration alongside text here]

411 293 The Lus almost always wear daggers and swords. Each of them, so to speak, possesses a rifle, generally flintlock, which by the shape of the stock, the length of the barrel and the many bands which adorn it greatly resembles the long Moukhala so dear to our Arabs in Algeria.

[361] Lu villages are clean, and the houses are arranged in a checkerboard pattern.

[33] The Lus have a high reputation as breeders of oxen and horses.

527 A great lover of celebrations and parades, this boisterous people sets off gunpowder at every opportunity, and there is no festival, private or public, so small that it is not accompanied by salvos and fireworks.

[77] 535 From their contact with the Burmese the men have retained a [247] [Illustration] [248] [Blank page] [249] taste for dancing and for sword fights mingled with dance steps in which they manifest a real grace and elegance.

"Among other forms of amusement, the men execute, with a truly remarkable suppleness and skill, sword dances which are perfectly elegant. Naked to the waist, with their trousers rolled up and bunched and a wooden sword in each hand whose cutting edge has been dipped in dye so that the thrusts will leave a mark, the two champions confront one another. Moulinets, parries and returns follow one another without apparent effort, and the movements are undulating and rapid but without any abruptness. The men seem to be caressing one another, not fighting, and yet the slashes leave their colored traces on the skin of the vanquished. Direct thrusts are forbidden, but the entire body from head to foot is fair game for the opponent. Thus during the

Tribal Tai

whole match, instead of keeping their legs rigid and remaining on the same line, the opponents turn constantly around a central point and raise each leg in turn, the knee bent. This exercise, in which all four limbs work at once and which requires a sure eye and rapid execution, is surely one of the most graceful in existence when it is performed with the facile ease and supreme elegance of the Lus. 535

"Lu dancing has that particular character of morbidness which one finds among most Mohammedan peoples and also in Spain. The men (for the men are the ones who dance) imprint on their feet only those movements which are indispensable for making the body pivot and facilitating slow, undulating movements by the hips, torso and arms. The dancers are accompanied by tom-toms and kettledrums, and they sigh out lingering, voluptuous chants which harmonize well with their movements. These are veritable harem dances, or such as dancing girls might perform." (Le Laos français.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

We have already seen what the religion of the Lus is like, and need add only that their bonzes are highly respected and that the pagodas are much frequented by the children and young people. Thus the number of scholars is higher among the Lus than among the Laotians. Many women even know how to read and write. 771 212

The Lus do not cremate their dead, but bury them, even at a very shallow depth, after wrapping the bodies in a mat or a piece of cloth. The bonzes recite a few prayers over the grave when it has been filled, and in return for this service usually receive an object of some value which belonged to the deceased. 764

[250] The tombs are not kept up.

The Youns. The natives called Youns are Laotians who have settled on the right bank of the Mekong, in the basin of the Upper Menam and in the territories of Xieng-Hai, Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen. There are, however, Youns living in French Laos where they have mixed with the other Laotians. [Illustration alongside text here] 619 304

The Youns may be distinguished from their fellow Laotians by the extent to which they are tattooed. Whereas a Laotian will only be tattooed from the bend of the knee to the waist, a Youn will be tattooed from the calf of the leg to the chest. This has caused the inhabitants of the right bank to be baptized "Black Bellies" (Lao-Phoung-Dam), while those of the left bank are called Lao-Phoung-Khao or "White Bellies."

Kha

586 684 and to the family of his accomplice. In a case of flagrante delicto, however, he has the right to kill the guilty parties.

[462] Kha women, when married, are renowned for their austerity, and their conduct is usually exemplary. Moreover, they are very soon disfigured by precocious and repeated childbearing, as well as by the difficult work which they do, and after two or three years of marriage the poor women are no longer tempting to anyone.

764 Deaths. Cremation is not practiced by the Khas. They bury their dead in as summary a fashion as the Lus, and for a few days bring food to the freshly filled grave. Then the latter is abandoned.

When a chief or a rich man is to be buried, the body is placed in a coffin hewn from a tree trunk.

181 Character. Like all oppressed peoples, the Khas are reserved and timid. They are afraid of innovations and new faces. But in intimate gatherings with their own people they are just as merry and love music, dances, celebrations and festivals just as much as the other peoples of Laos.

535 536 Music and dancing. They know certain dances imitated from the Lus, pantomimes (1) which resemble the I-Ke of the Burmese,

(1) They also have the habit of performing scenes in pantomime, rather like extremely primitive ballets. We shall describe one such scene:

"A group of girls, guarded by two respectable men, are pursuing the pleasures of dancing. A rogue comes up and tries to make off with one of the girls. After a few unsuccessful attempts he succeeds in eluding the guards' vigilance, jumps forward to seize the girl on whom he has designs, and clasps her in his arms. But his happiness is too much for him and he falls senseless at the feet of the girl he wanted to abduct." (Le Laos français.) - [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

and [255] singsong legends in which the r's and k's roll out in terrible fashion. They also have songs which they accompany on flutes, clarinets and single-stringed violins. Some tribes have xylophones, these being instruments composed of bamboo tubes of [Illustration here] different thickness and length, each of which produces a tone varying with its size. It will be seen that by striking with a [256] stick of wood on these tubes, a combination of more or less harmonious sounds will

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149: Reinach--188 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

101 [261] [Illustration] [262] [Blank page] [263] As far as marriages, deaths, etc. go, we find practically the same customs among the Kha tribes of southern Laos as among their fellows in northern Laos.

231 It should be noted that the Rades breed a variety of small horses
439 which are highly prized in Annam, Laos and Siam.

[533] "These Khas love music and dancing. Their favorite instruments are gongs and bells.

534 "A set of gongs consists of seven, nine or twelve single ones. Made of copper and often very beautiful, these gongs take the shape of a cylinder from forty to eighty centimeters in diameter, only one end of which is closed by a vibrating plate. The cap worn by our judges and professors, although on a smaller scale, gives a fairly clear idea of the shape of these instruments. A few of the instruments are artfully cast and ornamented with much elegance. There is a solid ring about a third of the way along the gong's length which is part and parcel with the rest of the gong and makes it possible to hang it up on a side of the house, at about the height of a man's head, by means of a rattan thong fastened to the frame.

"The performers stand facing the battery and pummel it with their fists, taking care to strike the vibrating plate in the center so that it will emit a true tone. This procedure produces perfect musical notes, which are accompanied by the dull resonances of the tom-toms and the sharp sonorities of the bells made of a copper and tin alloy. The gongs bring a high price, and when it is a fine one a complete series is worth from 1,200 to 1,500 francs.

"In some villages the performers each take an instrument and hold it in a sling fastened to their shoulder, then form a column in single file. This Indian-style procession marches from the center of the house towards one of its extremities, striking more and more gently as it moves away from its point of departure. Then it returns to the center, unleashing a compensating crescendo. The maneuver begins again towards the other end of the house, and the musical promenade continues until the musicians are exhausted.

535 "When the Khas begin to play and perform the Kimlang (a very stirring war dance) and the warriors grow excited from dancing and
272 from drinking rice wine, it is wise to make them stop as soon as they
579 begin to pick up their weapons, for when drunk with alcohol and enflamed with ardor they are no longer masters of themselves.

714 "War dress includes feathers in the hair and a sort of cross of Saint Andrew formed of cloth rolled and crossed on the chest. Weapons, quivers, arrows, crossbows, bucklers, spears and swords complete their equipment.

149: Reinach--408 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Meo

[197] The Meos have several dialects in their particular language.

Their musical instruments are reduced to two: a kind of bagpipe
534 resembling the Laotian organ, but in which the frame is metal and the sounds sharper; and a smaller instrument which is nearly identical with the toy known in France as a jew's-harp.

535 To the accompaniment of their instruments, the Meos dance something reminiscent of the bear dance. (Le Laos français, 1900, Schneide Hanoi.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), Notice sur le Laos français.]

naturally be "water." These two elements, opposed though they are 593
to one another, nonetheless go together. If you should happen to 647
raise your voice, see to it that it does not reach the ears of your 565
neighbors who will be sure to laugh at your domestic misunderstanding.
There is a good way to appease your anger: that is to go out and get
some fresh air. A moment of distraction will calm your irritation.
This precious and effective remedy is called, according to a Laotian
expression, "to caress one's heart with a hand drenched with fresh
water."

On a walk and on a visit.--Formerly it used to be considered 574
a disgrace for a mandarin to go for a walk by himself or to visit minor 647
functionaries. Nowadays this is no longer the case. A Laotian 565
Minister goes out alone without being accompanied by the traditional 178
retinue. He visits all classes of society without being criticized for
it by anyone at all.

At a private gathering.--In contrast to the customs of former
times, present-day mandarins accept the invitation of a simple
citizen. The host very often organizes various diversions: dances, /533/
lamvong, orchestras, songs etc. The Ministers willingly participate /535/
in these; they sing, dance, and pay their respects to the phousaos
while they mingle with the crowd. Certain Laotians whom I consider
backward criticize the liberal manner on the part of our Ministers.
Our great mandarins are their own masters. Let them turn a deaf
ear to these carpings. /978/

Honor Laotian Women

Some people consider the Laotian woman as an inferior 562
creature.

Certain women, it appears, are not permitted to eat with
their husband. Miserable husbands! You consider then that your
better half is like an animal?

Certainly, tradition says: "The woman must sleep with her /513/
head lower than her husband's. She must go to bed after him and
she must get up before him. The husband must have eaten three /264/
mouthfuls of rice before the wife can begin to eat in her turn."

These counsels of our fathers are valuable, but they are far
from indicating that the woman is inferior to the man. They recommend,

satisfaction and finds a pleasant test of his abilities in setting words 538
to refrains whose meaning is unknown and in stimulating laughter
or pleasant and amusing ideas in his audience, either by vaunting
the joys of love and the plastic perfections of the human body, or by
recalling [217] useful or pleasant memories, or by honoring justice
and goodness. The morals of these folk, who are indolent because 538
they are content with very little and are happy and healthy, and to
whom all our subtleties are unknown, permit the greatest license in 831
songs and improvisations and the greatest realism and crudity in the
expression of thoughts.

In spite of this, there is not the least unhealthy intention in either the poet or his audience. As we have seen above in connection with burials, children of both sexes attend all these festivities accompanied by their parents. They all take pleasure in the same refrains and laugh at the same funny sayings, not because they are vicious but because they are pure pagans for whom enjoyment and pleasure are like gods. The songs are animated by graceful gestures, [535
and together with the music form a whole which is poetic according to their particular esthetic canons and which is simply a manifestation of art and not an indication of loose morals.

Theater. The Laotians also have a dramatic repertory consisting 536
of longwinded plays, epics, religious and warlike stories, romantic tales, ancient legends, etc. These poems are played by several actors, with an orchestra and supernumeraries, and require many very ornate costumes which have not varied in form since the earliest times. Usually, however, the costumes are mere tinsel.

Like the Cambodian and Siamese theater from which it comes, [171
the Laotian theater interprets age-old works taken from the Védas, 178]
the Ramayana or the Mahabharata. To this repertory are added purely Kmer plays and various adaptations of Burmese origin which are performed in the classical costumes and in which a strong tinge of comedy and modernism and a bit of satire are mingled with the ancient traditions.

Women are excluded from the theater, and the female roles are [462]
played by young men. As in the case of songs and improvisations, dramatic knowledge, the repertory of plays and the art of acting are handed down from father to son. The actors are called Lakhone and plays are called Kam-Kong-Lakhone or Kam-Kong [218] Fone-Lakhone if they include dances or ballets. Finally, one last dramatic genre

7: Thompson--373 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 193, 536, 538

"The Laotian tongue is very simple. It is mainly monosyllabic: the article is never used, and substantives are not declined. Profane literature includes historical works, chiefly the annals of Luang-Prabang as well as its codes of law, novels, and songs. There is a large sacred literature, a very small part of which has been translated from Pali into the vernacular. Their drama is akin to the Khmers' in length, costuming, and music. The themes are epic, religious, or bellicose history, love stories and legends, mostly taken from the Vedas, the Ramayana, and Mahabharata. Many Khmer and even Burmese plays, with a modern satirical tone, lend a cosmopolitan character to the Laotian repertoire. A kind of marionette theatre, analogous to the Javanese, exists as well."

536 of Burmese origin is called I-Ke or Lakhone-I-Ke.

There are also animated Shadow theaters in Laos, like the Chinese or Javanese shadow theaters. The figurines in them are quite large, completely articulated and strikingly lifelike in all their attitudes and in their gestures, which correspond perfectly to the words of their manipulators. Some of these shadow figures are so well articulated that they scrupulously reproduce the movements of the mouth, nose, eyes, etc. Finally, so that they need envy no one, the Laotians also have a puppet theater [Guignol] like our French puppet theater of Lyons. The puppets represent local types and costumes, banter certain social classes with their sarcasm and ridicule certain personages who lend themselves easily to criticism. The artists who make these little wooden knaves function have as much verve, malice and wit as their colleagues in Europe, and although their wit is usually somewhat coarse it is perfectly adapted to the milieu. The puppets enjoy great public favor, and so their performances, which last far into the night, are among those most enjoyed by an audience which is always numerous and attentive. Old men, adults and children come and stay for hours at a time, gasping and lifting their faces towards the opening out of which the puppets' heads and shoulders protrude. The witty sayings, jokes of all kinds and even the gestures of these puppets often shake the whole audience with a fit of uncontrollable laughter.

535 Dancing. The dance (fone in Laotian) finds little favor with the
462 Laotians. Scarcely any but men engage in this pastime, and they
857 dance a kind of Pyrrhic during the feast of rockets and a Phallic at the time of the pirogue regattas. During festivals singers and songstresses often mix dancing with their songs, but it is limited to a few rhythmic gestures of the hands and upper part of the body, without any movement of the feet.

There are no professional women dancers in Laos as there are in Siam or Cambodia. I know of only one ballet corps, [219] that of Luang-Prabang, which is composed exclusively of children and very young people. This group, which is nicely costumed, is developing under the direction of one master and several supervisors. It executes figures and a few steps which are always very graceful, while carrying multicolored lanterns in the shape of balloons or flowers. The dances are accompanied by songs and form a most harmonious and pleasant ensemble.

Kha

586 684 and to the family of his accomplice. In a case of flagrante delicto, however, he has the right to kill the guilty parties.

[462] Kha women, when married, are renowned for their austerity, and their conduct is usually exemplary. Moreover, they are very soon disfigured by precocious and repeated childbearing, as well as by the difficult work which they do, and after two or three years of marriage the poor women are no longer tempting to anyone.

764 Deaths. Cremation is not practiced by the Khas. They bury their dead in as summary a fashion as the Lus, and for a few days bring food to the freshly filled grave. Then the latter is abandoned.

When a chief or a rich man is to be buried, the body is placed in a coffin hewn from a tree trunk.

181 Character. Like all oppressed peoples, the Khas are reserved and timid. They are afraid of innovations and new faces. But in intimate gatherings with their own people they are just as merry and love music, dances, celebrations and festivals just as much as the other peoples of Laos.

535 536 Music and dancing. They know certain dances imitated from the Lus, pantomimes (1) which resemble the I-Ke of the Burmese.

(1) They also have the habit of performing scenes in pantomime, rather like extremely primitive ballets. We shall describe one such scene:

"A group of girls, guarded by two respectable men, are pursuing the pleasures of dancing. A rogue comes up and tries to make off with one of the girls. After a few unsuccessful attempts he succeeds in eluding the guards' vigilance, jumps forward to seize the girl on whom he has designs, and clasps her in his arms. But his happiness is too much for him and he falls senseless at the feet of the girl he wanted to abduct." (Le Laos français.) - [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

and [255] singsong legends in which the r's and k's roll out in terrible fashion. They also have songs which they accompany on flutes, clarinets and single-stringed violins. 533 Some tribes have xylophones, these being instruments composed of bamboo tubes of [Illustration here] different thickness and length, each of which produces a tone varying with its size. It will be seen that by striking with a [256] stick of wood on these tubes, a combination of more or less harmonious sounds will

a thin wooden plate for the So O, or a simple cylinder of may dou 534
whose extremity has a stretched boa skin for the So I.

The So Bang is nothing but a bamboo tube in a crude handle. Its register is small, and it is never used in an orchestra.

In all these violins, the bow is made of animal hair and passes between the strings.

Among the percussion instruments, the Nang Nat or Rang Nat is the most popular. It is a real xylophone and is made of wooden plates of different thicknesses suspended above a boat-shaped concave piece of wood which forms the sounding box.

The Khong Vong consists of sixteen bronze cymbals arranged on a semicircular frame made of rattan. In order to play these two instruments the musician uses two mallets whose head is made of elephant skin for the Khong Vong with which he strikes the keys by sliding them over the latter.

The Laotian orchestra has two forms: 1st) the Seb Noi or Ma Ho Ry consisting of several So, a varying number of khene, a Rang Nat, a Khong Vong and tambourines. The role of the Seb Noi is to accompany in an undertone a chorus or a solo; 2nd) the Seb Gnai (yai) is made up of the same instruments as the Seb Noi. Along with the so and the khene it also includes some large drums and a sort of clarinet or pi. This orchestra never accompanies singing. Its place is in the royal retinue or in a religious procession. Occasionally it is used in war dances of an episode taken from the Ramayana.

The performers always play from memory. Musicians are educated purely by ear and by intelligence.

[88] Laotian music uses only the octave with seven tones corres- 533
ponding to the scale of a khene. There are a variety of tunes composed by individual musicians whose names are lost. At the present day the most popular is the Lam Vong.

The Theatre

With more ballet and pantomime than real theatre, the Laotian 536
theatre, just as in Cambodia, is an intimate and complicated assembly of literature and music with orchestra and chorus, mimed scenes, dance and dialogue. The subjects of the classical theatre played at court are drawn from the Ramayana or other equally popular local works. The drama is presented with gestures learned and regulated beforehand, since each of the plastic phrases expressed by the actor or actress has necessarily a length determined by that of the musical phrase played by the orchestra or sung by the chorus.

● 536 There is no scenery. The costumes and headdresses vary according to the characters represented. The masks of colored lacquer worn by the actors, their accessories (weapons, scarves, etc.) being traditional and invariable enable the fictitious characters on the stage to be identified.

/178 The theatre of animated shadows, similar to the shadow theatre
101/ of China and Java, tends to disappear little by little.

Laotian Decoration.

Laotian decoration is characterized by a somewhat mannered
531 elegance which can be noticed in the motifs of the pagoda doors and
178 windows. The Laotian artisan is, however, endowed with an extremely well developed artistic sense, but the present day demands do not enable him any longer to live by his handiwork, and the importation of manufactured articles tends to make the artist disappear. /89/ He can only survive by royal patronage. The royal palace for this reason shelters sculptors on wood and ivory as well as goldsmiths, but
/644/ their produce is not sold and the tourist will hardly be able to bring back with him typical Laotian objects.

However, the weaving of silk materials of divers shades, often laminated with gold or silver, is still done on a sufficient scale to
/236/ satisfy the passing tourist.

The Sin

This is a skirt reaching from the hips to the ankles. It is of a
291 rather somber color with a design of vertical stripes very close together and not very evident. This skirt is decorated on its lower edge with a flat trimming of two or three rows of gold or silver braid. At the top of the skirt a belt of red cloth, more or less embroidered, relieves the rather dark tone. This garment is a regular cylinder having the same width on its entire length. When the woman emerges from her bath she lifts her skirt, gathered into the shape of a crown, above her head and lets it slide down the length of her body. She fixes it without hooks or fasteners to her belt by means of a turned in pleat tied in front leaving most of her belly exposed. A bright colored scarf of cotton or silk thrown over one shoulder and completely covering the breasts completes the costume. The most beautiful scarves come from Samneua, Luang Prabang and Khong. The jewelry most frequently seen consists of
301 silver bracelets, necklaces and buttons, rings, long crossed over chains /chaînes-sautoirs/, flat clasps, and belts usually of silver but sometimes of gold.

/Pages 90 to 135 not translated/ /136 blank/

7: Thompson--373 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 193, 536, 538

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15: Benedict--388-389 L-5 (no date) 1947 Laotians
116, 171, 212, 538

"The Lao script was derived from Khmer writing, probably in the thirteenth century. It is a simpler archaic version of Siamese writing, which is also of Khmer (and ultimately Indian) origin. The White Tai and Black Tai of Tonkin employ similar alphabets, possibly later derivatives of the Lao alphabet. Remarkably enough, the White Tai of Nghê-an, under Annamese influence, write this script in vertical lines, from right to left, as in Chinese! Lao literature naturally has much in common with Khmer literature, as described above, and bears the same deep imprint of Buddhist India. Native Lao (Thai) features are apparent in the more folkloristic aspects of the literature, however, and the poetic forms are [389] much freer than those of Khmer."

149: Reinach--156 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Ever since the death, singers and improvisers of both sexes accompanied by volunteer musicians had recounted the merits, qualities and exploits of the deceased at great length and with emphasis before a numerous audience which remained attentive and never grew tired. They boasted of his good deeds, listed his particular habits and tastes and enumerated his many children and grandchildren. 764 538 831

They dwelled with great satisfaction on the intimacies which he had taken with the fair sex up to quite an advanced age, and in support of their remarks showed brightly illuminated drawings painted on long streamers of glazed calico. These drawings, as much by the truth of the attitudes shown as by their outrageous realism, were the joy of the spectators. Both children and adults roared with laughter as they listened to the highly spicy commentary of the improvisers.

A curious fact was that this exhibition did not occasion any obscene or even suggestive gesture on the part of the audience.

The bonzes, who are the only art students in this country, are the ones who color these pictures. If published in our own land, the latter would certainly call down all the rigor of the law on their author. [532 792]

The day of cremation finally came, and the funeral proper began. 764

One of the sons of the deceased first set free two pairs of partridges and turtledoves, pet birds which he had had. The poor creatures were unaccustomed to flight and refused to leave their cage, but then beat their wings and clumsily escaped to a perch a few meters above ground on one of the trees [207] in the garden. A trail of ashes was spread all around the fence surrounding the house of the deceased in order, as popular belief has it, to prevent his spirit from escaping into the nearby region and tormenting the living. [175]

A solid bamboo stretcher which twelve hardy men would carry on their shoulders was placed on the ground to await the catafalque. Attendance was heavy, and people of all ages came from a distance. They wore their holiday clothes with vivid, light and iridescent colors. They wore flowers in their ears and hair and carried multicolored streamers, wax candles and sticks of incense in their hands. [292]

The members of the family, the officials of the Muong and the bonzes were also there in force.

The catafalque was carried from the house by hand and put down on the stretcher, which the porters then raised to their shoulders. At its base, near the feet of the deceased, was fastened a strip of calico

534 meters in diameter. By striking the gongs with these two hammers or brushing against the gongs with them, musicians succeed in playing certain local airs which, although their sounds are somewhat sharp to the ear, are nonetheless harmonious at a distance.

"These various instruments are frequently joined together to form orchestras which play in comparative harmony.

533 "There is no method of musical notation. Memory and routine are the performers' only guides. Their memory is adequate enough and their mastery of the instruments sufficient to provide their listeners with a fairly varied repertory." (Le Laos français.)

[216] Songs and singers. Songs and improvisations enjoy a great vogue in Laos, and are an obligatory feature of every feast and every ceremony. They also serve to keep up the spirits of boatmen and to break the monotony of traveling.

Talents as singers and improvisers are generally shared by both sexes. The same person will often have both these abilities, which are to some extent the heritage of certain families.

538 The songs consist of poems which form a kind of anthology or "Folk-Lore" of the land. Everyone knows some snatches of these
533 stories, which they hear over and over again without tiring of them and which are handed down intact or embellished with new parts from parents to their children and from the old to the young.

The improvisations are recitatives in the vulgar tongue or in Siamese which are composed according to circumstances. Certain songs are delivered in a language unknown to the Laotians, but which they repeat like the litanies of Buddhism with, so to speak, a ritual cadence and intonation.

Singers and improvisers of both sexes are called Mô-Lam or Mô-Kab-Lam, and the poems which they recite are called Kam-Kong. These artists are very well trained and are capable of singing aloud for twelve hours at a stretch without showing any trace of fatigue or lassitude, whereas even the hardiest kene players cannot blow on their instruments for more than about an hour.

Love stories, invocations, inspirations, memories, news items, legends, prophecies, voyages, catastrophes, etc. are all matters for improvisation. All these songs are arranged, amplified or distorted to suit the particular turn of mind, the fancy, the spirit or the merriment of the author and to suit the occasion and the moment.

538 With his somewhat caustic but not malicious verve, the improviser excels in mixing the modern with the ancient. He takes particular

satisfaction and finds a pleasant test of his abilities in setting words to refrains whose meaning is unknown and in stimulating laughter or pleasant and amusing ideas in his audience, either by vaunting the joys of love and the plastic perfections of the human body, or by recalling [217] useful or pleasant memories, or by honoring justice and goodness. The morals of these folk, who are indolent because they are content with very little and are happy and healthy, and to whom all our subtleties are unknown, permit the greatest license in songs and improvisations and the greatest realism and crudity in the expression of thoughts. 538 538 831

In spite of this, there is not the least unhealthy intention in either the poet or his audience. As we have seen above in connection with burials, children of both sexes attend all these festivities accompanied by their parents. They all take pleasure in the same refrains and laugh at the same funny sayings, not because they are vicious but because they are pure pagans for whom enjoyment and pleasure are like gods. The songs are animated by graceful gestures, and together with the music form a whole which is poetic according to their particular esthetic canons and which is simply a manifestation of art and not an indication of loose morals. [535]

Theater. The Laotians also have a dramatic repertory consisting of longwinded plays, epics, religious and warlike stories, romantic tales, ancient legends, etc. These poems are played by several actors, with an orchestra and supernumeraries, and require many very ornate costumes which have not varied in form since the earliest times. Usually, however, the costumes are mere tinsel. 536

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Women are excluded from the theater, and the female roles are played by young men. As in the case of songs and improvisations, dramatic knowledge, the repertory of plays and the art of acting are handed down from father to son. The actors are called Lakhone and plays are called Kam-Kong-Lakhone or Kam-Kong [218] Fone-Lakhone if they include dances or ballets. Finally, one last dramatic genre [462]

village and those of ancestors. Prayers for the dead are said, and 782
when they are over the head and feet of a goat, crude clay statuettes 769
representing two men, two buffalo and two oxen, and numeroux wax
candles are placed on a raft made of banana trees. The raft is
launched full into the current of a river while men collect on the
banks and fire salvos of shots and shoot off fireworks.

The musical instruments of the Thais are the "Kene" and [240] 534
a kind of clarinet with two tubes, reinforced by gongs and tom-toms.

Their songs are not at all noisy and are much more like mono- 538
tonous chants.

The Thais have a very characteristic game, and this is the game 524
of the "inexhaustible jar." A jar of rice beer is placed on the floor
of a house and five bamboo tubes stuck in it to serve as straws. Five 273
men take positions around the jar, and each of them puts a tube in
his mouth. Into each of the jars, and above a kind of porous stopper
made of pressed paddy husks, water is poured by means of an ox
horn with a hole in the end. At a given signal both men and women
begin to suck conscientiously while the contents of the ox horn are
poured into each jar three times in succession. The ones who empty
their jar first win, and the losers have to drink the contents of ten
horns of water poured over what is left of the beer in their jar.

The Thai beer does not have a bad taste, and its alcoholic
strength is equivalent to that of hard cider, which it closely resembles
in flavor. Although the additions of water decrease the beverage's
percentage of alcohol it nevertheless produces a slight intoxication,
due primarily to the speed with which it is sucked through the straw.
But the inebriety never degenerates into a quarrel, and provokes
nothing but laughter, songs and unadulterated merriment.

Who would believe that the Thais have the custom of throwing 527
"confetti"? Nothing is more true, however, for in the celebrations
at the end of harvest, which take place in December or January,
the merrymakers throw cotton seeds mixed with paddy, with husks,
and sometimes also with ashes.

He[1] must never look at a woman. However a few old women are 792
seen in the pagoda. These are the devotees. They are dressed in 785
white, their heads are completely shaved, and they lead a life of
observance and asceticism which is as rigorous as that of the monks. 562
They render small services to the bonzes, decorate the altar, etc.,
but they live outside the enclosure of the pagoda.

Laotian Buddhism.

In a recent pamphlet, His Excellency Thao Nhouy Abhay, former 779
Minister of National Culture and Education, wrote: "In its intrinsic 795
substance Buddhism is deeply tolerant, but ours [26] has truly become
not austere enough." Therefore he proposes some necessary reforms
which would quickly raise the intellectual and moral level of the
bonzes in Laos. There are two sects in Laos: the Mahanikay and the [792]
Thammayut. The only difference between the two is the way in
which they consider that monastic rule should be observed. Nothing
distinguishes them in appearance except the color of the monastic
robe of the Mahanikay, which is brownish-ochre almost chestnut.
The king is the chief of the Buddhist clergy. As for the believer 643
who regularly observes his religious duties, he is satisfied with little [735]
and gives much in alms. Buddhist tales and particularly Laotian
texts, among them the Pannasajataka (Ha Sip Xar), quote all the
merits acquired for future lives by those who give alms and, above
all, feed the bonzes.

Religious Literature.

The basis of the religious literature of Laos is the Buddhist 779
Tripitaka. These "Three Baskets" contain the integral "word of the 538
Buddha."

The basket [corbeille] of Vinaya (Vinayapitaka) is the rule of monastic life. It consists of five sections: Patimokkha, Mahavagga, Coullavagga, Souttavibhanga and Parivara. The Patimokkha is meant to be read in public (particularly on the feasts of the eighth month), on the periodic days of confession. The Mahavagga and the Coullavagga give the list of daily obligations, illustrated by examples drawn from the life of the Buddha. The Souttavibhanga is really a commentary on the Patimokkha; finally the Parivara is both a revision and a catechism.

The Basket of the Soutta (Souttapitaka) contains an enormous amount of preaching and of edifying tales. Among others, the famous Dhammapada, a treasury of the sayings of the Buddha and the Jatakas are to be found in this basket.

[27] The third basket is that of Abhidharma and consists of seven

1 [i.e., a bonze -- Analyst]

779
538 treatises on metaphysics.

[198] [179] Such is the whole of the Buddhist canon in force in Laos. Unfortunately, as the knowledge of Pali disappeared, many texts were forgotten because they were not understood and therefore were not followed. But certainly the most popular text and that which forms the core of all Buddhist literature is the Jatakam.

The Jatakas.

This name is given to a collection of tales about the former lives of the Buddha. As the Master is supposed to have had the greatest variety of experiences from the animal state to that of a god, going through the different states of humanity, his long career as bodhisattva provides ample material for stories of all sorts, moral tales, satirical tales, parables, fables, etc. These stories have no equivalent in any literature, for Buddha knows not only his own births, but also the former births of all creatures, and these he relates as the occasion presents itself. The method of exposition is always the same. The narrator tells more or less briefly the circumstances giving rise to the story of the Buddha, then comes the story itself, finally by way of conclusion, the Buddha relates the past to the present by indicating the identity of the characters in their various roles.

The greatest number of Jatakas take place at the time when "Brahmadatta reigned in Benares," which is the equivalent of our "once upon a time."

In these tales the Buddha appears in the most varied roles; he is in turn ascetic, king, scholar, courtier, brahman, prince, noble, merchant, landlord, slave, potter, elephant-driver, woodcutter, mason, thief, actor, student, etc. Sometimes he is a god or the deity of [28] a tree, sometimes merely an animal, such as a serpent, a lizard, a bull, a pig, a dog, etc. The Buddha has none of the prejudices of nobility. Instead he gives a comforting example of how in all ranks of creation one can realize perfection in oneself and serve the collective interests of the universe. The most incongruous materials are harmoniously blended in this incoherent collection which is always frank. The whole Indian folklore is poured into this convenient framework, where it has received the Buddhist stamp, and been spread throughout the whole Far East where it has been received with enthusiasm.

There are 547 Jatakas. Some are more popular than others. Thus, in Laos, there are ten which form a special collection called "Sip Xat" (the ten Jatakas). The best known are the Temiya Jataka: (Cf. Appendix: Luang Prabang).

779 "The prince heir to the throne Mugapakkha remained dumb until
538 he was thirteen years old. He recovers his speech at the moment when his father wants to bury him alive. He then explains his previous silence by showing that an inconsiderate word may be the cause of great torment in future existences for him who has uttered it." And the Sama Jataka:

"Sama who fed his father and mother, who were both blind, dies of a wound inflicted unintentionally by king Kusi who was deer hunting. As Sama is dying, he entrusts his murderer to break the news to his parents, who lament so painfully that Sakkha is moved and brings Sama back to life."

But of all, the most popular is unquestionably the Pha Vet, the Laotian name for the Vessantara Jataka. (Cf. below Boun Pha Vet).

There exists another series of Jatakas which rival the five hundred Jatakas in popularity. It is the Pannasajataka (Ha Sip Xat) or the fifty
[101] Jatakas. This very peculiar text is found in [29] all the literature of western Indochina, and was probably composed in Thai country. Versions exist in Burmese, Khmer, Siamese and Laotian. The Laotian rendition has the peculiarity of containing 27 out of 50 tales which are not found in any other version. These 27 stories are entirely original. They are at the moment in the process of being translated.

Finally the five hundred Laotian Jatakas form a convenient framework into which all kinds of stories in the current language have been inserted. Their study will doubtless prove a mine of information on local folklore.

THE PHI

771 We cannot conclude the chapter relating to the religion of Laos without mentioning the cult of the Phi.

776 In his books "La Participation" and "L'Evolution humaine" the late lamented Jean Przyluski distinguished three successive phases of religion which, according to him, are related to an economic and social state.

When man is a collector of food, that is, when he lives from what he can gather or hunt or fish, his religion is vegetalism or totemism. When he becomes a producer, man's religion becomes agrarian, honoring the gods of vegetation, of the earth, the forests, etc., and particularly the protecting genie of the village. Finally, in the period of urban communities, universal gods appear.

While some reservations might be made on this classification, it does nevertheless offer a convenient framework in which we can

inverting the order of words. The negation bo is added. Is the gentleman home? is translated Tan you ban bo? Sometimes a single word contains a whole phrase: 193

mi = there are.
dai = it is possible.

Vocabulary. In addition to the pronunciation of sounds, one of the difficulties of the Laotian language is the distinction between noble language and popular language. The language is different when one addresses the bonzes, the high dignitaries, the king. There is a very rich concrete and abstract Laotian vocabulary which unfortunately is tending to go out of use. We have found in manuscripts Laotian words translating textually [78] abstract Pali words, but they have been gradually forgotten. The Laotians no longer read enough of their original texts. Cheap Siamese literature has invaded the country making the people abandon their own language. 192 554 [178] 177 538

One of the urgent tasks is to bring back the old Laotian texts into honor and to spread them abroad again among the public.

[79] LITERATURE AND MUSIC

In addition to the canonical religious literature already discussed, Laos possesses an important literary treasury. But as in Cambodia, Siam and Burma, this literature is anonymous. We are in the presence of epic texts of Indian origin, of legendary traditions, of apologues, of legal, moral or comic tales. There exist also novels, but as in French "romances" of the Middle Ages, they are by unknown authors. There is no equivalent in Laos of a Kalidasa or of a Li T'ai-po. No philosopher or dramatic author is known. 538

If the name of a French writer were mentioned whose manner is closest to that of Laotian authors, it would be that of Charles Perrault, and this in a word characterizes the type of Laotian literature. It excels in wonderful tales.

Literature of Indian Inspiration.

In addition to the Jatakas, Laos possesses at least two great texts of Indian origin. This is said under reservation of further discoveries, for in spite of the important work of Louis Finot, "Recherches sur la littérature laotienne," we are still far from knowing all the treasures of the Laos pagodas. 177 114

a) **The Pancatantra.** The first text is a collection of tales copied from the famous Indian Pancatantra. In the Middle Ages

538
101

these tales were spread throughout the world in an extraordinary way. They penetrated many literatures by [80] word of mouth or in writing. But at first the means of propagation was a Pahlavi version made at the request of the Sassanid king Khosroes Anoshirvan (531-579). From this version a first Syriac translation and an Arabic transcription were made. The work became very widespread throughout the whole of Islamic literature. At the beginning of his sixth book, La Fontaine says that he has drawn the subject of a large number of his fables from those of the Indian sage Pilpay (doubtless Vidyapati), but the material was furnished to him through an Arab intermediary of the eighth century, Kalila-wa-Dimna. Finally, it should be remembered that the prologue forming the framework of "The Thousand and One Nights" is found in the Pancatantra.

The same thing happened to this text in the Far East. It is found in Java, Siam, Cambodia and Vietnam. At Vientiane it exists under the name of Mulla Tantai. This collection is unknown at Luang Prabang, but the text is found in a collection of five works called Pakon. In the first four books only tales of a similar character are grouped in a common framework. The fifth is merely a series of comments on the texts of the Vinaya and has no relationship with the Pancatantra.

These works are compiled under a uniform plan: a subject being discussed, each person who takes part in the debate expresses his opinion and bases it on a story (Finot).

The story begins with the prologue forming the framework:

"There was once a king who, while walking one day in his park, saw a young married woman who pleased him. He ordered his minister to bring him every evening a young virgin of good family under pain of death for him and his family. After some time there remained in the town only a single maiden, the daughter of the minister Nang Tantai (the Laotian Scheherazade). [81] They had to lead her to the king, but she was cautious and reassured her parents as to her fate."

It is well known how the king, charmed by the tales told by this young girl, married Nang Tantai who became queen.

b) The Ramayana. The extraordinary popularity in Asia of this Indian epic is proved by the many versions of it one finds: Chinese, Tibetan, Javanese, Malayan, Vietnamese, Khmer, Siamese, etc.

The Laotian version was somewhat neglected until recent years, because it was supposed to be only a copy or translation of the Khmer text or the Siamese version. We have undertaken to study it, and it

538 shows us, on the contrary, that this is a profoundly different text, differing not only from the two lessons already quoted but also from 101 that of Valmiki which is the source of inspiration of all the others.

Because of the newness of the problem, it would be at least premature to indicate now the origins of the Laotian text and to establish its relationship to other known versions. Therefore we will limit ourselves to recalling the essential part of the poem of Valmiki and to stating what we learn from the Laotian version.

538 The Ramayana of Valmiki. The story of Rama, son of the king of Ayodhya, takes place mostly in India. Persecuted by a jealous stepmother, the young prince and his wife Sita are exiled. He is accompanied by his brother Laksmana. Attracted by Sita's beauty, Ravana, King of Lanka (Ceylon), carries her off after removing Rama and Laksmana who pursue a golden gazelle which the king has created by magic. Thanks to his alliance with Sugriva, King of the Monkeys, Rama sends the monkey Hanuman as a messenger to Sita, then attacks Lanka. He kills Ravana and wins back his wife. But the latter is [82] suspected of being unfaithful and submits to ordeal by fire. Rama then brings her to Ayodhya.

The Pra Lak Pra Lam (Laotian Ramayana). Nang Canda, daughter of Dacaratha, king of Candapurisisattanagamahanagara (Vientiane) was carried away by Ravana, son of King Indapattanagara. Dacaratha begs the god Indra to give him a son capable of killing Ravana. Indra sends his own son Pra Lam (Rama) who, with the aid of his brother, brings Nang Canda back to Vientiane.

Ravana is exiled by his father, King of Indrapattanagara and settles at Lanka. Having risen to the paradise of Indra, he takes advantage of the latter's lack of attention to violate a woman of the harem. This woman asks permission to avenge herself. She goes down to earth and becomes the daughter of Ravana. She attempts to kill him, but he exiles her. She is abandoned on a junk and rescued by a hermit who adopts her. The fame of Sita's beauty reaches Rama, who decides to go and marry her. Ravana, no longer remembering that she is his daughter, becomes the rival of Rama. But as Rama is the only one able to lift the magic bow of the hermit, he becomes Sita's husband. At this point comes the episode of the golden gazelle and the carrying away of Sita. Rama pursues his wife, but he is turned into a monkey for three years, because of his wicked karma (Cf. the Buddhist doctrine). He has a son Hamuman. Having taken back his human shape and with the help of Laksmana, Hamuman, and the army of monkeys, he attacks Lanka, kills Ravana and brings Sita back to Vientiane.

000 Vientiane.

538 101 As can be seen, there is a certain originality in the Laotian text. Only the episodes of the golden gazelle, the abduction of Sita and the attack on Lanka are similar to those of the Valmiki poem. In addition the scene is laid in Laos. All the ceremonies are Laotian and many explanations are given of [83] its origin and the creation of numerous muongs, particularly those of the region between Khong and Vientiane. Northern Laos, on the contrary, is seldom mentioned.

Romances

538 There are two kinds, in verse and in prose. As is mentioned by Louis Finot, from whom we borrow the whole passage quoted below, the Laotians have a marked preference for long stories of adventure relieved by their pleasant rhythm. However, neither the actors nor the events of the drama shine by their variety; the characters can be reduced to a small number of types:

1st. The hero. He is naturally a young prince. Naturally, too, he is handsome and in love, but he is a lover who takes no pride in reserve or in fidelity. He merrily takes advantage of every occasion and usually comes back with five or six women whom he has collected by the way. When necessary he lies unscrupulously. He fights and wins, but with the help of magic weapons, which diminishes the merit of his exploits. To increase his dignity, the story-teller gives him the title of bodhisattva which becomes him as little as possible.

2nd. The Rishi. This is a hermit magician. He instructs the hero in occult arts and provides his equipment, a flying horse, miraculous weapons, etc. He also collects abandoned young girls who appear in the nick of time to become the mistresses or wives of the young prince.

3rd. The Yak. This is the enemy of the hero. He also possesses all kinds of magic powers, he flies through the air, takes different shapes, fights with enchanted weapons. He is violent, irascible, voracious and libidinous. He is sometimes good-natured and may become a faithful servant when he has been beaten mercilessly.

[84] 4th. The father-in-law. This is a king from whom his daughter is taken without consulting him. He is constantly furious, grotesque and scoffed at.

5th. Indra. He is the god ex machina. He comes to the aid of compromising situations and sends water at the opportune moment which saves those who are dead. Like a well-trained servant

he answers to the first call. A rishi can be sent to him as a messenge but in case of need an arrow is sufficient.

Let us pass on to the women.

6th. The heroine. She is beautiful, loving and faithful, but otherwise rather insignificant. However she shows a certain amount of courage. She does not hesitate to have the guards beaten and to fight alongside her husband.

7th. The Kinnaris. When they catch sight of the young prince asleep, these gay and shameless bird-women hasten to carry him off to their home for not very strict games. However, they are good-natured girls and are ready to repair the damage they have done.

These are the most common types. As for the plot, it hardly varies: a chase on a flying horse, rendez-vous, abductions, separations, fights against the yaks or against angry fathers, women lost and found again, death and resurrection, general reunion and universal rejoicing--that is about the contents of these poems.

But they are of primordial importance in the study of local traditions and customs. A thorough study of the semi-legendary events in these romances, by visiting the places where they are supposed to have occurred, will enable one to obtain results similar to those obtained by Sir Aurel Stein in Kashmir. Let it also be remembered that the text of the Rajatarangini, History of Kashmir, was merely an amalgamation of mythical and legendary themes [85] whose geographic framework was the high Kashmir valleys. The minute exploration of each region mentioned in this compilation has enabled Sir Aurel Stein to distinguish correctly between the true facts of which he has found traces, that is to say the archaeological remains, and the mythical legends. Similar work may be done in Laos.

The most popular romances are Kalaket, Lin Tong, Surivong, Camban, Usabarot and above all Sin Xay (Cf. below Savannakhet).

As for the prose romances, they hardly differ from those in verse except by their form. The basis consists always in the telling of endlessly repeated popular tales. But here the compilers have frequently used the form of the Jataka and given the stories a certain amount of Buddhist coloration.

The remainder of Laotian literature consists chiefly of tales. Many comic or judicial stories reflect the whole popular spirit. Besides, many of them have been incorporated in the Jatakas. Like the romances the Laotian chronicles are heterogeneous compilations of semi-legendary and real events. Many are still unedited, particularly those of the kingdom of Champassak. We can also connect with the literature the

538 inscriptions, some of which go back to the fourteenth century and are [172] in the Laotian language. For the earlier period we have seen above that these inscriptions were either in Sanskrit or in Khmer (Cf. Stele of Sayfong, appendix: Vientiane).

Music

533 Laotian songs belong to the field of poetry and are of two kinds:
538 the one consists of poems celebrating the exploits of legendary heroes,
883 transmitted from father to child, from master to pupil, and often expanded by imaginary improvisations; the others embroider the love theme.

[86] Alternate chants are used, particularly in the courts of love. A young girl sings, a boy answers. These songs have become a traditional game whose social function has been forgotten. They consist of a series of questions and answers. Often the questions are even real puzzles or simple guessing questions. By asking each other questions, the young people try to get to know each other.

It seems as if the origin could be found here of what the Indians call the svayamvara which is the choice of the husband by the woman. This custom is very persistent among the white Thai of the Phongtho region.

534 While vocal music is very prevalent in Laos, there exists also instrumental music which should not be neglected. We summarize here the excellent account given by his Highness Tiao Souvanna Phouma on Laotian music.

"There are three kinds of instruments: a) wind (the khouy and the khene), b) string (the So I and the So O), c) percussion (the Nang Nat and the Khong Vong).

The khene consists of a series of thin bamboos of various and decreasing lengths placed side by side in pairs like the flutes of Pan. Usually these are in seven consecutive rows. These bamboos are joined together by two half gourds attached with wax which form the blowing chamber and have a small circular opening to serve as mouthpiece. On the inside, the bamboos are pierced with holes. The most curious thing about the way the khene functions is that several notes are simultaneous and are absolutely continuous.

The khouy is a flute without any keys, generally made of bamboo and giving very clear tones.

The so, [illegible] with two strings, consist of a long carved wooden handle and a sounding box. [87] The latter is a half coconut closed by

10: d'Orleans--352 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 539, 832

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"In one of the pagodas we visit, I can hear the prayers of the bonzes mingling with the soft whisperings of the love-stricken swain, one of whom delivers himself thus:--

'Oh! my love, you who are my very own heart, I love none but you. It is you only whom I love. You are white and green like the eggs of a crow. I implore of you to be my life.'"

10: d'Orleans--372-373 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 539, 584

[LSS: For a description of the game of repartee during which this dialogue was spoken, see Laotians, category 533, pp. 370-371] "Here are some scraps of the chanted dialogue which I took down from the lips of the interpreter.

HE.—'I am very well off. I even have some elephants.'

SHE. —'I am not free.'

HE. —'If you marry me, you will have nothing to do and you will be free to act as you wish.'

SHE. —'I am married. I have a child.'

HE. —'That doesn't matter. I'll arrange with your husband so that he will let you go.'

The chorus replies in a refrain too free to be reproduced here.

SHE—'You are married.'

HE. —'Ask the inhabitants of the village; I am not married.'

SHE. - -'I have known for a long time that you are poor. You haven't even a rupee.'

HE. —'I haven't a rupee, but we will go into business and we shall have a good deal of money.' [373]

SHE. —'Don't you hope to marry me?'

THE CHORUS. —'It is sad to marry an old woman.'

HE. —'I cannot marry you now, but later on when your husband is dead. You have a very pretty face, pretty as the god in the centre of the pagoda, who is so beautiful that

I dare not look at him.'

And he pretends to run away in terror. The young girls burst into laughter.

SHE. —'At a small rivulet there is not very much to drink.'

HE. —'Here are two candles. My face is well lighted. Does it please you or not? You must say.'

SHE. —'I love you, and you don't love me. Whom am I to marry?'

HE. —'When we die, we will die together; we shall be burned together.'

SHE. —When the flames mount up you will leave the young married woman.'

He goes up to the group of girls, and lights them with the candles, then returns to make love to the old woman.

HE. — 'If you become my wife I will not abandon you. I could not find any one so pretty as you.'

SHE. —'We are going to bid you good-bye. If you love me we shall meet again in a few days.'

HE. —'When I go away from here I shall find no girl so pretty as you. I shall die.'

Upon this the party breaks up."

Thaïs of the Mékong The genesis of Thaï settlement in the 174
valley of the Mékong is infinitely more obscure. There is a com- 773
plete lack of documentary evidence if we overlook the Laotian legends which are indeed charming in their animation and naïveté but which do not offer any guarantee of authenticity or even, in most cases, of probability (2). We must nevertheless admit that

2. Cf. Mission Pavie, Études diverses, Vol. II, "Recherches sur l'Histoire du Cambodge du Laos et du Siam" (manuscripts translated by Auguste Pavie's Cambodians).

the wonderful tales of Muong-Theng's gourd and of the division of the earth between the sons of Khoun-Borom do not contradict our notions as to the expansion of the Thaï race in Indo-China, and that they constitute an obvious allusion to the arrival of the invaders in eastern Laos.

Here is the legend, of which there are several versions, in as 539
"denuded" and condensed a form as possible (3): 174
773

3. This legend of the gourds very probably takes its inspiration from the passage in the Ramayana which tells how "Loumati, the second wife of Sagara, gave birth to a green calabash. It broke, and sixty thousand sons came out of it. The nurses put this 'little' family out to grow in a bed of butter." (Ibid., Introduction, p. xxxvii.)

/31/ The king of Heaven Phya-Theng sent the sage Khoun-Borom to reign on earth with two divine wives, Nang-Et-Keng and Nang-Yoma-kara. Mounted on a white elephant with black ears and tusks which were curved, transparent and crossed, Khoun-Borom came down to the vast plateau of Muong-Theng (the land of angels, known today by the Annamite name Dien-Bien-Phu) in the spot called Na-Noï. There a gourd plant of prodigious dimensions had grown in the center of Kouva pond and had fastened onto a fig tree on the bank which was itself of unrivaled size and which helped the plant to support two enormous fruits. The celestial envoy had the gourds pierced, and out of them, in incalculable quantities, there at once came gold, silver, cloth, perfume, plant seeds, men, women, oxen, buffalo, pigs, dogs, chickens, ducks, etc., which spread throughout the world. And since his two wives had given him seven sons, Khoun-Borom

539 separated the peoples and divided them among his sons:
174 1. Khoun-Lo received Muong-Swa, the land of millions of ele-
773 phants and of white parasols (Lan-Xang-Hom-Khao);

2. Chet-Chuong received Muong-Phoueun (plateau of Tran-Ninh and valley of the Nam-Nhiep as far as the vicinity of Borikane);

/32/ 3. Nhi-Fa-Lane received Muong-Ho (Sip-Song-Panas, the land of the Twelve Thousand Ricefields);

4. Chu-Song received Prakan (the Thai regions of Upper Tonkin and of the Black River);

5. Saya-Phong received Muong-Nioun (Xieng-Mai or Lan-Na, the land of millions of ricefields);

6. Kham-In received Muong-Louvo (Siam or Lan-Piyea, the land of millions of granaries);

7. Louk-Poun, finally, received Hongsavadi (Pegou and Pagan).

Before sending them forth Khoun-Borom said to the seven kings who were his children: "You shall live peacefully and as good neighbors, the elder ones not quarreling with their younger brothers... Go forth, and remember that you were born of the same womb."

174 It is not impossible that this division, in spite of its fabulous
631 character, should mark the first stage of the history of the Thaïs in the Mékong valley, at a time which the legend does not indicate but which might belong to the second half of the thirteenth century. This date would indeed correspond approximately to an inscription of Rama-Khameng, king of Sukhothaï, "written in Cambodian characters on the four sides of a sandstone stele" and translated by Father Schmitt, in which are mentioned for the first time the names of Vientiane and Vien-Kham (Tran-Ninh) in /33/ the basin of the "Khong river" (1). But whereas the Thais of the Ménam had succeeded, in the course of relatively brief stages, in forming a compact Siamese kingdom which was rapidly freed from Kmer domination, the Thaïs of the Mékong remained divided for a much longer time.

1. Cf. Mission Pavie, ibid. /Études diverses, Vol II, "Recherches sur l'Histoire du Cambodge du Laos et du Siam" (manuscripts translated by Auguste Pavie's Cambodians)/, pp. 175ff., and G. Maspero, "Le Royaume de Vieng-Chan" (Revue indochinoise, 1904, pp. 497 and 498).

Having probably come from their land of origin through the secondary valleys of the Nam-Ta, the Nam Ou and the Nam-Ngun, they founded more or less rival principalities: Cri Cudhamanagari (Muong-Swa-Luang-Prabang); Muong Phoueun (Xieng-Kham, later

pious king who justified the bonzes' prophecies by his deeds. He 643*
built a magnificent pagoda to the memory of his father, the
Wat-Visoun (2), the materials for which were requisitioned from 346
175*

2. The edifice which bears this name dates from the time of the king Zakarine (1898). The enormous "stupa" next to it, which covered rich treasures which have only recently come to light, is now in the process of being restored.

the vassals of the northern provinces. Legend has it that the raft
carrying the columns provided by the king of Tran-Ninh sank /539/
downstream from Pak-Vet, and the inhabitants of the region still
say today that they can be seen at certain times of the year beneath the waters of the Nam-Khane.

Edict against the cult of the "Phis." The king's great piety 771
and his mystical attachment to the /73/ dogmas of orthodix 175*
Buddhism made him intolerant of the Brahmanic practices which 643*
continued to be honored by the peoples of his States. In 1527 he prohibited the cult of the Genii and decreed that all the temples erected to the "Phis" should be demolished. A pagoda called
"Sisouvannathevalok" (1) was built on the very site of the sanctuary/778/

1. This pagoda was destroyed by a tornado in 1883. The king at that time, His Majesty Sisavang-Vong, had it rebuilt in 1905 on the original foundations.

of the tutelary Genie of the capital. But it was impossible, even for the supreme chief of existences, to drive from the heads of people as fatalistic as his subjects were the innumerable superstitions which they attached to accidents, to diseases and to the phenomena of sky, earth and water. Despite the royal ordinances the cult of the "Phis," together with a belief in sorcerers and witches, persisted and still persists today.

Phothisarath was the first of the kings of Lan-Xang to leave his 663
Xieng-Thong palace and reside at Vientiane for many years. 175*

Thanks to its central location and its comparative nearness to 633
the kingdoms of Ayuthya and Annam, this city had grown extensively as a consequence of the development of trade. The Kmers, who had been in full decline /74/ since the ruin of Angkor by the kings of Ayuthya, no longer had any influence there. The

Laotian provinces, over which it exercised only nominal authority as yet (2). It must, however, combat the rights which Annam /161/

2. Even over the old principality of Vientiane, now three- /631/ quarters depopulated, where it had had the wisdom, or the weakness, to leave the old chiefs of muongs in charge of the government and had required of them only an oath of fidelity and the payment of personal and land taxes in the form of one large annual tribute.

might one day be led to assert over these regions, and it must place them under military occupation so as to present the emperor Tu-Duc, and eventually the Quai d'Orsay, with a fait accompli without further delay. The great invasion of Tran-Ninh by the Hos was to furnish it a pretext in 1873.

/242/ Invasion of Tran-Ninh by the Hos (1872). A large band 563
of "Red Flags," numbering about two thousand pirates who had 175*
been driven out of the Black River by the "Yellow Flags" towards /167/
the end of 1871, fell upon the plateau by way of Xieng-Ko, which /579/
it sacked despite the desperate resistance of the inhabitants, and entrenched itself in the island of Bandon near the village of Banban. A first column which Chao-Hung sent against it fled bravely at the first contact with the invaders, and since everything ends in a song in the land of Laos, their panic was at once turned to ridicule and put in couplets which are still sung today (1).

1. The following is a translation of the first of these 539
couplets:

Sanousit leaves his opium pipe which is lost.
Sisania throws away his opium lamp.
Chao-un-Vico abandons his Annamite gong.
All is lost, all is thrown away.
They hide in the forest, gasping with fear.
They do not even keep so much as a pin.
They hasten homewards through the brush.
By the shortest road.
For three days it is impossible to eat.
Chao-un-Vico's face is no longer human (fear has distorted his features).

"It seems that this refrain was sung whenever Sanousit, 563
175*

771 and to which is added the pantheism of the "Phis." Their general
779 doctrine, however, includes a belief in an "element which creates all things" and in a future life, the sanction of their dogmatic taboos and precepts, in a place of eternal beatitude which it is possible to inhabit here on earth and which is, at bottom, nothing else but the annihilation of being in the "Nirvana" of the Buddhists.

Among the Lus, even more so than in China and the Indies, the basis of this mystical and dreamlike religion which is so well suited to their temperament is an idea of the nothingness of things, the uselessness of effort and even of action. It is, in a word, the most complete pessimism and the annihilation of energy and will.

775 Various beliefs. 1. The following is an incantation or prayer
769 for [158] dying persons which gives a good picture of the system of the world and of the idea of metempsychosis:

539

The sky and the earth are growing dark!
Come out, souls, and gain "space"!
The spirits of the parts of the body are joined together
and form only one!
Listen to the law of Buddha:
We teach the road which leads to the kingdom of Buddha,
the kingdom of the rising sun.
The one soul, the union of the spirits of the body, knows
today that birth and death are alike!
What is birth?
Nothingness produces the generative breath.
The breath produces fire.
Fire produces water.
Water produces earth, mother of all beings.
Birth is produced by harmony and perfect equilibrium of
the elements.
What is death?
Death is a return to the beginning by the reversal of causes.
Earth masters water.
Water masters fire.
Fire masters air.
Air masters nothingness.
Nothingness always remains nothingness.
Nothingness is infinite.

149; Reinach--118 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Death is produced by a lack of harmony and equilibrium among the elements.
Sympathy of the spirits produces a man.
Antipathy of the spirits produces a saint.
He who understands this can transform his nature and reach a point where he knows neither birth nor suffering nor death.
He will not know desire or grief!
He who, as he draws his last breath, repents of all his faults in deed, intention and thought regains his original purity. His soul goes to paradise so that, after "time" has passed, it may again be incarnated at the epoch of "rebirth" in the body of a good, just and happy man.

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2. We shall now give an extract from the work of Captain Gosselin, who gives a good definition of the spirits or souls in Laotian beliefs which are particular to each human organ and faculty. His description will be found to agree with what we have said at the beginning of this chapter.

[159] "The existence of man consists in the union of several organs, the cooperation of which helps to regularize the mechanism of vital formation. Over each of these organs presides an immortal personality which is called the soul of the organ. These souls, which are thirty-two in number, are as follows:

"The soul of hair on the head; the soul of body hair; the soul of the fingernails; the soul of the teeth; the soul of the skin; the soul of the flesh; the soul of the nerves; the soul of the bones; the soul of the cartilages; the soul of the glands; the soul of the heart; the soul of the spleen; the soul of the peritoneum; the soul of the liver; the soul of the lungs; the soul of the large intestine; the soul of the small intestine; the soul of digested food; the soul of food to be digested; and the soul of the brain.

"These twenty organs are produced by the male substances, that is to say by the father. The twelve others originate from female substances, or the mother. They are:

"The soul of the bile; the soul of glutinous matter; the soul of the synovia; the soul of the blood; the soul of the sweat; the soul of

10: d'Orleans--346-347 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 541, 796

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"The order and composition of the procession are regulated by rites of very long standing. At the head of the procession march young men with flowers in their hands, then two rows of bearers of red and white umbrellas for the temple, behind them coming six or eight men carrying upon their shoulders one of those gilt chairs which are used in the pagodas as pulpits, and upon which one of the principal bonzes is seated. He is accompanied by two guards, who have in their hands [347] a bamboo with a mat at the end of it shaped like a lotus leaf. Following him comes a cortége of bonzes and students in yellow, belonging to six pagodas, singing in chorus or making response to one another, while at an interval of about fifty yards, a number of young girls march in regular order, the smallest coming first. They all have a yellow scarf over their dress, and each has a parasol according to her size, from the tiny European sunshades to the vast Chinese umbrellas of oiled paper, and each of them carries a silver jar full of flowers for the pagodas or of water for the libations. Picturesque as this spectacle is, it is not the most curious part of this 'festival of the women ' as it might well be called."

25: Brodrick--100 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 273, 527, 534, 541

"In May is the Feast of Fireworks, that begins with a decorous temple service and then, after nightfall, the big drums start to throb. All night long men hammer at the buffalo-hide tambours, breaking off only to make the rounds of the village where, at each house, they drink rice-alcohol, and so the Firework Festival goes on, with rockets whizzing in the sky and the bass drums rumbling, a holiday of drunkenness and gaiety prolonged for three whole days.

The Festival of the Great Waters, in July, is not unlike that in Cambodia, but more spontaneous and fairy-like. Then there is the Cake Feast in October and then at the Hunter's Moon, the Festival of the Great Oath.

These are some of the official court festivals in the realm of Luang-Prabang, but the local, village feasts are more revealing of the Laotian as he is. The Courts of Love, singing all night long, and the funerals..."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

following a crowd. It was about two miles from the town's centre 527
and I passed several pagodas on the way, where carpenters were
working by lamplight in preparation for a future festival.

An enclosure had been built round the pagoda in which every 354
kind of light, from hurricane lamps to fluorescent tubes, had been 527
concentrated in an anarchic glare. The pagoda had hired a generator 545
for the occasion. There was no entrance fee, but young ladies with
demurely lowered eyes waited just inside to accept donations, in
return for which you received a candle, a posy of Japanese lilac and
two joss-sticks in a bamboo container. Among the many attractions
was a free theatre show, lasting for many hours, indistinguishable,
except to an expert, from the theatre of Siam. Actors remained on
the stage for what seemed interminable periods, occasionally ad-
vancing or retreating a few steps. Meanwhile their babies played
happily round their feet, and quite frequently a stage-hand would
walk across and interrupt a scene for a few seconds to pump up the
pressure in the hurricane lamps.

On a nearby platform the *lap ton* was being danced. Once again 292
it was the major attraction, but as it was still incorrect for Laotian 301
girls to dance in public, religious enterprise had arranged for 535
hostesses to be brought over from Siam, just across the river. The 562
pagoda hired the girls for the three nights and lodged them in a 527
nearby building. It cost a piastre to cavort round the stage for
about fifteen minutes with one of them. They were dressed in
hideous knee-length frocks, and some seemed to have permanent
waves. The backward Laotian girls in their dowdy finery, their
silk scarves, their skirts woven at the hem and waist-band with silver
and gold thread, and their abundant jewel-decked chignons, could
only look on wistfully. As I arrived the organizers were having 403
trouble with the microphone – indispensable adjunct to any social 527
occasion in the new Far East. A young man chanted a soft, nasal
melody which could only be heard within the *boun* enclosure itself.
But suddenly the electricians were successful with their tinkerings
and all Vientiane was flooded with a great, ogrish baying. The

a certain basic licentiousness and is accented by a final sharp 533
cheer; and the singsong in the strict sense which has no great development and to which were applied words, at the whim of the man or woman singing, to celebrate a welcome or any kind of event (1).

1. M. Galerne, op. cit. /Courrier musical, 1925/

Here is one of the love songs, "from which springs all the sentimentally exquisite poetry of the Laotian soul":

The moon is rising; come, o my beloved, and speak to us under the rays of the twinkling star;

O flowers, which exhale your pure perfumes at this hour, come and tell me of his good qualities;

O my heart, why do you beat so strong?

I think of my beloved.

Come, come quickly; I am alone under the roof of my house; why do you leave me thus?

I am languishing, my beloved. Come, then, and press this heart which beats so strongly for you and ask it for the essence of my thoughts.

Come, come quickly.

/123/ Page 123 is devoted to an illustration: "A khene player." -- Translator/ /124/

We must regretfully cut short this rapid excursion into the melodious garden of these people who are instinctively artistic and who lost the joy of living together with their independence through the fault of their leaders' tearing one another to pieces, and also because there cannot for long be any place here below for individuals, as well as for peoples, whom the Germans themselves, although they are nevertheless deeply musical, have scornfully called "mandolin players" (1).

1. The Laotian theater scarcely deserves mention. It de- 545
rives exclusively from the Cambodian and Siamese theater /177/
and is likewise made up of extremely long plays -- epics, warrior legends and romances, and religious tales taken from the Vedas, the Ramayana or the Mahabharata. "To this repertoire are joined the purely Kmer plays and various adaptations of Burmese origin, which are played in classical costumes and in which a good bit of comedy and modernism

545 and a barb of satire are mingled with the ancient traditions."
/177/ (L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 191.)

341 The other arts: architecture. Carefree artists: this is what the
346 Laotians seem to have been throughout the ages. And this is what
172 explains the extreme fragility of the innumerable monuments with which they adorned their land and which the pitiless tropical vegetation is today strangling for the most part. Under the Kmer influence
/177/ in the south and the Burmese in /125/ the north they built temples, chapels, pagoda-libraries, and reliquaries in the shape of "lotus blossoms" or pyramids or cones which were without any originality of their own but almost always charming in the grace, prettiness and elegance of their details. The reigning princes, from Fa-Ngoun to Souligna, were all great builders of temples, but if we except three or four edifices in Luang-Prabang, a few pagodas and chapels, the That-Luong in Vientiane and the Vat Sisaket which is only a century old, practically nothing is left of this abundant flowering (1).

1. There can be no question here of the important monastery of Vat-Phou (Bassac), which is really Kmer and belongs in some way to the Angkor group.

Everywhere in Laos one encounters impressive ruins of brick pagodas which were clumsily built but in which the plaster which covered them still frames the openings with many-colored ornaments and exquisite arabesques. For several years the French have tried, albeit somewhat tardily, to save the chief of these mutilated vestiges of an Edenic past from total destruction. Even the Vat Prakeo itself is today, alas! irrevocably destined to final disintegration.

"More fragile still (was) the style of building /126/ in wood which may well have yielded the most beautiful of the country's achievements. One of the most interesting of these exists today only in the memory which was recorded by a drawing of Delaporte at the time of the expedition of Doudart de Lagree... This was a pagoda located in the vicinity of Luang-Prabang... its form was highly individual, and reminds one of a feeding trough or a bread-pan. Delaporte compares it to an Oriental tomb. Rectangular in shape, its walls flared out up to the first roof. The latter was surmounted by a second recessed story which flared out again to support a second richly ornamented roof..."

10: d'Orleans--321 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 288, 531, 548

"The scarves which are celebrated in Indo-China, embroidered by hand with a great variety of design, and in very harmonious colours, denote great taste. After the saleswomen have folded their goods and packed them up to take away, some of them lag behind and tell us that they are themselves for sale at twenty-five or thirty rupees."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

837 suitable girl, and was back with one by six-thirty. At seven the
588 bonzès came and performed a marriage ceremony which took half an hour. At seven-thirty we opened a bottle of champagne and drank to the health of the bride and bridegroom, and by eight they were already in bed.'

548 The evening was rounded off by a routine visit to the local opium den,[1] which, probably by design, was as decrepit and sinister as a waxworks exhibit. We stayed only a few minutes in this green-lit, melodramatic establishment, but it was clear that the unprofitable puff at the pipe was not to be avoided. One had to make some show of going to the devil.

000 I was lodged in the minor palace of the *Conseiller de la République*, the senior French official in Northern Laos, a Monsieur Leveau. The *Conseiller* was a man whose shyness and slight reserve of manner failed to mask a quite extraordinary hospitality. He never, for instance, issued a formal invitation to a meal, preferring with an air of casual assumption to say something like: 'Of course, you'll be dining at home tonight.' Monsieur Leveau was married to a Laotian wife, to whom I was not presented, and the huge official building always seemed strangely empty. We dined facing each other across a darkly gleaming wasteland of ambassadorial table. Sometimes a Laotian servant stole into the room carrying dishes; trailing behind him the distant sounds of a domestic interior. These were immediately sealed off by the closing of the door, leaving us to the vault-like silences of the huge room. As we sat there the light bulbs gave out in various parts of the room and were swiftly re-
365 placed. In Luang Prabang the electric current was switched on at the same time as the water was turned off – at seven-thirty. But the result was no more than a feeble striving of the filament, and the lamp in my bedroom produced a light considerably less than that of one candle. Monsieur Leveau partly got over this difficulty by enormously over-running lamps intended for a much lower voltage, but they did not last long.

[1] [at Luang Prabang. 286
--Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
1 [M. Leveau, senior French official in Laos.--Analyst] Laotians AM8 Kha AM7

INTO THE MEO COUNTRY

After dinner, when the Conseiller[1] relaxed for an hour, he could sometimes be persuaded to talk about some of his problems. These were the chronic worries of the Issarak[2] and the Viet-Minh. To the west of Luang Prabang the frontier with Burma started, and Burmese irregulars crossed it from time to time. Chinese opium smugglers conducted a regular trade with the Meos, and turned pirate when business was bad. But now that the communists had taken over in Yunnan there was some signs of this traffic slackening. And then the Meos themselves. They were passing like a blight through the mountains. Leveau's ambition was to change their agricultural habits. If they could be persuaded to come down to 1000 feet he could give them irrigated rice-fields to cultivate, and had offered to provide the buffaloes to do the work. L 669 579 548

I brought up the question of the Khas. The Khas are the aboriginals of Laos and are, in fact, Moï tribes under another name. Several hundred years ago they were conquered and enslaved by the Laotian nation, and now Khas were to be seen hanging about the market places of Laotian towns and villages, utterly broken and degenerate; as helpless as the pathetic remnants of once powerful Indian tribes in North America. I asked if it was true that Laotians still possessed Kha slaves. Leveau smiled in his tolerant and sceptical Laotian way and said that it all depended what you meant by slavery. The slavery of the old West Indian plantation kind was unknown in the Far East. For superstitious if for no other reasons, the peoples of Indo-China always trod very gently when it came to oppression of others. The spirits of their ancestors had to be reckoned with, and they themselves if pushed too far might be forced to revenge themselves by the efficient, occult methods strangers were always imagined to possess. He cited the well-known fact of a collective bad-conscience on the part of the Vietnamese, who conduct special sacrifices and offer symbolical rent to the spirits of the unknown aboriginal possessors of the land they now occupy. Leveau believed that slavery did occasionally exist, but that it took more the form of a racial aristocracy maintaining a subject people in a condition of K 566 769 566

2 ["free men" of Laos and Cambodia.--Analyst]

586 "If a husband remains absent for more than three years without sending news of his whereabouts, a divorce in the wife's favor is legally established. The same period of time and the same conditions are required to break an engagement which has been publicly announced by the parents.

"When a man and wife have had enough of living in common they take leave of one another by dividing their common acquisitions, except for the fact that each one takes back what he brought with him to the marriage. A woman who wants a divorce places a bouquet and two wax candles on the common bed.

"Usually a husband leaves his wife free to separate from him and has recourse to law only to obtain restitution of any part of the common property which his wife may have taken with her illegally.

"A wife who has committed adultery is at the discretion of her husband, who may demand that she be meted out the "Royal Penalty," that is to say either death or life imprisonment. He may also be content with a fine. We should hasten to say that the outraged husband always asks for the fine, which is inflicted on both guilty parties, the adulterous wife and her lover. The fine varies, depending on the region, from 170 to 800 francs.

"If a husband brings three complaints against his wife for adultery with three different persons, he is the one who is punished the third time, for he is considered to be a complaisant husband.

"Relations between unmarried persons are regarded as adulterous.

"A case is also considered adulterous, and punished in the same way, if any man and married woman are surprised alone in an isolated spot or are found talking together in the husband's house with no witnesses present.

"Adultery on the part of the husband is covered by the local law within the general formula which assimilates relations between two unmarried persons to adultery." (Le Laos français.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

548 Prostitution. The facilities provided by Laotian customs in the matter of marriage and divorce are such that prostitution does not, so to speak, exist. It is true that a few women are found in the large centers, especially since our settlement in Laos, who are prostitutes or are notoriously known to pursue clandestine prostitution, but this is an exception due solely to the presence of native troops and Oriental "boys" hired as servants [200] by Europeans. These women are,

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moreover, the object of the utmost scorn on the part of the whole population, and their houses are relegated to points outside the muong, that is to say outside the city.

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No such practice exists in rural areas, and if a few girls grant their lovers great intimacies it is in the hope--a hope which is almost always realized--that marriage will be the result.

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Death, burial, cremation. In principle, Laotians are supposed to cremate their dead. In this they are obedient to the ancient traditions which specified this ceremony, but since cremation is a costly practice poor people are simply buried.

In certain cases, as in deaths resulting from dysentery epidemics, from childbirth, from suicide, etc., the bodies are thrown into the river or its tributaries.

Laotians have no cemeteries enclosed by walls or barriers. A corner of the forest near the muong or village is reserved for this use and serves as a last resting place for those of the inhabitants who cannot be cremated or should not be thrown into the water. There, at the foot of the trees and in their shade, repose those adults and adolescents whose families did not even have means to buy the ritual cremation firewood, and also the children who never underwent the operation of "cutting the forelock" (1).

(1) This operation takes place at the age of thirteen and marks the transition from childhood to adolescence. It is the sign of nubility. [881]

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When it is to be buried, the body of the dead person is placed in a sort of coffin made of ax-hewn planks which are usually poorly joined and covered with colored paper burdened with ornamentation. Sometimes a mat is used, in simpler fashion, or else lattices made of split and crushed bamboo stalks like those which form the floors of houses. The whole is tied together with rattan or with bamboo bark.

This is the lot of destiny's outcasts. After a few family ceremonies and a feast given in the dead person's home [201]--the magnitude of which ceremonies and feast vary depending on the dead person's station in life and his family's resources--the bonzes, accompanied by a few pupils, come and recite the funeral orisons.

The bonzes are not supposed to look at the body during their prayers, and they hold up a screen called Talapat to hide their faces.

10: d'Orleans--320 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 437, 443, 551

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "...We were overrun by a troop of female hawkers, who settled themselves down in our quarters and spread out their wares for sale. These women all wear the same sort of dress, namely a silk petticoat with a scarf to match, some of them having their hair cropped close after the Siamese fashion, which is a very ugly one. After a few days we get quite familiar and call these young ladies by their proper names. They either have some name which indicates their sex, followed by the qualification of small, pretty, or what not; or else they bear the name of some good quality, such as peace, happiness, prosperity, jewel. The same saleswomen came back every day, asking an exorbitant price for every article and not showing any inclination to rebate it. However, they are very good-natured in the bargaining which follows, and seem as well pleased if they do not effect a sale as when, after a long discussion, we end by making a purchase."

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wax candles decorated with flowers, cigarettes and a sum of money. (Author's note) 431

the family from the hands of her patient.

"Two or three days after her confinement ends the mother must go to the pagoda and give a few presents to the bonzes, who give her in return a few cotton threads which she fastens to her wrists " (4). [751] [792]

(4) Dr. Estrade, 1895. Dictionnaire et Guide franco-laotien. [113]

Cases of dystocia and other childbearing difficulties are very rare in Laos, thanks to the physiological law which decrees that childbirth shall occur all the more naturally insofar as one comes closer to the primitive type and as one's body has not been deformed either by certain professional attitudes or by artifices of dress. [191] But when any difficulty of this type does occur the Laotian midwives are extremely skilful. Their hands take the place of the steel instruments in our gynecological and surgical arsenal, and their results are usually successful both for mother and child. 844

When the newly delivered mother is allowed to get up there occur traditional feasts and celebrations, the brilliance of which varies with the status of the young mother's parents. It is generally during these happy gatherings that the bonzes or sorcerers choose the name which the newborn child is to bear. They usually base their choice on some peculiarity of the coloring or eyes, or on a phase of the moon. The name will be replaced by another if the child falls sick, for in this case, as they say, the old name was unpleasing to his "Phis," that is to say to his personal tutelary spirits. [554] 846 527 551

Infanticide. Scarcely any cases of infanticide can be cited in Laos, and abortions are extremely rare or at least very well hidden. For when cases do occur it is among members of a class which, because of the rank it holds, is anxious to conceal its faults from the mass of the people. 847 [554]

In popular belief abortion, whether voluntary or natural, is regarded as a punishment of heaven or as a case of aberration which cannot fail to draw down the utmost scorn on the guilty parties and their accomplices.

Marriage. Marriage in Laos is made ready for long in advance, thanks to the liberty which young people of both sexes enjoy. The latter meet one another at every celebration and can communicate 584

316 healthy, and labor could be found quite easily. The route of access to the territory of Muong-Son would be through Tonkin, either by way of Cho-Bo-Van-Bu-Muong-Het or by way of Cho-Bo-Ta-Koa-Muong-Het. The journey from Hanoi to Muong-Son can be made in fifteen to eighteen days, as follows: two by steamship, eight by pirogue and the rest on horseback with bearers for the baggage.

(Extract from the reports by M. P. Macey.)

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APPENDIX XXII
NOTES ON RUBBER
I

314 In Laos, the rubber lianas are known to the natives by the generic name Khua (1). According to the information which M.

[552] (1) In Laotian, khua is a generic term applied to all lianas and to all climbing plants without exception.

Leblévec, head of the Upper Mekong Hydrographic Mission, was so kind to furnish me upon my request, their number seems to be quite large.

This traveler classifies the rubber lianas of Upper Laos into two categories, according to the nature of the product which they yield.

The first category includes the Khua-ka-tong-ka-tiou, the Khua-sout-long and the Khua-som-lam. The elastic gum which these varieties produce is dark in color, either black or chestnut. The bark is pebbly and blackish-green in color. The leaves are shiny and dark green. The fruit is elongated and produces pilose, barbed seeds. Some of these lianas are as much as 30 to 40 centimeters in circumference. They are found in the forests of the Laotian plains, on the banks of the Mekong.

The Ka-tong-ka-tiou is said to be found nearly everywhere on very humid terrain covered with rushes which are burned in the rainy season. The Sout-long is found on the banks of the Ngoum, in the region of Tourakom. The Som-lam grows on the upper Nam-Sam and in Xieng-Khouang.

M. Leblévec classifies the lianas which yield a light brown or dark reddish rubber in the second category. These are the Khua-mac-ka-khay, the Khua-kao-pong, the Khua-lam-sai and the Khua-tang-tong.

10: d'Orleans--321 [4] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 554, 793

"Then come the bonzes, one of whom, a big, fat man, with a bosom as protuberant as that of a woman, is a very important personage, as his small violet petticoat indicates. Satouk Camdi, as he is called, has a frank, cheerful face and strong voice, which he makes ample use of to ply us with questions. Once settled down, with his porters who carry sunshade, fan, &c., it seems as if we should never get rid of him. My proposal to photograph him is very gleefully accepted, and he at once makes his brother and sister sit for their portraits as well."

10: d'Orleans--379 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 554, 609

"The natives here seem very peaceful, and we get on very well with them. We are looked upon as important personages, or we should not be admitted into the sala where we pass the night and which bears the following inscription:--'Reserved for great men and mandarins.' "

23: Franck--312-313 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 554, 634

"... His Majesty was about to confer upon me his most regal decoration, the most prominent of the many medals on the breasts of the commissaire and of [313] the king himself, both in bronze and in the flesh, the highest honor of which this protected Oriental potentate is capable, something corresponding in Luang Prabang to the order of the Rising Sun in Japan, to wit: the order of the Million Elephants and the White Parasol! For you must know that Luang Prabang is not only the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha but even more officially the Kingdom of the Million Elephants and the White Parasol, just as King Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah's real title is Master of Heaven and of Life. I do not know whether it is actually claimed that there are so many pachyderms in the kingdom at the same time, but a little exaggeration is always admissible in the tropics; or it may be that the souls of departed elephants are also included in the reckoning."

23: Franck--338-339 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 554, 482

" For in Laos the importance of a traveler depends upon the amount of baggage he carries, the amount of trouble he puts the country to in getting him through it, even as in many other lands. The king never travels without an enormous retinue and tons of baggage, whether he needs it or not, and if he gets separated from it he withdraws into incognito. One [339] reason the coolies of Laos cannot carry more is that each of them has a musette containing his personal belongings and food, a knife in a wooden scabbard, and increasing odds and ends, until by this time they had nearly as much baggage as we, in sharp contrast to the Chinese, who, in a land of strong and constant competition, carry almost nothing of their own. On this third afternoon two men carried nothing but the loads of the others, and they seemed to be getting weaker as their own loads grew ever bigger. If this kept up I should have to have two men for every one who was actually carrying for me and my escort. "

565 The common people, kind and carefree in character, roamed
175* over the country in all directions as easy-going masters, leaving
/462/ household tasks to the women and the work of the fields to dependents of an inferior race or to slaves. They were excellent boatmen and traders rather than farmers, so that they liked to perform the function of peddlers and served as a link between the multiple /55/ varieties of mankind which inhabited Lan-Xang.

567 Slavery existed--slaves could be obtained through capture, as
175* the result of debt or through trade--and brought high profits to those
563 who engaged in this traffic. In the region of Muong-Swa there was also a kind of serfdom which was applied to certain Kha tribes placed under the patronage of the king, the princes or the chief representatives of the nobility.

565 But if we consider the gentle and happy temperament of this
175* people whose good humor made up for everything, we are justified in believing that the relations between the various social levels must have been free of any harshness.

191 They spoke a dialect derived from the language which was imported into the basin of the Ménam by Rama Khamheng at the end of the thirteenth century and which was itself derived from the
771 graphs of India (1). They practiced orthodox Buddhism together
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1. Cf. Mission Pavie, op. cit. /Études diverses, Vol. II, "Recherches sur l'Histoire du Cambodge du Laos et du Siam"/ Inscription of Sukhothaï translated by Father Schmitt, p. 192: "It was in (1287 A.D.) that the king Rama-Khameng summoned a teacher who created Thaï writing."

with the cult of the "Phi" or Genii which represented for them the beneficent or maleficent forces of Nature. The bonzes were of comparatively pure morals amidst these peoples for whom enjoyment and pleasure were, when /56/ all is considered, the true gods. Although they were fairly ignorant and recited their prayers in Pali
/782/ without understanding them, they did not lack a certain air of nobility. They also enjoyed a high regard and had as much favor as they could desire. The bonzeries[1] which were built near the pagodas were at once places of inviolable asylum, schools frequented by all the children of the village, and workshops where trades could be learned.

/[1] Buddhist monasteries--Analyst./

coming down the great river, and in the following 643*
he repressed with no less vigor a new attempt on the 648*
part of this ambitious prince." We have been un- 175*
able to find any confirmation of this expedition in
the Laotian chronicles.

General Sene-Soulintha took command /91/ of the troops and 643*
brought them back to the capital, where he had difficulty in ex- 669
plaining the king's disappearance. Since the ministers and the 175*
queen, who had just brought a son named Nokeo-Koumane into the
world, affected not to believe him, he had the palace surrounded
and the prime minister Tian-Ta-Simmarath, the governor of
Vientiane, assassinated together with his partisans and proclaimed
himself regent (1).

1. The Annals state that the chief bonzes preached conciliation and succeeded in avoiding the conflict for three months.

SENE-SOULINTHA (1511), REGENT (1571-1575).

Nothing could have been more favorable to the plans of the 643*
king of Burma than the disappearance of Setthathirath, and espe- 648*
cially these court quarrels which he resolved to exploit without de- 175*
lay. To the highly questionable regent he opposed the rights to
the crown of the former Oupahat, whom he had kept at Ava as a
hostage since 1565. But his envoys were ignominiously massacred,
"a fact which shows to what a degree people in Lan-Xang still
thought they could scorn the Burmese provocations." In order to
avenge this outrage Bureng-Naung sent out an expedition which /726/
was weakly /92/ led by contingents from Xieng-Mai and even
from Siam, and which ended in complete failure. Then he multi-
plied his intrigues and worked behind discontented persons who
naively imagined that with their old Oupahat there would no longer
be anything to fear from Burma.

In spite of the opposition which he encountered, the regent held 643*
his power in Vientiane for four years. Sixty-one years old, he was 554
the son of a simple village chieftain whom King Phothisarath had 175*
singled out for his intelligence and bravery. Setthathirath had em-
ployed his skill in Xieng-Mai, where he had proved his military
talent against the Burmese and the pretenders to the throne of Lan-
Na. Promoted to the rank of general and governor of Muong-Sai,

643* he had subsequently taken an active part in all the expeditions. In
554 the present circumstances he therefore seemed to be the man for the
175* job, but his obscure origin constituted an insurmountable obstacle to his recognition as head of the government by the immense majority of the population, who were unswervingly attached to their dynasty.

643* Third Burmese invasion (1574-1575). He tried to break the opposi-
648* tion by a reign of terror and had many rebels pitilessly executed on
175* /93/ his own authority. Then Bureng-Naung, exasperated, went on the march towards the autumn of 1574, and the Burmese army reappeared under the walls of the capital of Lan-Xang for the third time in less than a dozen years.

726 Sene-Soulintha thought that he should adopt the tactics which had
643* succeeded so well for Setthathirath, and tried to draw the enemy into
648* the forest. But the situation was no longer the same as it was in the
175* time when all the Laotians stood behind their legitimate sovereign. He took only a few partisans with him in his flight and Bureng-Naung was careful not to pursue him. The Burmese king entered the stronghold without difficulty, placed his protege on the throne, put a garrison at his disposition, consolidated the ramparts and returned tranquilly to Ava with the young Nokeo-Koumane whom he took along as a hostage. There he soon learned that the regent had fallen into the power of the Oupahat, who was sending him to him with all haste. Bureng-Naung received him with distinction and allowed him to live in complete liberty (1).

1. Cf. Lefevre-Pontalis, op. cit. /"La lutte des Thaïs contre les Birmans au seizième siècle." Revue indochinoise, 1914, Vol. XXII, Nos. 7-8./

MAHA-OUPAHAT, KING 1575-1579.

648* Lan-Xang was finally subject to the law of the /94/ Burmese con-
175* queror (1). After the Shan States, after Lan-Na and Ayutha, it
643*
/651/

1. The tribute of vassaldom was ten elephants and twelve kilograms of gold each year. (Ibid.)

succumbed in its turn because it had not been able to avoid dynastic dissensions. Nevertheless, this brilliant period of Burmese hegemony in the Indo-Chinese peninsula scarcely extended beyond the end of the sixteenth century. Bureng-Naung was to die in 1581 after a most

149: Reinach--5a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 5 /p. 9/ Imperial seal of Annam belonging to the king of Luang-Prabang.

149: Reinach--124 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Although less pure than in Cambodia, the bonzes' morals in Laos are generally fairly good. They are, moreover, greatly loved, highly regarded and fondly cherished. When there is a celebration or a great feast in a family, part of the choicest dishes is always reserved for the bonzes. 792 785 554

On the next to the last day of every phase of the moon, the bonzes must make public confession of their faults and be prepared, should the need arise, to undergo the punishments which the code stipulates. 792

Bonzeries are schools and at the same time workshops where all trades are taught. All knowledge is concentrated in them, as our knowledge was during the Middle Ages in monasteries. 871 874

Together with the pagodas, they are also spots of inviolable asylum in accordance with certain rights, and hostelries where travelers are lodged and fed with the produce of the bonzes' alms-seeking. 485 778

Newly ordained bonzes must stay in the pagoda at least three months, and may quit their habit at the end of this period. If a bonze desires to return to the pagoda after he has reentered lay life, his reassumption of the habit gives rise to the same formalities and ceremonies as the first time. It is a new ordination. 792

The liturgical litanies of the Buddhist religion, which the bonzes psalmodize, may not be translated into Laotian. The bonzes and the [165] [Illustration] [166] [Blank page] [167] Laotian faithful, as well as the cantors and the French adepts, chant prayers whose meaning they do not understand (1). 198 788

(1) In reality the Laotian, Lu and Youn bonzes form a sort of caste as the Druids used to in Gaul. More particularly, they are the ministers of worship, the repositories of moral authority, of scientific traditions, of secrets and of artistic and industrial methods. They transmit by word of mouth the precepts of Buddhist dogma, which were long ago explained by those who introduced the religion into the land. But the writings in "Pali" which contained these, although they can still be read mechanically by a few scholars, are no longer understood. Thence arises the necessity of handing down their meaning by word alone. Thence also, without doubt, arises the increasingly greater attenuation of the purity and force of these principles as they 792 779 178

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wax candles decorated with flowers, cigarettes and a sum of money. (Author's note)

the family from the hands of her patient.

"Two or three days after her confinement ends the mother must go to the pagoda and give a few presents to the bonzes, who give her in return a few cotton threads which she fastens to her wrists " (4). [751] [792]

(4) Dr. Estrade, 1895. Dictionnaire et Guide franco-laotien. [113]

Cases of dystocia and other childbearing difficulties are very rare in Laos, thanks to the physiological law which decrees that childbirth shall occur all the more naturally insofar as one comes closer to the primitive type and as one's body has not been deformed either by certain professional attitudes or by artifices of dress. [191] But when any difficulty of this type does occur the Laotian midwives are extremely skilful. Their hands take the place of the steel instruments in our gynecological and surgical arsenal, and their results are usually successful both for mother and child. 844

When the newly delivered mother is allowed to get up there occur traditional feasts and celebrations, the brilliance of which varies with the status of the young mother's parents. It is generally during these happy gatherings that the bonzes or sorcerers choose the name which the newborn child is to bear. They usually base their choice on some peculiarity of the coloring or eyes, or on a phase of the moon. The name will be replaced by another if the child falls sick, for in this case, as they say, the old name was unpleasing to his "Phis," that is to say to his personal tutelary spirits. [554] 846 527 551

Infanticide. Scarcely any cases of infanticide can be cited in Laos, and abortions are extremely rare or at least very well hidden. For when cases do occur it is among members of a class which, because of the rank it holds, is anxious to conceal its faults from the mass of the people. 847 [554]

In popular belief abortion, whether voluntary or natural, is regarded as a punishment of heaven or as a case of aberration which cannot fail to draw down the utmost scorn on the guilty parties and their accomplices.

Marriage. Marriage in Laos is made ready for long in advance, thanks to the liberty which young people of both sexes enjoy. The latter meet one another at every celebration and can communicate 584

584 their mutual sentiments and decide in complete freedom on the principle of their future union.

Natural inclinations are rarely opposed by parents, and so it is primarily out of form and a sentiment of respect that a young man, after reaching an agreement with his fiancée, sends an old man to convey his proposal to the parents of the future bride.

[554] On the other hand, since Laotian customs establish the size of the dowry which young men must, depending on their social status, [192] deliver to their in-laws, girls eligible for marriage encourage only those suitors who are in a position to provide such a dowry (1).

(1) The sum varies, for the lower and middle classes, between ten and 250 francs. But in the families of notables it may go as high, counting jewelry and gifts, as 1200 or 1500 francs.

When an agreement has been reached the fiancée's parents give a feast to which relatives, friends, neighbors and bonzes are invited. The latter then set a day and hour for celebrating the marriage, taking care to choose a propitious day.

585 On the appointed day the groom, accompanied by his friends and by musicians, goes to the house of his future wife's parents, to whom he delivers the sum agreed on as his dowry as well as the clothes, jewels and various gifts which he may care to add. As a sign of homage he also gives his in-laws wax candles and flowers, which are often accompanied by various foods, brandy, tobacco, etc.

The marriage contract is immediately drawn up in the presence of a mandarin and notables of the region. The act gives the names of the bride and groom, as well as those of their parents and the witnesses and magistrates present. The sum of the dowry, the jewels and other objects delivered by the groom to his future bride and her parents are carefully listed. Then after the document is signed by the young couple the authorities affix their seal to it and it is given to the girl's parents (2).

[212] (2) When the bride or groom does not know how to write, his or her signature is replaced by a black or red thumbprint or by an outline of the joints of the index finger (generally of the left hand).

149: Reinach--147 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Polygamy. Although polygamy is not the rule in Laos, it is sanctioned by custom, and the only limits as to the number of wives one man may possess are the extent of his resources and his personal taste for becoming the husband of a greater or lesser number of wives. 595 554

Since infertile unions are regarded as a punishment of [194] heaven, and since physiological defects are beyond the comprehension of the Laotians, a husband who has no children has two courses between which he can choose:

1. To repudiate his sterile wife. He must then leave her all their property gains since their marriage and half of their common property; [586]

2. To keep this wife and take a second one.

Recourse is preferably had to the last solution in most cases. By acting thus the husband avoids making restitutions which would often be difficult for him. Moreover, his first wife often persuades him to take a second wife who will be under her orders and almost become her slave.

This is what does happen if the husband has enough money for several wives. They are all under the domination of the first, never sit at the same rank as she and may not wear jewels or clothes which are as rich and sumptuous as hers. They are, in a way, legal concubines.

These secondary wives are ranked in accordance with their date of entry into the polygamous household and are designated as the first wife, second wife, third wife, fourth wife, etc. In the house, except for the times when the husband or master keeps them with him, they are employed as servants for all the household tasks, farming, spinning cotton, weaving cloth, etc.

In the case the first wife should die, and according to the will of the husband, the second wife takes her place and the others advance one notch.

There is also another very curious type of polygamy which is encouraged by the nomadic habits of the Laotian traveler or trader and which, "utile dulci," yields him profit, security and pleasure. Some natives are, in fact, married at several different places, often quite far from one another and generally situated at the spots where periodic markets are held. 438 595 485

The advantages of this type of polygamy--from the Laotian point of view, of course--are that the husband can have an associate

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595 in each center who will represent him, handle business in his absence,
485 collect at leisure the stock of trading merchandise needed for the next [195] trip, and also provide a home for him where he is sure to find a smiling face and a warm welcome in the course of his wanderings.

554 Among the nobility and the so-called princely families polygamy
595 is the rule and is almost obligatory for the sake of prestige, which demands a greater or lesser number of concubines depending on the husband's rank. It may sometimes happen, for various reasons, that there are two wives whose progeniture enjoy a higher rank and inherit the titles and duties of the father. It also happens, in this social milieu, that the first wife or wives will see that their husband is growing old, worn out and morose, and will seek to distract him during his last years by making him marry quite young girls for whom he is more of a father than a husband but who give him the illusion of rejuvenation and bring joy and gaiety into the house with the light of their youth (1).

(1) Thanks to the docile character of Laotian women in general, and also to the atavistic imprint of custom which makes them regard polygamy as an entirely natural status, peace and harmony are rarely troubled in such households. A hierarchy naturally arises among the various wives and concubines. Each of them remains in the place assigned to her by the date of her entry into the household and enjoys any special favors which may be conferred on her by their common husband without arousing any jealousy.

Quarrels between wives are so rare that when one does by chance occur the corporal punishments decreed by ancient custom are unhesitatingly applied. The situation is of such a nature as to preserve among Laotian wives a spirit of conciliation and amiability which is not the least of their charms.

832 Kissing. Punishment for amatory offenses. Like most of the
834 peoples of the Far East, the Laotians do not indulge in kissing, at least not in the European manner. They rub their noses against the skin of their children or wives and sniff more or less noisily.

Although the morals of the Laotians seem excessively free to us and their remarks, songs and gestures often border on what we would describe as obscenity, we should not conclude that the Laotians are deliberately lewd or cynical. They are instinctively careful to be

149: Reinach--152 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Gifts from the family serve as payment for the bonzes. When the prayers are over, flowers and wax candles are added to the gifts. The body is then raised on the shoulders of four pallbearers of good-will and taken to the cemetery, where there are a few ablutions and where the bonzes recite the last prayers before the burial. 764 792

When all is done the persons present take turns throwing branches, earth and stone into the grave, in the belief that these things will preserve the deceased from contact with wet soil and the teeth of animals. The grave, comparatively shallow, is dug two sok (.9 meter) deep for adults and a half sok (.65 meter) deep for children and adolescents. When the cavity has been filled with earth and well tamped down with the feet, the persons present withdraw and all is over forever.

No worship will be practiced for this tomb, and it will soon disappear under a thick blanket of vegetation. Relatives sometimes return, however, after a rainfall if the ground happens to have settled slightly on the very spot of the grave. They then fill up the tomb and build a sort of tumulus above it with flat stones or heavy round rocks.

The custom of throwing into running water the bodies of persons who had died as a result of certain diseases, generally of an epidemic character, used to be practiced in Laos before our arrival there. The inhabitants had no concern for the fatal consequences which such a procedure might have on public health. Since our arrival in the land an absolute prohibition has been issued against throwing any corpse into the watercourses. Nowadays the people are content merely with simulating this custom and with interring bodies after a pretended immersion. 766 744

[202] When the family of the deceased is wealthy or even well-to-do, cremation is the standard procedure. This ceremony is not performed immediately after death is pronounced, but may often be postponed for more than a month either to enable relatives to come from a distance, or to await the settlement of a pending lawsuit, or else the arrival of the fire sent by the sovereign if the deceased is a prince, an official or a man of a certain rank. Wealthy families postpone the date of cremation out of ostentation, for the interval between death and cremation is supposed to be filled with feasts, celebrations and amusements of all kinds which are put on almost continuously for the bonzes, relatives, friends, neighbors and [554] 764

764 passersby and which entail great expenditures.

The procedure in cremating bodies is practically the same throughout all of Laos, except for a few matters of detail peculiar to certain tribes and localities.

After death the body undergoes several preliminary operations, these being the ablutions, placing the funeral offering destined for the genii of the beyond in the dead person's mouth, drying the body and depositing it in the bier. The Laotian funeral offering recalls the ancient Egyptian custom which survived among the Greeks and [554] Romans under the name of obolus for Charon. In Laos this is a coin--a tical or a rupee--or a strip of silver or gold rolled into a cylinder on which the bonzes have used a sharp instrument to engrave certain sacred formulas and the word Arahang twice repeated, which in mystical language signifies worthy of honor, saint, exempt from all carnal desire, etc.

If cremation is to be postponed for any length of time the body is dessicated by means of mercury, which is introduced through the mouth so as to clean out the viscera completely, empty the intestine and prevent putrefaction. The procedure is completed by fumigating with aromatic plants and bark before the body is deposited in the bier. When the latter ceremony is over, the joints of the coffin are carefully luted with a special paste. Then until the time of cremation the casket is placed on a rather high catafalque which is covered with a roof and situated either in a [203] pagoda, in the dead person's home or in that of one of his close relatives.

There follows below the description of a funeral ceremony, all the phases of which were witnessed by the author. It will enable the reader to gain quite an exact idea of what cremation is like in Laos.

As soon as the death was made known, the bonzes from both pagodas of the Muong (1) came to the dead person's house in order to

(1) Here we refer to the Muong of Pak-Lay, capital of the province of Outhai-Thani (kingdom of Luang-Prabang). The deceased was the Tiao-Muong or head of this province, and was more than eighty years old when he died.

recite the litanies prescribed by the rites, and to see that a wall of the house was knocked down on the side of the rising sun. A bamboo staircase was built the entire width of the opening to give access to the room in which the body was to be displayed.

181 bread by their work, they have scarcely a care for the morrow.
461 Scrupulous observers of the traditions handed down to them by their ancestors, they live an utterly carefree life and instinctively dread everything foreign or unknown to them.

463 Occupations. The men busy themselves with the tasks of farming,
241 fishing and hunting. They are very industrious and skilled farmers, and can draw admirably on the soil's resources. They bring in the wate
462 needed for irrigating their rais or mountain ricefields through ingenious canals built along the sides of hills, and they also know how to capture springs, often very distant ones, for the same purpose. To decorticate paddy, they use mills driven by artificial waterfalls. The women perform the household chores, take care of the children, make and mend clothes, harvest and spin cotton, breed silkworms, unwind the cocoons and mill the silk. Theirs also is the task of supplying the home with water and with wood which they gather in the forest, as well as sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, getting in and decorticating the rice. These many tasks leave Thai women and girls little leisure, and it would thus seem only natural that they should profit by a momen of pleasure, whenever one presents itself in the midst of their multiple duties. They do, in fact, go in for fun eagerly and behave as keenly, despite their more reserved appearance, as their Laotian sisters.

361 Houses. There is no difference between Laotian villages and Thai villages, except that the latter are better kept and cleaner.

342 Thai houses are generally longer and higher than those of the
592 Laotians, by reason of the custom which decrees that the whole family--parents, children and grandchildren--shall live under the same roof. Some Thai houses are as much as thirty meters long and from eight to ten meters wide. In rare cases one finds much larger houses which are from seventy to seventy-five meters long and twenty-five meters wide.

342 Thai houses very often have no verandas on their long sides, but always have two, one at each end, which are covered by rounded roofs
554 and serve as reception terraces or antichambers.

The houses of mandarins and notables can be distinguished from the others by the fact that the roof rafters and the trusses of the gables extend above the line of the roof and cross. These members are decorated with wooden silhouettes or scallops ending in discs which, depending on their number and arrangement, indicate the rank of the house's owner.

149: Reinach--179a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

342

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Fig. 61 /p. 244/ Mandarins of the province of Muong-Hou.
(Courtesy of M. Besson.)

149: Reinach--252 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

The Laotian, as we have said before, makes his powder himself. 411
He also casts his bullets, which are usually only shapeless masses of lead or iron. In view of this fact it is not surprising, with such ammunition, that his guns do not have even a medium range. He is therefore forced to shoot from a very short distance, often less than five meters, if he wants not merely to hit his prey but to strike it in the right place so as to fell it on the spot and not risk becoming the victim of a wounded beast.

[345] European weapons tempt him because of their careful construction and long range, but if by chance he does try them they do not yield the same results in his hands as his own do, imperfect as they are. Thus he prefers his own weapons to ours, finding them better adapted to his eye and his arm.

For several years now, however, double-barreled hunting rifles [439]
of an inferior quality and Winchester muskets of the already outdated 1878 model have been imported into Laos through Siam and Burma. The careful maintenance which such weapons require, the high price of ammunition and the difficulty of obtaining new supplies are all reasons preventing their widespread use. Thus they are, so to [554]
speak, only luxury items possessed by a few fortunate Laotians who have acquired them out of ostentation rather than for use.

Firearms and crossbows are not the only hunting devices used in Laos. Indeed, there is no lack of ingenious instruments, some simple and some complicated, but always perfectly adapted to the particular purpose to which they are destined. They are made with perfect artistry and care, with a view towards capturing the most diverse forms of wild life, from the largest pachyderms such as the elephant down to the smallest bird. Traps, deadfalls, snares, springes, nets, birdcalls, etc. complete the Laotians' hunting equipment. All these devices are manufactured by them during the rainy season, when they are confined to their houses. They are like our peasants who profit from the long winter evenings to make all the little things which they will need during the course of the year.

Rifles and crossbows are used only in hunting the larger wild animals. The natives use special methods to capture elephants.

This pachyderm once lived in great herds in all the parts of 224
Laos which offered grassy plains, valleys and high plateaus, especially where certain varieties of bamboo, wild banana trees and graminaceous plants which were to its taste grew. Nowadays, because

241 Lower Laos and 1.1 inhabitant in Upper Laos), the considerable expense
311 which the establishment of a registry would involve, and the slight interest attached to such a measure in a land where our advantage lies in exercising only an indirect administration, it is impossible for me to reply in any precise fashion.

"All that I can say is that the area of cultivable land is about 80,000 square kilometers, and that it is very unevenly distributed.
[312] The southern part of the possession does offer a certain number of vast plains which are well irrigated or can be irrigated and which are admirably suited to agriculture.

"The northern part, on the other hand, is almost exclusively made up of a series of juxtaposed mountain masses in a nearly unbroken line which leaves only an insignificant place for the rare valleys and plateaus satisfying the conditions required by agriculture.

"The area of cultivated land may be estimated arbitrarily at 30,000 square kilometers, distributed as follows:

Southern Laos, 20,000 square kilometers.
Northern Laos, 10,000 square kilometers.
} Giving about 15 inhabitants per cultivated square kilometer."

In the preceding chapter we gave a list of the plants which compose the flora of Laos. We shall supplement it here by studying those which are grown as regular crops.

243 RICE. Rice, being the basic food of the Laotians, occupies first place among the country's crops.

Two varieties of rice are grown in Laos, glutinous rice or "Nep" (in Annamite) which is called "Khao-Niaou" in Laotian, and dry rice or "Khao-Tiao" which is known in trade as Cochinchina white rice.

The first is more nourishing and contains a higher percentage of starchy matter. Because of its particular qualities, it is the type most widely cultivated for food and for the manufacture of alcohol.

Dry rice or "Khao-Tiao" is also cultivated, but in smaller quantities. It is primarily used for making pastry and for food by inhabitants of certain races which do not eat glutinous rice.

[554 262] Persons of a certain standing even go so far as to eat only "Khao-Tiao" out of ostentation.

Glutinous rice is grown in plains ricefields as well as in terraced ricefields on hillsides and in "Rais" or temporary clearings in the mountains.

177 gesture, and others say that to salute the Laotian way sometimes
576 seems degrading because those whom one greets do not always return the greeting in the same manner, considering it as an homage which is their due but which does not need to be reciprocated.

The Laotian is polite, one must abide by that. The Laotian is respectful of tradition, one must abide by that even more emphatica But let us not forget that from now on all Laotians must have the sense of progress and the desire to improve themselves. Politeness must be neither a unilateral token of respect nor a mark of the humiliation of the human being.

554 To salute in the French manner the subordinate nods his head
576 after having taken off his hat if he is wearing one. If someone extends his hand to him, he shakes it. The superior is the first to hold out his hand. The woman is the first to hold her hand out to a man. To be polite one should shake hands somewhat forcefully. In order to do so one should always use one's right hand and never imitate certain Laotian peasants who, under the pretense of being acquainted with French customs, extend their hand from afar to Europeans while stretching out their left arm.

In the street.--When one meets a high personage in the street it is no longer necessary, as it used to be, to sit down in order to greet him. After having taken off one's hat one nods one's head. If one is not wearing a hat one is free to greet him either by joining one's hands together or by nodding one's head politely. If one is on a bicycle or on a horse, there is no need at all to dismount. The mere gesture of nodding one's head suffices. If one has something to say to a friend whom one meets, one should stand on the side of the street or of the pavement to conduct one's conversation. When one is on a bicycle one should dismount and should not leave one leg over the frame of the bicycle while one is chatting. If one is dealing with a colleague or an intimate friend, one may hail him using expressions like: "Sabay!" (good day), or "Pai sai ma?" (where are you coming from?): that is good tradition, which must always be preserved.

481 Laotians have the habit of walking in Indian file. This habit
576 should be abandoned because it is no longer good form. It will be well to practice the European custom of walking abreast of one another except in cases when this is a hindrance or on a path. When there are two people walking together, /972/ the superior places

173: Deydier--49 H, E-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

[76] LAOTIAN WRITING AND LANGUAGE

212 Laotian writing has an alphabet. It is written from left to right. The Laotian characters derive from the Thai writing created by King Rama Kamheng of Sukhodya in A. D. 1283. But this Thai writing is merely a substitute for the cursive form of the writing of inscriptions in ancient Khmer of Cambodia. This explains the striking similarities of Laotian and Khmer letters.

The tham characters are used especially in religious texts, but also sometimes in novels.

Two other writings close to the Laotian alphabet are the lu, whose use is localized in the extreme north, and the yuon, used at Xieng Mai and in the bordering provinces.

213 The Laotian manuscripts written on four lines are engraved with a pointed instrument on palm leaves of varying length pierced with two holes, at one third and at two thirds of their length. The cord which is to hold them together must only be put through the hole on the left side. A bundle of about twenty leaves forms a phuk (pronounced p'ouk). These phuk are grouped in bundles (mat) which are wrapped up in a piece of cloth or else they are put in a pile held at the top and bottom by two wooden boards, and pierced from right to left with a double series of holes through which a thin cord is passed. The two extremities are tied in a knot used to carry this mass.

[77] The Laotian Language

194 It is a tonal language. It possesses three series of letters, medium, high and low.

193 Morphology. The purely Laotian words rarely have more than two syllables. There is no article. The words are invariable. There is no gender, nor number, only generic terms used to define men, animals, vegetables, etc. The generic categories are numerous. There is one used for leaves and all that is flat, another for round and elongated objects, such as trees and columns, etc., in all there are about twenty.

Like the other words, the verb is invariable. Verbal time is unknown, but there are auxiliaries indicating a completed action. Personal pronouns differ according to whether the person addressed is an inferior, an equal or a superior.

[554]

Syntax. Laotian construction is direct: subject, verb, object. The determinant follows the determined. A question is made without

inverting the order of words. The negation bo is added. Is the gentleman home? is translated Tan you ban bo? Sometimes a single word contains a whole phrase: 175

mi = there are.
dai = it is possible.

Vocabulary. In addition to the pronunciation of sounds, one of the difficulties of the Laotian language is the distinction between noble language and popular language. The language is different when one addresses the bonzes, the high dignitaries, the king. There is a very rich concrete and abstract Laotian vocabulary which unfortunately is tending to go out of use. We have found in manuscripts Laotian words translating textually [78] abstract Pali words, but they have been gradually forgotten. The Laotians no longer read enough of their original texts. Cheap Siamese literature has invaded the country making the people abandon their own language. 192 554 [178] 177 538

One of the urgent tasks is to bring back the old Laotian texts into honor and to spread them abroad again among the public.

[79] LITERATURE AND MUSIC

In addition to the canonical religious literature already discussed, Laos possesses an important literary treasury. But as in Cambodia, Siam and Burma, this literature is anonymous. We are in the presence of epic texts of Indian origin, of legendary traditions, of apologues, of legal, moral or comic tales. There exist also novels, but as in French "romances" of the Middle Ages, they are by unknown authors. There is no equivalent in Laos of a Kalidasa or of a Li T'ai-po. No philosopher or dramatic author is known. 538

If the name of a French writer were mentioned whose manner is closest to that of Laotian authors, it would be that of Charles Perrault, and this in a word characterizes the type of Laotian literature. It excels in wonderful tales.

Literature of Indian Inspiration.

In addition to the Jatakas, Laos possesses at least two great texts of Indian origin. This is said under reservation of further discoveries, for in spite of the important work of Louis Finot, "Recherches sur la littérature laotienne," we are still far from knowing all the treasures of the Laos pagodas. 177 114

a) The Pancatantra. The first text is a collection of tales copied from the famous Indian Pancatantra. In the Middle Ages

10: d'Orleans--275 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 463, 471, 556, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"...Our boatmen assemble round us. I talk to them, and they tell me that they are engaged upon the pirogues for the benefit of the owner (usually a Laotian), who stands at the helm. To them a boat represents a large capital; the one in which I travel is worth sixty-seven rupees. As a rule the owner trades with them, a pirogue can carry about thirty-six thengs (a theng weighs about thirty-four pounds). The boatmen are chiefly hired from among the Kas;"

10: d'Orleans--307 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 461, 463, 511, 556

[LSS: at Luang Prabang] "The men do but little work, labour in the mines and the cultivation of the soil being left to the Kas and it is only in the towns that they are found engaging in any artistic occupation, such as the making of jewellery or the chasing of silver. Even those who do work rarely do so for more than seven hours a day, and the woman keep the pot boiling by spinning silk and making various materials, though they do not overwork themselves. When a household is very hard pressed the men seek employment as boatmen, and are very expert, making enough in a month or two to keep them the rest of the year, so that if there are few large fortunes, most of the inhabitants have enough to live upon in comfort, preferring freedom and tranquillity to an excess of labour, which would only give them what they do not want. Moreover, when they do happen to have put by a decent sum of money, they go and spend it at the pagoda, either in fulfilment of a vow or in payment of some religious ceremony. This is their only luxury, nor, indeed, do they regard it as one, for they reckon upon profiting by it in another world."

10: d'Orleans--344-345 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 443, 527, 556

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"We pay an early visit to the market and find the streets crowded, the women being attired in their finest things, and being loaded with bracelets and necklaces of gold, while the market itself is full of [345] birds in cages, which it is considered to be a very meritorious act to purchase and let loose. This Laos custom is very general among the Buddhists, and I remember seeing at Batang a Chinese soldier who, as he caught his fish, put them into a bucketful of water, the Thibetans giving him money at the close of the day to put them back into the river."

68: Mouhot--154 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 431, 576, 556, 609

"I am literally pillaged by these petty mandarins and chiefs of villages, [HD: in southern Luang Prabang province] and have to give away guns, sabres, lead, powder, colours, pencils, and even my paper; and then, after having received their presents, they will not put themselves out of their way to do me the smallest service. I would not wish my most deadly foe, if I had one, to undergo all the trouble and persecution of this kind which I have encountered."

68: Mouhot--272-273 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 644, 556, 609

"[HD: Excerpt from a letter written by Mouhot in Luang Prabang to his brother] After waiting for ten days I have at length been presented to the king with great pomp. The reception room was a shed such as they build in our villages on fête-days , but larger and hung with every possible colour. His Majesty was enthroned at one end of the hall, lazily reclining on a divan, having on his right hand four guards squatting down, and each holding a sabre: behind were the princes all prostrated, and farther off the [273] senators, with their backs to the public and their faces in the dust; then in front of his Majesty was your poor brother, dressed all in white, and seated on a carpet, with teacups, basins, and spittoons in silver placed by his side, contemplating this grotesque scene, and having some trouble to preserve his gravity as he smoked his pipe. The visit cost me a gun for the king and various small presents for the princes, for one cannot travel here without being well furnished with presents for the kings, princes, and mandarins. Luckily it is not here as in Siam; the natives are willing to help me, and for a few inches of brass wire I get a beautiful longicorn or some other insect, and these are brought to me on all sides: thus I have succeeded in largely increasing my collection, but five pieces of red cloth [HD: brought as a trade item] have disappeared already.

The day after my first audience I had another from the second king, who wished also for a present. I sought among my stock, which anywhere else would cause me to be

68: Mouhot--272-273 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 644, 556, 609

taken for a dealer in old stores, and found a magnifying glass and a pair of old-fashioned spectacles with round glasses, which make him look like a gorilla without hair, a little cake of soap (he had great need of it), a bottle of eau-de-cologne, and a bottle of brandy. This last was opened on the spot and duly appreciated. You see all this is expensive, but I am obliged to pay these good people, and the king has been kind to me, and is going to carry my letters for me." [HD: on his trip to Bangkok to pay tribute to the King of Siam]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

241 sufficient for his requirements. If there are six members of the
461 family, six standard, equal sized portions of land will be cultivated.
511 If a child is born into the family another piece of land is cleared and
792 worked. When a member of the family dies, whether it be a baby or the grandfather, cultivation of his portion will be stopped. Just enough is produced for the family to eat and to provide a small surplus sold in the market — *with the bonze's approval* — to buy occasional strict necessities, like a silk shawl and a bicycle for the
735 daughter. There is no social insurance and there are no poor. The
556 old and the sick are supported by the young, or, where they are
792 left without able-bodied providers, by the community, and the
771 bonzes give instructions for the necessary land to be placed under cultivation for them. The accumulation of wealth which is not to be used for definite, approved purposes, causes a man to lose prestige among his neighbours, just, as in the West, the process is reversed. The main difference, it seems, between Buddhism in Indo-China, and Christianity — apart from any question as to their relative merits — is that, whether we admire it or not, the former is largely put into practice.

It is a stimulating reflection that the Western millionaire, obsessed for the sake of social distinction with the amassing of enormous possessions — little of which he can personally consume — would attain the same ends of personal celebrity under a Laotian Buddhistic order of things by his priestly austerities — by embracing the most abject and prestige-conferring form of poverty.

181 For this reason perhaps the local Evangelist missionary and his
771 wife have made no converts. Like all who have lived among the
785 Laotians they are charmed with them — although, of course,
797 disappointed at their blindness. They also deplore their immorality.

In the matter of converts the Evangelists have been no more unsuccessful than their Portuguese, Spanish and French forerunners. The Laotians having little capacity for abstractions, either in their

291 or less degree lightens its rather dark color. The skirt is a true cylinder, with the same diameter all along its length. A woman raises the skirt in a mass like a crown above her head, lets it slide down along her body and fastens it to her waist, without any hooks or fasteners, by tucking it in along her stomach, which is largely left bare. A brightly colored sash of cotton or silk is thrown over one shoulder, sometimes covering the breasts, to complete the costume.

"During the cold season, where there is a winter, a few women cover their trunks with a short jacket. This garment finds favor mainly outside the larger centers.

302 "A certain number of women wear their hair cut in Bressant style, in accordance with the style imported by the Siamese. The greater number wear their long hair rolled into a coil on the top or side of the head. Women's coiffures vary, moreover, depending on the region and on whether they are married or single.

292 "For great ceremonies, wealthy women wear skirts made of cloth spangled with gold or silver, and sashes of the same type.

"In Luang-Prabang they add a silk or velvet jacket decorated with embroidery on the neck, front and cuffs. Merchants can be found in this city who rent out costumes of this type, as well as gold jewelry, for great ceremonies to women who do not have any." (Le Laos français.)

301 Jewelry. Jewels find great favor among the [179] Laotians and
556 are used to complete and enrich their costume. They are not only ornaments, but also the most widespread method for realizing and preserving the liquid part of their fortune. In fact, the inhabitants transform the greater part of [Illustration here] their savings and profits into jewelry, and since they wear them on their body they are spared the use of strongboxes.

[583] The women and children are the ones who wear jewels most. They go into the trousseau of the young bride, and parents give them to their children as the latter grow up, thus putting together a sort of dowry for the time when they reach the age of marriage.

301 [180] Gold and silver are used in making jewelry, and precious
306 stones such as rubies, sapphires and various genuine or imitation gems are sometimes added as ornaments.

Gold is not used in all parts of Laos, but is mainly limited to the large centers located near regularly worked gold-bearing deposits.

[563] Doubtless because of the application of ancient sumptuary laws, silver is the only metal used by certain races--even by the Khas,

505 Large quantities of nep (rice suitable
438 for making alcohol), hides, horn, cardamom, wax, benzoin, various gums, etc. were shipped from Bassac, from Pakse, from Savannakhet, from Vien-Tiane and from other Laotian centers which had formerly traded exclusively with Bangkok by way of the Nongkay-Outaradit route on the Menam and by the Korat route on the Se-Moun.

505 "Passenger traffic, which was almost nil when the new services
484 were established, is increasing every day. The natives are beginning to become familiar with this rapid, convenient and inexpensive manner of traveling which the steamship represents and they are making more frequent use thereof, a fact which can only contribute to the broadening of relations between the various posts scattered along the great river and increase trade in their products of all kinds" (1).

(1) See, in Appendix XXX, the transport rates between France and Indo-China and between Saigon and Laos.

[487] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER XI
1. SOCIAL STATUS. SLAVERY

[565] Upon our arrival in Laos, we found a hierarchial society com-
567 prised of nobles, commoners and slaves. We could not do better than to preserve all features of the political, social and administrative
178 organization just as it had been. In this respect we took our inspiration from our predecessors the Siamese, leaving our new subjects the
177 utmost liberty and respecting their traditions, customs and mores insofar as these were compatible with our own institutions.

Thus we were at times forced to recall certain native officials who had compromised themselves with the Siamese, or who through their exactions had made themselves unworthy of their office. Moreover, we have always acted tactfully and mildly, [488] leaving the choice of officials to election, in accordance with custom.

But above all, we took radical measures by completely suppressing the slave trade and by regularizing a very mild form of slavery for debt.

[556] There used to be slavery in Laos, as in Siam, in the form of slavery by capture, by purchase and for debt. It yielded high profits for those who engaged in the traffic, for the children and grandchildren of slaves were slaves themselves at birth, a fact which increased the fortunes of their masters to that extent.

149: Rehuach--422 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[124]

APPENDIX XXI

NOTES ON GOLD-BEARING DEPOSITS

1. DEPOSITS OF NAM-BENG AND NAM-NGAO

(District of Pak-Ta--Luang-Prabang)

316 These deposits, which are situated in the principality of Luang-Prabang a hundred kilometers west of the capital, are made up of alluvial beds in the valleys formed by the left-bank tributaries of the Mekong (Nam-Beng, Nam-Ngao, Nam-Ta, etc.).

[643 556] Before our settlement in Laos, these deposits had long constituted part of the patrimony of the kings of Luang-Prabang. It was from here that they extracted all the gold needed not only to pay their tributes of vassaldom to the Chinese, Annamite and Siamese sovereigns, but also to make purchases in Bangkok and cast gold articles and massive pieces of jewelry for their family, as well as the insignia of officials.

Our own prospecting trips to these deposits in 1893 and 1894 yielded, merely by washing in a wash-trough and without amalgamation, "crude gold" which was clearly visible in the form of nuggets, grains and dust. Moreover, from natives who worked these deposits we acquired nuggets which were obtained by means of this same rudimentary process and which varied in weight from two to forty-five grams. We even saw nuggets of unrolled "or crespelé" weighing [301] 140 and 225 grams, which came from the same place. What is more, it is not unusual to meet children wearing nuggets hung around their neck like amulets--nuggets which vary in volume from the size of a hazelnut to that of a pressed fig.

The gentle slope and short length of the valleys where the deposits are found, and the proximity of the mountains from which the gold comes, are precious indications of the presence of outcropping lodes. Moreover, the appearance of the crespelé metal, as if it were spongy, [125] to which particles of quartz still adhere, is a confirmation of this hypothesis.

In 1895 a corporation called the "Mining and agricultural company of Laos" ["Société minière et agricole du Laos"], with a capital of 150,000 francs, was established in Paris through our efforts. It sent M. Isnard, a mining engineer, to the locality to study the deposits of gold and precious stones which we had prospected.

A corporation with a capital of several millions was later to take the place of the study group.

in the course of which Setthathirath, faithful to his tactics, suc- 643*
ceeded in escaping once again. Since the rainy season was ap- 648*
proaching and the Burmese were without provisions, they had to go 726
back towards Vientiane where they expected to be able to spend 175*
the winter. But they were so harrassed all along the road by the detachments which Setthathirath sent out on their heels that they regained Burma in all haste with their prisoners (August 1565).

"In sum Bureng-Naung's efforts, in spite of splendid victories, remained without /88/ any final result. There were those who /723/
criticized the king of Lan-Xang for his way of waging war, but the latter knew the defensive resources which his vast country offered, covered as it was with forests and very sparsely cultivated. By constant elusion and by harrying the enemy when they advanced too far he did what very great captains have done under similar circumstances, and it would have been a great imprudence on his part to risk the salvation of the Thai race in formal battles" (1).

1. Cf. Lefevre-Pontalis, op. cit. /"La lutte des Thais contre les Birmans au seizieme siecle." Revue indochinoise, 1914, Vol. XXII, Nos. 7-8./

Campaign of 1568-1569. The king of Burma thought that if he turned his arms against Ayuthya once more he would be more successful (2). The young Siamese prince Phra-Naret sent word to

2. The former king of Ayuthya, taken prisoner by Bureng-Naung, had entered a monastery in Ava and had played his /557/
role so well that he had been allowed to go on a pilgrimage to Ayuthya. He at once threw off his frock and actively seconded his son in preparing their resistance.

Setthathirath, who hastily sent him reinforcements (1568), but the Laotians fell into an ambush prepared with the assistance of a Siamese turncoat named Oya-Ram and had to return home with all speed. The Siamese had to give up their anticipated revenge, but fortunately for them the /89/ Burmese army was anxious to deal with Setthathirath and did not linger in the region of Ayuthya, but moved towards the Mekong and Vientiane by forced marches.

Second Burmese invasion (1569-1570). The Laotian army was waiting for it at the river crossing and tried in vain to prevent it

they at least preserved their individuality and the prerogatives of 648*
their government. 175*

/98/ Xieng-Khouang, the capital, was then a large and beautiful city whose numerous inhabitants were protected by an enclosure 633
of deep moats and by forts which crowned the surrounding hillocks. 175*
The immense stone jars scattered pell-mell over its plain in the 172
time when the Khas dominated the region (1) and "the wealth of

1. Legend has it that these jars were constructed by the /415/
aboriginal Khas. For what purpose? -- A mystery. They may originally have been storehouses which served to shelter provisions on a road which has been frequented in all periods by migrating peoples. Perhaps rather they were designed to collect rainwater. Perhaps, finally, these monumental vases were simply mausoleums in which offerings were piled up to the shades of the dead.

its sixty-two pagodas and of its shining Thats whose sides concealed treasures" had given it a renown which went far abroad.

Friendly relations were therefore resumed, as in the past, be- 648*
tween the two States. Lan-Xang was again preparing to live in 643*
peace in its rediscovered autonomy when Nokeo-Koumane died 175*
while still very young and without leaving any survivors, in 1596 after a five years' reign.

THAMMIKARATH (1582), KING 1596-1622.

New disorders were to be feared, /99/ /Page 99 is devoted to 643*
an illustration: "Tran-Ninh. The Plain of the Jars"--Translator/ 175*
/100/ and new competitions for the throne. Such was not the case, for the moment, thanks to the authority of Vongsa, a cousin by marriage of the dead king, who although was only fourteen years old was able to rally the suffrage of the court to his name. His mother was a sister of Setthathirath's last wife. The dynastic link was thus rather tenuous and the local chronicles do not fail to point out that on this date the power passed to the "junior" branch of the Khoun-Lo succession.

Vongsa reigned under the name of Thammikarath. In 1598 a 557
son Oupagnouvarath was born to him, who had scarcely reached 643*
man's age when he developed a keen interest in the administration 175*
of his country. By virtue of his intelligence and his precocious maturity of mind he soon acquired a genuine popularity both among

557 the people, and finally took a major part in the direction of the king-
643* dom's affairs. Thammikarath was wounded in his paternal pride,
175* would not countenance this premature interference in his royal prero-
/578/ gatives, and treated his son as a rebel (1621).

OUPAGNOUVARATH (1598), KING 1622-1623.

669 Supported by the majority of the ministers and by /101/ one of
578 his brothers, Mone-Keo, Oupagnouvarath entered into an open struggle
643* against his father, defeated the troops who had remained faithful to
175* the latter in bloody battles, and had himself proclaimed king in Vientiane on the "Sunday, first day of the crescent moon of the fourth month of the year 984" (1622). Three months later, Thammikarath was killed at his orders, together with his last partisans, in Pha-Deng. The epilogue of this somber family drama was not long in coming, for Oupagnouvarath died the following year under unknown circumstances.

662 With his death the intrigues for the crown began all over again,
175* and during a new period of nearly fifteen years, which the confusion of the Annals obscures as if intentionally, princes succeeded one another in Vientiane without any reference point for the chronicler and without any probable date which would make it possible to establish even an approximate chronology.

PHOTHISARAT II, KING 1623-1627.

643* We may nevertheless agree that it was one of Sene-Soulintha's sons
175* who seized power in 1623 under the name of Phothisarath (a fact which further complicates this imbroglio).

/102/ MONE-KEO, OUPAGNAOVARATH, TONE-KHAM, VISAI, KINGS 1627-1637.

The national dynasty resumed its prerogatives in 1627 with, successively, Oupagnouvarath's brother Mone-Keo, Mone-Keo's son named Oupagnaovarath (?), and finally with the latter's two sons Tone-Kham and Visai. The last-named died in 1637 (1).

648* 1. It was fortunate for Lan-Xang that the Burmese had been
175* driven back by the Thais of the Menam and had abandoned all action in the territories once subject to the rule of Bureng-Naung. If this had not been the case the historian of today would doubtless be somewhat more clear as to the events of the time, but Lan-Xang would certainly have sunk permanently into anarchy and into the partitioning which

Tax on rice, paddy, horns, hides, etc.

438
651

	Per picul (francs)	Per hundred kilograms (francs)
Paddy	0.25	0.416
Rice	0.50	0.832
Gum lac	2.50	4.16
Chinese nettle	2.50	4.16
Buffalo horns and hides	2.50	4.16
Buck horns and hides	3.75	6.25
Anteater scales	3.75	6.25
Cardamom	5.00	8.32
Elephant and tiger bones	3.75	6.25
Benzoin	12.50	20.82
Rubber	12.50	20.82
Wax	12.50	20.82
Ivory	50.00	83.20
Pirogues	ten percent ad valorem.	

Also to be added are certain incidental receipts, such as those arising from chancery fees or those collected by the native tribunals in conformity with the rates scheduled by the code of Vien-Tiane.

[701] [557] [658] The royal treasury of Luang-Prabang subsidizes certain expenses, such as the upkeep of the kingdom's militia, of the native hospital in Luang-Prabang, of the Franco-Laotian school in Luang-Prabang, etc. [504]

652 Finally, the general budget of Indo-China pays out a variable sum annually for the purpose of balancing the receipts and expenditures of Laos.

C. Opium

651 One of the most important sources of Laotian revenue is provided
276 by the sale of opium. The administration is responsible for the sale of this substance, which it manufactures itself and which is marketed
655 by licensed merchants acting as middlemen.

Before 1900, Laos sold on its own behalf the opium which was allotted to it by the Cochinchina Customs and Excise Office (1),

(1) This was true only for Lower Laos. The opium sold in Upper Laos came from the Luang-Prabang distillery, which is no longer in operation today.

10: d'Orleans--308 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 533, 562, 832

"The men gossip with the girls, give them flowers, play to them, recite verses, sing them songs and play at cards with them, but never dance with them. Men and women walk through the streets singing, in groups where the two sexes are apart, or sit opposite the one to the other at the entrance to the pagodas. I shall have an opportunity of recurring to these peculiar love-makings, and I have noticed that, in contradistinction to what generally takes place in the East, here it is the young women who dominate the men, who go through the form of beating them, if necessary, and who condescend to cast an amorous glance at them or to respond to their compliments."

25: Brodrick--106 [3] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 562, 586, 883

"Laotian women seem never to have been parked and compressed into any sort of seclusion. Divorce is easy and a manner of seeking it was most charmingly civilized. If a husband had reason to think that his wife did not like him, he placed flowers upon her pillow. If she could still tolerate him, or if she had not any new plans, then she left the flowers untouched for three days. If she desired to get rid of her man, she threw the flowers away, whereupon he walked out and got a divorce.

And at the Love Courts, the phousao and the phoubao, the girls and the boys are free and equal, at least as far as the conventions rule."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

following a crowd. It was about two miles from the town's centre 527
and I passed several pagodas on the way, where carpenters were
working by lamplight in preparation for a future festival.

An enclosure had been built round the pagoda in which every 354
kind of light, from hurricane lamps to fluorescent tubes, had been 527
concentrated in an anarchic glare. The pagoda had hired a generator 545
for the occasion. There was no entrance fee, but young ladies with
demurely lowered eyes waited just inside to accept donations, in
return for which you received a candle, a posy of Japanese lilac and
two joss-sticks in a bamboo container. Among the many attractions
was a free theatre show, lasting for many hours, indistinguishable,
except to an expert, from the theatre of Siam. Actors remained on
the stage for what seemed interminable periods, occasionally ad-
vancing or retreating a few steps. Meanwhile their babies played
happily round their feet, and quite frequently a stage-hand would
walk across and interrupt a scene for a few seconds to pump up the
pressure in the hurricane lamps.

On a nearby platform the *lap ton* was being danced. Once again 292
it was the major attraction, but as it was still incorrect for Laotian 301
girls to dance in public, religious enterprise had arranged for 535
hostesses to be brought over from Siam, just across the river. The 562
pagoda hired the girls for the three nights and lodged them in a 527
nearby building. It cost a piastre to cavort round the stage for
about fifteen minutes with one of them. They were dressed in
hideous knee-length frocks, and some seemed to have permanent
waves. The backward Laotian girls in their dowdy finery, their
silk scarves, their skirts woven at the hem and waist-band with silver
and gold thread, and their abundant jewel-decked chignons, could
only look on wistfully. As I arrived the organizers were having 403
trouble with the microphone – indispensable adjunct to any social 527
occasion in the new Far East. A young man chanted a soft, nasal
melody which could only be heard within the *boun* enclosure itself.
But suddenly the electricians were successful with their tinkerings
and all Vientiane was flooded with a great, ogrish baying. The

643* driven out of their States, and succeeded as a conciliating suzerain
648* in restoring them to their rights.

175* It was under his reign that a rather unfortunate episode took place, one which was to be fraught with consequences for Lan-Xang and which is related in the Annamite chronicles. The relations which had heretofore been maintained with the descendants of the Giao-Chi had been highly courteous, and when the king of Annam Lê-Loi was attacked by a Chinese army in 1421 Lane-Kham-Dèng offered him a force of 30,000 warriors and a hundred elephants. Lê-Loi accepted with the keenest satisfaction, but scarcely had the reinforcements from Lan-Xang arrived on the spot when they betrayed their allies and went over to the Chinese. They gained nothing thereby, however, for the Annamites overthrew their enemies and brusquely escorted the soldiers of Lane-Kham-Dèng back to their own territory. Although he was lucky enough to escape from this wasps' nest, the king of Annam nevertheless felt a profound resentment at this betrayal. His successors inherited the grudge, and less than fifty years later one of them was to become the instigator of a widespread coalition to punish Lan-Xang.

/59/ NANG-KEO-PHIMPHA (1428-1438).

175* During the ten years which followed the death of Lane-Kham-
643* Dèng the harmony which presided over the destinies of the royal
562 dynasty was troubled by a cruel and authoritarian woman who was the actual governor under the ephemeral crowns of seven kings.

Nang-Keo-Phimpha was the eldest of the daughters of Sam-Sene-Thaï (1). The Annals are extremely discreet as regards this

114 1. Pavie's translators, led astray by copyists' errors, wrongly
643* make of Nang-Keo-Phimpha, whom they call Maha-Thévi
175* (Great-Queen), "the daughter of Fa-Ngoun's predecessor" and the first wife of Sam-Sène-Thaï. The predecessor of Fa-Ngoun, that is to say the latter's grandfather, died at an extremely advanced age in 1353. His daughter would then have been more than eighty years old at the time which concerns us, and this is not likely. From this initial error, aggravated by mistakes and omissions in calculating the Laotian cycles, there resulted an inextricable confusion in the chronology drawn up by Pavie's interpreters, who were Cambodians and did not know French. The present account, based on direct translations which are as faithful as possible

114 and on cross checks between the Annals and family documents,
643* is an attempt to reestablish the facts. The exact correspond-
175* ence of the dates justifies us in thinking that it is as close to historical truth as possible.

175* ambitious princess and limit themselves to recording her crimes with-
643* out explanation or comment. It may be that her intrigues had al-
562 ready brought Lane-Kham-Dèng to the throne in utter disregard of the eldest son's rights, or, on the other hand, she may have been impatient /60/ to see this younger son, who does not seem to have submitted to her influence and whose life she may have shortened, placed on the throne.

Phommathat, king 1428-1429. -- Pak-Houeï-Luong, king 1429. Thao-Sai, king 1430.

643* Whatever the case may be, she was discontented with her nephew
175* Phommathat, the eldest son of Lane-Kham-Dèng, and had him de-
662 posed ten months after his accession to the throne, then slaughtered on the rock of Pha-Dieou at the mouth of the Nam-Khane. Then she gave the crown to her brother Kham-Teun, the fourth son of Sam-Sène-Thaï and governor of Pak-Houei-Luong, who reigned under this latter name. Five months later, however, Kham-Teun had ceased to please and was replaced with Thao-Sai, the third son of Sam-Sène-Thaï and of Nang-Keo-Yopha. Scarcely six months had passed when the king discovered a plot to assassinate him which had been fomented by his sister. At his wits' end, he chose to hang himself in the bath chamber of his palace.

Phaya-Khai, king 1430-1433. -- Xieng-Sai, king 1433-1434.

Then Nang-Keo-Phimpha let her choice fall on her nephew Gnou-Khone, the second son of Lane-Kham-Dèng, who was governor of the /61/ Muong of Xieng-Khai and who chose the name of his province as his reigning name. Phaya-Khai "lasted" for three years and then died at Pak-Khane, assassinated by the inhabitants on his aunt's orders. Khone-Keo, the son of Sam-Sène-Thaï and of Nang-One-Sa, succeeded him under the name of Xieng-Sa and died in the same way seven months later.

Third son of Lane-Kham-Dèng, king 1434-1435.

Lane-Kham-Dèng's third son (whose name is unknown) replaced him for a space of eight months. In order to escape his aunt's fury,

149: Reinach--116 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

the "Phi."

It is said that each of us has his good and his evil genie which are engaged in a constant struggle, and that we are good or evil according as the one or the other gains the upper hand. This is a kind of symbolism of good and evil, but here the controlling and guiding conscience is replaced by the influences of the moment, the occasion, the circumstances and the milieu. 779 776

Each house also has its own "genie", reminiscent of the Roman Lares, to which sacrifices and offerings are made on every possible occasion. 776 782

The evil "Phis" are more dreaded and receive a great many more offerings than the good "Phis," with whom no trouble need be taken.

In each village there is a sorcerer to explain the actions of the "Phis" and teach the way to gain their favor. Although consultations with them are not free of charge these sorcerers, who are called Mo-hou-ha, Mo-Phi or Phi-pop depending on the province, are just as [155] [Illustration] [156] [Blank page] [157] highly regarded as the "Guardians of the Genii" of the Buddhist religion and, like them, are exempt from servitude and taxes.

In times of epidemic all responsibility is attributed to the evil "Phis", and in order to make them take flight the men of the villages beat on the roofs of their houses with long bamboo poles until such time as the "Phis" are supposed to have disappeared.

The Khas have retained a belief in metempsychosis which is tinged with certain rather vague superstitions bearing on a future life and some kind of resurrection. But this second existence is not everyone's privilege, and will exist only insofar as one's life has been a good one. 775

They also believe in the existence of a place of torment where perjurers, murderers, etc. will remain for all eternity. To be sure, they believe in a general way that a new life will begin and that it will be a reward or a punishment for the individual's deeds in his last incarnation. Thus a brave and good man will return as a happy and respected chieftain. Others will be entitled only to an animal existence, the importance of which in the scale of being will be like a personification of their faults and merits. One odd fact is that women always want to return in the guise of a man. [562]

Religion of the Lus. The religion practiced by the Lus is a form of Buddhism which has been mitigated by certain local customs 771 779

462 Tilling the ricefields, hunting, fishing and managing rafts and
241 pirogues take up about six months of the year. The rest of the time they rest and enjoy themselves. The status of women in Laos, although not as low and painful as that of other women of Asiatic races, is nevertheless not as pleasant as that of their husbands. In fact, all the petty farming tasks fall on them. They perform all the household labors, care for the poultry yard and the livestock, etc. They do the cooking, decorticate the paddy, go and fetch wood and water, spin, weave and dye cotton and silk, take care of the children, etc. Less [182] fortunate than her husband, the Laotian woman has no leisure except on holidays, and even then she has to make all the preparations without letting her daily occupations suffer.

Of ordinary height, generally well made and even elegant of
142 figure, the Laotian woman has a friendly face and is not without
562 either grace or coquetry before her marriage. This does not mean that there are no homely girls, but these are rather an exception. As she grows older and worn from bearing children the Laotian woman loses much of her early grace, but in spite of everything she retains her joyousness, her high spirits and her very pronounced taste for celebrations when there is singing and feasting.

862 Laotian mothers worship their children. They take great care of them and often push their weakness for their children to such a
858 point as to prolong the period of breast-feeding, often beyond the child's fourth year.

342 Dwellings. Like all the representatives of the Thai family, the Laotians inhabit houses which are rectangular in shape and are always
574 raised one or two meters above the ~~house~~ GROUND on piles. Wood and bamboo, in the form of beams, framing members, rafters, door and window casings, partitions, doors, windows, floors and shingles, are used to build houses, without the use of any nails, all joints and assemblies being fastened together with rattan.

The dimensions of the houses vary greatly and depend on the number of families that they are designed to shelter. Verandas with roofs which are sharply inclined and come down quite low are placed around the house, mainly on the south and west, to temper the heat of the sun and serve as a vestibule, a reception hall or a workshop. The family stays there during the day, as on a sort of neutral ground where people who are coming and going can be received without transgressing custom, which decrees that no one except members of the family and close friends shall have access to the inner apartments, which form the private home of the house's inhabitants.

304 produced with an implement bearing several fine points which are dipped in India ink or diluted cinnabar. Depending on the coloring matter used, the tattoos are dark blue or brick red in color. The tattoo artists give their taste and fancy free rein and produce the most varied designs which, for example, represent intertwined snakes, dragons, lions, tigers and imaginary animals. Oftentimes there is only one overall color which makes the tattooed person look like a man wearing a close-fitting blue bathing suit.

304 885 The practice of tattooing is a very old one and its origin is lost in [186] dark antiquity. It is at once a kind of coquetry and a proof of courage because of the suffering which the operation causes and the dangers it involves in a land where antisepsis is unknown to the natives and where the tools used are as dirty as the operators. [Illustration here]

In some localities a man who is not tattooed is regarded as lacking in virility, and as a sign of his inferiority he may not bathe upstream from women.

562 304 Laotian women are not tattooed. This custom is practiced only by the Youn and Kha women, where tattoos are usually limited to lines, stars or reptiles on the hands, imitations of rings on the fingers, etc.

301 [187] Personal adornment. In all seasons both men and women wear flowers on their ears or in a string around their coil of hair. This gracious custom, which flatters both the eye and the sense of smell, must be extremely ancient in origin. It is to be found in many parts of the globe which have no relation to Laos, and particularly in Polynesia. [Illustration here]

346 531 Pagodas. Laotian pagodas are as numerous as they are varied in respect to type of construction, architecture, dimensions and ornamentation. In sparsely populated villages and poor muongs the pagodas are built like the houses, either of wood, thatch or bamboo lattice, although with greater care and a few slight additional decorations. Elsewhere, in the larger centers, the pagodas are built of brick, roofed with tile, enhanced by many-colored and gilded ornaments of carved wood and embellished with pseudo-sculptured motifs made of staff. On the inside, the walls are covered with brightly colored frescoes [188] which often picture, against a gold background, religious or warlike scenes taken from the Ramayâna and other more realistic ones which often border on obscenity.

Hill Tribes

595 There is polygamy among the Meos, and the Meo women do not enjoy any higher regard than the Kha women.

[101] The Yaos. The Yaos have the same origin as the Meos, and are strikingly like them in many respects. Their mores, their beliefs and their habits are identical.

619 As we have seen above, the Yaos are divided into three varieties, these being the Lantenes, the Khao and the Ao-Tchaine.

291 The Lantenes (blacks) wear broad trousers, a long smock buttoning
302 at the side and a turban, all made of black cottonstuff. They wear their hair long and either wound under a turban or braided in Chinese style.

[342] Their houses are like those of the Meos and shelter several families, each of which has its own quarters. They are generally clean and well kept-up.

593 The mores of the Lantene Yaos are patriarchal, and these folk are monogamous. The women are very reserved and do not let them-
562 selves be seen much by strangers. They enjoy a certain respect and are treated with consideration by their husbands.

231 The Lantenes are great livestock breeders, and cultivate the opium
241 poppy in addition to rice and maize. They are skilled hunters of wild animals, and each man owns a rifle from which he is rarely separated.

224 Besides a dialect peculiar to them, they speak Quoan-hoa (a
[212] Cantonese idiom), and many of them can write Chinese characters.

198 The Khao Yaos are less outgoing than their fellows and do not
101 greet strangers with as much good will.

The men's clothing is like that of the Lantenes, [269] but the
291 women are garbed in a different manner and wear their hair in a special way which has earned their tribe the name "Khao" (horns).

Over a pair of black trousers ornamented with colored embroidery and held in place by leggings, Khao Yao women wear a tunic which comes down to the knees but the flaps of which are fastened to the belt. This tunic also has colored embroidery on the chest, back, neck and cuffs, and is held shut with wide silver hooks.

302 Their hairdress consists of a coil which is smeared with wax and lacquer to hold it in place and in which a wooden socket is imbedded. A light bamboo framework is inserted into the socket, and over this is spread a red cloth or a black cloth embroidered in red. The women thus appear to have two horns on their head.

301 Silver jewelry, neckbands, bracelets and ear pendants are worn by the Khao Yaos.

000 maintain a correct bearing. One should pay careful attention to one's words in order not to hurt those one is speaking to; that could engender an argument, a scandal, or at the very least it might create an atmosphere of embarrassment which is always unpleasant. One should listen to the general conversation and not interrupt the speech of an important person.

A banquet in the European manner. --The director or the president of an association takes care to send out his invitation cards several days in advance of the occasion. The invited guest must answer before the day of the meal to say whether he accepts or declines the invitation. In the latter case he should state the reason for his inability to come.

Politeness requires that one come on time. One should come neither too soon nor too late. If a person does not observe the hour, one often says jokingly that he adopts "mong lao" (the Laotian hour). By "Laotian hour" is understood "one hour later than the one arranged.
/805/ Every guest who arrives at 9:00 P.M. when the dinner is set at 8:00 P.M. goes by the "Laotian hour."

My dear compatriots, in order to be polite, adopt, from now on, the European hour; 8:00 P.M. is 8:00 P. M. and not 9:00 P. M.

He who presides over the banquet is seated in the middle while the most important person invited is placed in front of him. The persons of secondary importance are seated: first, to the right of the President, second, at his left, third, to the right and to the left of
/562/ the outstanding guest and so forth. Laotian women have the habit of keeping apart from the men. At a banquet the group of women sits by itself. From now on we must remedy this custom because the place of the woman should be between two men.

At the table the guests remain standing and do not sit down until their hosts are seated.

Do not wipe your plates and your silver with your napkin. In so doing you would show your hostess that she does not like cleanliness and that she has not given the necessary instructions to her servants to assure the cleanness of the plates and dishes.

Formerly the number thirteen used to be considered unlucky in France: it was necessary to avoid that the number of guests at a banquet should come to 13; one had to arrange it so that one would have a smaller or larger number lest some misfortune might occur to

naturally be "water." These two elements, opposed though they are 593
to one another, nonetheless go together. If you should happen to 647
raise your voice, see to it that it does not reach the ears of your 565
neighbors who will be sure to laugh at your domestic misunderstanding.
There is a good way to appease your anger: that is to go out and get
some fresh air. A moment of distraction will calm your irritation.
This precious and effective remedy is called, according to a Laotian
expression, "to caress one's heart with a hand drenched with fresh
water."

On a walk and on a visit.--Formerly it used to be considered 574
a disgrace for a mandarin to go for a walk by himself or to visit minor 647
functionaries. Nowadays this is no longer the case. A Laotian 565
Minister goes out alone without being accompanied by the traditional 178
retinue. He visits all classes of society without being criticized for
it by anyone at all.

At a private gathering.--In contrast to the customs of former
times, present-day mandarins accept the invitation of a simple
citizen. The host very often organizes various diversions: dances, /533/
lamvong, orchestras, songs etc. The Ministers willingly participate /535/
in these; they sing, dance, and pay their respects to the phousaos
while they mingle with the crowd. Certain Laotians whom I consider
backward criticize the liberal manner on the part of our Ministers.
Our great mandarins are their own masters. Let them turn a deaf
ear to these carpings. /978/

Honor Laotian Women

Some people consider the Laotian woman as an inferior 562
creature.

Certain women, it appears, are not permitted to eat with
their husband. Miserable husbands! You consider then that your
better half is like an animal?

Certainly, tradition says: "The woman must sleep with her /513/
head lower than her husband's. She must go to bed after him and
she must get up before him. The husband must have eaten three /264/
mouthfuls of rice before the wife can begin to eat in her turn."

These counsels of our fathers are valuable, but they are far
from indicating that the woman is inferior to the man. They recommend,

562 rather, to the wife, that she be good and serviceable and that she sweeten the conjugal life.

A great mandarin who has chosen a life's companion, be she the offspring of a family from the common people or not, has raised her to his rank. She is therefore just as respectable, if not more so, as her husband, since the fair sex is, out of courtesy, more highly regarded than the stronger sex in all civilized countries.

We must therefore render the respect to Laotian women which is their due by the same title which makes it the due of Western women. It is necessary:

1. --that at gatherings the women should not sit on the floor while the men are seated in chairs.

2. --that at banquets the women be placed each one between two men;

3. --that the places of honor be reserved for the weaker sex;

4. --that the women be served before the men;

5. --that the man yield his seat to the woman in auditoriums, in vehicles of public conveyance, etc.

In a word, it is necessary that the man respect the woman and that he no longer look upon her as inferior to himself.

* * *

000 To conclude, in my opinion it would be preferable to modify and even to suppress certain of our customs and of our traditional ceremonies provided this modification does not run contrary to Buddhist rules. There would be occasion to regulate, notably, the funeral ceremony in Laos: for example in a funeral procession to prescribe orderly walking and the observance of silence; to prohibit smoking, the chewing of tobacco, and so forth.

771 Sometimes "tradition" and "superstition" are confused. I repeat, all that partakes of the domain of superstition must be banishe The Laotian is subject to a great number of superstitions, of which the following are some examples: /979/

784 It is forbidden, under certain pretexts:

--to have one's hair cut on Wednesday and to wash one's hair on Thursday because it is on these days, it is said, that Buddha had his hair cut and washed;

--to go on all fours in the deep forest, in order not to attract

He[1] must never look at a woman. However a few old women are 792
seen in the pagoda. These are the devotees. They are dressed in 785
white, their heads are completely shaved, and they lead a life of
observance and asceticism which is as rigorous as that of the monks. 562
They render small services to the bonzes, decorate the altar, etc., but they live outside the enclosure of the pagoda.

Laotian Buddhism.

In a recent pamphlet, His Excellency Thao Nhouy Abhay, former 779
Minister of National Culture and Education, wrote: "In its intrinsic
substance Buddhism is deeply tolerant, but ours [26] has truly become 795
not austere enough." Therefore he proposes some necessary reforms which would quickly raise the intellectual and moral level of the bonzes in Laos. There are two sects in Laos: the Mahanikay and the [792]
Thammayut. The only difference between the two is the way in which they consider that monastic rule should be observed. Nothing distinguishes them in appearance except the color of the monastic robe of the Mahanikay, which is brownish-ochre almost chestnut.
The king is the chief of the Buddhist clergy. As for the believer 643
who regularly observes his religious duties, he is satisfied with little [735]
and gives much in alms. Buddhist tales and particularly Laotian texts, among them the Pannasajataka (Ha Sip Xat), quote all the merits acquired for future lives by those who give alms and, above all, feed the bonzes.

Religious Literature.

The basis of the religious literature of Laos is the Buddhist 779
Tripitaka. These "Three Baskets" contain the integral "word of the 538
Buddha."

The basket [corbeille] of Vinaya (Vinayapitaka) is the rule of monastic life. It consists of five sections: Patimokkha, Mahavagga, Coullavagga, Souttavibhanga and Parivara. The Patimokkha is meant to be read in public (particularly on the feasts of the eighth month), on the periodic days of confession. The Mahavagga and the Coullavagga give the list of daily obligations, illustrated by examples drawn from the life of the Buddha. The Souttavibhanga is really a commentary on the Patimokkha; finally the Parivara is both a revision and a catechism.

The Basket of the Soutta (Souttapitaka) contains an enormous amount of preaching and of edifying tales. Among others, the famous Dhammapada, a treasury of the sayings of the Buddha and the Jatakas are to be found in this basket.

[27] The third basket is that of Abhidharma and consists of seven

1 [i.e., a bonze -- Analyst]

342 bedrooms separated from each other by partitions or curtains, the
[178] other is the communal room. In the space between the inner and outer beam, and not limited by the longitudinal partition, is the altar on which there are always one or several buddhas. It is placed on the side of the bedrooms, on the "soung" side of the dwelling, that is on the side opposite the entrance. The dimensions of the dwellings vary between six and twenty-four meters long by four to nine meters wide.

342 The houses are most often open to the east or to the north. They
823 may also overlook what is passing by in the streets or the paths and, as the case may be, the whole length of the river. For there is a superstition which forbids building "across the current," which is considered as unconquerable and invincible, and it would be dangerous to defy it.

343 The outhouses consist of an adjoining kitchen and a granary, a
[252] few meters removed from the principal dwelling. Near this granary is found the picturesque rice pestle (khok khao) which the women work with their feet.

343 [62] All the villagers participate in building the house. When the
476 propitious day and moment have been determined, the owner feeds everybody the whole time the house is being built.

Tattooing

301 Every self-respecting Laotian must be tattooed. The absence of
885 tattooing is a sign of mental and moral, therefore of social, inferiority.
562 As a general rule, however, the Laotian woman is not tattooed. This custom is found only among the women of Youan, Kha or Lu.

The Laotian is tattooed chiefly on his thighs, forearms and chest.
301 The tattooing on the thighs is so close together that from a distance a tattooed man looks as if he were wearing close-fitting blue shorts. The Laotians are called "white bellies" as opposed to those who are tattooed down to the navel and are then called black bellies. The colors used for tattooing are indigo blue, red, and black made from a mixture of lampblack diluted with buffalo gall.

[757] Those who have been tattooed are convinced that the signs they wear give them certain supernatural powers, particularly making them invulnerable to bullets and snake bites. During the events of 1941 Siamese soldiers were found wearing white cotton vests covered with cabalistic signs closely related to tattooing. These are a kind of removable tattooing intended to protect those who are wearing them.

May, and Vat Visun to render homage to the protecting genii of the village and chase away the evil spirits. 527

During three days the Laotians do no cooking. Fish, turtles, birds, etc., are bought in the big market and then set free as a sign of penitence and redemption of sins committed either voluntarily or not against living beings during the past year. 782

Possibly there is here a survival of the origin of the cycle of animals. According to Finot, at a very remote period, the custom of curing sick children by letting an animal go free had arisen. When a child was saved in this manner, he was said to have been born from this animal because he owed it life. He was forbidden to kill it, and the year of the child's birth was given the same [68] name as the animal. It is thus that the cycle of twelve years was established. 825 771

In the dry beds of the Mekong and of the Nam Khan, small that made of sand are built. Each one wishes the other a long life, whose number of years will equal the number of grains of sand forming the that, and great prosperity, for ill-luck has fled with the last day of the past year, and the New Year should bring as many riches as there are grains of sand in the that. Often around the principal that, other much smaller ones are erected, their number corresponding to the age of the builder. They express the wish of the one who has built them that he will see many more years added to those he has already lived. Actually these little that around the central mound are a reproduction of Mount Merou surrounded by different worlds (Cf. the symbolism of the That Luang). 527 805

In the pagodas the statues of Buddha are taken down from the altars and placed in little wooden prasat. They are sprinkled with perfumed water which flows in the hang-lin (a kind of gutter of gilded wood whose extremities represent the head of an aquatic monster), for the year now ending must be completely exhausted, and a minute cleansing, both material and spiritual, must leave a strictly clear way for the New Year. In the streets the young girls sprinkle not only the bonzes whom they honor, but all the young men, to compensate for all the minor vexations they have endured from the men during the past year. The high dignitaries are not exempt from these showers of more or less clean water. Sometimes their faces are rubbed with lampblack or mud, when they have the ill luck of meeting a group of young girls. Do we have a survival of the theme of the svayamvara here (free choice of the man by the young girl)? [562]

[66] The day in between, the day before New Year's day, is one of complete rest. All the events which occur during this day will determine

5: Brodrick--198 S-3 (1939) 1942 Laotians
116, 101, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"There are plenty of possible 'sites' over the other side of the frontier into Laos, for the Laotians are scattered and few. Their rude statues of the Enlightened One, all features and no face, have not invaded many of the anfractuosities in the hills of the country that they hardly own, so full is it of 'Khas', that is, 'wild men', or Moi."

6: Goudal--234-235 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-1-2
186, 563

"As regards Annamite immigration into Laos, the following opinion was expressed by a highly placed Laotian, His Excellency the Tiao Phetsarath, Inspector of Political and Administrative Affairs in Laos, in the course of an interview published early in 1931 by France-Indochine:

The Laotians have no need of Annamite immigration, which is a source of expense and trouble for them. The Laotians have to give [235] way before the immigrants and abandon their institutions and customs. The immigrants should as a rule submit to Laotian laws and regulations, but in reality they do nothing of the kind, as Annamites in Laos live 'outside the laws', form 'a State within a State' and thus enjoy 'inadmissable privileges'. This state of affairs must have serious consequences in the future and will surely lead the Laotians to desert Laos and to cross over into Siam to join the great Thai family, which always gives a warm welcome to its blood brothers from across the river.

These statements are naturally denied by the Annamites, who assert that they have no feeling of hostility for the Laotians and have no desire to invade or conquer their territory. And in reality the avenues open to the Annamite immigrants are nowadays much more limited than is commonly believed. There are of course the mines and work on the roads and railways, but most of the workers so employed are essentially unstable

and cannot really be considered as immigrants in the strict sense of the term. Only when the Annamites are allowed to grow rice in Laos will their emigration have any chance of development. Moreover they seem to form an element of stability and prosperity for Laos. (1)

1. Pham-Quynh: 'L'Immigration annamite au Laos', in France-Indochine, 27 March 1931."

7: Thompson--371 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 563, 661, 671, 177.67 France
636.67

"Nowadays the code of Vientiane or of Luang-Prabang is applied to the Thai peoples and to certain Kha tribes; Burmese custom law to the Lus in Muong Sing; and their particular customs to the other ethnical groups--all under magistrates of their own people. The judgments of these courts are examined by the French authorities. This is not a useless precaution, as often the judges themselves are in a quandary about interpreting their laws and traditions. Moreover, the venality of these judges passes all understanding. If the native appears without offerings appropriate to his station and that of the judge, he is lost. Undoubtedly with time the specialization of magistrates, with guarantees in salary and promotion, will obviate the most flagrant of these evils."

10: d'Orleans T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
563, 634, 721, 175. 72 Ethnic subgroups

[LSS: For the history of the family of Deo Van Tri, chief of the Lai district and for the history of the wars in the area of Laichau and Luang Prabang, see Indochina, category 116, pp. 204-209.]

10: d'Orleans--262 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 167, 484, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"We accept an offer from a Thai family encamped upon a sand bank, who invite us to warm ourselves at their fire. We begin to talk and find that our hosts were forcibly deported from the plain of Dien Bien, and that, after ten years' absence, they are returning to their home. They have a pirogue and a raft made of bamboos tied together, which carries their animals, fowls and pigs; we leave them after buying some cocoa-nuts which they have brought from the south."

10: d'Orleans--262-263 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 513, 563, 825 Ethnic subgroups

"Our men [LSS: Kha from Laos] lie down upon mats and this evinces a more advanced stage of civilisation than we have found amongst the Thaïs; in the middle of the night they suddenly jump up, [263] light a lamp and start in search of an animal, that has taken flight, to judge from their movements, though I do not see it. They afterwards explain their manœuvres; one of them had seen a long myriapod, which they were anxious to destroy, as it is a dangerous insect. They say, that when it crawls over the skin it leaves traces of its passage, in long red painful and unhealthy streaks. I do not know whether this assertion is true, but at all events, they seem much afraid of the insect."

10: d'Orleans--263-264 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 276, 301, 563, 777 Ethnic subgroups

"The boatmen [LSS: Kha from Laos] replace the waterpipe used on the Black River by the cigarette, which they put behind the ear after a few whiffs. They also chew betel. I remark that the majority of them wear a bracelet, made of two threads, on the right wrist. They tell us that it is a talisman--a kind of [264] luck charm, which is given to them when they leave their village to navigate or trade."

10: d'Orleans--266 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
563, 834 Ethnic subgroups

"...amongst the Thai's of the Black River, the men never hesitate to strip themselves, and enter the water; but the women appear more reserved."

10: d'Orleans--275 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 463, 471, 556, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"...Our boatmen assemble round us. I talk to them, and they tell me that they are engaged upon the pirogues for the benefit of the owner (usually a Laotian), who stands at the helm. To them a boat represents a large capital; the one in which I travel is worth sixty-seven rupees. As a rule the owner trades with them, a pirogue can carry about thirty-six thengs (a theng weighs about thirty-four pounds). The boatmen are chiefly hired from among the Kas."

10: d'Orleans--275 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"... They [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] are of small size, with very dark complexions and narrow foreheads; their eyes are close together, but the cheek-bones are not prominent; they wear their hair very short like the bristles of a brush."

10: d'Orleans--275-276 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 101, 173, 197, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"They [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian.] are easily recognised as Laotians, but they appear inferior and weaker, though they are lively and prepossessing; they originally came from Ban Lasa (near Muong Ngoi), but they call themselves Khamouks, and count seven principal tribes of Kas; but their dialects differ, so that several of them cannot understand each other.

The Kasings (whose language approaches that of the Yaos).
The Khakos.
The Khabits. [276]
The Khakoos.
The Kahoks (who wear cotton drawers as their only garment).
The Khapai's.
The Khamouks.

They say that they do not know anything of their history, but add: that the Laotians are their brothers, therefore the Kas had compassion upon them and retired to the mountains, leaving the plain and the young shoots of bamboo to them."

10: d'Orleans--276 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 563, 583, 591, 764, 793 Ethnic subgroups

"Marriages are easily made amongst the Khamouks; the young man's parents give sixty rupees to the girl's father and mother. After the marriage feast, the bridegroom sleeps one night in his father-in-law's house, then takes his wife home with him.

The dead are buried and not burnt; there is no priest, no religious ceremonies, but the master of the house cuts a fowl's throat and the mourners rub their knees with his blood. The men generally follow one stage in the bonzeries. (1) After a few months

1. I question whether this information does not apply more to the Laotians.

they are little bonze or Siang, then grand bonze or Tit ; a man who has not made one stage is Ba."

10: d'Orleans--276 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 563, 577, 775 Ethnic subgroups

"I do not know whether our boatmen [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] have followed any religious courses, but they do not seem to trouble themselves about the future. One of them first tells me that he does not know what will happen in the other life; then he adds that he believes he shall return to this world as a man, if he shows mercy during his lifetime, that is if he gives rice to the dogs and cats, or performs any other charitable actions;if not his soul will pass into the body of an animal."

10: d'Orleans--277 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 563, 805 Ethnic subgroups

"The duration of time does not trouble them [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] either, they count the days like the Laotians, and their year consists of twelve lunar months of four weeks each, of which one contains eight days, at the end of a few years a month is intercalated. Dates escape them altogether. 'The old people know them,' they reply to our questions."

10: d'Orleans--277 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 124, 177, 192, 563, 802 Ethnic subgroups

"I am trying to make a lexicon of their [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] language; they answer us, but sometimes we have a great deal of trouble in hearing what they say, and particularly in separating the affixes or suffixes, with which they can surround the same word. I notice the absence of special names for certain classes of things; they have no word for bread and the names of the numerals, except the four first, are borrowed from the Laotians; lastly mother is called ma, the word in general use amongst nearly all the peoples of the world, perhaps because it is the first sound that a newborn infant instinctively produces, when it requires food."

10: d'Orleans--277 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 202, 212, 533, 563, 802 Ethnic subgroups

"From their [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] own account, they have no special songs, but they use the Laotian music.

Writing is unknown to them; but they keep their accounts, or send their messages by means of small pieces of bamboo, marked with notches which are made at closer or longer intervals according to the signification that has been arranged. This is like our bakers' sticks. (1)

1. M. Harmand has found amongst the peoples of the south of Indo-China the same method of correspondence that Father Crabouillet discovered amongst the Lolos of Setchoun. (Cf. 'Note on the Writing of the Indo-Chinese Khas,' by M. P. Lefèvre-Pontalis, L'Anthropologie, Mars-Avril, 1892.) "

10: d'Orleans--277-278 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 276, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Our men [LSS:Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] smoke a wooden pipe, with a small bamboo stem, like those of our countries. [278] They light it with a steel and a wick made of fibres taken from the bark of a tree. They also smoke opium; Chinese caravans bring it to them raw, and they pay about a rupee for nearly three quarters of an ounce (twenty grammes), they cook it over the fire in a small copper cup. Three Laotians from Luang Prabang, who are also in the sala, devote themselves to the same work; they are merchants, who have come to buy rice. The apparatus ready and the lamps lighted, each man lies down and we go to bed."

10: d'Orleans--278-279 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 302, 304, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Here [LSS: in a village between Muong Ngoi and Luang Prabang in Laos] also we meet some Kas; the men have a piece of wood or a bouquet of flowers in the lobe [279] of the ear, which forms a large fleshy ring, and their legs are tattooed. The women wear a small embroidered jacket; a deep blue turban with embroidered fringes surrounds a chignon ornamented by two round silver plates, joined by a small chain; chaplets of transparent glass beads are wound round them. The natives allow us to photograph them."

10: d'Orleans--279 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 522, 533, 563, 832 Ethnic subgroups

"They [LSS: Kha boatmen in the service of a Laotian] are in good spirits, and chat from one pirogue to the other, or sing in answer to the women, who are bathing at the water's edge. The men inquire if they are married, and invite them to follow them, in case their hearts are free. The songs, often improvised, are upon subjects referring to love. They also try to frighten the buffaloes that, half hidden in the water, only show their back and the head which they hold horizontally; but the great stupid animals pay no attention to the shouts, they let us pass, contemplating us with an air of fatalistic resignation; but they do not move. In the evening our boatmen ask permission to go to the village. We grant it and follow them, however a few are left behind to keep watch over the pirogues."

10: d'Orleans--281 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 262, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Watching our boatmen [LSS: Kha boatmen in the service of a Laotian] would be sufficient to occupy us, for they are a very interesting study; their chief pre-occupation is to point out some game to us, and with this aim they search the banks with their eyes. The steersman seems particularly fond of hunting, and he is doubly keen upon it now, for he has all the men to feed, so he is not at all sorry to give them some monkey flesh or a few birds, which do not cost him anything."

10: d'Orleans--281-282 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 262, 522, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Our men, [LSS: Kha boatmen in the service of a Laotian] have one resource, which I cannot make up my mind to try; they have picked up a kind of cricket on the banks, and after amusing themselves by making it chirp as they hold it between [282] two fingers, they throw it into the saucepan, and eat it stewed."

10: d'Orleans--282 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 354, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"We all remain talking in the sala. Some candles have been made of yellow wax (sold in disks), which the men [LSS: Kha boatmen in the service of a Laotian] roll round a cotton wick by rubbing them both between their hands; the light is good."

10: d'Orleans--289-290 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 133, 441, 501, 563

"Lower down,[LSS: at Luang Prabang] lying against the river bank itself, immense rafts, real houses of thirty to forty yards long, carry stocks of merchandise and of various commodities, regularly [290] stacked one above the other. Chinamen live in these floating establishments.

The bank only rises some fifteen yards, and the shallow water scarcely hides a few sandbanks, while the calm powerful river flows on in a muddy stream more than 400 yards wide."

10: d'Orleans--302 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 101, 162, 563

"The inhabitants [LSS: of Luang Prabang] are Kas, Laotians, Lus and Meos, while there are also a few Chinese traders and shopkeepers. The Kas, divided into seven tribes, according to the information obtained by Holt, Hallett and Neis, are four times more numerous than the Laotians."

10: d'Orleans--302 -305 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 291, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"For the most part of small stature, (1) the Kas are very dark in complexion and of

1. Those whom we measured averaged about five feet two inches; the women being smaller.

the same colour all over the body. Their legs are as a rule thin and their stomachs protuberant; the nose broad and flat; the eyes rather elongated; the lips thick and the jaw prominent, while the forehead is narrow and receding. The facial angle seems to indicate that they belong to an inferior race, and, as a matter of fact, they look like savages by the side of the Laotians. These Kas have long, straight hair falling over the forehead, in some cases tied together by a strip of cloth, or else plastered on the top of the head and fastened at the back in a chignon. The men wear a large ring in the lobe of the ear and fill up the interstice with a piece of wood, [pages 303 and 304 contain illustration] [305] or a bunch of flowers. Their dress, as a rule, consists only of a sheet, that is to say of a piece of blue cloth passing between the legs and fastened round the waist, the women wearing a turban, a loose vest, and a short petticoat."

10: d'Orleans--303 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

KHAMOUKS, (FULL AND SIDE FACE), LUANG PRABANG.

10: d'Orleans--305 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 147, 157, 463, 563, 609 Ethnic subgroups

"The Kas of Luang Prabang appear to be very shy, and I could not induce them, even by the promise of presents, to let me photograph them, the only means by which I succeeded being an order from the Siamese Colonel, while, when brought up, they were so intimidated that I could count their pulses beating at more than eighty to the minute. When walking in the streets they proceed as if they were afraid that some one was going to hurt them, and, being more laborious if less educated than the Laotians, they are employed by the latter to fashion the metals, to look after the stock and to cultivate the soil, so that they fill much the same part that the Lacædemonians of old did, except that they are not so badly used."

10: d'Orleans--305-306 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 563, 567, 721

"In former times the men of the conquering race made inroads into the Kas villages and carried off a number of the inhabitants as slaves, the males being seized in preference to the females, while with the people of the plain the reverse was the case. Now the king has abolished slavery in theory, though in reality it still exists; (1) but

1. Slavery as practised upon the Kas is regarded as legal among the Laotians; a father who is poor and has a large family, often sells one or two of his sons, at the rate of fifteen rupees if they are very young, and of from twenty to forty for adults. They are then employed as boatmen.

the armed raids are not of frequent occurrence. Here, as is the case with certain European nations upon the coast of Africa, who claim [306] to be fighting the battle of liberty, the term forced labour is substituted for slavery, because it sounds better. I do not wish to criticise the generous sentiments which humanitarian ideas have evoked against slavery, but I am inclined to ask myself whether, taking everything into account, this condition is not often preferable for the people of the inferior races to liberty without the means of livelihood.

I was talking with a young slave who had been purchased by the mother-in-law of one of our interpreters. and he did not seem at all desirous of being freed. His parents, too

10: d'Orleans--305-306 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-2
116, 563, 567, 721

poor to support him, had sold him, he was well-fed and happy with his masters, and asked for nothing better."

10: d'Orleans--316 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 175, 197, 241, 511, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"In speaking of the inhabitants of the principality of Luang Prabang, I referred to the Lus, the Meos and the Chinese, and a few words must be said about all three.

The first mentioned strike me as being, from an ethnographical point of view, very similar to the Laotians, whose language they speak, with a few slight differences of dialect, but they are smaller, punier and in a more poverty-stricken state. We saw one of their villages, just behind Luang Prabang, and its poverty was the most salient feature about it. Coming originally from Sibsompanas, where they form the principal element of the population, they have been driven south by Chinese wars and invasions, and several of them told me that they had not the means of returning home. Moreover, they are just as well off where they are, for, like the Kas, they cultivate the soil, planting rice fields for the Laotians."

10: d'Orleans--316 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Their clothing [LSS: the Lu of Luang Prabang] is very poor compared with that of the latter, [LSS: the Laotians] the men wearing short blue trousers and the women, striped petticoats, the latter having their hair drawn up in a chignon at the top of the head, covered in many cases with a dark blue scarf, while both sexes wear a loose blue vest."

10: d'Orleans--319 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 563, 583, 591, 764 Ethnic subgroups

[LSS: Among the Meo of Luang Prabang] "The marriages are arranged by the parents, a young girl being rated at 36 rupees and taken, as soon as she is married, to the house of her husband. The bodies of the defunct are interred three days after death."

10: d'Orleans--319 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 439, 563 Chinese

"With regard to the few Chinese, they form a colony apart at Luang Prabang, devoting their energies to the trade in rice, salt and European fancy goods brought from Bangkok, no caravans from the Yunnam coming this far."

10: d'Orleans--322 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 563

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "We made the acquaintance of the Siamese colonel and of the commandant. The former, attired in a small white jacket, blue silk trousers, helmet, stockings and shoes, is a man of considerable intelligence, and very pleasant in his manner. The Prah Pa La Sa Da (abbreviated into Prah Sada), or chief over a thousand, has been decorated by the French Government..."

10: d'Orleans--325-326 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 301, 563, 697

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "It is a strange crowd, [326] and among the component parts of it are young girls bare to the waist, with a smile upon their lips, their arms encircled by several gold bracelets, and with a gardenia in their hair, while beside them, perchance looking much more frail and humble, is a Ka woman with a turban upon her head and a basket on her back, fastened by a piece of leather going round her forehead. Then there are groups of Kas, ten or twelve together, who walk about with a timid, startled look, and try to dodge my photographic apparatus. Following these, perhaps, is a convoy of prisoners, wearing black gaiters to avoid the friction of the rings in their chains, behind them being the Siamese soldiers, who have silk trousers, linen vest and felt hat. Their aspect and bearing denote the parvenu, and they display all the insolence of new masters, contrasting with the calm, dignified air of the portly bonzes, who, robed in yellow and escorted by their young pupils, proceed with measured and self-satisfied tread.

There is little sign of hurry in the crowd, and it is as much as they can do to move out of the way to let a royal elephant or the vehicle which is conveying a Minister to the Royal Council Chamber go by."

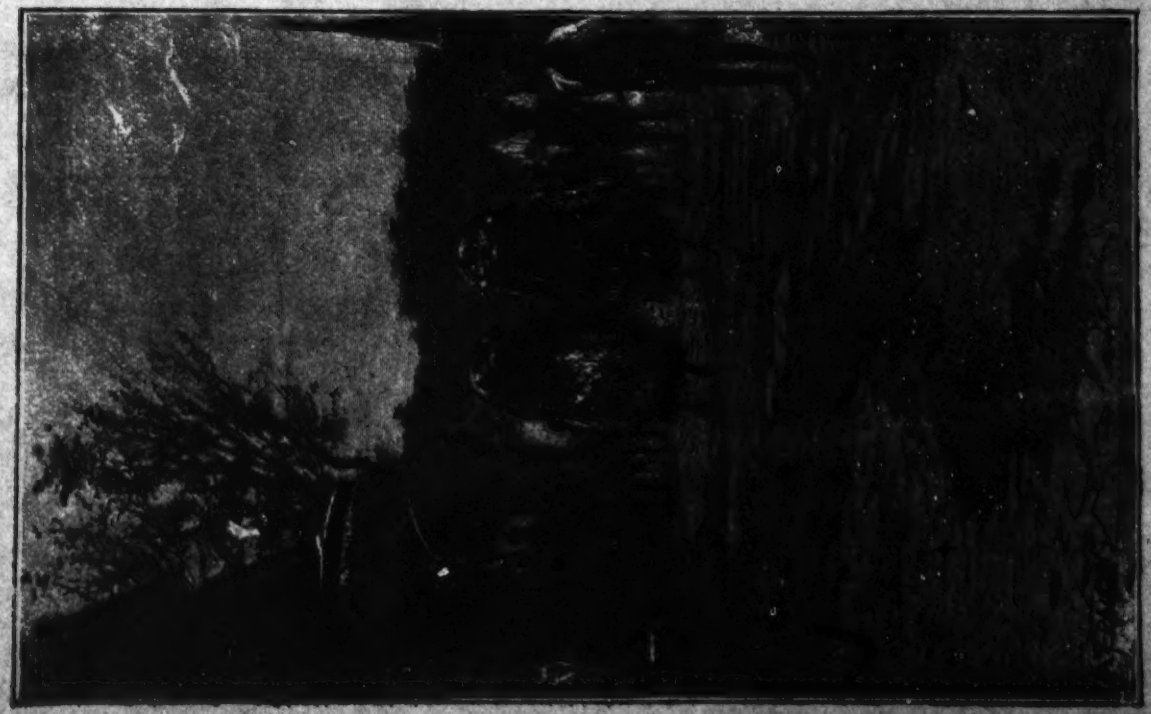
10: d'Orleans--329 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 439, 458, 563

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "It is the Chinese who import and sell the goods from Siam or the Western Shan States, there being four traders in European articles. One of these is a French protégé, who tells me that he has brought his stock of goods from Bangkok by Pitchaï. When he goes down, he takes with him from Luang Prabang ivory, for which he pays about 5s. a pound, and benzoin which costs him about a rupee per lb. Last year, the price of these articles was very nearly double, and the trader tells me that a pair of fine stag's horns is worth about thirty rupees, a smaller pair fetching a third of that price. He adds that business is very bad, and that it is as much as he can do to make both ends meet."

10: d'Orleans--349
116, 527, 535, 563

T-3 (1891-92) 1894

Laos
Ethnic subgroups



NEW YEAR DANCES AT OUATE SIENG TOSO, LUANG PRABANG.

10: d'Orleans--360 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 441, 563, 177.44 France
636.44

"The trade of Laos, like that of the greater part of Siam, is carried on by the Chinese, who form a sort of freemasonry among one another against the foreigner and are constantly pushing forward their advance posts. Masters of the Customs, more intelligent, more hard working, more temperate and more rapacious than the Siamese, they constitute the commercial class, and they have a way of insinuating themselves into the secrets of the natives and transferring their money into their own pockets which we neither could nor would wish to imitate. Our task is a higher one, and it consists, upon the one hand, in undertaking and carrying out such enterprises in the way of mining as I have described above, and upon the other in supplying the native or Chinese middlemen with the raw material and with our national goods upon as reasonable terms as English or German merchandise."

10: d'Orleans--369-370 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 342, 361, 563, 712

"We reach Paklay. The river here is broad with sand-banks on either side and water just covering the top of the rocks. The village is situated on the right bank. The piles which support the houses are hid by a net-work of bamboo, arranged also to shut in the animals. A fairly clean hut is set apart for us, as we are to stay here for a day. The Siamese lieutenant has ordered our elephants, but we cannot have them before to-morrow, so I employ a part of the day in taking photographs. The town, if so it may be [370] called, is not large, having 780 inhabitants, including women and children. The Siamese garrison is made up of eighty men, and is shifted every three years. The lieutenant lives in one half of a rather large house, and the other half is occupied by Chinese merchants."

26: Brodrick--60[5] S-3 (1939) 1944 Laotians
116, 439, 563

"What trade exists is in the hands of Shan and Chinese merchants who are also middlemen for the hill-rice and other products of the 'Khas' or 'savage' tribes of the jungle."

28; Crawfurd--219-220 G-3 (1821) 1830 Laotians
116, 101, 131, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"The Kariang, the Lawá, the Ká, and the Chong, are wild and migratory races. The first and second of these are the same people who inhabit various portions of the Burman dominions. They are confined to the mountainous parts of Lao. The Ká, a term which in the [220] Siamese language means slave, but who are called by the Kambojans, Panong, inhabit the mountains of Lao, bordering upon Kamboja."

34: Thompson--168[2] J-4 (no date)1947 Laotians
116, 563, 463, 181

"This fear and dislike [P.H.: of the Annamese] is also felt by Cambodia's northern neighbors, the Laotians, who are even less able to resist Annamite infiltration. The Laotians do not appear to share the capabilities of their relatives in Siam and resemble the Cambodians in regard to farming and industrial incompetence. Although they are less talented as craftsmen, they are more skillful as boatmen and as merchants. Under sympathetic tutelage, however, they have shown some ability in forestry and even in mining."

175* to extricate only the following steps in the life of the principality:

1. The founding of the capital by two Buddhist hermits "who came from the plateaus where the great source of the Mé-Nam-Kong in born" and who went down the river and stopped where it is joined by the Nam-Khane, charmed by the hills which were reflected in it and the main peak of which flamed with all the scarlet flowers "of a gigantic tree, the Kok-Thong, /36/ 107 fathoms high and seven in circumference." The city, which was first called Ban Lan-Swa, was later given the names Xieng-Thong (in memory of the flaming tree), then Xieng-Dong (from the name of the river which bounds it downstream on the Mékong) and finally Xieng-Dong-Xieng-Thong

2. The Kmer domination which doubtless followed on Chinese suzerainty with the Kha leaders born of "Pra Rothisen" who came from Angkor and of Néang-Kangrey, the daughter of a native prince; the names of these two ancestors were given to the hills which face Luang-Prabang and whose graceful lines curiously evoke the forms of two reclining bodies;

3. The arrival of the Thaïs who came out of Muong-Theng's gourd, drove out the Khas and seized the territory; Khoun-Lo, at the head of a formidable army, is supposed to have appeared suddenly at Pak-Ou, to have forced the king Khoun-Kan-Hang to flee towards the Nam-Ta after a bloody combat, and to have reduced to slavery those of his subjects who were not able to follow their leader or gain the highest mountains.

175* The various Kha tribes, henceforth scattered, broken up into
● 563 small groups with no connection between them, deprived of common interests and speaking different dialects, fell back /37/ /C. A. M. Translator's note. Page 37 is devoted to an illustration: "Hills of Xieng-Mène at Luang-Prabang."/ /38/ upon themselves and opposed the invader with a force of absolute inertia, thereby preserving themselves for many long centuries from contamination by other populations. Their present-day descendants, moreover, have not lost all of their original traditions. They are fully conscious of their antiquity and say not without some scorn, that "the peoples who are newcomers in Indo-China are only their younger brothers" (1);

1. Cf. L de Reinach, op cit. /Le Laos, 1911/, pp. 126 and 127. Another version, one which is candid and much more peaceable, relates the settlement of the Thaïs in Muong-Swa as follows: "When the Thaïs asked the Khas to go and live on the mountain the latter refused, and in

order to prove that they had arrived first they pointed to a 175*
rattan basket which was placed at the top of a tree and 563
intertwined with the highest branches. That evening the Thaïs chose a higher tree and placed their oldest basket at the top of it. The following morning they showed it to the Khas, whose simple minds were convinced by the subterfuge and who yielded the spot."

4. The establishment of the Thaï dynasty of Khoun, which at first preserved close ties with Cambodia and perhaps also with China following the Mongol invasions, and whose 23rd representative, Phaya-Kham-Phong, reigned in 1316.

The chronological list, as complete as possible, of the chief- 175*
tains who ruled over the region before this latter date may be 643*
drawn up in the following manner:

/39/ 1. Phaya-Nan-Tha (from Ceylon?).

2. Phaya-Inthapatha (from Cambodia) who is said to have married the above chieftain's widow.

3. Thao-Phou-Tha-Saine, son of the foregoing.

4. Phaya-Ngou-Lueum, son of the foregoing.

5. Thao-Phe-Si, son of the foregoing.

6. Ay-Saleukheuk, son of the foregoing.

7. Ay-Tiet-Hai, son of the foregoing.

8. Thao-Tiantha-Phanit, a simple "betel merchant" who came from Vientiane miraculously covered with gold and magnificent cloth and who struck wonder into the people of Xieng-Dong-Xieng-Thong. When elected king he used his wealth to beautify the city. He built the first pagoda of Xieng-Thong and the "that" on the Phou-Si (1).

1. The group of religious structures which today bears the /346/
name of Xieng-Thong is said to date from 1561. (H. Parmentier, Inventaire des monuments du Laos.) With its graceful annexes and its neo-Burmese gate, it is numbered among the greatest successes of Laotian architecture.

9. Khoun-Swa, a Kha chieftain.

10. Khoun-Ngiba, son of the above.

11. Khoun-Viligna, son of the above.

12. Khoun-Kan-Hang, son of the above, under whose reign the Thaï invasion took place.

565 The common people, kind and carefree in character, roamed
175* over the country in all directions as easy-going masters, leaving
/462/ household tasks to the women and the work of the fields to dependents of an inferior race or to slaves. They were excellent boatmen and traders rather than farmers, so that they liked to perform the function of peddlers and served as a link between the multiple /55/ varieties of mankind which inhabited Lan-Xang.

567 Slavery existed--slaves could be obtained through capture, as
175* the result of debt or through trade--and brought high profits to those
563 who engaged in this traffic. In the region of Muong-Swa there was also a kind of serfdom which was applied to certain Kha tribes placed under the patronage of the king, the princes or the chief representatives of the nobility.

565 But if we consider the gentle and happy temperament of this
175* people whose good humor made up for everything, we are justified in believing that the relations between the various social levels must have been free of any harshness.

191 They spoke a dialect derived from the language which was imported into the basin of the Ménam by Rama Khamheng at the end of the thirteenth century and which was itself derived from the
771 graphs of India (1). They practiced orthodox Buddhism together
793
554

1. Cf. Mission Pavie, op. cit. /Études diverses, Vol. II, "Recherches sur l'Histoire du Cambodge du Laos et du Siam"/ Inscription of Sukhothaï translated by Father Schmitt, p. 192: "It was in (1287 A.D.) that the king Rama-Khameng summoned a teacher who created Thaï writing."

with the cult of the "Phi" or Genii which represented for them the beneficent or maleficent forces of Nature. The bonzes were of comparatively pure morals amidst these peoples for whom enjoyment and pleasure were, when /56/ all is considered, the true gods. Although they were fairly ignorant and recited their prayers in Pali
/782/ without understanding them, they did not lack a certain air of nobility. They also enjoyed a high regard and had as much favor as they could desire. The bonzeries[1] which were built near the pagodas were at once places of inviolable asylum, schools frequented by all the children of the village, and workshops where trades could be learned.

/[1] Buddhist Monasteries--Analyst./

to Chao-Noi to deliver the fugitive up to him as soon as he entered 648*
Chao-Noi's States. 175*

The only alternative was an unpleasant one for the king of Xieng-Khouang, who doubtless regretted, although somewhat tardily, that he had not given more support to his neighbor when there was perhaps still time. To give Anou up would be to expose himself to reprisals from their common suzerain the emperor of Annam, while to conceal his presence in his domain was surely to draw down the immediate wrath of Siam.

Captivity and death of Anou (1831-1835). Losing his head, he 727
met the most immediate threat by arresting Anou and holding him 643*
prisoner in /176/ Muong-Soui until the arrival of the Siamese en- 175*
voy, a Lu chieftain named Chao-Nan (1). The vanquished king

1. Up until the end of the eighteenth century the Lus formed /563/
an important group in the kingdom of Xieng-Kheng. Their /636/
chieftain, the Chao-Fa, who was then a tributary of Burma, had his residence at Muong-Sing. After Phia-Tak's victories over the Burmese, certain Lu families served the Siamese while others dispersed in the mountains of Luang-Prabang and Xieng-Mai and the Chao-Fa settled in Muong-You to remain under the protection of the king of Burma. See below, Chapter VIII, p. 331 (question of the Sip-Song-Panas), and 355.

was put in golden chains and sent on a richly caparisoned elephant to Bangkok, where he found a luxurious prison which had been prepared to receive him (1831). He remained there for four years and died in circumstances which have remained mysterious (2).

2. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique." Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./ Some accounts claim that he poisoned himself. Mgr. Pallegoix relates that he was placed in an iron cage and exposed to the insults of the populace, and that he succumbed to the bad treatment which he had to endure.

Destruction of the kingdom of Vientiane. Siam made an ordi- 727
nary Siamese province out of the old kingdom of Vientiane, a kind 175*
of military frontier land which it called "Lao Phoueun." It would /642/

devoted to an illustration: "Junction of the Nam-Khane and the 643*
Mekong at Luang-Prabang." --Translator/ /183/ whom he had 595
chosen in Luang-Prabang itself from the families of his mandarins. 175*

KHAMONE-NOI, KING 1726-1727.

Khamone-Noi succeeded him and took as wives two of the dead /595/
king's daughters, Thene-Sao and Thene-Kham. But Intha-Som at 175*
once began to agitate. Not daring to hope that the family of the 669
Sip-Song-Panas would lend him aid against one of its children, he 643*
addressed himself to some newcomers to the land who had been 563
infiltrating for some time into the valley of the Nam-Ou. These /167/
were the "Mousseux," mountainfolk driven out of Yunnan by the
religious wars (1). Although their temperament was not at all war-

1. Violent Moslem rebellions were then devastating southern China.

like, these fugitives nevertheless agreed, since they had no choice, 721
to lend their aid to Intha-Som. In return the latter promised their 643*
leaders La-Nga and Noli that he would recognize and confirm their 175*
occupation of Muong-Yo and Boun-Neua as soon as he became king. 669
563

Submission of Intha-Som (1726). But the Mousseux (2), al-

2. The word "Mousseux" is the word which most nearly approaches the native appellation. With their slender figures, their rather white coloration, their prominent cheekbones and their well-shaped and not flattened noses, the "Mousseux" type has a greater affinity with the Indo-European type than with the yellow race type. /142/

though they were supported by Nha-No- '184/ Muong of Muong-La,
failed in their march on Luang-Prabang and Intha-Som had no
other recourse than to make his submission. He gave up his
weapons, took an oath of obedience and fidelity in the pagoda of
Xieng-Thong, and was given permission to live in the capital,
where he settled near the Vat-Visoun with a large retinue of
Mousseux.

He was quite determined not to keep his word. The king,
moreover, was not at all worried and did not even have him watched.

643* capture later on in a return offensive (1).
175*

1. The Annals also state that two of his grandsons, Tia-Oun and Tiao-Thep, came and settled in Luang-Prabang during the wars which followed.

INTHA-SOM, KING 1727-1776.

643* Having attained his ends, Intha-Som had himself solemnly
587 crowned and married Khamone-Noi's wives. Only Thene-Sao seems
175* to have raised any objections to accepting her new husband. At first she refused categorically, then proposed the condition that the
/428/ first son whom she should bear should inherit the succession. Intha-Som agreed and all was arranged.

648* In the following year he received a mission from the Sip-Song-
643* Panas, whose leader, Pha-No-Muong of Muong-La, explained to
175* him that his master had to pay China a tribute of two elephants /189/
563 which he had not been able to procure in his territory and which he begged his neighbor to be so kind as to furnish him.

Intha-Som had too many obligations towards this prince not to present them to him gratis, but he profited by the occasion in order to inform the envoys of the trouble being caused him by his former allies, the "Mousseux," who, according to him, were mistreating the inhabitants of the region and against whom he was powerless precisely by reason of the services which they had rendered him before his accession to the throne. Could not the embassy from the Sip-Song-Panas ask the emperor of China to recall these people to their homes (1)?

1. Intha-Som's grounds for complaint against the "Mousseux" seem rather improbable if we may judge of them by their present-day descendants, who are gentle, out-going and hospitable. Patriarchal in their mores, they had fled the insurrections in Yunnan and were then seeking in Laotian territory only the tranquillity which they could not find in their own land. We are therefore justified in seeing in Intha-Som's accusations against them a mark of the spirit of ingratitude and duplicity which he manifested in many circumstances of his troubled life.

Pha-No-Muong agreed to transmit this wish to Pekin, but observed that ambassadors who could speak directly in the name of the

king of Luang-Prabang could make themselves heard more effec- 648*
tively than he himself could. 643*
175*

/190/ First mission to China (1729). Intha-Som recognized 563
the truth of this bit of advice and in 1729 charged Phya-Muong-
Khoua, Phya-Mune and Phya-Sivongsa to go to the emperor of /431/
China, deliver two elephants to him as a gift and ask him to recall
the Mousseux.

After a long voyage the mission reached Pekin without any untoward happening. They were welcomed most courteously and the Chinese government promised to give satisfaction, but only on condition that the king of Luang-Prabang should continue to send a pair of elephants every five years. An agreement was reached on this basis and the ambassadors brought back to Luang-Prabang the assurance that the Mousseux would be invited to return to their own country (1).

1. The viceroy of "Muong-Se-Luong" received orders to recall all the Mousseux to China. The orders must have been carried out rather ineffectively, for today the Mousseux still form an important group in the region of Muong-Sing.

Second mission to China (1734). A second mission also led by 648*
Phya-Muong-Khoua left five years later to deliver the promised 175*
tribute, but on their way encountered bands of robbers called /579/
"White Flags" who forced them to fall back /191/ on Muong-La.
Phya-No-Muong placed an escort of five hundred men at their disposition and sent word to the Chinese governor of Yunnan-Sen who also sent out a detachment at once to disperse the pirates. The latter's leaders were finally captured and handed over to the emperor's delegate. The ambassadors were then able to fulfill their mission and returned to Luang-Prabang laden with gifts for their king (1).

1. The Guimet Museum has the seal which was delivered by China to the "Sovereigns of Laos" when the Tartaro-Manchu dynasty acceded to the throne, "in exchange for the one which they held from the Ming dynasty." (Pavie, A la conquete des coeurs, p. 347.) Intha-Som was therefore reviving an age-old tradition. This seal, which was carried off by Deo-van-Tri when Luang-Prabang was sacked by his

648 175* In the meantime the carefree populace of Luang-Prabang lived happy and at peace. This is at least the opinion of its annalists who, in confirmation of the adage which states that happy peoples have no history, begin and end their account of Souka-Seum's reign with this categorical assertion.

175* 563 167 The Meo Migration. It was about this time that the first migration of "Meos" occurred in the principality. The chroniclers make no mention of it, doubtless because it was peaceful on the whole and did not affect the tranquillity of the Laotian peoples. Indeed, the newcomers settled on the highest summits of Tran-Ninh and Luang-Prabang, in completely uninhabited regions where even the Khas had never ventured and which were outside the scope of the natives and their leaders.

Farmers and caravaneers, the Meos were above all among the worst denuders of the forests. They must have been driven south out of Se-Tchouen and Yunnan by the need to find new territories which were rich in forests, and also by their undisciplined temperament which could not endure /213/ the authority of the Chinese mandarins. They settled first on the wooded peaks of the Houa-Phan and of Tonkin, then on those of Upper Laos where they found the same kind of habitat as in the cold lands which they had fled. Without religion, without priests, without writing and obedient only to sorcerers who held absolute sway over their essentially vain and credulous character, they lived there in small independent groups, laying waste to the forest in order to grow poppies and maintaining with the neighboring groups only those relations which were strictly indispensable to marketing their opium (1).

/113/ 1. Settlement by the Meos encountered more resistance in Tonkin. "I recall," writes Deo-van-Tri in his Memoires, "having seen my country (Lai-Chau) invaded by the Meos who were called 'White Flags' about 1848. They disturbed the tranquillity of the land, but my honorable father Cam-Sinh finally came to an agreement with them and put them at liberty to settle wherever they wanted on the high plateaus of the region." In the following year, in order to spare his sons from violent family dissensions, Cam-Sinh entrusted Deo-van-Tri and his brother Cam-Heune to the king of Luang-Prabang, who placed them in a pagoda with his own children (Revue indochinoise, August 31, 1904.)

At the death of Souka-Seum, which occurred "at noon on the 563
second day of the waning moon of the tenth month of the year Kot-Set (1212 = 1850) in the palace of Xieng-Mene opposite the city of Luang-Prabang," the Meos already formed many villages. The latter might be described as real eagles' nests, /214/ isolated and scattered, which for three quarters of a century were to maintain relations with the Laotians and the Khas which were suspicious and distant, yet not characterized by systematic hostility.

TIANTHA-KOUMANE, KING 1851-1869.

The dead king's obsequies were not celebrated until the end of 648*
1851, and his brother Tiantha-Koumane did not mount the throne 175*
until 1852, after the accession of the new king of Siam, Phra-Maha-Mongkut.

This latter sovereign, resuming the liberal policy of the old kings of Ayuthya, opened his country wide to foreigners. Britain, which had just extended its Indian empire to Pegou and the deltas of the Irawaddy and the Sittang, was the first to profit thereby, and in 1855 its ambassador Sir John Bowring obtained the advantageous trading treaty which was to guarantee the English language such diffusion that it would become the second official language in Bangkok.

King Mongkut had not, however, signed this treaty out of any particular kindred sentiment, but under the constraint of the British settlements in Burma, and so he hastened to make advances to the representatives of the other /215/ powers. On May 29, 1856 he granted equivalent advantages to the young American Republic, and on the following August 15 came to terms with the minister plenipotentiary of the Emperor of the French.

Franco-Siamese treaty of August 15, 1856. The France of Napoleon III thus renewed with Siam the relations which had been started by the France of Louis XIV. After the tragedy of Constantin Falcone long ago we had abandoned all activity on the banks of the Menam, where only a few missionaries tenaciously pursued their evangelistic propaganda.

The advances by the Siamese government were therefore rather ill-understood in Paris, for our interests in Bangkok were only slight, and it was quite incidentally that M. Charles de Montigny, who was returning to his consular post in Shanghai and whom Count Walewski had primarily commissioned to deal in strong terms with the emperor of Annam in the course of his voyage

648* attempt, moved with all haste towards the banks of the Mekong,
175* followed by four thousand families and carrying off the archives "in order to prevent any later pretexts to claims" (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./

Annam reacted immediately and installed another Quan-Phu in Muong-Kham with two thousand men, but it had learned its lesson. The new delegate inaugurated an administration of flexibility and concessions, placed Chao-Pho, the eldest son of Chao-Noi, at his side, and after four years yielded all power to him (1855).

Chao-Pho did not remount his ancestors' throne, but took control of affairs with the simple title of the emperor's mandatory. Tiantha-Koumane, however, most probably at Bangkok's instigation, took the point of view that the kingdom of Xieng-Khouang had been reconstituted and demanded tribute.

Long negotiations ensued, in the course of which Chao-Pho maneuvered with sufficient skill to avoid any offense on the part of Luang-Prabang and any disavowal on the part of Annam. Finally Tran-Ninh paid /236/ ninety bars of silver to Emperor Tu-Duc every year and sent Luang-Prabang the traditional triennial bounty.

175* Chao-Pho therefore restored comparative tranquillity to his
● 563 countrymen for a few years. Tu-Duc had come to grips with the
/167/ French and seemed to lose interest in Tran-Ninh's affairs, and the memory of evil days was beginning to be blurred in the mists of the plateau ricefields which were once more being cultivated, when the first bands of "Hos" appeared whose devastations were to achieve the total ruin of the unfortunate principality.

First incursions of "Hos" (1864). Driven from China by the wars of Yunnan, these hordes of ravenous fugitives (1) suddenly poured

1. "Ho" means "Chinese" in the Thai dialect.

into northern Indo-China. Their invasions began about 1864 and were to unroll in successive waves for more than twenty years against the Sip-Song-Panas, Tonkin, the Houa-Phan, Tran-Ninh and as far as the gates of Luang-Prabang.

115: Le Boulanger--147 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8
Ho

Although not organized at first, their bands gradually formed 175*
into armed contingents which soon became known under the names 563
of /237/ black, yellow or red Flags, depending on the color of
their banners. In contrast to the Meos, who were called White
Flags (1) and whose settlement fifteen years previously had, on the

1. See above, pp. 212 and 213.

whole, been permanent and not too violent, the Hos waged a war
of brigandry which calls to mind the sinister exploits of the Grandes /579/
Compagnies which were dismembered by Du Guesclin. They razed
villages, held the terrorized inhabitants for ransom, or else hired
themselves out to the inhabitants to protect them against other
bands. The cantons of the Black River were the first to fall prey to
their pillaging, but then the leaders of the region came to terms
with them, interested them in their internal disputes, took them
with them to the Tonkinese delta to aid the Annamites against the
French, and finally sent one band against another in the Laotian
territories which they devastated as far as Nong-Khay. Both mili-
tary and diplomatic action had to be taken by France following the
first Pavie mission in order to suppress them. Those of them who /144/
did not go back to China abandoned their guns to become farmers,
married Thai or Kha wives and thus created a stock of mixed blood
which, by successive crossings, /238/ merged into the mass of the
population.

Restitution of the Prabang by Siam (1867). In the midst of all 648*
the cares which the threats of these invaders caused him, Tiantha- 175*
Koumane had the satisfaction of restoring the venerated statue of 778
the Prabang to his people.

Carried off to Vientiane by Thao-Nong in 1707 and ravished
successively by Chulalok in 1778 and by Bodin in 1828 (1), the

1. See above, pp. 47, 133, 156, 158 and 174.

kingdom's ancient palladium was finally returned by King Mongkut,
in 1867, to Fa-Ngoun's descendant, who sent the Oupahat Oun-Kham
to Bangkok to take solemn possession thereof.

Taken by land as far as Xieng-Mene (Luang-Prabang right bank),
it was displayed for seven days and seven nights at the landing of

Laotian provinces, over which it exercised only nominal authority as yet (2). It must, however, combat the rights which Annam /161/

2. Even over the old principality of Vientiane, now three- /631/ quarters depopulated, where it had had the wisdom, or the weakness, to leave the old chiefs of muongs in charge of the government and had required of them only an oath of fidelity and the payment of personal and land taxes in the form of one large annual tribute.

might one day be led to assert over these regions, and it must place them under military occupation so as to present the emperor Tu-Duc, and eventually the Quai d'Orsay, with a fait accompli without further delay. The great invasion of Tran-Ninh by the Hos was to furnish it a pretext in 1873.

/242/ Invasion of Tran-Ninh by the Hos (1872). A large band 563
of "Red Flags," numbering about two thousand pirates who had 175*
been driven out of the Black River by the "Yellow Flags" towards /167/
the end of 1871, fell upon the plateau by way of Xieng-Ko, which /579/
it sacked despite the desperate resistance of the inhabitants, and entrenched itself in the island of Bandon near the village of Banban. A first column which Chao-Hung sent against it fled bravely at the first contact with the invaders, and since everything ends in a song in the land of Laos, their panic was at once turned to ridicule and put in couplets which are still sung today (1).

1. The following is a translation of the first of these 539
couplets:

Sanousit leaves his opium pipe which is lost.
Sisania throws away his opium lamp.
Chao-un-Vico abandons his Annamite gong.
All is lost, all is thrown away.
They hide in the forest, gasping with fear.
They do not even keep so much as a pin.
They hasten homewards through the brush.
By the shortest road.
For three days it is impossible to eat.
Chao-un-Vico's face is no longer human (fear has distorted his features).

"It seems that this refrain was sung whenever Sanousit, 563
175*

563 Sisania or Chao-un-Vico passed through the village streets.
175* The teller of this tale added naively that they did not like it at all." (Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./).

175* /243/ A second column was led by an incapable and cowardly
563 leader (1) and came to terms in a treacherous way with the Hos,
726

1. Phra-Phanom, a cousin of Chao-Hung who was in the pay of Siam. (Cf. ibid. /de Pelacot, "Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./.)

who organized themselves strongly in their lair and began a systematic pillage of the surrounding territory. Then Chao-Hung asked for aid from the king of Luang-Prabang and the emperor of Annam. Tu-Duc sent twelve hundred men, while Oun-Kham sent two hundred, himself took command of 400 Phoueuns and marched resolutely on Bandon. But he committed the error of attacking in scattered order, without a unified command. The Hos sustained the siege for forty-eight hours, then became aware of the lack of unison among the allied leaders and on the third day made a sortie during which Chao-Hung was killed. His death threw his troops into disorder and marked the end of their resistance (2).

2. The Annamites regained Vinh in the number of only seven hundred (Cf. ibid. /de Pelacot, "Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./).

Xieng-Kham and Xieng-Khouang were immediately occupied by the Red Flags and all of Tran-Ninh was invaded and devastated, most of the villages burned, and the populace requisitioned and tortured with nameless atrocities. To such an extent was this true that after a few months the pirates had /244/ brought about an absolute vacuum. Finding nothing more to pillage, they had the idea of extracting ransom money from Luang-Prabang and had already set out on their way when a "bad omen" suddenly made them turn about and directed them towards Vientiane and Nongkhay.

Siamese intervention (1872). They encountered no resistance in this depopulated region, the few inhabitants fled terrorized into the forests at the mere rumor of their approach. They entered

Anou's old capital without difficulty and fortified themselves there, 726
completing the destruction of its ruins in their search for the royal 175*
treasures (1), and from there sent rapid incusrions into the present- 563

1. They tore down the central minaret of the That-Luong.

day muong of Borikhane.

The governor of Nongkhay, blackaded in his city which was 648*
thronged with fugitives, joined his cries of alarm to the appeal 726
which the king of Luang-Prabang had sent to Bangkok, and the 175*
Siamese government dispatched an army which first succeeded in 563
driving the Hos northward and then launched a flank attack on them
by detaching eight hundred men and sending them to reinforce the
forces which King Oun-Kham had mobilized. But the campaign
which had been so forcefully begun soon softened in the face of
the pirates' counterthrusts, /245/ for the latter had shut themselves
into nearly impregnable fortresses. Pressed to make an end of it
and to save face, the Siamese leaders came to terms with them and
gave them permission to remain in the land in return for vague
recognition of the suzerainty of Bangkok. As for the surviving in-
habitants of the circumscriptions which had been purged of Hos, /727/
they were "severely blamed for having fled before the enemy" and
driven along the Mekong with their flocks. "10,600, men, women
and children departed. The exodus of these poor folk across this
land of famine was a pitiful spectacle. Most of them died along
the way, and a few were able to flee. Only six thousand reached
Siam" (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./

Luang-Prabang had been miraculously spared, but anarchy of 579
the utmost violence was unleased at the very gates of the princi- 563
pality. The "Yellow Flags" invaded the Sip-Song-Chau-Thai, 727
whose leader Cam-Sinh had joined forces with the "Black Flags" 175*
of Ong-Liu (2), while the Meos and the Khas stirred up trouble in

2. Luu-Vinh-Phuoc, encamped at Lao-Kay.

their turn -- seemingly at first merely in self-defense against the
Hos, then as a means of existence in the general confusion -- by

579 ravaging the region of Dien-Bien-/246/ Phu as far as Muong-Ngoi.
563 King Oun-Kham was growing old and carefree and felt incapable,
727 when left entirely to his own resources, of calming the mortal dis-
175* quietude of his people. Thus Siamese agents, the number of whom
/648/* was constantly on the increase, were welcomed all along the Upper
Mekong as the only protectors from whom effective aid could be ex-
pected.

636 Relations with the cantons of the Black River. The man Cam-
175* Sinh, who was of Chinese origin himself, was nevertheless a friend
of the princes of Luang-Prabang, but he was then too preoccupied
with driving the invaders out of his own domains to lend any support
to his neighbor.

His remote ancestors were military mandarins in Quang-Si and had settled three hundred years previously in Muong-Lai, which they had pacified in behalf of the king of Anna. Their authority extended around Lai-Chau as far as Yunnan in the north and Muong Theng in the south (Dien-Bien-Phu, the legendary cradle of the Laotian race). At this time they had reached a peaceful agreement
/728/ with the kings of Lan-Xang, most likely Nokeo-Koumane or Thammi-Karath who had just /247/ shaken off the Burmese yoke (1) and who

1. See above, pp. 97 and 100.

were glad to give them charge of the "white" and "black" Thais of the region in exchange for a triennial payment of thirty-three taels of silver "and one horse" (2). Relations had subsequently become

2. Cf. the Chronicle of Muong-Lai given by Deo-van-Tri to Auguste Pavie in 1894.

completely friendly and trusting to such a degree that when Cam-Sinh was in conflict with several of his relatives around 1850 he had not hesitated to place two of his children, one of whom was Deo-van-Tri, in Souka-Seum's hands (3).

3. See above, p. 213, note.

669 Revolt of the Khas of Muong-Ngoi (1876). It was not until 1876,
175* after he had temporarily driven back the Yellow Flags, that he was
563 able to send any reinforcements to Oun-Kham to sustain the struggle

against the revolted Khas. But scarcely had the latter made their 669
submission when Cam-Sinh was again overwhelmed by a return of- 175*
fensive of the pirates in his territory, and then soon drawn by his 563 ●
ally Liu-Vinh-Phuoc into the ambush warfare which the emperor /648/*
of Annam was sustaining in the Tonkinese delta against the French of Francis Garnier and Henri Riviere.

/248/ Siamese occupation (1883-1885). The old king Oun- 648*
Kham was therefore left to confront the ever-threatening Hos by 175*
himself, as well as a populace which was perpetually on the qui-vive and Siamese who were settling daily in his land in increasing numbers as in a conquered country. The latter redoubled their activities when the French advance in Tonkin, despite a thousand setbacks, resulted in the protectorate treaty of August 25, 1883 which posed the problem of Annam's political frontiers in a precise way. Bangkok's agents immediately enlisted Laotian recruits, marched against Xieng-Kham and once more besieged the Hos in their entrenched positions, but they suffered so grave a setback (1)

1. The Siamese general Phya-Khon-Thay was killed and his troops disbanded.

that King Chulalongkorn decided to send out a large force immediately and place the whole upper country to the north and east of Luang-Prabang and as far as the approaches to the Black River under military occupation.

Upon his arrival in October 1885 the Chao-Meun-Vai-Voronat (2),

2. He was elevated to the dignity of "Phya" Surrissak upon his return to Bangkok in 1887. (See below, p. 271.)

who was commander-in-chief of the occupation forces, took effective possession of the principality, entrusted its administration to two commissioners or Kaluongs who were stationed /249/ with King Oun-Kham, and himself went into the field in a prudent march towards Tran-Ninh and the Houa-Phans, taking the oupahat Souvanna-Phouma and one of his sons with him as hostages rather than as comrades in arms.

/250/ /Blank page/

Question of the Sip-Song-Panas (Anglo-French commission, 648*
January-April 1895). On January 1, 1895 he met the British mission 175*
in Muong-Sing, as he had agreed with its leader, the Resident Minister Scott, during his recent trip to Bangkok.

Because he had explored them in 1891 with Deo-Van-Tri, Pavie was not ignorant of the fact that the twelve principalities which lay in a line on both banks of the river and which formed what was called /332/ the confederation of the Sip-Song-Panas had always been more or less tributary to Burma, but he also knew that the British conquest of this latter country had detached several princes from it and that these princes had deemed it well to place themselves under Chinese protection. The prince of Xieng-Kheng, in particular, who was a descendant of the old "Chao-Fa" of Muong-Sing and was established on the right bank at Muong-You (1), had transferred his

1. See above, p. 176, note 1.

capital to the plain of Muong-Sing in 1885 "in order to put the Mekong between himself and the invaders." This prince, who was "a sage /563/
and perspicacious old man, a scholar whose speech was rich in /439/
images, and a man greatly superior to the average mandarin," was endeavoring to create harmony among the extremely varied populations with different origins, customs and languages -- Lues, Younes, Yaos, Meos, Mousseux, Khas, etc., who had settled on this verdant plateau, an age-old crossroads on the great caravan route. With his profound good sense he was the first to realize that it was impossible to create an intermediate zone "and that a partitioning of the country was the probable solution. He gradually came to accept the idea of giving up the right bank and, yielding to his liking for us, he even made /333/ preparations to emigrate towards Luang-Prabang (1) in

1. See above the relations of Luang-Prabang with the Sip-Song-Panas in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, pp. 129, 133, 180 ff.

case no part of his country should be awarded to us by the terms of the decision" (2).

2. Mission Pavie, "Geographie et Voyages," Vol. II, p. 341.

Franco-Siamese treaty of October 7, 1902. Finally after more 648
than three years of negotiations which were skilfully terminated in 175*
Paris by the Phyas Sri and Suriya, a new treaty was signed on October 7, 1902 by the terms of which we gave Siam back its liberty on the right bank of the river in exchange for the return to the French authorities of the territories of Melouprey and Tonle-Repou in Cambodia and of Bassac in Lower Laos. The king of Luang-Prabang obtained the frontier correction /343/ which he had been claiming for nine years, but we allowed Siam to retain the status of suzerain with respect to our protege as regarded this large part of his domains. As for our Asiatic nationals residing in Siam, we lost touch with them to such a degree that the revision of their lists was left to the entire discretion of the Siamese authorities.

This treaty provoked the sharpest and most fully justified protests on the part of the colonial group in the Chamber. How had the high competence of Auguste Pavie and the repeated advice of our successive ministers in Bangkok led the Quai d'Orsay to conclude a treaty which did not decide anything and which, in exchange for slight territorial satisfactions in the south, completely abandoned our influence over the whole Laotian right bank to the north of the Se-Moun? Under the pressure of parliament, which refused to ratify the treaty, the talks had to be resumed with more care given to "making our rights and interests respected."

Insurrection of the Khas of Lower Laos (1901-1907). The necessi- L
ty for reaching some kind of agreement, however, was becoming all K
the more desirable on both sides in that Lower Laos had for /344/ 669
about a year been the theater of an insurrection, as violent as it was 175*
singular, by the Khas on both banks of the Mekong. 563

The fief of Bassac, which was administered by the descendants of L
Chao-Houy (1) in behalf of the king of Siam, had lost much of its K
/636/

1. See above, pp. 168; 177, note 2 and 328, note 1.

importance for the latter ever since the treaty of 1893 had amputated the muongs of Saravane and Attopeu. All this region, which was populated mainly by Khas (Boloven, Alak, Nha-Heun, on the left bank), had been only sparsely colonized by a few Phou-Thai and Laotian families, and Siamese domination over these tribes which were refractory to all authority had never been more effective than the purely nominal domination of the old kings of Vientiane (2).

2. See above, p. 90, the campaign of Setthathirath in

K Attopeu and p. 160, the first known rebellion of the Khas
L of Bassac.
669
175* In fact the region had long been a vast supply ground for slaves --
563 "Annamites generally, whom the turbulent and hardly Khas went and kidnaped on the other side of the watershed chain" and bartered on the banks of the Mekong for buffalo, gongs, metals and cloth, of which they stood in permanent need.

K The cause of the rebellion of 1901, which /345/ arose in the re-
/567/ gion of Oubone and spread like wildfire, remains highly obscure. Doubtless the abolition of slavery by King Chulalongkorn and the prohibition against engaging in this traffic which was pronounced by our first administrators were not unconnected with the mystical fervor which agitated the Khas, who were tacitly supported by those
K Laotian functionaries who had suddenly been deprived of profitable
/791/ dealings. Whatever the case may be, these basically superstitious people were inflamed by their sorcerers or "Phou-Mi-Boun," who resembled messiahs and in whose supernatural gifts they had an unshakeable faith, and they declared war against the established order for the purpose of imposing the authority of their ringleaders, who alone were worthy, in their eyes, of "governing men and causing justice to reign among them" (1). In March 1901 the situation had

L 1. Cf. J.-J. Dauplay, Les terres rouges du plateau des
K Boloven. Saigon, 1929, p. 55.
113

become so grave on the plateau of the Bolovens that M. Remy, the
L government commissioner in Saravane, was surrounded together with
K some fifteen militiamen in the pagoda of Thateng by 1500 Khas,
669 almost all of whom were armed with flintlock rifles, and that he
175* owed his own salvation only to a forceful resistance. "A few days
563 later the whole plateau was up in arms. All the villages /346/ had followed the Phou-Mi-Boun, without distinction of race. They had, moreover, scarcely any other alternative, for the lukewarm and hesitant individuals were simply massacred" (1).

1. Cf. J.-J. Dauplay, op. cit. /Les terres rouges du plateau des Boloven. Saigon, 1929./, p. 60.

The rebels' success had no aftermath, however, and thanks to

the resolute action of administrator Remy the situation was greatly L
improved in the spring of 1902. "The fact that the Phou-Mi-Boun K
were powerless to perform the slightest miracle was recognized by 669
all the insurgents, three-quarters of whom had made their submis- 175*
sion and reintegrated their villages. . . . But other agitators, also 563
from Siam (2), had already abandoned the plateau and directed

2. Thrown back to the Mekong from the territory of Oubone by the Siamese military forces sent against them.

their efforts against Savannakhet and Vientiane. At about eight in the morning on April 19, 1902 the Savannakhet commissariat was surrounded by hordes of Laotians, bands of inspired folk who marched, sang and played the khene, convinced that the bullets from our rifles would change into frangipane flowers. It was necessary to open fire in order to free the capital. They left 150 dead on the square, and probably carried off as many wounded. On our side losses were limited to one militiaman killed and two wounded. Then everything became calm again" (1).

1. Cf. J.-J. Dauplay, op. cit. /Les terres rouges du plateau des Boloven. Saigon, 1929./, pp. 62 and 64. "Vientiane was also seething with agitators, and the Europeans there spent more than one anxious night. In fact, however, peace and order was never disturbed." P. 63.

From then on the revolt seemed to be throttled. It nevertheless lasted longer than was reasonable as a result of the lack of agreement between the heads of the provinces involved, who could not settle on an overall plan of action "against the rebel chieftains who had taken refuge (with their last partisans) in the wooded mountains of the left bank of the Sekong." The latter were able to hold out in their dens for more than four years, and not until 1906-1907, when discord spread among them, did they make their submission "discouraged and dying of hunger" (2).

2. "In the case of one of the rebel chieftains, the famous Bac-My, his so-called submission was only a pretense designed to lull our vigilance, to enable him to recruit partisans and above all to procure arms from Siam. This was so true that he had to be suppressed towards the end of 1910.

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As for the Boloven-Khomadan, he never made his submission. He still lives with his partisans on the mountain of Phou-Luouang in the northeast of the plateau." Cf. ibid., p. 65.

Franco-Siamese treaty of February 13, 1904. In the meantime the governments in Bangkok and Paris had succeeded in reaching an agreement on a rough and ready compromise, in /348/ an obviously reciprocal desire to end all misunderstandings and to restore between France and Siam the friendly relations of former times which were now seen to be more indispensable than ever between immediate neighbors.

By the new treaty of February 13, 1904 Siam confirmed its previous territorial cessions, and also renounced all rights of suzerainty over the territories of Luang-Prabang situated on the right bank of the Mekong. For its part, France continued its 1902 policy of renouncing all rights to the 25-kilometer zone, but obtained permission to retain seven establishments there (by application of Article 6 of the treaty of 1893 which had authorized boat relays, storehouses for wood, etc. for the development of navigation on the river). It was understood that the list of our Asiatic proteges would not be revised, and future enrollments would be limited to subjects placed directly under the authority of French jurisdiction. Finally, the treaty provided for mixed commissions composed of officers which should shortly undertake to delimit the new frontier "between the kingdom of Siam and the territories forming French Indo-China."

The goodwill of the negotiators /349/ triumphed over the complexity of the interests at stake and their entanglements. Thus signatures were exchanged to general satisfaction and ratification was obtained without any comment.

Franco-Siamese relations since 1904. The mixed commissions began their work in Cambodia almost immediately in an atmosphere of cordial collaboration. We were able to evacuate Chantaboun in 1905 at the very beginning. We obtained a broad protective zone surrounding Kratt in the region included between Tonle-Sap and the sea, and the operations which were subsequently carried out in Laos awarded us the district of Dan-Sai which runs southwards for some hundred kilometers alongside the territory of Luang-Prabang. Profiting by these gracious marks of a sincerely friendly spirit, Commander Bernard, the leader of the French mission, skilfully reintroduced the

and, even as they retain their smiling native good nature, they are 643*
becoming increasingly adapted with each passing day to the rude 178
necessities of modern existence in the hectic struggle between
individuals and peoples.

Nearly identical results have been achieved in the other parts of Laos where /354/ the influence of our administrators is exercised in a more direct manner, even though it is still usually based on the ascendancy which the local mandarins have retained over the populace.

Annexation of the territory of Bassac (1905). It was thus that 635
the territory of Bassac on the right bank, which was in full disorder 175*
when it was returned to France, was pacified by the Laotian "governor" whom we appointed there. Annexed in January 1905 to the province of Ban-Mouang, this territory had been abandoned in the previous year by the oupahat Boua-Laphan, who was the successor of King Kham-Souk (1) and who had taken refuge at Ban-Toung-

1. See above, p. 328.

Loung in the Siamese district of Oubone. In a most loyal manner Chao-Nhouy, one of Kham-Souk's sons, offered us his services and took an oath of fidelity before Superior Resident Mahe on October 14, 1905. He was named governor of the region, and since then has not ceased to give the French administration the benefit of his influence and his devotion (2).

2. The "delegation" which replaced the commercial agency in Bassac was discontinued in 1908 and the capital of the circumscription, which took the name of province of Bassac, was transferred from Ban-Mouang to Pakse.

/355/ The Khas of Lower Laos. The Khas of Lower Laos have 563
remained perfectly peaceful ever since their 1901 escapade was 669
suppressed. They have even tended imperceptibly to come out of their fierce isolation as new means of communication have connected their villages, which only yesterday were hidden in the brush, with the vast network of roads now under construction which will soon open up the Laotian hinterland (1).

1. The question of the Indo-Chinese "Moi hinterland"

563 deserves full study but would be beyond the scope of the
669 present work, which is strictly limited to an account of historical events.

The mountain tribes of Upper Laos. The mountain tribes of Upper Laos, on the other hand, have been subject to more or less violent unrest during the period 1914-1921.

The Lus of Muong Sing and of the Sip-Song-Panas, as well as the representatives of the many races which inhabit this land with a chaotic relief structure, had previously accepted the establishment of French guardianship without any hostile reaction, for the misdeeds of the Lu chieftain Van-Na-Poum, who was, all in all, only a common bandit who robbed the people by force of arms /356/ and was killed in 1910 by our militia after he had wounded Inspector Nollin, who was sent to arrest him, cannot be regarded as acts of out-and-out rebellion. But in the first months of the World War the Yunnanese frontier, which was well-known to smugglers and brigands, was troubled by a marked recrudescence of outlawry, and suddenly in November 1914 Chinese bands, which were probably encouraged by Annamite agitators in contact with the Germans who had been expelled from Indo-China, broke out in the Muong-Hou and the Houa-Phan, burned the capital at Sam-Neua, at which time Administrator Lambert was massacred, killed Militia Inspector Tuyaa who was sent against them, and spread terror throughout the whole region.

624 1. The Muong-Sing incident (1914-1916). Phra-Ong-Kham, the
669 Chao-Fa of Muong-Sing, who was the son and the successor in 1907 of the prince who had spontaneously turned to Auguste Pavie in the past when he wished to escape British domination (1), did not share

1. See above, p. 331.

his father's sentiments with regard to France's representatives. His abuses of his power had gained him vigorous protests on the part of the government commissioner's delegate, and he had sworn to /357/ revenge himself on the latter by -- quite simply -- having him assassinated. His plot was discovered and he fled to China (December 2), from which point he gave active help to the brigands by inciting his subjects to revolt and by propagating false rumors designed to discredit French prestige among the populace.

Even though the latter responded half-heartedly at best to his

urgings, no less than three successive expeditions (the Sourisseau, 624
Friquegnon and Dussault columns) and two years of difficult and 669
costly operations were necessary to restore order and suppress the Yunnanese bands. The deposition of the Chao-Fa -- applicable both to himself and his heirs -- was decreed in April 1916, and the former principality was converted into a simple "muong." Phra-Ong-Kham died in China in 1923, and when his family offered to make its submission it was given permission to return to Muong-Sing.

2. The Meo rebellion (1919-1921). While these events were M
transpiring the Meos, who lived mainly high up on the peaks of 563
Luang-Prabang and Tran-Ninh (1), had maintained a proper atti- 669
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1. See above, p. 212. 787

tude even though approached by the Chao-Fa and the /358/ Chinese brigands. Nor had they seemed at first to pay any more attention to the movement which their fellows in Tonkin had just initiated in the basin of the upper Black River.

Continuing to live apart from other races in jealous isolation, they had nevertheless seemed for some time past to be moving towards closer terms with the provincial administration, which had succeeded in interesting them in road projects. But in July 1919 one of the leaders of the Tonkin rebellion who was being pursued by our troops and was called Batchay came to seek refuge among them. From this lair he sent out emissaries whose mission it was to devote themselves to secret propaganda efforts among the Meo groupings of Upper Laos in favor of a king who, "accomplishing the will of Heaven, was to bring them happiness, peace and prosperity." The rumor rapidly circulated among these credulous tribes that a prophecy which had fallen from the sky was summoning all Meos to revolt and form a great independent kingdom with its capital at Dien-Bien-Phu or Muong-Heup. To the accompaniment of incantations and magic formulas, the able-bodied population was called to march against the Laotians, Khas and Annamites and to build the palace of the awaited sovereign.

/359/ In vain did the king of Luang-Prabang send messages to L
the Meo leaders in protest against these absurd rumors. Within a M
few weeks armed bands were formed which began to ransom and 563
pillage the villages of Tran-Ninh, Luang-Prabang and the Houa- 669
Phan. Our militia had to occupy the outpost of Muong-Heup, which

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was attacked on August 15. It repulsed the assaillants, two of which were killed and some ten wounded. The Muong-Ngoi outpost was then reinforced by riflemen under the command of Lieutenant Distanti, and detachments led by Laotian leaders scoured the country. On September 23, however, Lieutenant Distanti fell into an ambush and suffered a mortal wound, and in October we committed the error of evacuating Muong-Heup, an action which heightened Batchay's prestige still further and provoked a veritable panic among the terrorized populace.

The matter was becoming serious, and reinforcements had to be sent from Hanoi and Saigon. A military column was organized and placed under the direction of Colonel Angeli, who was able to free the plateau of Xieng-Khouang and part of the Houa-Phan only after fierce battles at Ban-Ban, Bergerie, Ban-Phadeng and Pakkha /360/ (January-May 1920). At the same time attempts had been made to enter into negotiations with the principal rebel leaders so as to open their eyes to the dangers and ordeals into which they were drawing their families. A few submissions were obtained in this manner, but when the rainy season halted all operations Batchay profited from the respite in order to regroup his partisans east of Nam-Ou.

In December Commander Dorey resumed the offensive, and despite the many obstacles in a "land bristling with mountains, sown with ambushes and devoid of all resources" succeeded in driving the Meos "from one entrenched position to the next," harrying them without respite, encircling them and decimating them with such rapidity that a month later all their bands were either destroyed or had surrendered, that Batchay was in flight and abandoned by the last survivors, and that the column could be disbanded in March 1921 (1).

1. Batchay's refuge was not discovered until October 1922. Surprised by Khas in the vicinity of Muong-Heup, he was killed by the latter on November 17.

Thus ended, almost as suddenly as it had broken out, this surprising insurrection which was uniquely due to the fanatacism of skittish and excessively superstitious tribes which were /361/ blindly obedient (like the southern Khas towards the Phou-Mi-Boun) to leaders who imposed on them by practices drawn from the lowest kind of sorcery. It is indeed a proven fact that the Meos had not been exposed to the

influence of any foreign propaganda and that their revolt did not L
at any time assume the character of an anti-French manifestation. M
Thus their uprising had no repercussions on the other ethnic groups 563
in Laos, which in spirit and in deed stood behind our repressive 669
measures.

They returned in peace to their agricultural labors (chiefly the L
cultivation of poppies) in their precipitous solitudes. A special M
administrative statute gave them the cantonal and communal 563
autonomy which they desired, with no Laotian or Annamite inter- 636
mediary. No matter how infrequent their contacts with the popu- 609
lations of the valleys and plains, it is quite certain that racial
antagonism (exploited by agitators during the revolt) was maintain-
ing a state of mind among their groupings which was suspicious and
devoid of friendliness towards the native authorities. The reforms 178
which were put into effect seem to have yielded good results. In 563
the same way, a prudent policy towards the still unsubdued tribes
of Lower Laos, one which will avoid direct conflict with their
customs /362/ and prejudices, will gradually tame these last repre-
sentatives of another age whom the opening-up of means of com-
munication will finally incorporate into the larger Indo-Chinese
family.

/ Pages 363-367 contain a Bibliography. Page 368 is blank. Pages 000
369-375 contain an Alphabetical Index of Names Mentioned. Page
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133 The market of Bassac owes its importance to the proximity of the
433 plateau. It is therefore a storehouse for the Laotians of the whole region, a reservoir [51] from which they draw. The part which it
438 plays is obviously a fine one, and no more can be asked of it.

There has also been much discussion as to whether large-scale breeding of buffalo and oxen would be successful there, for at present livestock is found only in the villages situated near the Sédone, that is to say, quite far from the plateau. The question has not yet been settled, and sufficient tests have not yet been made.

133 At the southernmost corner of the plateau there is a conical mountain about 800 meters in altitude which Francis Garnier baptized The Breast [le Téton] because of its shape, and to which he later gave the name Lagrée's Peak [Pic de Lagrée] in commemoration of the President of the Exploratory Commission of 1866.

[224] The elephant hunters of southern Laos go to the mountainous region of Saravane and Attopeu every year, and there they capture an annual quota of fifty to a hundred elephants.

133 To the east of Attopeu the mountains are inhabited by well-nigh independent Kha tribes--Cédangs, Djarais, Rognaos and
[177 Bahnars. The two latter tribes have almost been pacified, thanks to the persevering efforts of the Christian missionaries of Kon-Toum.
797] This point is the center of the mission, and through it passes the road from Attopeu to Qui-Nhon. It crosses the Annamitic Chain
563 between Kon-Xalam and Kon-Tiorak at an altitude of about 900 meters. Near Attopeu this same road goes up over Pou-Satièng (400 meters), the last ramification of the great chain, which separates the basin of the Sé-Souk from that of the Sé-Kémane.

[135] This region of Pou-Satièng, Sé-Souk and Sé-Kémane has long been known to be rich in gold deposits.

§ IV--HYDROLOGY

a.--THE MÉKONG--GENERALITIES

133 It has often been said, and rightly so, that the Nile constituted Egypt. In the same way it can be said that the Mékong makes Laos, for is it not the river which gives what vitality there is to these vast isolated regions? Is it not the river which, by its annual floods, helps the growth of rice? Does it not supply, with its fish, a large

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navigable during part of the year.

The Ia-Drang, whose valley is inhabited by the Djaraï tribe, is one of its principal tributaries. For that matter, the most important Kha tribes are settled in the valleys of the watercourses which have been dealt with in the foregoing. Thus we find the Lovè Khas between the Sé-Khong, the Sé-Souk and the Sésane; the Niaheun Khas and a few Alaks in the valley of the Sékhong; the Souk Khas in those of the Sé-Pien, [103] [Illustration] [104] [Blank page] [105] the Sé-Kampho and the lower Sékhong; the Salangs between the Sésane and the Sé-Souk; the Bahnars and the Rognaos in those of the Bla and the other left-bank tributaries of the Poco; the Penongs in the deep valley of the Srépok; the Djaraïs in the middle valley of the Sésane and in that of the Ia-Drang; and the Braos and the Tiam-Poueun in the lower Sésane. Those [Illustration here] of the Kha tribes which have been pacified work the gold-bearing alluvia of these rivers and pay their taxes with the gold dust which they extract.

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Upriver from Stung-Treng and as far as the waterfalls the Mékong can be navigated at low water by steam launches. At high water the large steamers of the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine] which provide service between Saigon and Pnom-Penh can go up as far as Khône. Below Stung-Treng and as far as Kratié the river can be navigated only by pirogues at low water. The following table [106] shows the average length of journeys by river between Stung-Treng and nearby points on this reach:

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region.

At the beginning of the rainy season and of the dry season it will be well to wear a cholera-belt, especially at night.

In northern Laos garments of cloth suiting may be worn in the morning and evening during the mixed half-season.

Woolen clothing is also very good, even in the hot season after sundown, for persons who can stand it.

As protective headgear against the sun one should wear the colonial helmet or else the various types of hats made of Indian "saja" pith, cork, elder or rubber. One should provide oneself with a parasol if one fears overexposure to the sun.

Before sunrise and after sunset any kind of headgear will do, and in winter when the sky is clouded over a felt or straw hat is sufficient for the whole day.

In the matter of shoes one should consult one's own need and wear heavy ones or light ones, made of leather or cloth, as one wishes. For walking trips and traveling on horseback one needs waterproof shoes with iron cleats. Above the latter one should wear soft woolen puttees, which are quite superior to leather boots, leggings or gaiters, whatever the advantages of the latter.

One's diet in Laos should consist almost exclusively of the local staples and produce to which should be added, during six months of the year, the produce of a vegetable garden planted with European vegetables. The rest of the time one may content oneself with the native vegetables, which are less varied, to be sure, but which can be grown during the rainy season.

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[119] Beef, pork, goat meat, rabbit meat, venison, fish, poultry, chickens and ducks, geese and guinea fowl, etc. provide, together with eggs, the main elements in the diet, especially if garden produce be added. It is well to use canned food only when one cannot do otherwise.

One very important question which should not be neglected is the making of bread. Faulty workmanship, the use of spoiled flour or of poor quality leaven are, in fact, the often unknown causes of most stomach disorders. The ideal thing would be to replace bread completely with local rice either steam-cooked and eaten as it is, or else pressed into cakes.

Experience has shown that Europeans living in tropical regions stay healthier when they use only native produce and approach the native diet as closely as possible, which is based on rice and maize.

563 It is thus that the Missionaries, for example, whose resources
262 are extremely limited and do not enable them to use imported food-stuffs, remain in the land for many long years without any great damage to their health. It goes without saying that one should avoid overindulgence in food, and especially in alcoholic beverages. Drinking iced tea at and between meals gives excellent results, but then it is well to take a small quantity of pure wine. Coffee is an indispensable tonic and stimulant for aiding digestion and fighting off the heaviness which generally manifests itself after meals.

000 One should avoid long siestas immediately after the noonday meal. Newcomers will do well not to succomb to this damaging habit, which slows digestion, softens the organism and in the long run robs the brain of its lucidity and vigor. It is preferable to move about a bit immediately after meals on the verandas or in the rooms of the house. Billiards provide excellent exercise in this case.

Around two o'clock, when digestion is complete and before business is resumed, a cold shower is extremely hygienic. [120] According to one's tastes and temperament one may take a shower bath, pour water over oneself with the help of a basin held in the hand, or bathe in a tub with a large sponge.

In the evening after sunset it is well to take a little exercise in the form of horseback riding, bicycling, tennis, etc. But one should avoid going too far and becoming tired, since all that is needed is enough effort to maintain the suppleness and elasticity of the muscles. After such exercise one should take a quick shower or tub bath, then, if desired, a small glass of generous or tonic wine such as quinquina, cola, coca, Désiles wine, etc.

One should avoid all the so-called alcoholic aperitifs, which necessitate the use of a great deal of water and ice, for they cause overabundant perspiration and, by filling the stomach, retard the secretion of the gastric juices. It is precisely this secretion which gives the sensation of appetite.

164 In the matter of general preventive hygiene, a great many
751 persons will do well to follow the regimen outlined below. Every day one should take a few centigrams of salts of quinine, hydrobromide, bihydrobromide, sulfate, etc. If excessive fatigue is anticipated as a consequence of prolonged exposure to the sun, a long march or a stay in the forest, one should take a larger dose of quinine. The dose may be as large, depending on temperament and experience, as one gram for the sulphate and fifty centigrams for the hydrobromide.

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It is true that all the races and varieties enumerated above can be found in Laos, but it is impossible to say what their exact origins were or to gain a complete knowledge of their history, their migrations and the details of their settlement in the land.

For certain regions inhabited by several races we do possess, however, either Phong Savadan or local annals, or else legends written on palm leaves, or even accounts which have been handed down by word of mouth. The manuscripts are, in general, rather incorrect and full of interpolations and embellishments inevitably due to the scribes. They are the only written documents.

The architecture might also give us useful information on all these questions, but the monuments are either too recent and contain nothing of any interest or else they are mute on the events which motivated their edification, as well as on the events contemporaneous with them. None of this evidence, whether it be in the form of manuscripts, temples or pagodas, offers the guarantees of authenticity and the ensemble of precise details which are needed in order to leave the realm of hypotheses and [129] [Illustration] [130] [Blank page] [131] deductions, no matter how adroit and logical these may be, when we attempt to settle in exact fashion the evolution of races in the basin of the Great River.

Various theories, based on documents which are questionable in varying degrees, have been put forth by explorers and travelers. We shall here submit to the reader's judgment those which seem to afford the best summary of this somewhat obscure question.

Here, first, is the opinion of the Superior Resident in Laos (1).

[113] (1) Le Laos Français. (Revue indo-chinoise, Nos. 82 ff., 1900.)

"Laotian legends claim that all the races which now inhabit Indo-China came out of one and the same gourd in Dien-Bien-Phu (Annamite style) or Muong-Thèng (Laotian style), a vast plateau situated in the northeast part of the valley of the Nam-Hou. The sons of this gourd are said to have spread eastward towards the China Sea, southward along the Mékong and the Ménam, and westward towards Burma. Whether we will or not, this gourd reminds us of Noah's Ark.

"On the other hand, if we consult the chronological list of the kings of Luang-Prabang, we note that after six kings of foreign origin, the first of which came from India and the second from Cambodia, there were four kings of Kha race, after which Laotians coming from

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Dien-Bien assumed power and never again relinquished it.

"In the absence of local documents offering sufficient guaranties of authenticity, we can only formulate hypotheses on the evolution of races in the Mékong valley, by using the better known history of the East Indies and the Empire of Annam.

"In the present hypothesis we shall assume that the autochthonous population in prehistoric times was a highly colored race of which no traces are left, but whose presence can alone explain, here as in the East Indies or in Annam, the quite marked coloration of the present-day population despite repeated infusions of yellow and white blood.

"By virtue of its location the valley of the Mékong was destined to be one of the major outlets of the races coming from Tibet, and one of the entries for the red races which came up the rivers from the south.

"By virtue of their location, too, the basins of the Mékong and the Ménam, separated from one another by dividing chains low in altitude, were destined to be the refuge of races driven from the east and west by victorious invaders. We know that the first invaders of India were Tibetans. It is probable that a similar invasion took place in the basin of the Mékong and brought about a first mixture between the pseudo-negroes whom we have supposed to have been the original inhabitants and the invaders.

[132] "Later on the Touranians who had penetrated into the Indies (1) from the west and who left so strong an imprint of their

(1) And also into Yunnan and Malaysia, where they introduced Islamism. (Author's note.)

type in the land must have gone back eastwards in considerable numbers when they were driven out by the Aryans, and founded an ephemeral dynasty in Laos.

"Meanwhile the Malays who had occupied the Indo-Chinese coastline went up the Mékong and came, in their turn, to mix with the races already in the land. They do not seem, however, to have gone beyond Savannakhèt, for the northernmost Cham monument of which we know is that of Hueun-Hin (the stone house) which is to be found somewhat north of the mouth of the Sé-Bang-Hien.

"It is possible that the mixture of aborigines, Tibetans, Touranians and Malays produced the race of Khas with its many varieties which are slightly different depending on the dominant blood type.

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"When the Annamites, who were of Chinese origin, succeeded, although not without difficulty, in destroying the Cham empire, they drove the conquered people back into the Mékong basin where a kingdom grew up which had Bassac as its capital and was known by the name of Champa-Sak by the Laotians. It was then that the Thais, driving the Khas and the Chams whom they could not absorb or who resisted them back towards the mountains, took possession of all the plains and all the valleys. From this last mixture, on top of so many others, there has resulted quite a large number of varieties which have a common origin and have had a parallel development and life, but which have not mixed with neighboring varieties. The generic name of Thais which is given to this collection of men implies a certain number of types which, if not different, are at least dissimilar in certain respects. Finally, there were two rather inconsiderable infusions of Aryan blood. The first occurred in the fifth century A.D. and went northward from Cambodia as far as Luang-Prabang. The second was in the seventh century, when the sacred books were brought from India through Burma and the north Mékong valley. A curious fact worthy of note is that the Chinese pilgrims Fa-Hiang and Huyen-Tchang, returning from the Indies where they had gone to study the Buddhist religion, wrote their well known works in China at about the same time. The influence of the Aryans, who were the bearers of the sacred books of Buddhist doctrine and also of many Brahminic superstitions, manifested itself especially in a physical way among the Thais of the northwest and less noticeably among the Thais on the very banks of the Mékong.

"Although the Aryans scarcely transformed or modified a small segment of the Thais from the physical point of view, without having any influence of this type on the rest, it may nevertheless easily be asserted that the moral influence which they exerted was felt by all the Thais and that all of them had their moral and intellectual life [123] modified by the Aryans to an appreciable degree. Only the Khas escaped this influence."

Finally, in conclusion, this author adds:

"The population of Laos can be naturally divided into three broad categories:

"1. The Thais, who include all the people speaking the Thai language with slight differences in accent and a few differences in vocabulary. The chief among them are:

"The Laotians, the Phou-Thais, the white, black and red Thais,

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the Thais-Neua, the Pou-Euns, the Lus and the Youns;

"2. The Khas, and the Khas who are evolving towards types of the first category;

"3. The inhabitants who come from neighboring countries: China, Yunnan, Annam, Cambodia, Siam, Burma."

We shall now give Dr. Lefèvre's version (1):

(1) Dr. Lefèvre, Un voyage au Laos, 1898.

"1. The first inhabitants of the peninsula or true aborigines were the Khas, a nearly savage fold without monuments and, so to speak, without any form of writing, who were driven back into the mountains by the successive invaders of their territory.

"2. The Malays or Chams were the first colonists to come to Indo-China. Little by little they succeeded in forming several principalities, the most important of which was the kingdom of Champa or Tiampa, which included the whole coast from Tourane to Baria.

"3. After the Malay infiltration came the arrival of the Brahmins, who had been driven out of Benares with their leader Pra-Thong. They struggled with the Malays and almost absorbed them in the end. The Brahmins were the first ancestors of the Cambodians.

"4. Under Açoka, emperor of Burma, took place the arrival of the Kmers who came from Pégou and Hansavadi and settled in Cambodia, thereby overshadowing the Brahmin caste.

"5. Tartars came down from the north and leveled all. They were followed by the Thais who came from Mongolia or Setchuen and who spread to Siam, Laos, Burma, Kouang-Si, Kouang-Toung, the north of Tonkin and the island of Ha'nan.

"6. To the east, on the coast, are the Annamites, who came from Kouei-Tcheou and occupy all the territory included between the Annamitic Chain and the sea."

Dr. Lefèvre's conclusions are worthy of note, for they were based on documents which are reputed to be authentic. We [134] should, however, add one particular relating to the prehistoric period, that is to say to the epoch of polished stone and the bronze age. At that time there were human beings in the Mékong basin who had the same way of life, the same kind of tools and the same methods of work as our own ancestors in ancient Gaul. In fact, the interesting

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172 collections which have been assembled in Luang-Prabang by M. Massie (1) and by Prince Henri d'Orléans contain tools and weapons

(1) The Massie collection (Pavie mission) is in the museum of Saint-Germain.

of polished stone and bronze which attest the antiquity of the Khas or Laotian aborigines.

174 The autochthonous races, the first occupants of the soil of Indo-
563 China, the ancestors of the folk whom we now call Khas, possessed means of action which were doubtless identical to those of the neighboring peoples (2). But their evolution towards the grouping of

(2) See Appendix, No. XVII.

families into tribes and of tribes into clans was a great deal slower. Their tools and weapons remained at a fixed stage of development, and thus they were subjected to contact with and then the influence and yoke of more intelligent neighbors who were better armed and had a broader and less individualistic social organization.

Who can say, in the absence of any kind of historical monument relating to this remote epoch, and especially after the terrible Tartar invasion, how many crossings, metamorphoses and fundamental transformations these first inhabitants of Laos underwent? Always driven back, fleeing and scattered, they formed what might be called ethnic stratifications which were broken from place to place by numerous faults but the traces of which are clearly visible at the various levels of the mountain slopes and on the plateaus where Kha villages were successively established.

Disseminated, with no bond to unite them, dispersed so as to offer less resistance, speaking different dialects, and deprived of common interests, it may be truly said that the various Kha tribes and clans appear to us in a degenerate light.

000 It would, however, be wrong to suppose that this state of affairs is immutable and incurable. The physical and moral regeneration [135] of these races must not be thought of as a utopian dream, but is essential both as an instrument of domination and as a stimulus to our other subjects in Laos who are descended from the conquering races.

It will be greatly to our interest, and we may even say that it

is [Illustration here] a duty for us, to restore the Khas to the normal 000
status to which their imposing number in the total population as well as the special qualities which they possess give them a right.

Once emancipated from their strict servitude and from the rapacity of the Laotian and Thai mandarins, and once commanded by leaders who have been chosen by them and from members of their own race, the Khas will rise rapidly and, as [136] time passes, will certainly give a most effective impetus to the development of our possession's riches.

Moreover, they have not lost the tradition of their original status. 563
They are conscious of their own antiquity and say, not without scorn, that the peoples who are newcomers to Indo-China are only their 173
younger brothers. Their race has fallen back on its own resources, has divided into small groups, has opposed a force of almost inertia to the invader and the conqueror and has thus kept itself free for many long centuries from mixtures with other peoples. Today there are still many descendants of these first possessors of the land and one may find in them, in a latent state, the energy and courage so conspicuously absent in the conquering races which drove them back to the mountains and reduced them to a kind of slavery or ostracism from which the latter greatly profited.

Nor can it be denied that the Khas are capable of moral and 563
material improvement. There are many, for example, who have 795
adopted Buddhism (1), and still others Catholicism (2). These Khas 797

(1) Khouène Khas and Khmou Khas.

(2) Bahnar Khas, Rognaos, etc.

have yielded up to persuasion and gentle treatment what they refused for many centuries to constraint and force. The future is therefore encouraging.

What is more, the question of emancipating the Khas has left 563
the domain of theory and pure speculation. In 1894 M. Macey, one 177
of our political agents, emancipated the Khas in the territories of Xieng-Khong, Muong-Mugne, Poukha, etc. The terrain was well chosen for the experiment, since this daring attempt was applied precisely to the Khouène, Khmou and Lemet Kha groups whose moral regeneration had already begun through the practice of Buddhism.

177 Notice should also be taken of the transformation which has been
563 going on for half a century or so, in the fusion of Khas with Lus,
Laos and Thais. From these fusions have emerged the mixed-blood
144 races which are known as Phou-Thèngs, Phou-Thîongs, Souès,
Phongs, Phou-Oks, Laos-Nîos, etc. [137] [Illustration] [138]
[Blank page]

[139] Later on in 1898 and 1899 the 1894 experiment was tried once more, thanks to the intelligent initiative taken by the Superior Commandant in Upper Laos. His Majesty the king of Luang-Prabang proclaimed the emancipation of the Khas in his kingdom on both banks of the Mékong and even of those who, while natives of Luang-Prabang, are employed in Siam in the lumber camps of the upper Ménam valley.

In résumé, the Khas of French Laos are anything but a negligible quantity, but rather constitute a force and a reserve of energy from which we may draw great profit.

3. LANGUAGES

197 It is impossible here to examine in detail the many Kha idioms
194 and dialects, which only a long and attentive special study could succeed in coordinating, in grouping by similarities and in identifying with other languages, idioms and dialects which contributed to their formation.

The Kha dialects have harsh consonant sounds, among which the R and K are particularly noticeable, in contrast to what is the case in the other forms of the Thai language spoken in Laos where R, except in Siamese, is replaced by L or H.

Insofar as it is possible to judge, the primitive languages must have been corrupted when the land was invaded by foreigners. From that time on they dissolved, changed and became subdivided into idioms, and then into varied dialects. Besides the regional and racial
211 idioms and the various local dialects the Khas, who do not (except for the Khouènes) have any form of writing, use various means to translate their thoughts, and symbolic objects such as strips of wood in which they make notches in accordance with a conventional system.

This method may be compared to that of a great many illiterate persons, who sometimes succeed in keeping quite complicated accounts by this means.

If one were to entrust a letter to a Kha courier, for example, one [140] would give him the following symbolic objects grouped together:

291 or less degree lightens its rather dark color. The skirt is a true cylinder, with the same diameter all along its length. A woman raises the skirt in a mass like a crown above her head, lets it slide down along her body and fastens it to her waist, without any hooks or fasteners, by tucking it in along her stomach, which is largely left bare. A brightly colored sash of cotton or silk is thrown over one shoulder, sometimes covering the breasts, to complete the costume.

"During the cold season, where there is a winter, a few women cover their trunks with a short jacket. This garment finds favor mainly outside the larger centers.

302 "A certain number of women wear their hair cut in Bressant style, in accordance with the style imported by the Siamese. The greater number wear their long hair rolled into a coil on the top or side of the head. Women's coiffures vary, moreover, depending on the region and on whether they are married or single.

292 "For great ceremonies, wealthy women wear skirts made of cloth spangled with gold or silver, and sashes of the same type.

"In Luang-Prabang they add a silk or velvet jacket decorated with embroidery on the neck, front and cuffs. Merchants can be found in this city who rent out costumes of this type, as well as gold jewelry, for great ceremonies to women who do not have any." (Le Laos français.)

301 Jewelry. Jewels find great favor among the [179] Laotians and
556 are used to complete and enrich their costume. They are not only ornaments, but also the most widespread method for realizing and preserving the liquid part of their fortune. In fact, the inhabitants transform the greater part of [Illustration here] their savings and profits into jewelry, and since they wear them on their body they are spared the use of strongboxes.

[583] The women and children are the ones who wear jewels most. They go into the trousseau of the young bride, and parents give them to their children as the latter grow up, thus putting together a sort of dowry for the time when they reach the age of marriage.

301 [180] Gold and silver are used in making jewelry, and precious
306 stones such as rubies, sapphires and various genuine or imitation gems are sometimes added as ornaments.

Gold is not used in all parts of Laos, but is mainly limited to the large centers located near regularly worked gold-bearing deposits.

[563] Doubtless because of the application of ancient sumptuary laws, silver is the only metal used by certain races--even by the Khas,

who work gold mines--and by the inhabitants of several regions, whose state of fortune would nevertheless enable them to use a more precious metal. 301 306 [563]

Jewelry and examples of the goldsmith's art are found in different forms and types which vary greatly with the region and race, as will be seen by the nomenclature given in Chapter IX.

Food. The Laotian scorns the pleasures of the table, and is generally a moderate eater and drinker. Steam-cooked glutinous rice forms the basis of his food supply. To this he adds salt, peppers, various other spices, fresh or preserved fish, etc. Besides these, but less frequently, his day-to-day diet may be varied with poultry, eggs, buffalo meat, beef and pork, as well as venison. To be sure, it is mainly on the occasion of public or private festivals, which are fairly numerous in the course of the year, that the Laotian improves on his usual rather frugal fare in this way. 262

The customary beverage is water which may be taken directly from the rivers or first be hastily decanted into jars or water-coolers of porous earthenware. In general, Laotians prefer water taken directly from the river to that which has been filtered. Finally, the people of Laos consume rice brandy which is obtained by distillation, and a kind of beer made by cold fermentation of rice mixed with paddy husks. 271 273

The use of these drinks, aside from rare exceptions, is reserved for holidays. [527]

Physical appearance, character, occupations. The Laotian's character is, in general, mild, friendly and happy. His physiognomy is [181] open and smiling. Not quarrelsome by nature, he even shrinks from coming to blows in extreme cases and prefers to end a dispute with an outburst of laughter rather than with blows. 152

Since, all in all, it has few needs and inhabits a land with luxuriant vegetation which is abundantly favored with products to be had for the scavenging, this happy people can easily satisfy its needs and be content with its fate. [Illustration alongside text here.]

It is assuredly lazy, but out of indifference much rather than out of any deliberate intent. It cannot grasp the advantage or utility of a regular and prolonged effort beyond what is strictly necessary to provide it with a living and a few distractions to which, in reality, its own joyous disposition makes the greatest contribution. 461

To the men are reserved the chief tasks, which have a more virile and noble character than those which are the women's lot. 462 241

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[525]
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Tribal Tai

s the long pirogue, and the jockeys are the oarsmen. Nor will it be n vain to remark that, as in our races, heavy wagers are often laid by the owners and the lovers of this kind of sport.

Thais or Phou-Thais. The Thais or Phou-Thais are divided into four distinct groups. These are:

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1. The Khao-Thais (white);
2. The Dam-Thais (black);
3. The Deng-Thais (red);
4. The Neua-Thais (northern).

The Khao-Thais are the result of marriages between Chinese men and Dam-Thai women, or vice versa, although the former case is the most frequent. They do not form large agglomerations, but only isolated family groups in the midst of the surrounding population. They are found only in the northern part of the Sib-Song-Chau-Thais, a territory which is dependent on Laos from the ethnographic point of view but administratively attached to Tonkin.

The following is what is known of their origin: [229] [Illustration] [230] [Blank page] [231]

"Around 1600 a rebel Chinese leader assembled a few partisans, set sail from Canton and landed at Haiphong. From there he went on to Bac-Ninh, continually increasing the number of his men. At Bac-Ninh the rebel leader received an envoy from the king of Annam, who asked him to help put down the Thais and the Muongs of the Black River. The Chinese leader accepted, and after leaving Bac-Ninh he went to Lao-Kay, from which point he soon entered the province of the Sib-Sing-Chau-Thais. After defeating the Thais and the Muongs he was given this province out of gratitude for his help. His troops, worn out by the campaign, settled in the country and lost no time in marrying Thai women. It was from such unions that the white Thais were born" (1).

(1) E. Picanon, op. cit. [Le Laos français, Paris, 1901.]

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Dam-Thais and Deng-Thais. These two varieties have a common origin and belong to the same family (2). The different names which

(2) Thais are found in nearly all of Laos, where they are scattered among the Laotian population. They are particularly numerous in the Hua-Pahn, where they are in the majority in certain muongs.

619 they bear come, as in the case of the Khao-Thais, from peculiarities
[291] of costume. In fact, whereas the Dam-Thais, both men and women,
only wear clothing which is dark blue and almost black, with no
• 563 colored ornamentation, the Deng-Thais, although they wear the
same kind of clothing, always add a few ornaments such as embroidery,
galloons or red turbans.

Physical appearance. Costume. The Thais have strongly marked
142 features and stern faces. Their complexion is clear and rather swarthy,
461 and they are quite tall. They are more hardy and above all more
industrious than the Laotians.

Like the Annamites, the men let their hair grow. They bind it
302 up in a coil on the top of the head and cover it with a vast turban,
291 the ends of which fall onto their shoulders on either side of the face.
Men's clothing consists of a broad pair of trousers with a very low
seat and a straight tunic buttoned along the side which comes down
to the knees. A sort of sash made of the same kind of cloth hugs the
[286] waist over the tunic, as a belt would do. The material used by the
Thais for clothing are made of cotton which is generally grown locally
and which the [232] women spin, weave and dye themselves. Their
garments, made with very coarse, irregular thread, have a rough ap-
pearance but are very solid.

The women's figures are thick-set but not fleshy. Their faces,
142 which are more rounded than elongated, are pleasant and their eyes
are beautiful. But childbearing and the work of the fields soon destroy
their gracefulness, and after the age of twenty-five their figures thicken,
their wrists and ankles become heavy and their faces begin to harden
and wrinkle. [Illustration alongside text here]

[286] The Thai woman wears a skirt which is quite similar to the Laotian
skirt, but made of coarser cloth and dyed the same color as the men's
291 clothing. Over this she wears a very short jacket made of the same
cloth which is buttoned down the front and sometimes embellished
563 with chased silver work. The height of elegance is for the jacket to
be cut in such a way that when the woman moves in a certain way it
lets a little skin be seen above the skirt waist. Outside the home and for
ceremonies the women put on a sort of dressing gown which covers their
other clothing and comes down to the ankle. Its sleeves are very close-
fitting, and the garment buttons straight down the front to a point below
the waist. A strip of dark violet cloth, for the Dam-Thais, and red for

291 the Deng-Thais, is applied to the edges of the gown. It is further
563 ornamented [233] on the outside edge opposite the buttonholes with colored silk embroidery which does not go down below the waist.

This garment is also folded in half lengthwise and worn rolled around the body with the sleeves left hanging.

302 The women wear their hair parted down the middle in front
301 and rolled into a sort of long tassel behind which is contained within the folds of a little turban. The latter is wound above the forehead and the free end inserted under the first turn, on the nape of the neck. This headdress is quite similar to that of the Annamite women in Tonkin.

In certain regions of Laos, Thai women wind their hair into a sort of coil which girls wear loosely down their neck and betrothed or married women wear on top of the head. Thai jewelry is made of heavy silver and is of the same type as Laotian jewelry. The men wear bracelets on their wrists.

262 Food. The Thai diet is like that of the Laotians, but they prefer
264 non-glutinous white rice and use chopsticks like the Chinese and Annamites.

The use of betel is quite widespread among the Thais, but in
276 contrast to the Laotians they keep their teeth white. The Thais smoke the oily, opiated tobacco of Tonkin and China in bamboo waterpipes whose tiny bowls only contain a small pinch of tobacco. They also smoke a local variety of tobacco, either in cigarettes or in pipes with a highly worked clay bowl into which a long stem ending in a glass or jade mouthpiece is inserted.

156 Character. Although serious and reflective, the Thais have a vivacious and friendly character. They are somewhat cold in appearance but are sound friends and highly affable when one gets to know them better.

[701] Gentler and more timid than the Laotians, they have no taste for the art of war and it is difficult to get them to stay in the native militia.

433 They are very self-seeking and much more miserly than the Lao-
438 tians. [234] It should be noted, moreover, that since they produce everything themselves and are a people of farmers and livestock
156 breeders, they do not have, by virtue of their ever sedentary occupations, the opportunities which these latter have to enjoy fairly high profits resulting from commercial transactions, nor the special habits which contact with different races gives.

181 The Thais love pleasure and celebrations. Guaranteed their daily
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149: Reinach--179 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai

Men's and women's clothing varies little in [244] form from that of the Thais. Under their jacket, however, the women wear a breast-cloth attached to the neck and waist by cords, like the Annamite and Tonkinese women. 291

The Lus. Two centuries or so ago the Lus, who also belong to the Thai race, used to live in the "Shan states" between the Salouen and the Nam-Hon, where they were surrounded by a drifting population composed of Burmese, Kunes, Ngieous, etc. [Illustration alongside text here.] 619 175

Following emigrations, they came to Laos and formed two distinct agglomerations.

Some Lu families have settled in the course of this century on the territory of Luang-Prabang. Today these Lus form villages composed exclusively of people of their race, but live on good terms with the Laotians, whose language and customs they have adopted. [563]

In the old Lu kingdom of Muong-Sing, on the other hand, this people has retained its habits, that is to say its character and temperament are like those of the Burmese. 101

There the Lu is boastful, full of arrogance, a braggart and insolent, but a little firmness is enough to humble his pride. [105]

Lus have a clear complexion, delicate features, keen eyes and a swinging stride. The men are generally tattooed from the calf of the leg to above the navel, and they also have tattoos on their chest, [245] neck, shoulders and arms which are generally red and in the shape of squares with rounded corners. They have long hair rolled in a coil on top or slightly to one side of the head. This coil is wrapped in an enormous turban which they wear tilted over one ear. Many of them have a moustache. This they train upwards, a trait which gives them a conquering air, and to keep it up they smear it with wax. [Illustration alongside text here] 142 304 302

The men's costume consists of a pair of full trousers and a short jacket buttoned along the side. It is made of cotton and is dark blue, almost black, in color. The bottoms of the trousers, the edges of the jacket, the cuffs of the sleeves and the armholes are ornamented with three galloons (blue, white and red) which are quite narrow. Their holiday clothes are often made of silk in varied colors. 291

The women wind their hair into a heavy coil on top of the head, and on the side of the coil they place a broad circular plaque of chased silver. They wear skirts like the Laotian women, but the stripes are very broad, run crosswise and are in bright colors. They [302] [301]

149: Reinach--183 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Kha

"The most varied types are to be found among the Khas. Some are just like the American 'Redskins,' others have a heavier and more bestial appearance, and still others are small and puny. Certain of them are veritable savages who have never heard of clothing and live in shapeless huts, taking to the trees or fleeing into the forest at the slightest alarm, with monkey-like habits and the instincts of wild animals. 142 291

"Others, on the other hand, wear clothing quite like that of the Lus, build proper houses and enjoy a comparative degree of civilization. But they all carry a bag of dark blue cloth which never leaves them.

"It is a long way between the primitives which some of them are and the half-civilized beings which the better policed among them are. Thus the greater part of these poor folk have long been in servitude, especially in the northern and central part, and have become the humble servants of more highly refined races which exploit them. 563

"In the south, however, some tribes of particular origin have been able to resist all outer authority and are still free and independent today." [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

The Khas of northern Laos. All the Khas of northern Laos have been brought under control, and even emancipated, and live grouped in villages or hamlets which are distributed over the mountainsides, generally near some watercourse. 361

Houses. Kha houses, which are built on piles and in the same style as those of the Laotians although in less careful fashion, are set down without any care for symmetry or alignment. They are generally much smaller and built for a single family. The houses are extremely dirty. 242

The Khas have very little in the way of large livestock, and so the under part of the houses shelter only pigs and poultry. 231

A few Kha tribes, such as the Khouenes (white and black), Khmous and Lemets, which are the most civilized have quite fine villages with well built and carefully aligned houses. A pagoda will sometimes be found in these. 361

Costume. Khas of both sexes wear their hair long and wound in a coil on the nape of the neck or top of the head. The [258] Lemets comb part of their hair down over their forehead and cut it off straight at the eyebrow level. 291

equipment.

411 [264] "It should be noted that these folk do not have rifles. Their crossbows are quite large, and shoot pointed barbed arrows, which are poisoned in time of war, over great distances.

"The spears are of average length. The shafts are made of very beautiful barnboo, and the iron points are of varied shapes.

"The swords have long hilts ornamented with tin, and the blades are slightly curved.

"Among the Djarais bucklers are made of wood and shielded with tin. Among the Kasengs they are made of buffalo hide, and among the Cedangs of buckskin with the fleece left on.

"Among the Cedangs the bucklers take the shape of a shield, while their shape varies among the others." (Le Laos français.)

[Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos). "Notice sur le Laos français, " in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

●563 619 Khas of mixed blood. In the section on races we have seen what mixtures were produced from crossings between Khas and other members of the great Thai family. Their distribution is as follows:

1. The Phou-Phays and Phou-Thengs are found scattered everywhere throughout northern Laos;

2. Sos and Seks are found in Luang-Prabeng, Tran-Ninh and Cammon;

3. The Soues inhabit the high valleys of the Se-Bang-Hien and the Sedone and the northern slopes of the plateau of the Bolovens.

The evolution of all these mixed blood varieties is not yet complete, and many have partly retained their original dialects. Certain tribes, however, have completely adopted the mores and languages of the dominant races to which they owe their existence, and these have pagodas, bonzes, etc.

RACES OF MONGOL ORIGIN

619 563 We know that individuals of Mongol origin inhabit northern Laos and are grouped in three principal varieties known as Hos, Meos and Yaos.

The Hos. The Hos are inhabitants of Yunnan who came to Laos either with the robber bands (1875-1888) or with caravans. [265] [Illustration] [266] [Blank page] [267]

They settled in Laos, abandoning their guns and packs to become farmers, hog breeders, tea planters, ect.

Hill Tribes

Almost all are of low birth and are crude and illiterate. They have married Thai or Kha women and thereby founded a stock of halfbreeds. This race is destined to merge with the mass of the Laotians or Thai population and through successive crossings lose all distinctive characteristics. 619 563

The Meos. The Meos are also Yunnanese who have retained a degree of independence and have not been marked with the Chinese imprint like the Hos or adopted baggy clothes and the custom of wearing their hair only in a braid.

They are distributed in groups of a few families each of which live on the peaks of the mountains in northern Laos and the Sib-Song Chau-Thais. They can be divided into three great families--the blacks, the whites and the reds--which owe their names to the color of certain parts of the women's costume. Thus among the black and red Meos skirts or jackets are light blue in color, but the latter have a wide collar ornamented with black or red embroidery. Finally, a small turban with black and white checks or of red material, depending on the case, completes their garb. Among the white Meos, the women wear a skirt and jacket of unbleached cloth, with a white and blue embroidered collar. [361] 391

The men's clothing is light blue in all cases. It is composed of a broad pair of trousers which come down somewhat below the calf, where the legs are drawn tight, and of a short, tight-sleeved jacket which buttons down one side.

A turban winds around the head and covers their long hair, which may be rolled or braided. 301

The women's hair is parted and wound on the upper part of the nape of the neck in a coil. (1)

(1) See Appendix XIX.

The Meos practice ancestor worship primarily, like many Asian peoples. They have no pagodas or bonzes, but elders perform the office of priests and also administer justice. 769

[268] The Meos bury their dead, and make animal sacrifices on the occasion of births, marriages and deaths so as to gain the favor of the "Phis" or multiple and varied genii in whose existence and influence they believe.

Marriage is as simple as among the other peoples of Laos. [581]

Divorce may occur either through mutual consent or in the case of adultery. [586]

314 Indeed scavenging, that is to say the gathering of forest products, hunting and fishing, is all that is needed besides rice and maize to supply the day to day needs of the native and even provide him with a comparatively important basis for trade.

Forest Products

1. Benzoin (Khab-Niane).

314 824 Benzoin is extracted from the tree called Styrax benzoin, by means of incisions made on the trunk. The benzoin trees (Kok-Khab-Niane) are localized in Upper Tran-Ninh, the south of the Hua-Pahn and the north of the province of Luang-Prabang. They are not cultivated in [563] any way. The resin or gum is harvested at certain times of the year, generally by the Khas, at the foot of the trees and along the trunk, where it coagulates in masses or tears.

Benzoin is collected in its natural state, that is to say in tears of various sizes and in breakages. In the production centers it is separated into three grades: large and medium tears, medium and small tears, and small pieces and breakages. In the transit markets these three grades are sorted and screened and once more divided into six kinds or types, which are: large tears, medium tears, small tears, mixed large, mixed medium, and finally tiny fragments and dust.

[431] A few years ago a chemical process was [329] discovered, it would seem, for extracting certain of the aromatic alkaloids contained in benzoin from coal, and the market value of this product suddenly dropped by more than sixty percent. At the present time, depending [435] on the grade, the market price in Luang-Prabang is from 90 to 115 francs per hundred kilograms (1), in Nong-Khay from 100 to 135

(1) We have deemed it preferable to give the price in francs and per hundred kilograms, since the reader may not be familiar with Laotian weights and currency.

788 francs, and in Korat from 120 to 160 francs.

314 439 Part of the benzoin production is consumed locally in the manufacture of sticks of incense for use in worship. All the rest is exported to Bangkok and from there to Europe. A very small proportion is sent to Tonkin by way of the Black River. Upon its arrival in Bangkok, benzoin from Laos is worth twice as much as in Luang-Prabang.

824 314 2. Crimson lake or stick-lac (Khang-Deng).

This gum is produced by an insect of the "cochineal" type, the

149: Reinach--262 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Rice is grown in two different ways in Laos: in inundated ricefields on plains or hills, and in rais or [357] temporary mountain clearings. Only one crop is harvested per year, from November to January, since the Laotians do not practice artificial irrigation and count only on the water supplied by rain. 243 [312]

Maize is always grown in rais or on the edge of terraced hillside ricefields. In southern Laos only the Khas have any in their fields. The Laotians produce maize only in their gardens, as a vegetable. [563]

Glutinous or aquatic rice grows well only on low, hot, swampy land where the soil is heavy. Dry rice, on the other hand, thrives only on ordinary soil which is moist and slightly sandy, and on heights up to an altitude of 1,800 meters where it can endure temperatures which are relatively low for tropical regions (5° and even lower).

Plains ricefields. The land in plains ricefields generally consists of soil containing a high percentage of vegetable matter. It is composed of alluvia worked by earthworms and containing organic vegetable matter in decomposition. The clayish and sandy soil is deep enough to permit growth and nourishment of the plant roots. It generally rests either on rock, or on a compact sediment or on an alluvial strata which has a higher clay content and has not been penetrated by worms. This bottom layer prevents the ground water which is indispensable to the growth of the grain from escaping.

Terraced ricefields. In the ricefields which are terraced or arranged in steps, and which are situated on hillsides or the lower slopes of the mountains which enclose high valleys, the layer of vegetable matter is fairly thin. This is due to the fact that rocky particles removed from the peaks by running water have been deposited on natural terraces where they form a kind of alluvial cone. Man's handiwork has extended and leveled them, and arranged them in such a way that the alluvia will not be carried lower. Dikes or levees of earth and stones limit the successive terraces which cover the slopes, like the steps of a gigantic stairway. They hold back the vegetable soil, and at the same time their inner faces [358] constitute the walls of irrigation canals which circulate from one step to another from the top of the hills to the bottom, diverting into the furrows, through slits which may be opened at will, the waters of a brook or torrent which has been captured at a higher level. 243 312

Rais. Rais take their name from a Siamese unit of area measurement which is applied to ricefields and which represents a square forty meters on a side, or 1,600 square meters. They are [804] 243

249 The amount of paper produced is hardly significant, and is limited to
289 local needs.

245 TEA. Tea is the most important crop of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na
311 and the Burmo-Shan States on both banks of the Mekong. The regions of production are included between 21° 30' and 22° 30' N. latitude and between 97° 30' and 99° 40' E. longitude.

175 The greater part of these regions, that is to say those situated on
648 the left bank of the Mekong, belonged to us by the terms of the 1887 Franco-Chinese treaty of Tien-Tsin. But because of our slowness to occupy these territories England inherited the rights of Upper Burma and ceded them to China, and finally only the two Muong-Hou remained in our possession.

563 Unfortunately, the small tea-growing region left to us is not only the least productive, but also the one in which tea-growing has degenerated and is no longer practiced except by the Khas.

[377] Yet the climate of the Muong-Hou is similar to that of Man-La, which is located thirty kilometers to the west and whose tea has the same reputation as those of I-Hou, I-Bang, Muong-Hing, Muong-Pang and Muong-Yang, all of which are known as "S'semao and Pou-Eurl Teas." Furthermore, the altitude and configuration of the soil, the nature of the terrain and the varieties of tea plants are all similar in our territory of Muong-Hou and in that of Man-La. But as a consequence of various circumstances and especially of a long interruption in cultivation between 1884 and 1893, most of the tea plants have not been pruned. They have reached a height of more than six meters and the tea which they produce is almost valueless (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVI.

The average production of the whole tea-growing region has been estimated at from 600 to 660 tons. This tea is exported to China, to Burma, to Laos, to Tonkin and to Siam. In 1891 and 1892 France imported a trial shipment of 6,000 kilograms, but the transaction was not repeated because of a rise in transport costs and customs duties which did not leave a large enough profit for the importer.

435 In the regions of production prices vary, depending on quality, between 75 and 150 francs per hundred kilograms.

The teas which come from this region meet with little approval in Europe, because they lack the various aromas which the Chinese

[563] 231 The breed of horses in Laos is therefore continuing to degenerate. Certain Kha tribes (Djarais and Rades), however, still possess very fine specimens, but these Khas will not sell their horses and mares except with a great deal of urging and at a very high price. They never come and offer their horses to buyers, and only by chance can the latter discover any by traveling through their villages. It is a certain fact that most of the fine horses of Phu-Yen and Binh-Dinh come from the region of the Rades (1).

[654] (1) The establishment of a depot of stud-horses in Darlac, in the midst of these Kha tribes, may soon give excellent results from the point of view of production and breeding.

In southern Laos, no epizootic disease has yet been noted among horses. The same is not the case in northern Laos, where it causes great ravages every year in the province of Vien-Poukha. The progress of this epidemic has been described in the following manner by M. Garanger, former Government Commissioner at Vien-Poukha:

"Well before any exterior symptoms of the disease appear, the horse manifests a bad disposition, sulks over its food, carries its head low and is anxious to lie down. Its hair becomes dull.

"Then under the abdomen a swelling appears which extends from the breast to the testicles (to the vulva in mares). It rapidly increases in volume and grows as thick as a man's hand. The scrotum and penis (the vulva in mares) [400] take on an abnormal growth. Exploration by hand reveals considerable obstruction in the hollow space within the lower jaw, yet there is no discharge.

"The animal then has difficulty in walking, then the hindquarters act as though paralyzed. It falls down in the stable and remains down until death, which is not far off.

"The period of algidity varies in length. Old horses do not last more than seven or eight days after the swelling forms, while young animals may not die until around the twentieth day.

"The epidemic always strikes during the rainy season and seems especially active in July and August.

"If the carcass is opened after death it is found that the whole interior (viscera) is covered with thousands of little black dots the size of a pinhead. This disease seems to be extremely contagious. In vain did I practice isolation and burn three contaminated stables in succession. Yet it also breaks out spontaneously, since it struck at the same time in Vien-Poukha, in Xieng-Khong and in the brush,

231 178 Attopeu; slopes of the plateau of the Bolovens; plains of the Se-Kampho and of the Se-Pien (2); plains of the upper Sebang-Khan and of the

(2) I have never crossed these great and beautiful plains which stretch as far as the eye can see between these two rivers which have water all year long, intersected here and there by wooded hills whose slopes provide the herds with a refuge and with a guaranteed food supply during the inundation of the lowlands--an inundation lasting three or four months--without regretting that no European colonist has ever thought of taking advantage of this situation. (Report of the Superior Commandant of Lower Laos, April 1897.)

Ia-Drang.

231 435 The sale prices for buffalo and oxen vary from one point to another and are also subject to fluctuations due to the age, stature, abundance or scarcity of the stock, the law of supply and demand, etc.

In 1899 livestock exports from Lower Laos only were 2,184 oxen valued at 54,600 francs, 362 cows valued at 5,430 francs and 3,144 buffalo valued at 235,800 francs, or a total of 6,690 head with a value of 295,830 francs.

In Lower Laos buffalo sold for from 50 to 112 francs in 1899, and oxen for from 20 to 30 francs. In Upper Laos the prices for [406] buffalo varied from 60 to 110 francs. Oxen may cost more or less there, depending on whether they are trained as draft and pack animals or fattened for export. In the first case they bring from 40 to 70 francs and in the second from 10 to 15 francs.

231 262 Pigs. Pigs are used mainly for food by the natives, who consume a great many. The meat of this animal enjoys great favor among the population, and it is pork which, prepared either alone or with fish, enters most often into the composition of meals. [Illustration here]

[563] The Lus, the Meos, the Chinese and the Khas are past masters at raising pigs, and their stock might figure successfully in our regional competitions. They fatten them in closed compartments, after first castrating them.

231 The most common variety is the one known as "Cochinchinese or Tonkinese pig." It is gray with white spots and sometimes almost black, and bears on its back a mane of long, stiff bristles similar to those of the wild boar. Even when domesticated these pigs have

439 563 Goods are imported in the northern part of the land by the Hos, the Burmese and the Ngieous, in the form of merchandise from Yunnan, Tibet, China, India and even Europe. They include furs, iron and copper pots, tin, cotton and silk clothing, small wares, tea, articles for opium smokers, horses, silk, cotton and light wool goods, lacquered boxes, swords, machetes, rifles, etc.

In the middle region and the south, Chinese, Cambodians, Siamese, Annamites and Europeans import the following articles: salt, cloth goods, thread, hats, knit wear, blankets, umbrellas, petroleum, matches (1), worship articles, dyes, bars of iron, porcelain bowls,

(1) Of Japanese manufacture imported through Bangkok and Moulmein, and of Annamite or Tonkinese manufacture imported through Saigon and Vinh.

perfumes, clocks and watches, glassware, paper goods, hardware, copper goods, nails, locks, drugs, a few Chinese staples, etc.

Since Laos has no direct access to the sea, it has no maritime outlets. It gives up its export products to middlemen established in Siam, Yunnan, Annam, Cambodia or Cochinchina, and these middlemen re-export Laotian products to various overseas markets or resell them on the spot for local consumption.

3. PRESENT-DAY COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS, COMMERCIAL PROCEDURES.

439 441 563 Just about everyone engages in trade in Laos, in highly variable proportions, to be sure, and each according to his resources. There are, however, real merchants, [422] businessmen and traders who are the middlemen between the native producers and the exporters in neighboring countries or on the coast. The greater number of these, and also the most active ones, are the Chinese, then come the Hos and the Burmese. They may act either on their own account, or in behalf of a small local syndicate, or again as representatives of Chinese or European houses established in the ports.

The Laotians are more likely to operate individually or in family groups financed by nobles, officials of high rank or wealthy men who use this means of putting to work the capital which business has already brought them.

567 as early as March of 1896, in a report which we believe it will be of
426 value to reproduce in part, as well as a code of rules as ingenious as they were just governing slavery for debt (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVIII.

567 Finally, there is a kind of serfdom in Laos which is applied to
563 certain Kha tribes. Thus in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang, subsequent to revolts, entire tribes of Khas were reduced to a state of serfdom and placed under the patronage of the king, of princes, or of the principal members of the nobility. In 1894 our administration undertook to liberate these Khas, who are completely free today. In southern Laos most of these latter are still the clients of a few nobles or Laotian officials, but the guardianship is a gentle one which they can abandon and resume at will.

2. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

178 Under our control, as has been noted above, the political
642 organization of Laos has remained what it was before 1893. We have respected the customs and local traditions, and we govern through the native administration in which all the machinery has been retained.

643 [490] The following is a nearly complete list of all the officials in a large Muong such as the kingdom of Luang-Prabang or of Bassac (1)

(1) The kingdom of Luang-Prabang is situated on both banks of the Mekong, but the king resides on the left bank at Luang-Prabang and is consequently dependent on the French authorities. The kingdom of Bassac is today wholly on the right bank, and the king of Bassac falls under Siamese domination. The title of king is sometimes given also to the "Tiao-Fa" or head of the province of Muong-Sing. The head of a muong in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na may be a "Tso-boua," a "Phya-Hua" or a "Sen-Houi-Fa," depending on his importance.

At the head are the Kings, two in number:

Somdet-Phra-Tiao or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Louang, first king, great master of existences.

Tiao-Maha-Oupahat or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Vang-Na, second king,
644 great master responsible for conservation of property. [Illustration here]

whatsoever of respect is to be seen in this liberty.

3. JUDICIAL SYSTEM

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In French Laos, justice is meted out by the native tribunals:
1. In accordance with the codes of Vien-Tiane (1) or Luang-

(1) See Appendix XXIX.

Prabang for all individuals of the Thai race and for Khas of certain tribes;

2. In accordance with the Burmese customs which are peculiar to the Lus of the territory of Muong-Sing;

3. In accordance with their particular customs for the individuals of various races--Meos, Yaos, etc.--who are not subject to any of the above codes.

The judgments of the native tribunals are examined, and revised or approved if the need should arise, by the French authorities.

Matters of little importance, such as those which fall under the jurisdiction of our justices of the peace, are settled by canton heads or the heads of villages.

Acts qualified as criminal by our law are judged by a mixed province tribunal presided over by the government commissioner who is head of the province. He is seconded by a native assessor and by a secretary-clerk. Such tribunals sit in the capital of each province. [498] In reaching its decisions, it takes its inspiration from the native laws and customs, insofar as they agree with our sentiments of humanity and dignity and with the spirit of French law. It judges appeal cases which have already come before the native tribunals.

Finally a superior court, presided over by the superior resident aided by two assessors, one European and the other a native, fulfills the functions of a court of appeal with respect to the mixed province tribunals.

Foreign Orientals, that is to say Annamites, Cambodians, Chinese, Burmese, Siamese, etc., may be judged only by the mixed province tribunals. As for Europeans, they are subject only to the regularly constituted French tribunals of Tonkin and Cochinchina.

693 The venality of the magistrates in Laos cannot be denied, as in all of the Far East, and the natives generally prefer our arbitration to that of their natural judges. They say that we render justice free of charge, while their own magistrates take more notice of the offerings

000 are incapable of any initiative or any work.

The Laotian people taken as a whole needs to be guided and sustained at once firmly and gently. In accordance with the hallowed expression, "an iron hand in a velvet glove" is needed to lead them. What we need to make them understand, in order that they may profit thereby, is that the only purpose of the improvements which are proposed is to procure them a greater sum of well-being, a good which they are far from scorning.

By taking possession of Laos, it is to be hoped that we have assured its security for all time. The appreciable development of agriculture and trade during these last few years is proof that [513] [Illustration] [514] [Blank page] [515] the inhabitants have grasped the goal which we are pursuing. To increase the country's resources in order to bring about prosperity, this is the task to be accomplished. It is a duty which we cannot shirk without betraying our traditions, and without losing our prestige in the eyes of the peoples which have welcomed us as liberators and protectors in the true sense of the word, who conquered them by the heart and not by fire and sword.

2. COLONIZATION METHODS

464 563 Although some of the higher regions of Laos have a climate approaching that of Algeria, it is not a colony to be populated. Europeans cannot engage in continuous physical labor there, and must limit themselves to a role of direction and supervision, leaving the heavy manual work to Orientals.

The question of labor is thus of prime importance for utilization of the country's resources. Yet given the sparse population density, its lack of aptitudes and the great distances between inhabited centers, it would seem to be no easy matter to count on the Laotians. They are above all a people of boatmen, drivers, carters and carnacs.

Nor can one employ the Khas. Although good mine, forest and agricultural workers, provided they do not have to leave their mountains and their forests, they are unsuited to any kind of work in the plains or low valleys.

Thus no other solution is left to the problem of recruiting workers than to have recourse to Annamite or Chinese immigration. Now, the Annamite is afraid to move; he (especially the delta Annamite) dreads staying in regions which are at all mountainous (1). Prejudices, super-

(1) The first Europeans who came to Laos know how difficult it was to recruit, in Annamite territory, a suitable force of "boys"

who were disposed to follow them.

464 stitions and perhaps also the opposition of the mandarins who for
563 centuries have tried [516] to prevent any exodus towards the lands situated beyond the mountains, have in the long run made him a stay-at-home.

This industrious, intelligent and prolific people prefers to struggle
000 for life in agglomerations which are too dense, rather than emigrate in order to obtain a life of well-being and ease.

We should not, however, despair of ever seeing the Annamites spread into Laos and there provide a powerful force for repopulation and make the low plains which border the Mekong from Cammon to Cambodia bear fruit. It is up to us to destroy the legends, to reduce to nothingness the superstitions which have gained currency, and then to use our influence to bring an end to the ostracism in which Laos is held. Does it not belong today to the great Indo-Chinese family in which all the component peoples are French subjects in the same right?

On the day when the mandarins no longer sustain a fear of Laos and a dread of slavery among the Annamites, it will be possible to induce them to emigrate into the Mekong basin. The colonies already in existence, particularly at certain points in Cammon, will grow from that day on through the addition of newcomers. We must not deceive ourselves into thinking that such immigration will not take time, and so in order to meet our most pressing needs European colonies in Laos will have to appeal to laborers from the southern provinces of China and especially from the island of Hainan, that inexhaustible reservoir which has supplied coolies to several parts of the world for so many years.

But, it will be asked, is Laos ready to welcome colonists who want to work the mines and forests and to engage in trade, agriculture and livestock breeding? We believe that, in the present state of communications, some of these undertakings are possible at this moment and that others cannot hope to succeed until the country's economic equipment has developed.

316 As concerns commerce and the exploitation of forests and mines,
313 we have noted that several attempts have already been made. These are valuable indications showing the [517] courses which isolated
185 colonists or companies which would like to employ their capital in our new possession can follow as of the present time. Indeed, such undertakings yield profits almost from the very beginning, and if they are

149: Reinach--400 G-3 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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APPENDIX XVII
ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLES OF LAOS

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Which was the truly autochthonous race, whence did it come, and what were its mores and customs? No one can answer this question, and the only statement which can be advanced is that the savage peoples must have settled in the Indo-Chinese peninsula at a time when present-day Indo-China did not yet exist, geologically speaking, and when a greater or lesser part of the Asiatic continent was covered by water.

Coming from the Malay Archipelago, the Khas occupied the south of the peninsula at first and immediately entered into a struggle with the aborigines. Stronger and more intelligent, they drove the aborigines back into the forests and mountains and founded groups and colonies in their midst which gradually absorbed the first occupants, until that day when the victorious Khas came up against men of the yellow race who drove them back into the mountains in their turn, and into the poorest and most remote parts of the land.

Coming down from the high plateaus of central Asia, probably from Tibet, the men of yellow race came in through the northwest and at first occupied the northern provinces of the immense territory which was later to make up the Chinese empire. These natives, whom the Chinese chroniclers designate by the name of Y, that is to say "Bearers of large bows," and by the name of "Miao-Tse," or "Sons of the uncultivated fields," were driven back in their turn by new invaders. They then fell back into the southern provinces and sought refuge on little-accessible peaks where more or less pure types of their ancient race may still be found today, and from there they spread into the valleys of the Mekong, the Menam, the Salouen and the Irrawaddy. Isolated from one another as a consequence of their expansion, these individuals of primitive race became mixed with one another and with the first inhabitants of the conquered regions, and gave birth to intermediary sub-races and to distinct groups whose character and even number is very difficult to determine. Language became [103] differentiated, the kind of handwriting used was influenced by the proximity of more powerful peoples, dress changed, and yet all of them preserved analogous usages and beliefs which militate in favor of a common origin. Thence arises the necessity of seeking the origin of these peoples in the diversity of families, tribes, sub-races and races which successively shared the extreme provinces of present-day

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China and Indo-China (1)

D.E. PRANOLL. LE LAOS Français. 1901 CHALLAMEL. [PARI

175 291 177 [104] taken after the Cambodians in this respect--that they later adopted the "sampot" and formed the habit of cutting their hair very short, just as the Thais of Lai-Chau today dress like their Chinese neighbors and wear their hair in a long pigtail. The same reasons may also explain modifications in language and writing, which must have been identical in the beginning.

563 144 Of the Phou-Thais who are settled today in the territory of Luang-Prabang, some--and these make up the greater number--are black Thais (aborigines) from Dien-Bien-Phu, with a darker coloration than the inhabitants of Lai-Chau, who are called white Thais for this reason. The others belong to this second variety.

The ones who sacked Luang-Prabang in 1887 under the leadership of Deo-Van-Tri were white Thais.

Youns. The Laotians living on the right bank of the Mekong at Xieng-Mai, Xieng-Sen, Muong-Nan, etc. are called Youns. [304] The only feature which distinguishes them from their fellows on the left bank is that they generally tattoo their stomachs, whereas the others tattoo the thighs and upper part of the legs, whence the names "Lao-Phoung-Khao" (white-bellied Laotians) and Lao-Phoung-Dam (black-bellied Laotians) which are used in designating the ones and the others.

Phais. Neither do the Phais constitute a separate racial group. They are Khas who are in the process of being transformed, Khas crossed with either Lus or Laotians according as their neighbors have been representatives of the first or the second of these races. Although after this contact they have begun to police themselves and to bring their way of life into conformity with that of the Lus or Laotians, they are nonetheless subject to the same regime as the Khas in respect to taxes and other matters.

563 175 Lus. The Lus, who are natives of the Sip-Song Pan-Nas, did not come and settle in any great numbers in the territory of Luang-Prabang until long after the Laotians, and then only in order to flee the war which was desolating their own land, or simply because they hoped to find better living conditions in this territory. The immigration took place in an entirely peaceful manner, and since that time the Lus have not ceased to live on good terms with the Laotians, whose mores and dress they have generally adopted and by whom they will soon be completely assimilated.

563 Khos, Meos, Yaos. These various names designate natives whose racial type, dress and hairdo ending in a queue unquestionably denote a Chinese origin, and who do not differ from one another except

Kha

563 in a few particulars. They all inhabit the peaks of mountains, where they generally engage in the cultivation of poppies and maize.

[439 241] Hos. The Hos are genuine Chinese who came in with the caravans from Yunnan and settled in the land to engage in trade or to grow cotton (1).

(1) According to a monograph by Government Commissioner Grand.

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APPENDIX XVIII
NOTE ON THE EASTERN REGION OF LOWER LAOS (1)

[113] (1) Extract from a report by Colonel Tournier, Superior Commandant of Lower Laos. (Bulletin Economique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900, No. 19.)

PRESENT STATUS OF THE DIFFERENT KHA TRIBES

563 TRIBES LIVING ON THE GREAT ANNAMITIC CHAIN. 1. The tribe of Tha-Hoi may be regarded as being entirely pacified. It is a dependency of both Annam and Laos, but the spheres of influence of the two lands were perfectly delimited at the time of the establishment by Annam of the administrative post in Lao-Bao.

2. The Khon-Tou-Khas, the Ve-Khas and the Alak Khas are completely pacified and extremely tranquil. They are dependencies of Saravane.

Between the high valleys of the Se-Kemane and the Sesane (where the word Legnau, which is unknown in the region, is found on the Pavie map), there is an absolutely deserted region which serves as a buffer between the abovementioned tribes and the Cedangs.

[316] 3.The great tribe of the Cedangs, so far unconquerable. It occupies both sides of the chain, and its villages are situated in extremely 563 difficult positions. The land is very poor, and until the last few years, besides the iron deposits which they work, their real commerce 567 was the slave trade. All the Annamite slaves of the Mekong valley, both on the left bank and the right, came from raids made by these tribes in Annamite territory, even down as far as the sea. The abolition of slavery in Laos was a great blow to them, but since it is absolutely necessary for them to procure buffalo and oxen in order to live and especially for their superstitious practices, they still continue to make occasional captures in Annam and find a market for

Kha

563 their prisoners among the Djarais. This state of affairs cannot go on
567 [106] indefinitely, and after settling the question of the Djarais which is more urgent, it will be necessary for Annam and Laos to pacify these tribes by a common agreement.

563 4. Rognao, Bahnar, Goelar and Habau Khas. These tribes, over
797 whom the missionaries exercise moral authority and many of whose villages are Catholic, can be regarded as pacified even though they do not pay any tribute. I have previously explained why it would not be politic, in my opinion, to require tribute in this region as of the present time.

These tribes, which are entirely located in Laotian territory, are quite tranquil but in continual dread of undertakings by their Djarai neighbors.

563 5. The great Djarai tribe, which is by far the most important and most numerous in the estimation of the missionaries. It is said to include nearly 150,000 inhabitants and is the finest racial type which I have seen in all the Kha region.

Many villages are subject to our authority and pay the head tax. Others, such as those which I found in the valley of the Psi and on the Sesane, obey our orders, keep the roads in repair, receive traders and travelers with perfect hospitality and will pay tribute whenever we wish.

563 But there are two groups which are absolutely rebellious to our
[619 643] penetration. These are: 1) the groups of villages of Pley-Qho and Pley-Denang immediately south of the mission; and 2), somewhat further to the south, the group of the Sadetes whose two chieftains,
579 the kings of water and fire, inhabit the points which are marked on the map as Pa-Tao-Ia and Pa-Tao-Ngo.

563 The first of these groups has continuously committed hostile
668 acts against us. They are the ones who attacked the convoy of M. Navelle when this official came to visit the mission, who have
726 constantly attacked convoys on the road from Ang-Ke to Kon-Toum, who more recently robbed a Laotian hunter of merchandise valued at more than 1,000 piasters and pierced him with sword thrusts, and, finally, who attacked M. Lacouture and killed one of his guides. These villages are dreaded by all their neighbors. It was they against whom Meyréna (1) marched, but his success was not sufficiently

(1) Since I have been led to pronounce the name of the man who dreamed of creating a Cedang kingdom, I should say a few words regarding this adventure which seems to me to have been greatly exaggerated.

Kha

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I shall not dwell on all the personalities implicated in the matter, for I have neither the right nor the means to define the responsibilities incurred, but shall simply say that his authority has never been recognized by the Khas in any effective fashion. In a gathering held in the common house of Kon-Hoirin and at which the representatives of some twenty Cedang villages were present, he appeared in the guise of one who had come to lead them in their defense against attacks by their neighbors and to command them against the enemy Djarais (the tribes of Pley-Qho and Pley-Denang, to be exact). His proposal was naturally accepted, and was also given sanction by some semblance of an expedition against the Djarais. When the Cedangs did not take all the booty and especially all the prisoners that they had anticipated, they broke off relations with Meyréna. What is more, when Father Vialleton, the director of the Catholic mission of the Bahnars and a man of extremely subtle mind, subsequently realized what the situation was, he did not want to enter into open conflict with Meyréna but was content to set up a confederation of the Bahnar, Rognac and Goelar tribes, a confederation which had the Kha chieftain of the village of Kon-Toum at its head, but which was under the moral and actual leadership of Father Vialleton. This master stroke, the only purpose of which had been to prevent Meyréna's authority from prevailing over these tribes, dealt the death blow to the kingdom of which he had dreamed and he was obliged to leave the country.

Such, in all its simplicity, is the truth of this adventure when disengaged from all the little incidents of a more or less humorous nature which occurred at the time.

followed up. It is [107] now necessary that this den of bandits should disappear or surrender. The hatred which they have aroused against themselves is so great that during my inspection tour all the neighboring tribes, including the Cedangs, asked permission to join forces with me and march against them immediately. I had to promise that satisfaction would be given them.

When this group has disappeared or surrendered, all the hesitant factions of Djarais, Salangs and Halangs-Doang will make their submission once and for all.

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As for the second group, that of the Sadetes, the question is a ticklish one. The two Sadete kings are unquestionably the religious leaders of all the Kha tribes south of the Cedangs. According to the

619 traditions and the annals which I have been able to consult, they are
643 the descendants of the last kings of the land before the Cham invasion.
[648 The kings of Cambodia have had to appeal to them for help on one
or two critical occasions, and it was in return for services rendered
175] that the king of Cambodia, up until recent times, used to send them
563 presents every year (annual tribute, according to them, payment of
which stopped only five years ago).

[726] They have never been willing to recognize our authority. The king of Pa-Tao-Ia, who is situated on the Laotian side, twice attacked the Government Commissioners of Stung-Treng when the latter were making a tour of inspection in this region, first in December 1894 and a second time in January 1897. They were given a severe lesson this second time, for the village was entirely destroyed and they suffered many losses. The Sadete Loum (the Master of water) settled on the Annamite side alongside the Master of fire after the affair, and since that time has given no further orders to our faithful Djarais.

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APPENDIX XIX
NOTE ON THE MEOS

563 The Meo has a savage and distrustful character. He does not
609 like the presence of foreigners, or even of people of his own race.

Clinging to the side of a mountain, and always as high up as possible, he asks only to be allowed to live in peace in his wild solitude and bodes no ill to anyone provided he is left alone and independe

He is a great hunter of wild beasts and large game. More in-
433 dustrious than the Thais, he makes all his farming implements him-
241 self (picks and shovels), as well as his wooden buckets and mills for
grinding maize and paddy. He raises fine poultry, pigs, oxen, goats
231 and horses with particular care and success. If he stays in one place for any length of time he also produces, in addition to the maize and rice which form the basis of his food supply and the opium which he smokes, very fine eggplants, gourds, sweet potatoes and non-sweetened batatas very much like the common potato, sorrel, green beans and all the French vegetables whose seeds are given him. On his heights he cultivates the fruit trees which merely vegetate in the plains, such as the peach tree, and the peaches which he harvests can compete without any fear with those of our own country.

The Meo climbs like a cat. Over sheer paths, up ladders com-
516 posed of a single bamboo pole standing upright in which notches are
417 cut at regular intervals which are large enough for two toes, the Meo

has created a center for the study of Laos which will enable the country to be better known and better loved. From these works new elements will arise which will serve as a base for more detailed works which the reader can study to his advantage, while awaiting the publication of a new edition of this modest tract, whose only ambition is to increase the understanding of the habits, customs, and traditions of the Muong Lao. 114

May we express here our profound gratitude to His Royal Highness Prince Savang Vathana, heir to the throne, for the friendly interest he has ever shown in our work. We express our thanks to His Highness Boun Oum, Prince of Champassak, who has kindly pointed out to us monuments till now unknown. To L. L. E. E. Thao Kou Abhay, president of the King's Council and to Thao Nhouy Abhay, former minister, we are also indebted for certain information for which we are grateful. We thank Mr. Michaudel for the friendly and constant help he has given to the French School [5] of the Far East in Laos, and we also thank Mr. Malleret, director of this school, who has made useful suggestions. Finally, we express our thanks to Prince Souvanna Phouma and to the Princess for the consideration they have shown us on many occasions and for the encouragement they have given to this work. 122

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[7]

HISTORICAL SKETCH

"...Then, Phou Lan Xon, messenger of Phaya Then, king of the sky, took a red-hot iron and pierced the gourd. Immediately a crowd of men sprang forth. There were so many that the opening was not large enough to let them through, so larger openings were made with scissors." 173 563

Such is the origin of the two groups of people of Laos. The Khas, who came out of the opening made by the red-hot iron, were blackened by the cinders; the Thais, who came through holes made by scissors, kept their fair complexion.

However original, this charming legend is far from giving us precise information about the first inhabitants of Laos. As a famous scholar has already bitterly remarked, it is the beginnings about which we know the least. Alas, Laos is no exception to this rule. The historian who attempts to retrace the events which have occurred in this country from the origins to the 13th century, at which period documents with substantial proofs are available, finds himself in much the same position as an ant lost in a sieve. The holes are more 127

7: Thompson--371-372 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 565, 567, 177.56 France
636.56

"The people were simply divided into slaves and freemen. Of the former there were three kinds: slaves for debt, by sale, or by capture. Slave-trading used to be enormously profitable, for the offspring of slaves were born into perpetual slavery. In 1880 the King of Siam made a generous reform. The descendants of slaves were henceforth to be freemen, and it was made much easier for debt slaves to buy their freedom. No mention was made, however, of captured slaves, but severe penalties were meted out to men convicted of slave-trading. One of the first steps taken by the French was the abolition of the slave trade, despite its affecting important Laotian, Cambodian, Siamese, and even Burmese commercial interests. Next, debt slavery was attacked in 1896, and for this Tournier found an ingenious solution. Special attention [372] was paid to the Khas, who lived in a state of serfdom, and this provoked a series of revolts. Their enfranchisement was begun in 1898, and nowadays a form of patron-client relationship has been evolved, but the bond is easy. It is almost impossible to wipe the slate clean, for many of the slaves resist change, since it is an easier way of getting rid of a debt than by working as freemen."

10: d'Orleans--299-300 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 565, 646

"There is an hereditary assembly called the Sena, to which the members of certain families belong. The king can create new members, but cannot remove any, and the [300] Sena is a sort of House of Peers possessing the right of remonstrance. In fact, the Governmental acts bear the preamble, 'The Sena and the King,' the former being given precedence."

10: d'Orleans--354 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 177, 565, 644

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"After a few more prayers in the pagoda, he [LSS: the king] returns home, preceded by his courtiers who are dressed in the Laos fashion, like the rest of the people, without any distinguishing sign, and who carry cups, boxes, a teapot, and other articles all of wrought gold, and most of them given by the King of Siam. It is surprising to notice side by side with these a small yellow tin box containing clothes, a French deal box, painted to represent carriages and horses, a phial containing scent, and a crystal bottle such as one may see in a hairdresser's shop. All this is indicative of what must happen in a country which is overrun, as this one will be, by the bad taste of what I may call a cheap and nasty civilisation. [sic]"

victorious (1), and this expedition, which would seem to have 648*
643*

1. With the help of Trần-Ninh. 728
175*

been imposed on him, is the only campaign which is related during his long forty-three year reign.

According to the Annals he strictly observed the Buddhist teaching and followed, in a more docile manner than his father had 643* 175* done, the pious counsels of Pha-Maha-Pasaman-Thala-Tiao, his /645 spiritual director, "and so his kingdom knew a long period of 792/ peace and prosperity." He was a great builder of temples, and erected the pagodas of Manorom, Ouposot (with a library which was given the manuscripts which had been brought from Angkor), and Xieng-Kang which was built in memory of his daughter, the young princess Sivayaka, who died of smallpox at the age of twelve.

The Three Hundred Thousand Thaïs. In 1376 he gave orders 161 for a general census of the inhabitants of Lang-Xang. The results 175* gave 300,000 "registered" Thaïs, not counting women, children, 654 bonzes, foreigners, slaves and Khas (2), and Oun-Hueun took /53/

2. The number of registered non-Thaïs was about 400,000.

/C.A.M. Translator's note. Page 53 is devoted to a map: "Lan-Xang and surrounding regions at the death of Fa-Ngoun (1374)./ as his reigning name Phaya-Sam-Sène-Thaï, the King of the Three Hundred Thousand Thaïs.

Social Organization. These folk then constituted a society 631 grouped by families and divided into Nobles and Commoners. The 565 Nobles were given certain privileges and helped to administer the 175* kingdom, from the dignitaries who were princes of royal blood down to the simple officials who were responsible for collecting taxes, for assembling labor drafts, for transporting goods, etc.

In the provinces the heads of circumscriptions (Muongs) were elected either from the Nobles or from the Commoners, but the choice of the electors generally fell on the son or some relative of the person who was to be replaced, unless there were some unworthiness or notorious incapability.

565 The common people, kind and carefree in character, roamed
175* over the country in all directions as easy-going masters, leaving
/462/ household tasks to the women and the work of the fields to dependents of an inferior race or to slaves. They were excellent boatmen and traders rather than farmers, so that they liked to perform the function of peddlers and served as a link between the multiple /55/ varieties of mankind which inhabited Lan-Xang.

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175* the result of debt or through trade--and brought high profits to those
563 who engaged in this traffic. In the region of Muong-Swa there was also a kind of serfdom which was applied to certain Kha tribes placed under the patronage of the king, the princes or the chief representatives of the nobility.

565 But if we consider the gentle and happy temperament of this
175* people whose good humor made up for everything, we are justified in believing that the relations between the various social levels must have been free of any harshness.

191 They spoke a dialect derived from the language which was imported into the basin of the Ménam by Rama Chamheng at the end of the thirteenth century and which was itself derived from the
771 graphs of India (1). They practiced orthodox Buddhism together
793
554

1. Cf. Mission Pavie, op. cit. /Études diverses, Vol. II, "Recherches sur l'Histoire du Cambodge du Laos et du Siam"/ Inscription of Sukhothaï translated by Father Schmitt, p. 192: "It was in (1287 A.D.) that the king Rama-Khameng summoned a teacher who created Thaï writing."

with the cult of the "Phi" or Genii which repesented for them the beneficent or maleficent forces of Nature. The bonzes were of comparatively pure morals amidst these peoples for whom enjoyment and pleasure were, when /56/ all is considered, the true gods. Although they were fairly ignorant and recited heir prayers in Pali
/782/ without understanding them, they did not lack a certain air of nobility. They also enjoyed a high regard and had as much favor as they could desire. The bonzeries[1] which were built near the pagodas were at once places of inviolable asylum, schools frequented by all the children of the village, and workshops where trades could be learned.

/[1] Buddhist Monasteries--Analyst./

633 be seen from a great distance. To be sure, it extends over a prodigi-
174 ous area and is so large that one would take it for a city... The king's
344 apartments, which are embellished with a superb and magnificent portico and a large number of beautiful rooms accompanied by a large parlor, are all made of wood which will not decay and ornamented inside and outside with excellent bas-reliefs so delicately gilded that they seem rather to be covered with flakes of gold than gold leaf.

"From that point one enters the courtyards which are extremely spacious, and one first sees a long line of houses built entirely of brick and roofed /113/ with tile in which the second wives usually stay, and outside another row of houses built alongside in the same symmetry for the mandarins' officers. I could write a whole volume if I undertook a minute description of all the other parts of the palace, the riches, the departments, the gardens and a number of other such things...

565 "The houses of the principal lords and of well-to-do persons are
342 very high and beautiful, and are all made of wood with a great deal
352 of artifice and a greater or lesser number of ornaments, depending on the expense to which the individuals are willing to go, but I must confess that the common people and the poor are housed extremely badly
/793/ and that their dwellings are cabins and huts rather than houses. Only the talapoins (bonzes), who are the priests of the idols, have permission to build their monasteries and houses out of brick and stone. Instead of rugs and other such furnishings, persons of quality use small reed mats in which the weave is so delicate and so highly ornamented with figures and various leaf patterns that, to my mind, there is nothing more beautiful nor more pleasing to the eye. They ordinarily use them to cover the walls of /114/ their rooms and houses inside and outside, which they keep very clean and of which they take particular care...

643* "The king is absolute and independent... all the land belongs to
/423/ him, and he disposes as absolute lord of all that his subjects possess...
631 offices, employment, honors and wealth depend absolutely on the
174 king, who raises those persons who please him most to the highest offices in the kingdom.... The principal dignities and offices of the kingdom are eight in number. The first is that of viceroy general... and because the kingdom is divided into seven provinces seven other viceroys are appointed... there are also other governments of less consequence which depend on the former both in respect to civil affairs and to those which concern war.... Each of these provinces has
/701/ its militia, which consists of infantry and cavalry.

115: Le Boulanger--74 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

"But in regard to the kingdom's laws, it is a certain fact that 671
there are very few of them, because, in my opinion, there is no 571
great need of any in order to live in accordance with the customs 626
of the land. The people are brought up to work, to have very little
to do with foreigners, not to undertake anything which might dis-
turb them and to live an idle and /115/ listless life although not
lacking any of the things necessary to preserve it. The king's will,
which does not greatly interfere with his people, takes the place
of a great many laws for them. . . . The manner in which the in-
habitants of the land live with one another is highly civil and
obliging. Unfriendliness and quarrels are banished. . . they all have
enough to live on and get along on, so that one does not hear of
thieves except as a thing quite out of the ordinary. . . . But the /565/
mandarins do not behave in the same way. Indeed, their insolence
and their insulting and criminal conduct dim the praise which the
common people merit on this account, because they abuse the
power which they have in the kingdom, and when they see some-
thing which pleases them. . . they act in such wise as to find means
for taking possession of it.

"But if we should now pass to the person of the king in order to 643*
describe him, there is no monarch, no matter how powerful, whom 174
he does not regard as beneath him, and it would indeed seem that 648
he affects not to yield in any particular to the emperors of China. . .
Only rarely does he appear in public. . . preferring to be worshiped
by his people as a hidden God rather than as a man like themselves
and of the same nature. . . He allows himself to be seen only twice
/116/ a year, for a period of three days, by his people, who re-
ceive this grace from their prince with such gratitude and joyous
sentiments that he forgets nothing on these occasions which might
contribute to their amusement. For this purpose there are several /527/
elephants which are trained to do a thousand little tricks and several wild
animals which are kept chained and made to fight. . . finally there
are wrestlers and gladiators and others, with their skirmishes which
last until last until evening and terminate all this rejoicing. . .

"Of all the prerogatives which he (the king) has, and which are 643*
a further mark of the extent of his power, that of having several 576
petty tributary kings in his dependency who come to his court to do
him homage and acknowledge him as their sovereign and who give
him superb presents, is by no means the least. He receives these
ambassadors in a great parlor seated on an extremely high throne
and garbed in his ceremonial robes, and replies to their civilities

285 lacquer -- red on the inside and black on the outside -- and deco-
532 rated with a fine gilt design which makes a border, like a galloon" (1).
175*

1. Cf. G. Maspero, ibid. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930/, pp. 190-191.

286 Even today weaving remains women's work, and is done solely in
462 the home. The materials, which may be silk or cotton, striped or
532 splashed with colors, embroidered or spangled with gold and silver thread, nevertheless acquire, under the action of light and carefree hands, chatoyant, harmonious or dazzling tones, and yet the looms which are used are simple in the extreme. Patterns "are obtained, as before the invention of the Jacquard loom, by alternately isolating or raising certain woof threads by means of thin bamboo splints" (2).

2. Cf. L. de Reinach, ibid. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 338.

181 Thus did the Laotian of the seventeenth century live in peace, respecting the law of the least effort with an amiable perserverance amidst his laughter and his games. . . . The princes were perhaps the
/565/ only ones in the whole kingdom to know any of the worries which power and its exigencies bring, and it was for not having wished to compromise with his authoritarian principles that King Souligna, towards the end of his reign, compromised the destinies of his people forever.

643* Condemnation of the heir apparent to death. He had three chil-
175* dren, a son Tiao Ratsabout and two daughters. His son married Nang-
648* Tian-Koumali, who gave birth in her turn to two children, King-Kitsarath and Intha-Som. Nang-Tian-Koumali was the sister of a prince of the Sip-Song-Panas who had been driven out of his country by a Chinese invasion and whom the king of Lan-Xang had welcomed in Vientiane together with his family. Tiao Ratsabout, however, committed the imprudence of seducing the wife of the chief palace page. In accordance with his edict which punished the crime of
/684/ adultery by death, Souligna pitilessly referred the deceived husband's complaint to the royal tribunal and allowed his son to be sentenced to capital punishment

The result was that at the king's death, which occurred /130/ in 1694, the direct heirs to the crown were his grandsons King-Kitsarath

764 the fire collapsed. In a great shower of sparks, in the middle of a
787 long blue flame, the coffin tottered and fortunately leaned to the right side. The dead man's spirit was satisfied, and it was also an excellent omen for the prosperity of the Muong.

764 [214] Now the pyre, the catafalque, the coffin, the corpse and all were nothing more than an immense live fire, an incandescent mass which projected bizarre flashes on the motley crowd and gave to it, in the evening twilight beside the great river, a phantasmagorical air.

From time to time one of the posts of the canopy could be seen in the center of the fire, rising towards the sky like a gigantic torch. The coffin toppled, and for the space of a second the corpse seemed to appear grimacing and twisting in the middle of the flames, like a salamander.

The whole fire fell in, and the crackling noises lessened. Two or three tongues of flame shot out here and there, only to be extinguished immediately. The coals finished burning themselves out, and soon nothing was left of the pyre and of the whole edifice, so bizarrely decorated, but a pile of gray ashes in the middle of which a few whitish and incompletely burned bone fragments could still be seen. With night the last gleams of the pyre disappeared, the last coals went out and the only light remaining was that of the twinkling stars.

Early the next day the bonzes went to the spot where the pyre had stood. They collected the ashes which had been cooled by dew during the night and then, after throwing a few handfuls to the four winds, they used the rest to draw a crude human face on the ground. The few whitish bones which were still left and which crumbled at the touch were collected and placed in a jar of ordinary earth, which would be buried in the enclosure of a pagoda at the foot of a sacred "ficus."

[565] Later on, since the deceased had been well-to-do and his family was wealthy, the latter would be helped by the people of the province to build a brick pyramid called "That" inside the pagoda enclosure.

A few ashes in an urn and, in some, the memory of a great celebration and a few good meals...and that is all that remained of the man who had long been a great leader in his province.

533 Music. "Instrumental music holds a place of honor in Laos.
534 The instruments are few in number, and are of Malayan and Chinese origin.

527 Those desirous of obtaining special graces give similar celebrations
182 which last several days and several nights, and the offerings are more beautiful and more varied. It is generally on occasions of this sort that assumptions of the habit by bonzes and their pupils are particularly likely to occur.

Being present at these ceremonies confers certain indulgences, and that is why they are so punctually followed and why all those who take part try [224] to help in celebrating them by offerings of all sorts.

[196] On the spot where the celebration is to be held, a sort of pulpit is constructed beforehand where the bonzes stand as they come up by turns to read passages chosen for the occasion from the sacred books. They never allow themselves to be disturbed by the surrounding noise, but stand as if transfixed in the middle of the songs and shouts.

It is readily understandable that this should be an agreeable way to procure one's salvation, but since it is very costly it is not within everyone's means. Fortunately, there are ways of compromising with
[565] heaven which enable even the poorest to associate themselves in these great celebrations, in accordance with their resources, by means of even very modest offerings and to benefit therefrom both spiritually and materially.

There is no doubt but that a belief in the efficacy of plenary and partial indulgences enters into their consideration, but it is equally reasonable to suppose that the attraction of the profane pleasures which one enjoys in the course of these gatherings is not the least of the motivating causes which lead the Laotian people to frequent them so zealously.

[171] Pirogue races. We have seen that pirogue races and regattas took place during some of the legal holidays, and a few words of explanation on this matter are given below.

526 This custom must have been introduced by the Malays and then
501 handed down from the Kmers to the Laotians, following an ascending direction from south to north.

The pirogues used in the "Souang-Hua" (1) regattas are specially

(1) Literally, pirogues which run.

built and exclusively reserved for this use. Sometimes as much as twenty-five meters in length, they are hewn out of specially chosen wood and have most elegant delicate and elongated lines. Their extremities are armed with what appear to be slender gilded horns. The exterior is lacquered black with gold ornamentation and the

505 Large quantities of rice (rice suitable
438 for making alcohol), hides, horn, cardamom, wax, benzoin, various gums, etc. were shipped from Bassac, from Pakse, from Savanmakhet, from Vien-Tiane and from other Laotian centers which had formerly traded exclusively with Bangkok by way of the Nongkay-Outaradit route on the Menam and by the Korat route on the Se-Moun.

505 "Passenger traffic, which was almost nil when the new services
484 were established, is increasing every day. The natives are beginning to become familiar with this rapid, convenient and inexpensive manner of traveling which the steamship represents and they are making more frequent use thereof, a fact which can only contribute to the broadening of relations between the various posts scattered along the great river and increase trade in their products of all kinds" (1).

(1) See, in Appendix XXX, the transport rates between France and Indo-China and between Saigon and Laos.

[487] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER XI
1. SOCIAL STATUS. SLAVERY

[565] Upon our arrival in Laos, we found a hierarchial society com-
prised of nobles, commoners and slaves. We could not do better than
567 to preserve all features of the political, social and administrative organization just as it had been. In this respect we took our inspira-
178 tion from our predecessors the Siamese, leaving our new subjects the utmost liberty and respecting their traditions, customs and mores in-
177 sofar as these were compatible with our own institutions.

Thus we were at times forced to recall certain native officials who had compromised themselves with the Siamese, or who through their exactions had made themselves unworthy of their office. Moreover, we have always acted tactfully and mildly, [488] leaving the choice of officials to election, in accordance with custom.

But above all, we took radical measures by completely suppressing the slave trade and by regularizing a very mild form of slavery for debt.

[556] There used to be slavery in Laos, as in Siam, in the form of slavery by capture, by purchase and for debt. It yielded high profits for those who engaged in the traffic, for the children and grandchildren of slaves were slaves themselves at birth, a fact which increased the fortunes of their masters to that extent.

000 indispensable for us to be acquainted with customs of our French friends. This is to prevent that in the course of a French-Laotian gathering we should be embarrassed in our actions and gestures. The French on their side should not be ignorant of our customs; a gesture of Laotian politeness might well be misinterpreted by those who are unacquainted with our customs, and that would be a regrettable misunderstanding.

How a Laotian Mandarin Should Behave.

647 A high Laotian functionary, in order to be worthy of his rank,
576 must have a different bearing depending on whether he finds himself in the exercise /977/ of his functions, among his family, or at private gatherings.

577 In the office. --In his office the mandarin behaves in an irre-
647 proachable fashion in order to show himself worthy of the functions that he holds. In this way he sets a good example to the officials who are under his authority. Before he reprimands one of his subordinates, he must have thought the matter over to get a clear idea of the effects that his reprimand may have. The man who has received the reprimand will not fail to answer, in effect, any unfounded criticism. If the head of a department hands out reprimands on every possible occasion, even for minimal matters, his staff will end up by being used to his unnecessary harangues. By this process one scarcely makes oneself obeyed and respected. In short, the mandarin should "turn his tongue seven times in his mouth" before speaking; he has a correct appearance and is concerned about his reputation and his honor.

593 In the family. --The mandarin must be a good father of his
647 family in the company of his wife and of his children. He facilitates
666 the household work entrusted to his wife, in place of picking quarrels with her from vain motives. Crude forms of expression may give rise to arguments. It is up to you, mandarin, to avoid them. It is possible that your wife may throw you into a fit of anger. In that case it is up to you to control yourself and at the same time to try and appease your companion by consoling words. If one of the partners in a marriage is "fire," so goes a Laotian adage, the other must

naturally be "water." These two elements, opposed though they are 593
to one another, nonetheless go together. If you should happen to 647
raise your voice, see to it that it does not reach the ears of your 565
neighbors who will be sure to laugh at your domestic misunderstanding.
There is a good way to appease your anger: that is to go out and get
some fresh air. A moment of distraction will calm your irritation.
This precious and effective remedy is called, according to a Laotian
expression, "to caress one's heart with a hand drenched with fresh
water."

On a walk and on a visit.--Formerly it used to be considered 574
a disgrace for a mandarin to go for a walk by himself or to visit minor 647
functionaries. Nowadays this is no longer the case. A Laotian 565
Minister goes out alone without being accompanied by the traditional 178
retinue. He visits all classes of society without being criticized for
it by anyone at all.

At a private gathering.--In contrast to the customs of former
times, present-day mandarins accept the invitation of a simple
citizen. The host very often organizes various diversions: dances, /533/
lamvong, orchestras, songs etc. The Ministers willingly participate /535/
in these; they sing, dance, and pay their respects to the phousaos
while they mingle with the crowd. Certain Laotians whom I consider
backward criticize the liberal manner on the part of our Ministers.
Our great mandarins are their own masters. Let them turn a deaf
ear to these carpings. /978/

Honor Laotian Women

Some people consider the Laotian woman as an inferior 562
creature.

Certain women, it appears, are not permitted to eat with
their husband. Miserable husbands! You consider then that your
better half is like an animal?

Certainly, tradition says: "The woman must sleep with her /513/
head lower than her husband's. She must go to bed after him and
she must get up before him. The husband must have eaten three /264/
mouthfuls of rice before the wife can begin to eat in her turn."

These counsels of our fathers are valuable, but they are far
from indicating that the woman is inferior to the man. They recommend,

7: Thompson--371-372 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 565, ~~567~~, 177.56 France
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"The people were simply divided into slaves and freemen. Of the former there were three kinds: slaves for debt, by sale, or by capture. Slave-trading used to be enormously profitable, for the offspring of slaves were born into perpetual slavery. In 1880 the King of Siam made a generous reform. The descendants of slaves were henceforth to be freemen, and it was made much easier for debt slaves to buy their freedom. No mention was made, however, of captured slaves, but severe penalties were meted out to men convicted of slave-trading. One of the first steps taken by the French was the abolition of the slave trade, despite its affecting important Laotian, Cambodian, Siamese, and even Burmese commercial interests. Next, debt slavery was attacked in 1896, and for this Tournier found an ingenious solution. Special attention [372] was paid to the Khas, who lived in a state of serfdom, and this provoked a series of revolts. Their enfranchisement was begun in 1898, and nowadays a form of patron-client relationship has been evolved, but the bond is easy. It is almost impossible to wipe the slate clean, for many of the slaves resist change, since it is an easier way of getting rid of a debt than by working as freemen."

10: d'Orleans--305-306 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 563, 567, 721

"In former times the men of the conquering race made inroads into the Kas villages and carried off a number of the inhabitants as slaves, the males being seized in preference to the females, while with the people of the plain the reverse was the case. Now the king has abolished slavery in theory, though in reality it still exists; (1) but

1. Slavery as practised upon the Kas is regarded as legal among the Laotians; a father who is poor and has a large family, often sells one or two of his sons, at the rate of fifteen rupees if they are very young, and of from twenty to forty for adults. They are then employed as boatmen.

the armed raids are not of frequent occurrence. Here, as is the case with certain European nations upon the coast of Africa, who claim [306] to be fighting the battle of liberty, the term forced labour is substituted for slavery, because it sounds better. I do not wish to criticise the generous sentiments which humanitarian ideas have evoked against slavery, but I am inclined to ask myself whether, taking everything into account, this condition is not often preferable for the people of the inferior races to liberty without the means of livelihood.

I was talking with a young slave who had been purchased by the mother-in-law of one of our interpreters. and he did not seem at all desirous of being freed. His parents, too

10: d'Orleans--305-306 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-2
116, 563, 567, 721

poor to support him, had sold him, he was well-fed and happy with his masters, and asked for nothing better."

23: Franck--330[2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 301, 567 Ethnic subgroup

"Daylight showed the dense vegetation deeply green, a land as far from China as if we were on another continent, and disclosed our dozen carriers to be Kha wild from the mountains, picturesque figures even in a land as out of the ordinary as Laos.

Instead of tattooed pants of cloth sampots these primitive fellows wore short cloth breeches like running-pants, and some of them had more or less of an upper garment also. They showed no tattooing, or at least very little, but rattled with bracelets of glass and other cheap materials, and had large earrings of all shapes, preferably not mates and if possible utterly unlike on the two sides of the same head. The few who did not have earrings put flowers or vine strings or leaves in the holes in their ears to keep them ready for more prosperous times. They had the eyes and the ways of the real wild man; yet, being former slaves, they were more docile than the Laosians or Pwun."

23: Franck--331 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 101, 567 Ethnic subgroup

"The Kha are a hill people who made complete submission to the former rulers of Luang Prabang, admitting themselves slaves, and now they accept the present monarch as king and are loyal to him, lending help of this kind upon royal demand, though one could not hire them as carriers in the ordinary way."

565 The common people, kind and carefree in character, roamed
175* over the country in all directions as easy-going masters, leaving
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1. Cf. Mission Pavie, op. cit. /Études diverses, Vol. II, "Recherches sur l'Histoire du Cambodge du Laos et du Siam"/ Inscription of Sukhothaï translated by Father Schmitt, p. 192: "It was in (1287 A. D.) that the king Rama-Khameng summoned a teacher who created Thaï writing."

with the cult of the "Phi" or Genii which represented for them the beneficent or maleficent forces of Nature. The bonzes were of comparatively pure morals amidst these peoples for whom enjoyment and pleasure were, when /56/ all is considered, the true gods. Although they were fairly ignorant and recited their prayers in Pali
/782/ without understanding them, they did not lack a certain air of nobility. They also enjoyed a high regard and had as much favor as they could desire. The bonzeries[1] which were built near the pagodas were at once places of inviolable asylum, schools frequented by all the children of the village, and workshops where trades could be learned.

/[1] Buddhist Monasteries--Analyst./

[114] of what has been observed, and because no better expression of the facts could be hoped for.

THE THAI RACE

142 "Laotians. Of all the Thais, the Laotian is the one who has
144 remained the purest, although he has a much higher proportion of Aryan blood than the other varieties, with the exception of the Lus. Fairly tall in stature, his hair cut short, elegant in his movements and more refined than all the other inhabitants of the land, he is the aristocratic type of Laos. His upbringing, his education, his religion and even his vices have a mark of distinction which make
438 them stand out above those of his neighbors. An excellent boatman,
505 and a trader rather than a farmer, he is the one who seems the master of the land, as much by virtue of his commercial aptitudes as by the
484 ease with which he ranges the country. Mounted on his long and narrow shaped pirogue, made in one piece of a tree trunk hollowed out by fire, he goes great distances to visit peoples of the most varied races [175] [Illustration] [176] [Blank page] [177] and serves as a link between all the human varieties which populate Laos. He is at home and at his ease everywhere, standing out clearly above all his countrymen in this respect.

[361] "The Laotian prefers to settle along navigable watercourses and in proximity to plains of ricefields. He is glad to have his land
[241] worked by mercenaries or by dependents of inferior race, and some-
[567] times by slaves (at least before our arrival). He himself, with quite an extensive knowledge of the needs and resources of the other inhabitants of the land, particularly likes to traffic in all kinds of merchandise. He it is who goes to buy forest products and cereal grains on the spot from the mountainfolk or from sedentary farmers, and sells them cloth, salt, tobacco, earthenware, farming implement
[439] etc. in exchange. He it is who exports the products of Laos to neighboring countries and brings back the things which Laotian industry cannot produce. His business as a commercial traveler, which he likes and which gives him a good standard of living, occupies him for only a few months of the year but brings him into contact with all the neighboring peoples and also with the Europeans and Chinese in the Siamese, Annamite and Cochinchinese trading posts. Thence arises his veneer of civilization which strikes one at first glance.

149: Reinach--186 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

result. But the Kha ideal is to possess a battery of gongs of different 533
sizes and timbres, and with these they manage to obtain quite perfect chords.

Industry. Withdrawn in their mountains where they live in small 433
isolated groups, the Khas use their leisure time to make many basket-work and hollow-ware products which have a mark of elegance and a great deal of delicacy. Other tribes make paper from wood pulp, weave mats from rattan and bamboo bark, etc. They use all these products in trade.

Finally, certain Khas exploit deposits of iron ore and transform 316
it into farming implements, while others wash gold-bearing sands.

In general, although the Khas are industrious they work only to 461
procure what is strictly indispensable. They cannot resign themselves to staying away from home for any length of time and dread any stay in the low country, which they say is unhealthy for them. Since they [313]
have particular aptitudes for woodcutting, however, they have been successfully employed to cut teak wood in the forests on the right bank of the Mekong which are situated in Siamese territory. But it must be admitted that there they are in mountainous country and in the midst of forests, as in their native region.

The Khas of southern Laos. In southern Laos Khas are found who differ very little from those of Upper Laos. We shall not concern ourselves with them, but shall deal briefly with the many more numerous ones who have particular mores and customs.

The Djarais, the Rades, the Bahnars, the Cedangs, the Peunongs, [619]
the Rognaos (1), etc. are the principal types of these Kha tribes,

(1) See Appendix XVIII.

which for the most part are still independent.

These people are proud, large and muscular, supple, trained in 181
all forms of bodily exercise, bold, warlike and brave.

These qualities, moreover, have been developed by their pe- 567
culiar way of [257] [Illustration] [258] [Blank page] [259] life.
Accustomed to hunting slaves from which they extracted large profits 721
by selling them on the banks of the Mekong, these Khas have had to resort to continual expeditions in order to obtain their human game.

For many long years, in fact, they could acquire [Illustration 567
here] the gongs, buffalo, metals, textiles, etc. which they needed only by selling captives, generally Annamites, whom they went and

Kha

caught even on the other side of the watershed and then delivered as 567
slaves to the Burmese, Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian merchants of the low country. The barbarity of their mores has been greatly lessened since our arrival in Laos, but traces of it still exist and manifest themselves in rivalries and attacks between tribes. The police force which [260] we have organized in the land in the form of a native militia, the influence of the missionaries who have settled among the turbulent Khas, and also the help and example of the tribes which have submitted to our tutelary authority will soon cause this abnormal state of things to disappear. Finally, our increasingly effective occupation of the land, which has been completed by the organization of the province of Darlac, and the strict protectorate which we exercise over Cambodia, the chief purchaser of slaves, have begun to bring order in an effective fashion to this shameful traffic in human flesh (1).

(1) See § I of Chapter XI.

It should be noted that the Djarais and the Rades are the only 197
Khas who speak Cham, that is to say a greatly corrupted Malay tongue which they have preserved for centuries.

The men's clothing consists of a loin-cloth, and that of the 291
women consists only of a short skirt knotted around the waist or under the armpits, the torso left bare.

Both men and women have long hair wound in a coil. Both 301
sexes, but mainly the men, wear jewels of a crude shape, made of tin or brass, in the form of bracelets, neckbands, ear pendants or cylinders and hairpins. They are also very fond of glass bead necklaces.

These Khas smoke tobacco, either dried or green, as well as 276
bamboo shavings impregnated with nicotine. They make terra cotta pipes with highly worked bowls and also use imported brass pipes. They do not blacken their teeth.

From the point of view of diet and housing, practically the same 511
conditions obtain as we have seen above except that the houses are built with greater care and arranged in the form of a circular camp.

In the middle of Cedang and Rognao villages there is a large 342
house some twenty to thirty meters long by twelve to fifteen meters 883
wide, with a high pointed roof. This is the common house where all the boys of the locality live from the age of nine or ten until the day of their marriage.

505 Large quantities of nep (rice suitable
438 for making alcohol), hides, horn, cardamom, wax, benzoin, various gums, etc. were shipped from Bassac, from Pakse, from Savannakhet, from Vien-Tiane and from other Laotian centers which had formerly traded exclusively with Bangkok by way of the Nongkay-Outaradit route on the Menam and by the Korat route on the Se-Moun.

505 "Passenger traffic, which was almost nil when the new services
484 were established, is increasing every day. The natives are beginning to become familiar with this rapid, convenient and inexpensive manner of traveling which the steamship represents and they are making more frequent use thereof, a fact which can only contribute to the broadening of relations between the various posts scattered along the great river and increase trade in their products of all kinds" (1).

(1) See, in Appendix XXX, the transport rates between France and Indo-China and between Saigon and Laos.

[487] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER XI

1. SOCIAL STATUS. SLAVERY

[565] Upon our arrival in Laos, we found a hierarchial society com-
prised of nobles, commoners and slaves. We could not do better than
• 567 to preserve all features of the political, social and administrative organization just as it had been. In this respect we took our inspira-
178 tion from our predecessors the Siamese, leaving our new subjects the utmost liberty and respecting their traditions, customs and mores in-
177 sofar as these were compatible with our own institutions.

Thus we were at times forced to recall certain native officials who had compromised themselves with the Siamese, or who through their exactions had made themselves unworthy of their office. Moreover, we have always acted tactfully and mildly, [488] leaving the choice of officials to election, in accordance with custom.

But above all, we took radical measures by completely suppressing the slave trade and by regularizing a very mild form of slavery for debt.

[556] There used to be slavery in Laos, as in Siam, in the form of slavery by capture, by purchase and for debt. It yielded high profits for those who engaged in the traffic, for the children and grandchildren of slaves were slaves themselves at birth, a fact which increased the fortunes of their masters to that extent.

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When he mounted the throne, the present king of Siam promulgated a generous law relative to slavery to celebrate his accession. This was the "Pi-Marong" law (that is to say, the law of the year "Pi-Marong," or 1880). If it had freed all the slaves in a block, it would have brought about recriminations and turned many wealthy Siamese, whose wealth lay mainly in troops of slaves, against the royal family. It therefore does not mention slaves for debt in the strict sense, and is concerned only with the status of their children and grandchildren. The former are declared to be free at the age of 21, and the latter at birth. As for the man who becomes a slave through debt, he cannot gain freedom through his work, since the latter is regarded as the equivalent of interest on the sum borrowed or the purchase price, if he should happen to change masters. If this sum is less than 56 ticals (1) in the case of men, and 48 ticals for

(1) The tical is worth 1.50 francs.

women, however, the slave is merely a debtor and can then redeem himself by his labor.

The reader will also note that this law makes no mention of slaves by capture. But the Siamese code does not recognize any such, and even levies extremely severe penalties on ravishers and sellers.

In 1893, when the Franco-Siamese treaty granted us the territory of Laos which was situated on the left bank of the Mekong, the conditions of slavery were therefore first of all what the "Pi-Marong" law, which was generally well applied, had made them, and secondly as determined by the ordinances of the code governing slave trading, which had partly failed to have any effect.

Our first concern was thus the radical suppression of the traffic [489] in human flesh, which was enriching a few Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian mandarins, and even some Burmese who were engaging in this sort of trade.

But this was not all. Once the slave trade was abolished, slavery for debt remained. It was left for our administration to regulate this question in a spirit of humanity and justice as soon as it felt sufficiently entrenched in the land and was able to begin the necessary investigations.

It is our pleasure here to pay homage to the generous sentiments and broad views of Lieutenant Colonel Tournier, then Superior Commandant of Lower Laos, who set forth the situation of slavery in Laos

567 as early as March of 1896, in a report which we believe it will be of
426 value to reproduce in part, as well as a code of rules as ingenious as they were just governing slavery for debt (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVIII.

567 Finally, there is a kind of serfdom in Laos which is applied to
563 certain Kha tribes. Thus in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang, subsequent to revolts, entire tribes of Khas were reduced to a state of serfdom and placed under the patronage of the king, of princes, or of the principal members of the nobility. In 1894 our administration undertook to liberate these Khas, who are completely free today. In southern Laos most of these latter are still the clients of a few nobles or Laotian officials, but the guardianship is a gentle one which they can abandon and resume at will.

2. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

178 Under our control, as has been noted above, the political
642 organization of Laos has remained what it was before 1893. We have respected the customs and local traditions, and we govern through the native administration in which all the machinery has been retained.

643 [490] The following is a nearly complete list of all the officials in a large Muong such as the kingdom of Luang-Prabang or of Bassac (1)

(1) The kingdom of Luang-Prabang is situated on both banks of the Mekong, but the king resides on the left bank at Luang-Prabang and is consequently dependent on the French authorities. The kingdom of Bassac is today wholly on the right bank, and the king of Bassac falls under Siamese domination. The title of king is sometimes given also to the "Tiao-Fa" or head of the province of Muong-Sing. The head of a muong in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na may be a "Tso-boua," a "Phya-Hua" or a "Sen-Houi-Fa," depending on his importance.

At the head are the Kings, two in number:

Somdet-Phra-Tiao or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Louang, first king, great master of existences.

Tiao-Maha-Oupahat or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Vang-Na, second king,
644 great master responsible for conservation of property. [Illustration here]

149: Reinach--401 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

China and Indo-China (1).

[113] (1) E. Picanon, Le Laos français. 1901, Challamel. [Paris]

II

173 Laos, Thais and Khas. Although the Laotian legends
563 attribute the same origin to all of these (Mueng-Theng or Dien-Bien-
144 Phu) and say that they all came from the same "gourd" (Nam-Tao-Phoun), it is hardly likely that the Laotians and the Khas have a common origin. Indeed, the characteristics which serve to distinguish the two races are too numerous and too marked, both from the point of view of the racial types themselves and as regards language, mores and religious beliefs.

144 Nor can it be affirmed that the Khas are the representatives of
174 the aboriginal population, for before any of their people had mounted the throne of Luang-Prabang, six kings foreign to their race had already occupied it--if we may regard the list of the first kings of the land which is preserved in the Phong-Sa Va-Dan (annals of the kingdom) as correct--and of these conquering princes the first is said to have come from India, and the second from Cambodia.

In any case, the Khas are said to have preceded the Laotians in the land, and it was not until the reign of their fourth and last king that they are supposed to have been conquered and driven out or enslaved by the Laotians, who had come down from Dien-Bien-
[609] Phu. Since that time, and despite many revolts of which the last is almost recent, the Khas have never ceased being "a folk taillable and liable to forced labor at pleasure" for their vanquishers, and their name has become a synonym for a low person or slave in the current
[56] idiom. Not until 1895 were the Khas once and for all freed--freed is perhaps not the word, for in the strict sense they were never slaves--or at least summoned to enjoy a system of rule similar to that of the other natives and which left no margin for arbitrariness and vexations.

173 In designating Dien-Bien-Phu as the cradle of the Laotian people, or at least in attributing to the Laotians and the Thais a common origin, legend seems to be in agreement with reality. There are indeed many points of resemblance and contact between the two peoples. The type is invariably the same, although finer in the native of Luang-
175 Prabang than in the native of Lai-Chau or Dien-Bien-Phu. Not more
291 than two hundred years ago the Laotians still wore, like the black Thais, the Annamite costume and their hair wound in a coil. It
177 was doubtless after contact with the Siamese--who had themselves

563 in a few particulars. They all inhabit the peaks of mountains, where they generally engage in the cultivation of poppies and maize.

[439] [241] Hos. The Hos are genuine Chinese who came in with the caravans from Yunnan and settled in the land to engage in trade or to grow cotton (1).

(1) According to a monograph by Government Commissioner Grand.

[105]

APPENDIX XVIII
NOTE ON THE EASTERN REGION OF LOWER LAOS (1)

[113] (1) Extract from a report by Colonel Tournier, Superior Commandant of Lower Laos. (Bulletin Economique de l'Indo-Chine, 1900, No. 19.)

PRESENT STATUS OF THE DIFFERENT KHA TRIBES

563 TRIBES LIVING ON THE GREAT ANNAMITIC CHAIN. 1. The tribe of Tha-Hoi may be regarded as being entirely pacified. It is a dependency of both Annam and Laos, but the spheres of influence of the two lands were perfectly delimited at the time of the establishment by Annam of the administrative post in Lao-Bao.

2. The Khon-Tou-Khas, the Ve-Khas and the Alak Khas are completely pacified and extremely tranquil. They are dependencies of Saravane.

Between the high valleys of the Se-Kemane and the Sesane (where the word Legnau, which is unknown in the region, is found on the Pavie map), there is an absolutely deserted region which serves as a buffer between the abovementioned tribes and the Cedangs.

[316] 3.The great tribe of the Cedangs, so far unconquerable. It occupies both sides of the chain, and its villages are situated in extremely 563 difficult positions. The land is very poor, and until the last few years, besides the iron deposits which they work, their real commerce 567 was the slave trade. All the Annamite slaves of the Mekong valley, both on the left bank and the right, came from raids made by these tribes in Annamite territory, even down as far as the sea. The abolition of slavery in Laos was a great blow to them, but since it is absolutely necessary for them to procure buffalo and oxen in order to live and especially for their superstitious practices, they still continue to make occasional captures in Annam and find a market for

Kha

563 their prisoners among the Djarais. This state of affairs cannot go on
567 [106] indefinitely, and after settling the question of the Djarais which is more urgent, it will be necessary for Annam and Laos to pacify these tribes by a common agreement.

563 4. Rognao, Bahnar, Goelar and Habau Khas. These tribes, over
797 whom the missionaries exercise moral authority and many of whose villages are Catholic, can be regarded as pacified even though they do not pay any tribute. I have previously explained why it would not be politic, in my opinion, to require tribute in this region as of the present time.

These tribes, which are entirely located in Laotian territory, are quite tranquil but in continual dread of undertakings by their Djarai neighbors.

563 5. The great Djarai tribe, which is by far the most important and most numerous in the estimation of the missionaries. It is said to include nearly 150,000 inhabitants and is the finest racial type which I have seen in all the Kha region.

Many villages are subject to our authority and pay the head tax. Others, such as those which I found in the valley of the Psi and on the Sesane, obey our orders, keep the roads in repair, receive traders and travelers with perfect hospitality and will pay tribute whenever we wish.

563 But there are two groups which are absolutely rebellious to our
[619 643] penetration. These are: 1) the groups of villages of Pley-Qho and Pley-Denang immediately south of the mission; and 2), somewhat further to the south, the group of the Sadetes whose two chieftains,
579 the kings of water and fire, inhabit the points which are marked on the map as Pa-Tao-Ia and Pa-Tao-Ngo.

The first of these groups has continuously committed hostile
563 acts against us. They are the ones who attacked the convoy of M.
668 Navelle when this official came to visit the mission, who have constantly attacked convoys on the road from Ang-Ke to Kon-Toum,
726 who more recently robbed a Laotian hunter of merchandise valued at more than 1,000 piasters and pierced him with sword thrusts, and, finally, who attacked M. Lacouture and killed one of his guides. These villages are dreaded by all their neighbors. It was they against whom Meyréna (1) marched, but his success was not sufficiently

(1) Since I have been led to pronounce the name of the man who dreamed of creating a Cedang kingdom, I should say a few words regarding this adventure which seems to me to have been greatly exaggerated.

The following table gives the composition of each of these blends:

272

Quality	White points	Delicate green leaves	Large leaves
1st quality	10%	30%	60%
2nd quality	5	15	80
3rd quality	2	5	93

Preparation. After harvesting the leaves are placed on mats in the sun, where they wither and become soft. They are then slightly torrefied in a copper or cast-iron basin placed over a hot fire. This operation, which lasts only a few moments and during which the leaves are constantly stirred and sifted, is designed to remove all the natural moisture which they contain and thus make sure that they will not spoil later on.

Molding and wrapping. Blends are made when the tea is molded, for the tea of these regions is sold in the form of cakes .25 meter in diameter or of cylinders six or seven centimeters in diameter. The different qualities of leaves are placed within easy reach and the different weights of each kind [154] which will be mixed together to make up a cake or cylinder are measured out. Then the mixing itself is done in marble, cast-iron or wooden molds after the leaves have been exposed to steam for a few seconds. The tea is compressed in the molds, the latter are heated, and when they are opened their contents are dry, hard and homogeneous. The cakes or cylinders are then wrapped in bamboo leaves or leaflets and tied with rattan. A package of tea in the form of cakes includes seven of the latter and weighs 1.2 kilograms.

[157]

APPENDIX XXVIII
REPORT AND REGULATIONS ON SLAVERY

567 The problem of slavery for debt is one of the most difficult ones to solve.

177 That of slavery resulting from capture has been solved very easily. The Siamese had already given orders for it to be stopped, and although it still existed in certain provinces, principally in those of Lower Laos, this was due to the fact that the Siamese high mandarins voluntarily closed their eyes, thanks to large sums which were paid to secure their cooperation and which constituted one of their largest sources of income.

As soon as we assumed the administrations of the country the Laotians sounded us out on this subject. They soon realized that our

•567 upbringing and sentiments rejected the idea of such slavery, and
177 without giving in gracefully, for some of them stood to lose large capital investments, they accepted without question the principle of emancipation of slaves by capture. A few attempted to use subterfuge and tried to pass off slaves who were really slaves by capture as
[675] slaves for debt. Fortunately every contract among the Laotian people, whatever it be, is a written one, and examination of these contracts was sufficient to foil all their ruses.

At the present time it may be said that this question has been solved. There are no longer any but voluntary slaves who like their life under their masters and, although free, want to stay there. Nearly all of them, moreover, are provided with a certification of liberation which their masters have forced them to request so that they, the masters, will not be accused later of keeping slaves by force.

Full justice must be given to the Laotian authorities who, although the first to suffer from this measure, have freely aided us in our task.

The reports by the government commissioners have noted the
[726] good consequences of the measure. One of its first results was to bring a stop to the inter-tribal warfare among the Khas, warfare whose origin, if not its sole purpose, almost always lay in the capture of human cattle demanded by recognized slave traders [158] who were established in the land--they were mainly Burmese--and who had deliveries to make.

567 As regards slaves for debt, the question is a much more delicate one, for here we are confronted by a voluntary and for the most part uninteresting form of slavery.

In Laos, all crimes and misdemeanors must be paid for. This is the origin of nearly all debts, among the well-to-do as well as among the poorer classes. Among the latter, sentences for stealing buffalo or rice are usually involved, and among the well-to-do sentences for adultery or judicial decisions resulting from unsuccessful speculations. When sentence has been pronounced, money must be found immediately in order to avoid prison. If the borrower can offer security for payment the necessary sum is lent to him at annual interest rates which vary, depending on the province, from ten to twenty percent.

If the borrower is a poor man, he offers his person in payment of the interest and then becomes not the slave, but the servant in a house.

His status is not comparable to that of a slave by capture. Whereas the latter is a veritable beast of burden, often badly mistreated, obliged to work only for his master and to provide himself for his food and clothing, the slave for debts, on the other hand, is fed and

•567 clothed--very simply, to be sure, like the rest of the family--but he is free to work for himself and can free himself quite easily if he is not too lazy. He is not mistreated by his masters and has scarcely any real work to do except during the rainy season at plowing time. As soon as the grain is in the slave for debt, who up to that time has lived in the house in the fields watching over the crop, goes back to town with the family to the houses surrounding those of his master, and if the harvest is a good one he has a good life without anything to do, taking part in all the festivities which go on in the house.

One unusual feature of these customs is that the master seems more to be pitied than the slave. Whereas the latter is free to change masters at will (in order to do so he has only to find a new one who will lend him the sum of money he owes), the latter cannot sell his interest in the slave to anyone else without the slave's consent. Thus if a master has the good fortune to find a good servant he has to treat him with a great deal of consideration, for there are plenty of people around him who would like to find a good one too. (Extract from a report by the Superior Commandant in Lower Laos.)

REGULATIONS GOVERNING SLAVERY FOR DEBT
(March 29, 1896)

567 656 ARTICLE 1. Any man or woman who borrows a sum of money may, if not under fifteen or over fifty years old, engage his or her person in order to acquit the contracted debt.

[159] Such an engagement, which is an absolutely personal one, shall not be contracted for a sum greater than eighty ticals (one cattle).

ART. 2. A sum of six ticals for men and four ticals for women shall be deducted from the debt each year towards payment in full.

ART. 3. Any non-indentured wife living with her husband while the latter is a slave shall be fed and supported under the same conditions as her husband, and each year the latter's debt shall be decreased by a sum of four ticals representing the voluntary labor of the wife.

ART. 4. Children of slaves shall be free of all debts contracted by their parents.

Until they reach the age of fifteen they shall be bound to serve their parents' master in payment for food and effects given them. After the age of fifteen they shall be entirely free. If they agree to remain with their parents and serve their parents' master, their consent

567 must be specified in a special contract signed by them. In this case
656 their work will go toward payment of their parents' debt at the rate of six ticals per year for boys and four ticals for girls.

ART. 5. If a slave dies his debt is considered paid and is not transferable to any of his relatives.

[651] ART. 6. A master is held responsible for payment of the head tax on any dutiable slave.

If the latter cannot secure the necessary sum through his own labor the master shall pay, but any such sum shall be added to the principal debt and mention thereof shall be made on the contract of debt by the authorities responsible for collecting the head tax.

426 ART. 7. Any individual who borrows money shall present him-
567 self with the lender to the highest native authority in his territory, who alone is empowered to certify debtor's notes.

656 The native authorities shall retain a duplicate of such debtor's notes; such notes shall be signed by both lender and borrower and invested with the seals of the authorities.

Notes shall be drawn up in ink and any crossings-out or additions approved.

ART. 8. For sums less than twenty ticals, the high authorities of a Muong may delegate their powers to the Tassengs or Phobans.

ART. 9. The provisions of this decree shall take effect immediately. Sons and grandsons of slaves for debt who have reached or passed the age of fifteen shall be regarded as free upon promulgation of these provisions. The same shall be true of persons under contract against their will, who shall have the right to have the contract which binds them revised in the presence of the French authorities.

"But in regard to the kingdom's laws, it is a certain fact that 671
there are very few of them, because, in my opinion, there is no 571
great need of any in order to live in accordance with the customs 626
of the land. The people are brought up to work, to have very little
to do with foreigners, not to undertake anything which might dis-
turb them and to live an idle and /115/ listless life although not
lacking any of the things necessary to preserve it. The king's will,
which does not greatly interfere with his people, takes the place
of a great many laws for them. . . . The manner in which the in-
habitants of the land live with one another is highly civil and
obliging. Unfriendliness and quarrels are banished. . . they all have
enough to live on and get along on, so that one does not hear of
thieves except as a thing quite out of the ordinary. . . . But the /565/
mandarins do not behave in the same way. Indeed, their insolence
and their insulting and criminal conduct dim the praise which the
common people merit on this account, because they abuse the
power which they have in the kingdom, and when they see some-
thing which pleases them. . . they act in such wise as to find means
for taking possession of it.

"But if we should now pass to the person of the king in order to 643*
describe him, there is no monarch, no matter how powerful, whom 174
he does not regard as beneath him, and it would indeed seem that 648
he affects not to yield in any particular to the emperors of China. . .
Only rarely does he appear in public. . . preferring to be worshiped
by his people as a hidden God rather than as a man like themselves
and of the same nature. . . He allows himself to be seen only twice
/116/ a year, for a period of three days, by his people, who re-
ceive this grace from their prince with such gratitude and joyous
sentiments that he forgets nothing on these occasions which might
contribute to their amusement. For this purpose there are several /527/
elephants which are trained to do a thousand little tricks and several wild
animals which are kept chained and made to fight. . . finally there
are wrestlers and gladiators and others, with their skirmishes which
last until last until evening and terminate all this rejoicing. . .

"Of all the prerogatives which he (the king) has, and which are 643*
a further mark of the extent of his power, that of having several 576
petty tributary kings in his dependency who come to his court to do
him homage and acknowledge him as their sovereign and who give
him superb presents, is by no means the least. He receives these
ambassadors in a great parlor seated on an extremely high throne
and garbed in his ceremonial robes, and replies to their civilities

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Moi AM9
M'nong

and we were down to the nursing-mothers, who, removing their 273
babies from the breast and passing them to onlookers, tripped lightly 574
towards us. Although the rice-alcohol, with its queer burnt-cereal taste, was weaker than usual, my friends said, it was beginning to take effect. The Moïs had slipped into an easy-going joviality and the [832]
nursing-mothers received some mild familiarities, for which they exchanged good-natured slaps. Their capacity for alcohol, though, was greater than that of the elder ladies, and they were not to be deceived by a mere pretence of drinking on our part. Calling for beakers they sucked up the alcohol, spat libations, syphoned off liquor until the beakers were filled, and presented them to us. Taking stock of the situation we saw that we had drunk our way to within two nursing-mothers of those perfect young representatives of the Polynesian race, the chief's daughters, who flung us occasional glances from between sweeping lashes. But we were all flagging, dizzy with the alcohol and the stunning reverberation of the gongs. And the morning was wearing on. It would have been difficult to imagine our condition by the time we had drunk our way down to an interesting social level. The Moïs encouraged us with smiles and gestures, but we could do no more.

It was at a village in the vicinity of Buon Dieo, where two years 683
previously an extraordinary affair had taken place. A family of 695
eight persons were suspected of magic practices to the detriment of 754
the village. According to local custom a representative was chosen 755
as accuser and a trial by ordeal arranged. This consisted of the 776
villagers' champion and the head of the accused family plunging 787
their heads under water, the first to withdraw his head, in this case the accused, being held to have lost the day. According to the rulings of customary law governing this rather unusual case the charged persons were found to be possessed by certain minor demons, located in each case in a bodily organ. The general attitude thus was a sympathetic one. The prisoners were regarded

gilt and jewels. The wily merchants accepted all these kindnesses 439
in the hope of extracting great profits from their packet (1). 175*

1. Cf. Cabaton, op. cit. /Le Laos et les Neerlandais au dix-septieme siecle (1913). /

The audience took place near the pyramid of That-Luong which was entirely covered with gold plate. The king, surrounded by all his court, stood in a great temple and had the newcomers sit on mats under the gallery. The following day danses, combats and /574/ water jousts were given in their honor on the river bank. Souligna-Vongsa was present, carried on a golden chair, and came and sat on a /108/ balcony erected over the river. In the evening more than two hundred fiery pirogues went down the Mekong. "The river seemed to be on fire."

As time passed the merchandise sold well, thanks to the gifts distributed to the king, the princes, the princesses and the officers. The Dutch cleverly disparaged the Siamese of Ayuthya as traders of little faith, offered to settle a misunderstanding which had arisen between the sovereigns of Lan-Xang and Cambodia, and obtained the Laotians' promise to deliver them enormous quantities of benzoin and gum lac. They finally left on December 24, "profoundly impressed with the wealth and splendor" of the kingdom of Vientiane (1).

1. Van Wusthof left without his two assistants, whom he left with the king to await the gifts destined for Van Diemen and the Laotian "ambassador" who was to accompany them. (Francis Garnier, Bulletin de la Societe de geographie, 1871.)

If we are to believe Van Wusthof, this city then had a huge 174
population, while Luang-Prabang was nothing more than a deserted 164
city. A terrible cholera epidemic had decimated its population, 369
and those who were left had come to life in Vientiane.

He also confirms the kingdom's frontiers as stated by the Annals and the perfect relations which /109/ Lan-Xang maintained with all its neighbors.

On the other hand he does not shed any light -- rather the con- 439
trary -- on the obscure period which preceded Souligna's accession 643*
to the throne. Indeed he writes with perfect serenity: "the present 175*
king inherited the crown three years ago from his brother, who died

462 Tilling the ricefields, hunting, fishing and managing rafts and
241 pirogues take up about six months of the year. The rest of the time they rest and enjoy themselves. The status of women in Laos, although not as low and painful as that of other women of Asiatic races, is nevertheless not as pleasant as that of their husbands. In fact, all the petty farming tasks fall on them. They perform all the household labors, care for the poultry yard and the livestock, etc. They do the cooking, decorticate the paddy, go and fetch wood and water, spin, weave and dye cotton and silk, take care of the children, etc. Less [182] fortunate than her husband, the Laotian woman has no leisure except on holidays, and even then she has to make all the preparations without letting her daily occupations suffer.

Of ordinary height, generally well made and even elegant of
142 figure, the Laotian woman has a friendly face and is not without
562 either grace or coquetry before her marriage. This does not mean that there are no homely girls, but these are rather an exception. As she grows older and worn from bearing children the Laotian woman loses much of her early grace, but in spite of everything she retains her joyousness, her high spirits and her very pronounced taste for celebrations when there is singing and feasting.

862 Laotian mothers worship their children. They take great care
858 of them and often push their weakness for their children to such a point as to prolong the period of breast-feeding, often beyond the child's fourth year.

342 Dwellings. Like all the representatives of the Thai family, the
574 Laotians inhabit houses which are rectangular in shape and are always raised one or two meters above the GROUND on piles. Wood and bamboo, in the form of beams, framing members, rafters, door and window casings, partitions, doors, windows, floors and shingles, are used to build houses, without the use of any nails, all joints and assemblies being fastened together with rattan.

The dimensions of the houses vary greatly and depend on the number of families that they are designed to shelter. Verandas with roofs which are sharply inclined and come down quite low are placed around the house, mainly on the south and west, to temper the heat of the sun and serve as a vestibule, a reception hall or a workshop. The family stays there during the day, as on a sort of neutral ground where people who are coming and going can be received without transgressing custom, which decrees that no one except members of the family and close friends shall have access to the inner apartments, which form the private home of the house's inhabitants.

to get something which is above the head of someone else. A polite 576
person realizes that it is very impolite to touch the head of another /826/
person, even that of his closest friend. To hit someone over the head with the mak kok is a very grave offense. The mak kok, which signifies olive, is a fist formed in such a manner that the middle finger sticks out beyond the other fingers. To point out an object with one's foot is the gesture of a very crude person. A polite person always avails himself of the index finger of his right hand to point out something to someone.

On a visit.--When one arrives at the house of a Laotian 574
one walks very softly and greets in the Laotian manner. If the owner 576
of the house /973/ extends his hand, one should greet him in the European manner. Once in the living room one must wait till one is told "Sit down" before sitting down. The polite person asks his guest to sit down immediately after the exchange of greetings.

When you enter the house of a European, never walk in stealthily the way you do with a Laotian. The European would think that you had come to stab him. You should walk in such a way that he can hear you, without, at the same time, stamping on the floor with all your strength because you would, in so doing, frighten the master of the house. Before entering, you must knock on the door quite forcefully; then you must wait till you are told: "Come in!" or till someone comes to open the door for you. The Laotian visitor does not dare knock on the door for fear of committing an impoliteness, but he coughs outside the door.

In the living room the master of the house has arranged all the furniture in a certain way. When you are invited to sit down, /353/
you should do so without moving the chair that is designated to you. If you are offered a cigarette, you may refuse politely if you do not not smoke. If you do smoke, you should accept it. You will notice that there are ash-trays in the room. Use them. Do not drop the ashes from your cigarette on the table, the chair or on the floor.

To receive something from a superior, the polite Laotian extends his right hand supported by his left hand.

Visiting the sick.--When one of our acquaintances has fallen 734
sick, we must inquire about him by paying him a visit. If one is prevented from doing so by something important, one can have a

734 friend take one's place.

Laotians when they pay a visit to a sick person, prattle noisily,
574 ask the sick person a great number of unnecessary questions, and
576 sometimes tell him stories to cheer him up. This custom must stop. The patient, who is tired, needs rest. The visit one pays him should not last longer than ten minutes.

574 Condolence visit.--The Laotian ceremony connected with
576 the condolence visit is the opposite of the Western ceremony. The
764 The visitor, instead of appearing sad before the family of the deceased, is gay and smiling.

In order to give you an idea of what goes on in a house in which a death has taken place among the Laotians, I shall content myself by citing here certain passages from my article, "The custom
764 of funeral ceremonies in the land of Laos" (1): "Those who believe
574
576 1. In Kinnary, No. 4, November, 1946.

in the existence of the phi place a tray of food intended for the deceased near the coffin. Furthermore they place, at the head of the coffin, a sword marked with a cross with chalk, together with a superstitious formula in order to prevent the phi from stealing the coffin away from the deceased. The coffin has to be watched over day and night. The watchers talk, play certain games, or engage in any other diversion. /274/

/825/ "In the course of this watch cats are also prevented from prowling around the coffin. A cat which were to jump across would provoke the resurrection of the dead person, according to what certain people say.

"The house in which the person has died is called heuan di (happy house). There one works, sings, dances, and plays. From it can be heard the sound of orchestras and shouts of joy. Such spectacles have something disconcerting about them to the eyes of strangers. Nevertheless, one should not regard this behavior as a sign of irreverence towards the deceased person. Despite its smiling appearance, the family of the deceased suffers profoundly. It abstains from violent shedding of tears and from public lamentations because it considers a discreet grief more dignified and the sense one has of death in this way a nobler one."

/779/ It would be difficult not to respect this tradition which stems

from the Buddhist religion; but there is reason, in my opinion, for 764
banishing all that is in the domain of superstition. 574

European custom, in contrast, permits the person in mourning 576
not to receive the visitor in the house of the deceased because he is
too afflicted. In this case the visitor leaves a card with a few words 000
of condolence.

If the person in mourning comes to receive the visitor, the latter should assume a sad air and he must not speak of the dead person first. This visit is paid out of sympathy for the family which is in mourning. It should not last too long because grief requires solitude.

Duties of the visitor.--On this subject I advise the adoption of the French custom:

The visitor dresses properly and in a correct manner. If he is wearing a coat and a hat, and carrying an umbrella and a cane, he puts them off before knocking on the door. He greets the lady and the master of the house before the other persons who are present. If the latter are too numerous he is not obligated to shake hands with everybody. It will be enough if he nods his head a couple of times to the right and to the left.

He takes his leave by shaking hands with the lady and the master of the house. In order to salute the other people present he performs the same movements as at his entry. If the number of people present is too large he may skillfully slip away; that is what is called loi vat angkit in Laotian ("to take French leave").

Duties of the host.--Here again my preference is for Western customs:

The host, when he sees his guests coming, appears before them to welcome them. After the exchange of greetings he designates the seats and invites everyone to sit down. When everybody is seated, somebody enters; he extends his hand and everybody rises to greet him. A lady does not get up to return the greeting except in the case of a personage of /975/ note or of a venerable old man.

The hostess and the host must appear affable and smiling during the whole time of the reception. When somebody takes his leave they accompany him to the door.

At a gathering.--At a gathering it is the duty of everyone to

naturally be "water." These two elements, opposed though they are 593
to one another, nonetheless go together. If you should happen to 647
raise your voice, see to it that it does not reach the ears of your 565
neighbors who will be sure to laugh at your domestic misunderstanding.
There is a good way to appease your anger: that is to go out and get
some fresh air. A moment of distraction will calm your irritation.
This precious and effective remedy is called, according to a Laotian
expression, "to caress one's heart with a hand drenched with fresh
water."

On a walk and on a visit.--Formerly it used to be considered 574
a disgrace for a mandarin to go for a walk by himself or to visit minor 647
functionaries. Nowadays this is no longer the case. A Laotian 565
Minister goes out alone without being accompanied by the traditional 178
retinue. He visits all classes of society without being criticized for
it by anyone at all.

At a private gathering.--In contrast to the customs of former
times, present-day mandarins accept the invitation of a simple
citizen. The host very often organizes various diversions: dances, /533/
lamvong, orchestras, songs etc. The Ministers willingly participate /535/
in these; they sing, dance, and pay their respects to the phousaos
while they mingle with the crowd. Certain Laotians whom I consider
backward criticize the liberal manner on the part of our Ministers.
Our great mandarins are their own masters. Let them turn a deaf
ear to these carpings. /978/

Honor Laotian Women

Some people consider the Laotian woman as an inferior 562
creature.

Certain women, it appears, are not permitted to eat with
their husband. Miserable husbands! You consider then that your
better half is like an animal?

Certainly, tradition says: "The woman must sleep with her /513/
head lower than her husband's. She must go to bed after him and
she must get up before him. The husband must have eaten three /264/
mouthfuls of rice before the wife can begin to eat in her turn."

These counsels of our fathers are valuable, but they are far
from indicating that the woman is inferior to the man. They recommend,

23: Franck--288-289 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 361, 576

"Every few [289] hours a cluster of jungle houses stood out in a tiny half-clearing on the high bank of the river, and most of these we visited. At each village the chief and the other men of importance, usually including several yellow-robed priests, came to pay their respects. Instead of snatching off hats or head-cloths, and performing an antic between a courtesy and an exaggerated bow, the form of salute in Luang Prabang is to come to a complete squat. Obsequious as this looked, it was evidently merely a gesture of politeness, for even the men of highest rank who had any intercourse with the prince, representative of the king in person, dropped to their haunches, and rose to human stature again only when the interview ended. In making any request of him, or in receiving anything from him, even the boatmen squatted, holding both hands, palms together, above the head. The village notables wore sampots of many colors--purple, pink, grass-green--topped by khaki coats of uniform cut, which they evidently donned in our honor. Always they brought us leaf-wrapped cones of flowers, usually on banana-leaf platters. A supply of these bouquets of greeting, one concluded, must be kept on hand for emergencies."

23; Franck--336 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 576, 622, 609 Ethnic subgroup

"Village chiefs bent low before the emissary of the king, putting their hands on their knees, for evidently this prince was not close enough to royalty to be worthy of the complete squat; or the people here may have been more independent. In turn the head-man of a village is a real boss-provided he has a very commanding way. This one of Ban-namon, otherwise known as Muong Kassy--ban seems to mean town, and a muong is a division something like the commune of France--did not have much head-man personality, or he had less respect or fear for princely orders than his attitude suggested; so that when I went for my daily conversation with my family I had also to wire back to the commissaire and insist on fresh horses, for none had been provided, the strict orders of the king and the French notwithstanding."

68: Mouhot--154 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians

116, 431, 576, 556, 609

"I am literally pillaged by these petty mandarins and chiefs of villages, [HD: in southern Luang Prabang province] and have to give away guns, sabres, lead, powder, colours, pencils, and even my paper; and then, after having received their presents, they will not put themselves out of their way to do me the smallest service. I would not wish my most deadly foe, if I had one, to undergo all the trouble and persecution of this kind which I have encountered."

68: Mouhot--268-269 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 123, 576, 609, 646

"No event could have caused more sensation here [HD: in Luang Prabang] than the arrival of 'the long-bearded stranger.' From the humblest to the greatest--for even here are distinctions of rank--every one [269] looks on a 'white' as a natural curiosity, and they are not yet satisfied with looking--nothing is talked of but the stranger. When I pass through the town in my white dress, to go to the market or to visit the pagodas or other interesting places, the people crowd round me, and look after me as long as they can catch a glimpse of me. Everywhere I go complete silence reigns, and I am treated as though I were a sovereign or prince, and the council, by order of the king, have given to me as to them power of life or death over his subjects. Poor people! why can I not raise you from the abasement into which you have fallen?"

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

403 electricians hugged each other, and, enchanted by the din, the
527 audience began to drift away from the theatre and make for the dancing floor.

527 The second attraction in order of popularity was a love-court. A
584 quadrangular arrangement of tables had been formed, covered by a
782 thatched roof raised on posts decorated with woven bamboo
793 representations of animals, weapons and phallic emblems. Seated round the tables in the interior of the square were the girls, and their suitors sat facing them. Between the couples had been placed offerings of food, brought by the girls. Originally a tribute to some ancient, forgotten fertility god, a primeval Thai Venus, the offerings would be given, next day, to the bonzes. All through the night the bantering of witticisms, the singing and the exchange of improvised verse would go on, accompanied by the accordion-like
[534] wheezings of the Kène, the Stone Age gourd pipes of Laos. Sometimes through a happy fault in the circuit the splutter and bellow of the loud-speakers would suddenly lapse, and you heard the beehive dronings of the communal love-making, the kènes, and the voice of the presiding bonze, preaching continually in an archaic, incomprehensible language from the wicker cage into which he had been fastened. The cage symbolized the protection of his religion from these earthly distractions. As soon as inspiration failed he would be relieved by the next on the rota of preachers, waiting now to take his place.

584 Love-courts are the accepted preliminary to the consummation of
[533] affairs of the heart, which – despite European conviction that
576 romantic love is a Western invention – are accompanied in Laos by much versifying and mild, self-imposed frustrations. When, for instance, a well-known beauty is wooed by a number of suitors, a serenading match may be arranged on the veranda of her house to permit her to test under competitive conditions the poetic and musical capabilities of each of them. Complete pre-marital freedom
[836] is recognized, but much outward reserve is maintained. There is a time and place for everything. It is incorrect, for example, to

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

acknowledge in the street a lady with whom one happens to be on 584
particularly good terms. These things in Laos are fraught with an 576
etiquette which is the legacy of a highly organized society not too far gone in decay.

The charm of Vientiane lies in the life and the customs of the 346
people. Unless one is an amateur of pagoda architecture there is 531
little else to be seen. The Laotians have preferred to work in wood, rather than stone, and their art, confined chiefly to the decoration by religious artists of the doors, pillars and interiors of pagodas, quickly perishes in such a climate.

Outside the town there is a great, grey, half-decayed *stupa*, built 771
as a tomb for a hair of the Buddha. It is surrounded by a cloister, 755
containing perhaps a thousand Buddha images; a collection of 778
which the people of Vientiane are very proud. But even here, where the religion is practised in its purest form, there is a little degeneration, a little backsliding from the lofty philosophic conception; and the taint of magic practices shows itself. Selecting one of the numerous images as a personal tutelary divinity, the devotee subjects it to a kind of bribery similar to that sometimes practised in Southern Europe with images of the saints. In this case the image's chief function is healing, and when the sufferer recovers from any complaint he hastens to the pagoda to apply gold-leaf to the part of the Buddha corresponding to that where he has felt the pain in his own body. I was interested to deduce from this practice that the people of Vientiane are much plagued by headaches – perhaps [164]
those which accompany malaria.

Standing in a corner of the sanctuary was an ancient ithyphallic 778
statue, an old Hindu divinity, no doubt, which had been worn 789
smooth in the appropriate parts by the feminine adoration of a 892
thousand years. I was told that the women of the French colony who wish for a child frequently emulate their husbands' pose of Laos-ization by coming here secretly to pay their respects. I 000
wondered whether this clandestine tribute might not be extended

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

deserted the village paddy fields at our approach. Dupont told the 361
driver to wait behind as we went into the village. As a convert to 361
the Laotian way of life he paid much attention to local etiquette; 576
he said that we must on no account appear with arms. There were 784
no signs of life in the village and Dupont found this disconcerting. We must keep a careful look-out, he said, for a white thread across the path, or a cross decorated with red flowers. Either would mean that the village was taboo to strangers; in the first case because of a violent death or the presence of epidemic disease and in the second because the feast of the tutelary spirit was being celebrated. It was for reasons of these periodical taboos that Laotian villages, although built as near as possible to roads, were not actually on them. The places where we had stopped that day were not true Laotian villages at all, but military posts, around which a few store-keepers, mostly Chinese, had grouped themselves.

Although Dupont could find no signs of a definite taboo, he was 576
still very uneasy that no one had come out to greet us. The correct 784
thing on entering a Laotian village with the intention of staying the night was to ask for the headman and obtain his permission to do so. Unless this were done it would be a grave discourtesy to enter any house. Dupont emphasized that while the Laotians were tolerant, civilized and hospitable, there were certain indispensable forms, and as we mooched about the deserted village, he poured out information on the subject; even describing the position for correct sleeping; body stretched out at right angles to wall containing door, feet pointing to the door. When I suggested that we might find an empty hut and sleep in it, he was startled. Although the villagers might overlook minor breaches of custom, he said, this would be a grave one, involving them in an expensive purification ceremony before the hut could be occupied again.

I offered no more suggestions and in the end we found a rather 576
scared looking woman who said, when Dupont spoke to her in Laotian, that the headman was away, and was not expected back. It was quite clear now that we were not welcome, and Dupont said

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

576 that perhaps it would be better, after all, not to sleep in the village. Thinking about this experience afterwards, I concluded that the villagers dared not welcome us in the usual way, being unable to guarantee our safety, with the Issarak bands and the Viet-Minh in the neighbourhood. I expected that Dupont would now resign himself and return to Vang Vieng, but he began to produce arguments for carrying on. The worst thing about the convoy, he said, was that it prevented our seeing so many things and doing so many things that we could otherwise do. Up in the mountains there were Meo villages, he said, and he badly wanted to get another Meo dog. They were rare and hard to come by, but he knew one of the Meo chiefs who would oblige him. Having found out that I was very ready to be interested in such things, Dupont produced this Meo village as a kind of gaudy enticement. The only thing that separated us from the leisurely enjoyment of such pleasures, was a single village, not more than three kilometres away, which, once passed, was the last until we reached the military post of Muong Kassy, fifty kilometres away, over the mountains. Dupont's final suggestion was that we should stay where we were until about an hour after dark, then creep up to the outskirts of the village – Pha Home was its name – with lights off, switch on the lights to make sure there was no barrier, and rush through it.

At about 8.30, then, by which time Dupont was convinced that the village of Pha Home, with its Viet-Minh visitors, would be peacefully sleeping, we started off. It was difficult to approach the village quietly, as the road was uphill all the way. Dupont stopped and tried to quieten the exhaust, by squeezing the ends of the pipe together. This certainly reduced the exhaust note to a strangled snuffling, but through it sounded too plainly the miscellaneous rattlings that nothing could stop, and as soon as the headlights were switched off there was no way of avoiding the pot-holes and the small, loose boulders, over which we crashed continually. It was lucky for us that the village lay back about a hundred yards from the road. In spite of the hour, it was full of light and animation. As

facing: THE FANTASTIC LANDSCAPE OF NORTHERN LAOS

175* inhabitants and especially the songs and laughter of the beautiful
114 girls bedecked with flowers. . . . It nevertheless follows from his re-
/771 marks that Lan-Xang was then the veritable holy land of Buddhism
792/ and that it possessed the most highly venerated sanctuaries where
priests from Siam and Cambodia "came to spend ten or twelve days
to study and receive their grades."

439 For a long time now the rich traders of Holland had been sending
175* ships into the waters of the Indian Ocean in search of cloves, /106/
nutmeg, pepper, silk goods, gold dust and porcelain. In 1641 the
mother country had made settlements in Java, Sumatra, Borneo, the
Celebes and the Moluccas, and its flag was known as far as the seas of
China and Japan. Several mercantile establishments had sent out
"sub-traders" from Batavia to Siam and to Cambodia. In July 1641
the governor general of Java, Van Diemen, ordered a mission which
was operating in Pnom-Penh on behalf of the East India Company to
send out a caravan to "the land of gum lac and benzoin." Under the
direction of Van Wustof and his assistants William de Gover and Hubert
Boudewinsz, the caravan entered the Mekong. The voyage was a long
and difficult one, and often dangerous where rapids had to be passed.
These men left Phom-Penh on July 20 and reached Vientiane on
November 3 after 106 days of effort. They brought a good-sized
packet of cloth and cottonstuffs, a casket of emeralds set in rings and
small gifts such as brightly colored sampots (?), mirrors which closed
like a book, etc... (1).

1. Cf. Cabaton, Le Laos et les Neerlandais au dix-septieme
siecle (1913).

A few kilometers out of Vientiane a /107/ messenger from the
king came to find out what the foreigners' intentions were and was shown
a letter from Van Diemen to the "sovereign of Laos." He was fully
satisfied and took them to the outskirts of the city to dwellings which
had been prepared for them on the banks of the river. On the follow-
ing day, November 4, the merchandise and gifts were unloaded. On
the 5th the Dutch were received by the king "a quarter of an hour's
/576/ march away from the capital." They knelt down most humbly, their
feet bare, striking the ground three times with their foreheads and
holding a large candle in each hand, and were welcomed in a
tumultuous camp of soldiers, horses and elephants caparisoned with

"But in regard to the kingdom's laws, it is a certain fact that 671
there are very few of them, because, in my opinion, there is no 571
great need of any in order to live in accordance with the customs 626
of the land. The people are brought up to work, to have very little
to do with foreigners, not to undertake anything which might dis-
turb them and to live an idle and /115/ listless life although not
lacking any of the things necessary to preserve it. The king's will,
which does not greatly interfere with his people, takes the place
of a great many laws for them. . . . The manner in which the in-
habitants of the land live with one another is highly civil and
obliging. Unfriendliness and quarrels are banished. . . they all have
enough to live on and get along on, so that one does not hear of
thieves except as a thing quite out of the ordinary. . . . But the /565/
mandarins do not behave in the same way. Indeed, their insolence
and their insulting and criminal conduct dim the praise which the
common people merit on this account, because they abuse the
power which they have in the kingdom, and when they see some-
thing which pleases them. . . they act in such wise as to find means
for taking possession of it.

"But if we should now pass to the person of the king in order to 643*
describe him, there is no monarch, no matter how powerful, whom 174
he does not regard as beneath him, and it would indeed seem that 648
he affects not to yield in any particular to the emperors of China. . .
Only rarely does he appear in public. . . preferring to be worshiped
by his people as a hidden God rather than as a man like themselves
and of the same nature. . . He allows himself to be seen only twice
/116/ a year, for a period of three days, by his people, who re-
ceive this grace from their prince with such gratitude and joyous
sentiments that he forgets nothing on these occasions which might
contribute to their amusement. For this purpose there are several /527/
elephants which are trained to do a thousand little tricks and several wild
animals which are kept chained and made to fight. . . finally there
are wrestlers and gladiators and others, with their skirmishes which
last until last until evening and terminate all this rejoicing. . .

"Of all the prerogatives which he (the king) has, and which are 643*
a further mark of the extent of his power, that of having several 576
petty tributary kings in his dependency who come to his court to do
him homage and acknowledge him as their sovereign and who give
him superb presents, is by no means the least. He receives these
ambassadors in a great parlor seated on an extremely high throne
and garbed in his ceremonial robes, and replies to their civilities

643* through the mouth of his chancellor and never speaks to them ex-
576 cept through a go-between..."

643* A "Trojan War" in Tran-Ninh (1651-1652). Under the firm hand
648* of such a monarch, the vassals and tributary princes eagerly com-
175 plied with the slightest of their sovereign's orders. Great was the
584 astonishment, therefore, when it was learned in 1651 that Chao-Kham-Xan, king of Xieng-Khouang, whom Souligna had asked for the hand of his daughter Nang-Ken-Chan in marriage, had dared to reply that the princess was not free and that he declined the honor of this alliance. Enflamed by the accounts which had been given him of the beauty and wisdom of the "pearl" of Tran-Ninh, the king of Lan-Xang pretended not to notice the affront but gallantly persisted and sent a messenger to take rich gifts to the girl. In vain. Then Souligna sent for the princess manu militari. The detachment was brought to an abrupt halt by the troops of King Chao-Kham-Xan and had to retrace its steps, while the people of Xieng-Khouang foresaw the worst and hastily built a fortress at Pana to protect their capital (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique." Revue indochinoise. Hanoi, 1896./

643* Souligna decided that a small army of two thousand men would
648* be enough to punish Chao-Kham-Xan for his insolence. This force
721 did in fact take the stronghold of Pana by surprise and penetrate into
175* Xieng-Khouang on a bridge /118/ thrown over the ramparts. The king, a prisoner in his own palace, had to give in. But although he surrendered to force he kept a stubborn rancor over this misadventure which was inherited by his son Chao-Kham-Lan who succeeded him in 1688. This prince raised a thousand difficulties in paying the traditional tribute to Lan-Xang, and friendly relations between the two sister states were ended for good and all. In the eighteenth century Xieng-Khouang was to be engaged in a permanent struggle with Souligna's successors, and in the nineteenth century Chao-Noi, a king of Tran-Ninh, was to deliver up the unfortunate king Anou, the last monarch of Vientiane, to Siam.

643* But let us not anticipate further on these events but rather re-
175* turn to the year 1652, when Lan-Xang was shining with all its splendor and when the minor expedition in Xieng-Khouang meant no more to its king than a simple demonstration of his power and his authority.

643 canton heads and heads of villages, who might be described as can-
646 tonal and municipal delegates, gather in the capital of the muong to vote on the names of candidates which are presented. The name of the one who obtains the most votes is then presented by the province administrator to the superior resident, who accepts or rejects him after studying his personal qualities, his aptitudes, his background, etc. In the case of a rejection the electors are consulted a second time. The superior resident names the four chiefs of muongs by delegation from the governor general. These latter may not begin office until they receive their commission, insignia and seal from the French government.

In general, the electors' choice falls on a son, brother or nephew of the high official who is to be replaced, unless he is unworthy or notoriously incapable.

635 Mandarins of lesser importance are named by the province head
647 with the approval of the persons under his administration and of the superior resident.

641 Officials receive a salary only in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang
652 and in the provinces of Vien-Tiane and Muong-Hou. Everywhere else they must be content with a fee equivalent to one-tenth of the sums they collect as taxes.

[693] In their capacity as judges, the muong authorities also collect legal costs and shares in the sums of certain fines, as is the custom of the land.

647 Such, in its general outline, is the organization of the Laotian
576 administration. It generally functions well, is sufficient to the needs of the natives and makes it possible for us, despite the vast extent of our possession, to keep only a few European officials there.

[192] The outer forms of respect towards great men, mandarins and anyone who holds a rank are dictated by Laotian etiquette, as in Siam. One does not speak to a king, a [495] [Illustration] [496] [Blank page] [497] prince or a leader as one would to an equal or an inferior. There are special expressions which are peculiar to the representatives of certain social classes or to the holders of dignities. But even while it conserves, at bottom, the ritual ceremonial forms, Laotian etiquette is paternal and much more spontaneous and genuinely respectful than elsewhere.

When they speak to the king, to princes, to great men, etc., inferiors prostrate themselves, with forehead on clasped hands, near the ground, or with their hands clasped above their head. Outside of this particular case, those present may remain squatting, smoke, talk, laugh and even disturb the audience somewhat. Moreover, no lack whatsoever of respect is to be seen in this liberty

/970/"Laotian Politeness in Ancient and Modern Times (1)"

1. A talk held on June 18, 1949, under the auspices of the Alliance Francaise in Vientiane.

121 An eminent lecturer has said that the Laotian is a humble person. I should like to add that the Laotian is also very polite. If I dared, I would use the past tense! But one should not let oneself be misled by the appearance of the newly arisen cities and the uncertain customs of a generation as yet poorly adjusted, where the old remember the past and where the young believe that much must be destroyed.

That is why the talk that I gave in Laotian on the subject had as much an informative character as an educational one, for I believe that in the era in which we find ourselves it is necessary to help people in making choices and in adjusting themselves. And since we, Frenchmen and Laotians, have been living side by side for more than half a century, we must, in some sort, have an interpretation of French and Laotian customs in order to be able to decide, now in favor of the former, now in favor of the latter.

576 What are the marks of respect?--To show his respect to a superior or to an older person, the Laotian salutes with his hands joined together. This manner of salutation must be preserved. The custom of going on all fours in approaching a mandarin will no longer do. It is, in effect, a humiliating posture. When one passes by a superior it is enough to walk softly while inclining the head a little.

The salute in the Laotian or in the French manner marks the respect of one person toward another. It must be reciprocal, but it is up to the subordinate to salute first.

/971/ When one person salutes another with his hands folded together, the latter must answer in the same manner. If he does not answer at all or only makes a sign with his head he must be considered ill-bred.

177 After having returned the greeting in the Laotian manner,
576 the superior can shake hands in the European manner in order to show his good will towards the person who respects him.

Some say that to salute in the European fashion is too liberal a

177 gesture, and others say that to salute the Laotian way sometimes
576 seems degrading because those whom one greets do not always return the greeting in the same manner, considering it as an homage which is their due but which does not need to be reciprocated.

The Laotian is polite, one must abide by that. The Laotian is respectful of tradition, one must abide by that even more emphatica But let us not forget that from now on all Laotians must have the sense of progress and the desire to improve themselves. Politeness must be neither a unilateral token of respect nor a mark of the humiliation of the human being.

554 To salute in the French manner the subordinate nods his head
576 after having taken off his hat if he is wearing one. If someone extends his hand to him, he shakes it. The superior is the first to hold out his hand. The woman is the first to hold her hand out to a man. To be polite one should shake hands somewhat forcefully. In order to do so one should always use one's right hand and never imitate certain Laotian peasants who, under the pretense of being acquainted with French customs, extend their hand from afar to Europeans while stretching out their left arm.

In the street.--When one meets a high personage in the street it is no longer necessary, as it used to be, to sit down in order to greet him. After having taken off one's hat one nods one's head. If one is not wearing a hat one is free to greet him either by joining one's hands together or by nodding one's head politely. If one is on a bicycle or on a horse, there is no need at all to dismount. The mere gesture of nodding one's head suffices. If one has something to say to a friend whom one meets, one should stand on the side of the street or of the pavement to conduct one's conversation. When one is on a bicycle one should dismount and should not leave one leg over the frame of the bicycle while one is chatting. If one is dealing with a colleague or an intimate friend, one may hail him using expressions like: "Sabay!" (good day), or "Pai sai ma?" (where are you coming from?): that is good tradition, which must always be preserved.

481 Laotians have the habit of walking in Indian file. This habit
576 should be abandoned because it is no longer good form. It will be well to practice the European custom of walking abreast of one another except in cases when this is a hindrance or on a path. When there are two people walking together, /972/ the superior places

481 himself at the right hand side. When there are three, the superior
576 walks in the middle. The same applies to travel in a conveyance. But when the group is very numerous, it is not possible for all to walk abreast. In that case the walkers divide themselves into several groups.

576 Habits and deportment. --The different habits of a person often attract the attention of the others. Our bad habits are immediately remarked by those who surround us; thus we become the laughing-stock of the whole community. Persons who expose themselves to ridicule and to mockery are the fools who make a display of their learning; people who wear glasses without being either near-sighted or farsighted or even without having anything wrong with their eyes; those who lower their hat to the right when the sun strikes their left temple; those who speak and while doing so always keep their pipe or a cigarette in their mouths; those who, while they speak or are walking, constantly keep their hands in the pockets of their trousers; those women whose sin is raised above their knees; and those who make themselves up and dress like actresses.

The habits which I have just described belong to persons who do not take the trouble of observing the behavior of well-bred people in order to follow their example. Those who, instead of observing other, prefer to keep their own bizarre habits are nok vong or nok soun persons (eccentrics).

I cannot, here, enumerate all types of correct behavior. You may consider as good behavior that which does not arouse the attention of others in an unfavorable way. A polite person is recognized by the fact that he talks softly, that he observes the hierarchy and by the fact that he always says: "Khop chai!" (thank you) and "Kho thot!" (pardon me). The politest terms for saying thank you are "Khop khoun!" and "Khop phadet phakhoun!" Well-bred people use these phrases every time they receive something or when someone has rendered them a service. They never forget to say: "Pathan thot!" or "Kho aphaythot!" (1) every time they make a slip in

1. Other terms of politeness used to excuse oneself.

speaking, when they pass in front of, or near, a person, when they are forced to pass through a door ahead of others or when they have

to get something which is above the head of someone else. A polite 576
person realizes that it is very impolite to touch the head of another /826/
person, even that of his closest friend. To hit someone over the head with the mak kok is a very grave offense. The mak kok, which signifies olive, is a fist formed in such a manner that the middle finger sticks out beyond the other fingers. To point out an object with one's foot is the gesture of a very crude person. A polite person always avails himself of the index finger of his right hand to point out something to someone.

On a visit. --When one arrives at the house of a Laotian 574
one walks very softly and greets in the Laotian manner. If the owner 576
of the house /973/ extends his hand, one should greet him in the European manner. Once in the living room one must wait till one is told "Sit down" before sitting down. The polite person asks his guest to sit down immediately after the exchange of greetings.

When you enter the house of a European, never walk in stealthily the way you do with a Laotian. The European would think that you had come to stab him. You should walk in such a way that he can hear you, without, at the same time, stamping on the floor with all your strength because you would, in so doing, frighten the master of the house. Before entering, you must knock on the door quite forcefully; then you must wait till you are told: "Come in!" or till someone comes to open the door for you. The Laotian visitor does not dare knock on the door for fear of committing an impoliteness, but he coughs outside the door.

In the living room the master of the house has arranged all
the furniture in a certain way. When you are invited to sit down, /353/
you should do so without moving the chair that is designated to you. If you are offered a cigarette, you may refuse politely if you do not not smoke. If you do smoke, you should accept it. You will notice that there are ash-trays in the room. Use them. Do not drop the ashes from your cigarette on the table, the chair or on the floor.

To receive something from a superior, the polite Laotian extends his right hand supported by his left hand.

Visiting the sick. --When one of our acquaintances has fallen 734
sick, we must inquire about him by paying him a visit. If one is prevented from doing so by something important, one can have a

734 friend take one's place.

Laotians when they pay a visit to a sick person, prattle noisily,
574 ask the sick person a great number of unnecessary questions, and
576 sometimes tell him stories to cheer him up. This custom must stop. The patient, who is tired, needs rest. The visit one pays him should not last longer than ten minutes.

574 Condolence visit. --The Laotian ceremony connected with
576 the condolence visit is the opposite of the Western ceremony. The
764 The visitor, instead of appearing sad before the family of the deceased, is gay and smiling.

In order to give you an idea of what goes on in a house in which a death has taken place among the Laotians, I shall content myself by citing here certain passages from my article, "The custom
764 of funeral ceremonies in the land of Laos" (1): "Those who believe
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576 1. In Kinnary, No. 4, November, 1946.

in the existence of the phi place a tray of food intended for the deceased near the coffin. Furthermore they place, at the head of the coffin, a sword marked with a cross with chalk, together with a superstitious formula in order to prevent the phi from stealing the coffin away from the deceased. The coffin has to be watched over day and night. The watchers talk, play certain games, or engage in any other diversion. /274/

/825/ "In the course of this watch cats are also prevented from prowling around the coffin. A cat which were to jump across would provoke the resurrection of the dead person, according to what certain people say.

"The house in which the person has died is called heuan di (happy house). There one works, sings, dances, and plays. From it can be heard the sound of orchestras and shouts of joy. Such spectacles have something disconcerting about them to the eyes of strangers. Nevertheless, one should not regard this behavior as a sign of irreverence towards the deceased person. Despite its smiling appearance, the family of the deceased suffers profoundly. It abstains from violent shedding of tears and from public lamentations because it considers a discreet grief more dignified and the sense one has of death in [illegible]y a nobler one."

/779/ It would be difficult not to respect this tradition which stems

from the Buddhist religion; but there is reason, in my opinion, for 764
banishing all that is in the domain of superstition. 574

European custom, in contrast, permits the person in mourning 576
not to receive the visitor in the house of the deceased because he is
too afflicted. In this case the visitor leaves a card with a few words 000
of condolence.

If the person in mourning comes to receive the visitor, the latter should assume a sad air and he must not speak of the dead person first. This visit is paid out of sympathy for the family which is in mourning. It should not last too long because grief requires solitude.

Duties of the visitor. --On this subject I advise the adoption of the French custom:

The visitor dresses properly and in a correct manner. If he is wearing a coat and a hat, and carrying an umbrella and a cane, he puts them off before knocking on the door. He greets the lady and the master of the house before the other persons who are present. If the latter are too numerous he is not obligated to shake hands with everybody. It will be enough if he nods his head a couple of times to the right and to the left.

He takes his leave by shaking hands with the lady and the master of the house. In order to salute the other people present he performs the same movements as at his entry. If the number of people present is too large he may skillfully slip away; that is what is called loi vat angkit in Laotian ("to take French leave").

Duties of the host. --Here again my preference is for Western customs:

The host, when he sees his guests coming, appears before them to welcome them. After the exchange of greetings he designates the seats and invites everyone to sit down. When everybody is seated, somebody enters; he extends his hand and everybody rises to greet him. A lady does not get up to return the greeting except in the case of a personage of /975/ note or of a venerable old man.

The hostess and the host must appear affable and smiling during the whole time of the reception. When somebody takes his leave they accompany him to the door.

At a gathering. --At a gathering it is the duty of everyone to

000 indispensable for us to be acquainted with customs of our French friends. This is to prevent that in the course of a French-Laotian gathering we should be embarrassed in our actions and gestures. The French on their side should not be ignorant of our customs; a gesture of Laotian politeness might well be misinterpreted by those who are unacquainted with our customs, and that would be a regrettable misunderstanding.

How a Laotian Mandarin Should Behave.

647 A high Laotian functionary, in order to be worthy of his rank,
576 must have a different bearing depending on whether he finds himself in the exercise /977/ of his functions, among his family, or at private gatherings.

577 In the office. --In his office the mandarin behaves in an irre-
647 proachable fashion in order to show himself worthy of the functions that he holds. In this way he sets a good example to the officials who are under his authority. Before he reprimands one of his subordinates, he must have thought the matter over to get a clear idea of the effects that his reprimand may have. The man who has received the reprimand will not fail to answer, in effect, any unfounded criticism. If the head of a department hands out reprimands on every possible occasion, even for minimal matters, his staff will end up by being used to his unnecessary harangues. By this process one scarcely makes oneself obeyed and respected. In short, the mandarin should "turn his tongue seven times in his mouth" before speaking; he has a correct appearance and is concerned about his reputation and his honor.

593 In the family. --The mandarin must be a good father of his
647 family in the company of his wife and of his children. He facilitates
665 the household work entrusted to his wife, in place of picking quarrels with her from vain motives. Crude forms of expression may give rise to arguments. It is up to you, mandarin, to avoid them. It is possible that your wife may throw you into a fit of anger. In that case it is up to you to control yourself and at the same time to try and appease your companion by consoling words. If one of the partners in a marriage is "fire," so goes a Laotian adage, the other must

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The person whose absent spirits are to be recalled sits next to the pha khouan, on the other side of which is the achar master of ceremonies facing him.

[585]

In the case of a wedding, the bride and bridegroom each sits in front of his and her own pha khouan and achar, the young man being on the right of his affianced.

Those present, consisting of aged persons, notables, relatives, friends and acquaintances, sit around mostly behind the interested parties.

While the candles are lighted, the achar commences to recite the prayer.

After the litanies are ended, the oldest and most respected of the assembly begins a series of the phouk khene (fixing a thread to the wrist) starting with the achar. The latter extends his forearm horizontally, either his right or his left, bent at right angles and held near the elbow by the hand of another person in the gathering. The opposite hand must be held in the attitude of prayer in front of the face as if it were joined to the hand on the other side. The man who will tie the knot then grasps the white cotton thread by the middle, so that the two halves hang down. These he draws over the wrist which is held in both directions of the axis of the arm, in order to sweep away the kho, that is, the misfortunes sent as a punishment for former sins. Then he detaches from the extremity of each thread a little piece which he throws towards the setting sun, thus throwing the kho afar. He then takes the khay khouan, a [51] pellet of rice, a banana, and finally one of the precious objects contained in the pha khouan. These he places in the extended open hand to serve as an offering to the khouan, and brings the small tray containing the khay khouan closer in such a way that the back of this hand is in contact with that of the chicken. Finally, after tying the thread around the wrist, he grasps the loops of the knot between the thumb and the forefinger, and rolls them together for about a second, giving him time to finish the formula of good wishes which he has been murmuring since the beginning while accomplishing the gestures described above.

The symbolical knot tied to the wrist serves to hold the khouan who have just been attracted to it, and prevents them from wandering away again. One can take advantage of the opportunity to "tie the wrist" of anyone present, either as a sign of friendship or of hommage. [576] At the close of the ceremony, which comes to an end without any more formalities, everyone is invited to a meal offered for the occasion.

10: d'Orleans--276 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 563, 577, 775 Ethnic subgroups

"I do not know whether our boatmen [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] have followed any religious courses, but they do not seem to trouble themselves about the future. One of them first tells me that he does not know what will happen in the other life; then he adds that he believes he shall return to this world as a man, if he shows mercy during his lifetime, that is if he gives rice to the dogs and cats, or performs any other charitable actions;if not his soul will pass into the body of an animal."

10: d'Orleans--366 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 577, 775

"They themselves know little; they believe that charitable people will be recompensed, taking on another individuality after death, and that the wicked will go to hell. 'There are, however, at Luang Prabang,' they add, 'some men who do not believe in hell, who do not give to the bonzes, who drink tchoum-tchoum, and who smoke opium.'"

25: Brodrick--101 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 181, 522, 577

"The Laotians like to laugh, that is to say that they like to enjoy the circumstances which move them to mirth and then they like to go on laughing because laughing makes them, as all of us, feel happy... And, if it is incongruity which moves us most to laugh, then those are most happy who live in a society full of conventions whose breach is ridiculous, provided, of course, that such a breach is not such a sin, such a crime and such a misdemeanour that laughter outlaws us. The Laotian has plenty of conventions, but he feels they are made to be breached. Happy people.

The Laotian is cheerful and serene and contented, perhaps from some strange physiology of his glands, of his bodily make-up and of his environment, or of all of these, but he is most of all happy because he has but few needs."

000 indispensable for us to be acquainted with customs of our French friends. This is to prevent that in the course of a French-Laotian gathering we should be embarrassed in our actions and gestures. The French on their side should not be ignorant of our customs; a gesture of Laotian politeness might well be misinterpreted by those who are unacquainted with our customs, and that would be a regrettable misunderstanding.

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73: Hammer--250-251 S-4 (no date) 1951 Laotians
578

"The greater part of the Laotian guerrilla movement, which was based largely on per-
[251] sonal rivalries within the royal family, seems to have collapsed in 1949 and made
its peace with the Laotian government and with France."

557 the people, and finally took a major part in the direction of the king-
643* dom's affairs. Thammikarath was wounded in his paternal pride,
175* would not countenance this premature interference in his royal prero-
/578/ gatives, and treated his son as a rebel (1621).

OUPAGNOUVARATH (1598), KING 1622-1623.

669 Supported by the majority of the ministers and by /101/ one of
578 his brothers, Mone-Keo, Oupagnouvarath entered into an open struggle
643* against his father, defeated the troops who had remained faithful to
175* the latter in bloody battles, and had himself proclaimed king in Vientiane on the "Sunday, first day of the crescent moon of the fourth month of the year 984" (1622). Three months later, Thammikarath was killed at his orders, together with his last partisans, in Pha-Deng. The epilogue of this somber family drama was not long in coming, for Oupagnouvarath died the following year under unknown circumstances.

662 With his death the intrigues for the crown began all over again,
175* and during a new period of nearly fifteen years, which the confusion of the Annals obscures as if intentionally, princes succeeded one another in Vientiane without any reference point for the chronicler and without any probable date which would make it possible to establish even an approximate chronology.

PHOTHISARAT II, KING 1623-1627.

643* We may nevertheless agree that it was one of Sene-Soulintha's sons
175* who seized power in 1623 under the name of Phothisarath (a fact which further complicates this imbroglio).

/102/ MONE-KEO, OUPAGNAOVARATH, TONE-KHAM, VISAI, KINGS 1627-1637.

The national dynasty resumed its prerogatives in 1627 with, successively, Oupagnouvarath's brother Mone-Keo, Mone-Keo's son named Oupagnaovarath (?), and finally with the latter's two sons Tone-Kham and Visai. The last-named died in 1637 (1).

648* 1. It was fortunate for Lan-Xang that the Burmese had been
175* driven back by the Thais of the Menam and had abandoned all action in the territories once subject to the rule of Bureng-Naung. If this had not been the case the historian of today would doubtless be somewhat more clear as to the events of the time, but Lan-Xang would certainly have sunk permanently into anarchy and into the partitioning which

68: Mouhot--110 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians

116, 484, 776, 823, 579

"As for the Laotians, I have found them, although superstitious, very courageous, especially those who traverse this forest [HD: i.e. Dong Phya Phia, the forest of the 'King of Fire', between Khao-Khoc and Korat in Siam] eight or ten times a year. Some of them even venture to awake the 'King of Fire' by bringing down game or shooting at robbers: yet death , even in the best season, carries off one or two out of every ten who travel here. I think the number of those who fall victims to this terrible journey must be considerable in the rainy season, when every torrent overflows its bounds; the whole soil is soaked, the pathways nothing but bogs, and the rice-grounds covered with several feet of water. After five or six days' walking through all this, with feet in the mud, the body in a profuse perspiration, and breathing a fetid atmosphere, hot as a stove and reeking with putrid miasma, what wonder that many sink and die?"

68: Mouhot--112 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 776, 823, 579

"Our guides are all Laotians from the neighbourhood of Korat, and their leader is unremitting in his care and attention towards me. Every evening he prepares my place for the night, levelling the ground and cutting down branches which he covers with leaves, and I am thus raised from the earth and protected from the dew. These guides lead a hard life, tramping in all seasons along these wretched roads, having scarcely time, morning and evening, to swallow a little rice, and having but little sleep at nights, tormented by ants, and exposed to the attacks of robbers, against whom they have constantly to be on their guard."

68: Mouhot--113 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 579, 162, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"These precautions are very necessary, for Korat is a nest of robbers and assassins, the resort of all the scum of the Laotian and Siamese races. Bandits and vagrants, escaped from slavery or from prison, gather here like the vultures and wolves which follow armies and caravans. It is not that they enjoy complete immunity, for the [HD: Siamese] governor, son of Bodine, the general who conquered Battambong and the revolted provinces, is viceroy of the state, has absolute power of life and death, and is, they say, very severe, cutting off a head or a hand with little compunction. But still it is Siamese justice, 'non inviola:' there are neither gendarmes nor police; the person robbed must himself arrest the offender and bring him before the judge. Even his neighbour will give no assistance in the capture."

68: Mouhot--275-276 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians

116, 162, 579

"Korat Ongcor Aithe of the Cambodians was formerly the bulwark of Cambodia on the north and west: a solid rampart supported by a large épaulement, the work of Khmer Dôme (the ancient Cambodians), still surrounds the town. It is at present governed by a Siamese mandarin of the first class, a kind of viceroy, but the ancient inhabitants have nearly disappeared, and it contains only about 300 Chinese or their descendants, small resident merchants, 300 other individuals who go about the country trading, and 1500 or 2000 Laotians, Cambodians, and Siamese, who, like wolves or jackals which follow an army or caravan, have come there from all parts of the kingdom, or have remained there after the wars of Laos and Cambodia, in [276] order to lead a life in harmony with their inclinations, attacking travellers and Chinese merchants, in fact a band of miscreants, with few exceptions destitute of all good qualities."

149: Reinach--188 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

101 [261] [Illustration] [262] [Blank page] [263] As far as marriages, deaths, etc. go, we find practically the same customs among the Kha tribes of southern Laos as among their fellows in northern Laos.

231 It should be noted that the Rades breed a variety of small horses
439 which are highly prized in Annam, Laos and Siam.

[533] "These Khas love music and dancing. Their favorite instruments are gongs and bells.

534 "A set of gongs consists of seven, nine or twelve single ones. Made of copper and often very beautiful, these gongs take the shape of a cylinder from forty to eighty centimeters in diameter, only one end of which is closed by a vibrating plate. The cap worn by our judges and professors, although on a smaller scale, gives a fairly clear idea of the shape of these instruments. A few of the instruments are artfully cast and ornamented with much elegance. There is a solid ring about a third of the way along the gong's length which is part and parcel with the rest of the gong and makes it possible to hang it up on a side of the house, at about the height of a man's head, by means of a rattan thong fastened to the frame.

"The performers stand facing the battery and pummel it with their fists, taking care to strike the vibrating plate in the center so that it will emit a true tone. This procedure produces perfect musical notes, which are accompanied by the dull resonances of the tom-toms and the sharp sonorities of the bells made of a copper and tin alloy. The gongs bring a high price, and when it is a fine one a complete series is worth from 1,200 to 1,500 francs.

"In some villages the performers each take an instrument and hold it in a sling fastened to their shoulder, then form a column in single file. This Indian-style procession marches from the center of the house towards one of its extremities, striking more and more gently as it moves away from its point of departure. Then it returns to the center, unleashing a compensating crescendo. The maneuver begins again towards the other end of the house, and the musical promenade continues until the musicians are exhausted.

535 "When the Khas begin to play and perform the Kimlang (a very
272 stirring war dance) and the warriors grow excited from dancing and
579 from drinking rice wine, it is wise to make them stop as soon as they begin to pick up their weapons, for when drunk with alcohol and enflamed with ardor they are no longer masters of themselves.

714 "War dress includes feathers in the hair and a sort of cross of Saint Andrew formed of cloth rolled and crossed on the chest. Weapons, quivers, arrows, crossbows, bucklers, spears and swords complete their equipment.

Kha

563 their prisoners among the Djarais. This state of affairs cannot go on
567 [106] indefinitely, and after settling the question of the Djarais which is more urgent, it will be necessary for Annam and Laos to pacify these tribes by a common agreement.

563 4. Rognao, Bahnar, Goelar and Habau Khas. These tribes, over
797 whom the missionaries exercise moral authority and many of whose villages are Catholic, can be regarded as pacified even though they do not pay any tribute. I have previously explained why it would not be politic, in my opinion, to require tribute in this region as of the present time.

These tribes, which are entirely located in Laotian territory, are quite tranquil but in continual dread of undertakings by their Djarai neighbors.

563 5. The great Djarai tribe, which is by far the most important and most numerous in the estimation of the missionaries. It is said to include nearly 150,000 inhabitants and is the finest racial type which I have seen in all the Kha region.

Many villages are subject to our authority and pay the head tax. Others, such as those which I found in the valley of the Psi and on the Sesane, obey our orders, keep the roads in repair, receive traders and travelers with perfect hospitality and will pay tribute whenever we wish.

563 But there are two groups which are absolutely rebellious to our
[619] penetration. These are: 1) the groups of villages of Pley-Qho and Pley-Denang immediately south of the mission; and 2), somewhat
[643] further to the south, the group of the Sadetes whose two chieftains, the kings of water and fire, inhabit the points which are marked on
579 the map as Pa-Tao-Ia and Pa-Tao-Ngo.

The first of these groups has continuously committed hostile
563 acts against us. They are the ones who attacked the convoy of M.
668 Navelle when this official came to visit the mission, who have constantly attacked convoys on the road from Ang-Ke to Kon-Toum,
726 who more recently robbed a Laotian hunter of merchandise valued at more than 1,000 piasters and pierced him with sword thrusts, and, finally, who attacked M. Lacouture and killed one of his guides. These villages are dreaded by all their neighbors. It was they against whom Meyréna (1) marched, but his success was not sufficiently

(1) Since I have been led to pronounce the name of the man who dreamed of creating a Cedang kingdom, I should say a few words regarding this adventure which seems to me to have been greatly exaggerated.

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
1 [M. Leveau, senior French official in Laos.--Analyst] Laotians AM8 Kha AM7

INTO THE MEO COUNTRY

After dinner, when the Conseiller[1] relaxed for an hour, he could L 669 sometimes be persuaded to talk about some of his problems. These 579 were the chronic worries of the Issarak[2] and the Viet-Minh. To 548 the west of Luang Prabang the frontier with Burma started, and Burmese irregulars crossed it from time to time. Chinese opium smugglers conducted a regular trade with the Meos, and turned pirate when business was bad. But now that the communists had taken over in Yunnan there was some signs of this traffic slackening. And then the Meos themselves. They were passing like a blight through the mountains. Leveau's ambition was to change their agricultural habits. If they could be persuaded to come down to 1000 feet he could give them irrigated rice-fields to cultivate, and had offered to provide the buffaloes to do the work.

I brought up the question of the Khas. The Khas are the aboriginals K of Laos and are, in fact, Moï tribes under another name. Several 566 hundred years ago they were conquered and enslaved by the Laotian 769 nation, and now Khas were to be seen hanging about the market places of Laotian towns and villages, utterly broken and degenerate; as helpless as the pathetic remnants of once powerful Indian tribes in North America. I asked if it was true that Laotians still possessed Kha slaves. Leveau smiled in his tolerant and sceptical Laotian way and said that it all depended what you meant by slavery. The slavery of the old West Indian plantation kind was unknown in the Far East. For superstitious if for no other reasons, the peoples of Indo-China always trod very gently when it came to oppression of others. The spirits of their ancestors had to be reckoned with, and they themselves if pushed too far might be forced to revenge themselves by the efficient, occult methods strangers were always imagined to possess. He cited the well-known fact of a collective bad-conscience on the part of the Vietnamese, who conduct special sacrifices and offer symbolical rent to the spirits of the unknown aboriginal possessors of the land they now occupy. Leveau believed 566 that slavery did occasionally exist, but that it took more the form of a racial aristocracy maintaining a subject people in a condition of

2 ["free men" of Laos and Cambodia.--Analyst]

king of Luang-Prabang could make themselves heard more effec- 648*
tively than he himself could. 643*
175*

/190/ First mission to China (1729). Intha-Som recognized 563
the truth of this bit of advice and in 1729 charged Phya-Muong-
Khoua, Phya-Mune and Phya-Sivongsa to go to the emperor of /431/
China, deliver two elephants to him as a gift and ask him to recall
the Mousseux.

After a long voyage the mission reached Pekin without any untoward happening. They were welcomed most courteously and the Chinese government promised to give satisfaction, but only on condition that the king of Luang-Prabang should continue to send a pair of elephants every five years. An agreement was reached on this basis and the ambassadors brought back to Luang-Prabang the assurance that the Mousseux would be invited to return to their own country (1).

1. The viceroy of "Muong-Se-Luong" received orders to recall all the Mousseux to China. The orders must have been carried out rather ineffectively, for today the Mousseux still form an important group in the region of Muong-Sing.

Second mission to China (1734). A second mission also led by 648*
Phya-Muong-Khoua left five years later to deliver the promised 175*
tribute, but on their way encountered bands of robbers called /579/
"White Flags" who forced them to fall back /191/ on Muong-La.
Phya-No-Muong placed an escort of five hundred men at their disposition and sent word to the Chinese governor of Yunnan-Sen who also sent out a detachment at once to disperse the pirates. The latter's leaders were finally captured and handed over to the emperor's delegate. The ambassadors were then able to fulfill their mission and returned to Luang-Prabang laden with gifts for their king (1).

1. The Guimet Museum has the seal which was delivered by China to the "Sovereigns of Laos" when the Tartaro-Manchu dynasty acceded to the throne, "in exchange for the one which they held from the Ming dynasty." (Pavie, A la conquete des coeurs, p. 347.) Intha-Som was therefore reviving an age-old tradition. This seal, which was carried off by Deo-van-Tri when Luang-Prabang was sacked by his

115: Le Boulanger--147 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8
Ho

Although not organized at first, their bands gradually formed 175*
into armed contingents which soon became known under the names 563
of /237/ black, yellow or red Flags, depending on the color of
their banners. In contrast to the Meos, who were called White
Flags (1) and whose settlement fifteen years previously had, on the

1. See above, pp. 212 and 213.

whole, been permanent and not too violent, the Hos waged a war
of brigandry which calls to mind the sinister exploits of the Grandes /579/
Compagnies which were dismembered by Du Guesclin. They razed
villages, held the terrorized inhabitants for ransom, or else hired
themselves out to the inhabitants to protect them against other
bands. The cantons of the Black River were the first to fall prey to
their pillaging, but then the leaders of the region came to terms
with them, interested them in their internal disputes, took them
with them to the Tonkinese delta to aid the Annamites against the
French, and finally sent one band against another in the Laotian
territories which they devastated as far as Nong-Khay. Both mili-
tary and diplomatic action had to be taken by France following the
first Pavie mission in order to suppress them. Those of them who /144/
did not go back to China abandoned their guns to become farmers,
married Thai or Kha wives and thus created a stock of mixed blood
which, by successive crossings, /238/ merged into the mass of the
population.

Restitution of the Prabang by Siam (1867). In the midst of all 648*
the cares which the threats of these invaders caused him, Tiantha- 175*
Koumane had the satisfaction of restoring the venerated statue of 778
the Prabang to his people.

Carried off to Vientiane by Thao-Nong in 1707 and ravished
successively by Chulalok in 1778 and by Bodin in 1828 (1), the

1. See above, pp. 47, 133, 156, 158 and 174.

kingdom's ancient palladium was finally returned by King Mongkut,
in 1867, to Fa-Ngoun's descendant, who sent the Oupahat Oun-Kham
to Bangkok to take solemn possession thereof.

Taken by land as far as Xieng-Mene (Luang-Prabang right bank),
it was displayed for seven days and seven nights at the landing of

Laotian provinces, over which it exercised only nominal authority as yet (2). It must, however, combat the rights which Annam /161/

2. Even over the old principality of Vientiane, now three- /631/
quarters depopulated, where it had had the wisdom, or the weakness, to leave the old chiefs of muongs in charge of the government and had required of them only an oath of fidelity and the payment of personal and land taxes in the form of one large annual tribute.

might one day be led to assert over these regions, and it must place them under military occupation so as to present the emperor Tu-Duc, and eventually the Quai d'Orsay, with a fait accompli without further delay. The great invasion of Tran-Ninh by the Hos was to furnish it a pretext in 1873.

/242/ Invasion of Tran-Ninh by the Hos (1872). A large band 563
of "Red Flags," numbering about two thousand pirates who had 175*
been driven out of the Black River by the "Yellow Flags" towards /167/
the end of 1871, fell upon the plateau by way of Xieng-Ko, which /579/
it sacked despite the desperate resistance of the inhabitants, and entrenched itself in the island of Bandon near the village of Banban. A first column which Chao-Hung sent against it fled bravely at the first contact with the invaders, and since everything ends in a song in the land of Laos, their panic was at once turned to ridicule and put in couplets which are still sung today (1).

1. The following is a translation of the first of these 539
couplets:

Sanousit leaves his opium pipe which is lost.
Sisania throws away his opium lamp.
Chao-un-Vico abandons his Annamite gong.
All is lost, all is thrown away.
They hide in the forest, gasping with fear.
They do not even keep so much as a pin.
They hasten homewards through the brush.
By the shortest road.
For three days it is impossible to eat.
Chao-un-Vico's face is no longer human (fear has distorted his features).

"It seems that this refrain was sung whenever Sanousit, 563
175*

Anou's old capital without difficulty and fortified themselves there, 726
completing the destruction of its ruins in their search for the royal 175*
treasures (1), and from there sent rapid incusrions into the present- 563

1. They tore down the central minaret of the That-Luong.

day muong of Borikhane.

The governor of Nongkhay, blackaded in his city which was 648*
thronged with fugitives, joined his cries of alarm to the appeal 726
which the king of Luang-Prabang had sent to Bangkok, and the 175*
Siamese government dispatched an army which first succeeded in 563
driving the Hos northward and then launched a flank attack on them
by detaching eight hundred men and sending them to reinforce the
forces which King Oun-Kham had mobilized. But the campaign
which had been so forcefully begun soon softened in the face of
the pirates' counterthrusts, /245/ for the latter had shut themselves
into nearly impregnable fortresses. Pressed to make an end of it
and to save face, the Siamese leaders came to terms with them and
gave them permission to remain in the land in return for vague
recognition of the suzerainty of Bangkok. As for the surviving in-
habitants of the circumscriptions which had been purged of Hos, /727/
they were "severely blamed for having fled before the enemy" and
driven along the Mekong with their flocks. "10,600, men, women
and children departed. The exodus of these poor folk across this
land of famine was a pitiful spectacle. Most of them died along
the way, and a few were able to flee. Only six thousand reached
Siam" (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./

Luang-Prabang had been miraculously spared, but anarchy of 579
the utmost violence was unleased at the very gates of the princi- 563
pality. The "Yellow Flags" invaded the Sip-Song-Chau-Thai, 727
whose leader Cam-Sinh had joined forces with the "Black Flags" 175*
of Ong-Liu (2), while the Meos and the Khas stirred up trouble in

2. Luu-Vinh-Phuoc, encamped at Lao-Kay.

their turn -- seemingly at first merely in self-defense against the
Hos, then as a means of existence in the general confusion -- by

579 ravaging the region of Dien-Bien-/246/ Phu as far as Muong-Ngoi.
563 King Oun-Kham was growing old and carefree and felt incapable,
727 when left entirely to his own resources, of calming the mortal dis-
175* quietude of his people. Thus Siamese agents, the number of whom
/648/* was constantly on the increase, were welcomed all along the Upper
Mekong as the only protectors from whom effective aid could be expected.

636 Relations with the cantons of the Black River. The man Cam-
175* Sinh, who was of Chinese origin himself, was nevertheless a friend of the princes of Luang-Prabang, but he was then too preoccupied with driving the invaders out of his own domains to lend any support to his neighbor.

His remote ancestors were military mandarins in Quang-Si and had settled three hundred years previously in Muong-Lai, which they had pacified in behalf of the king of Anna. Their authority extended around Lai-Chau as far as Yunnan in the north and Muong Theng in the south (Dien-Bien-Phu, the legendary cradle of the Laotian race). At this time they had reached a peaceful agreement
/728/ with the kings of Lan-Xang, most likely Nokeo-Koumane or Thammi-Karath who had just /247/ shaken off the Burmese yoke (1) and who

1. See above, pp. 97 and 100.

were glad to give them charge of the "white" and "black" Thais of the region in exchange for a triennial payment of thirty-three taels of silver "and one horse" (2). Relations had subsequently become

2. Cf. the Chronicle of Muong-Lai given by Deo-van-Tri to Auguste Pavie in 1894.

completely friendly and trusting to such a degree that when Cam-Sinh was in conflict with several of his relatives around 1850 he had not hesitated to place two of his children, one of whom was Deo-van-Tri, in Souka-Seum's hands (3).

3. See above, p. 213, note.

669 Revolt of the Khas of Muong-Ngoi (1876). It was not until 1876,
175* after he had temporarily driven back the Yellow Flags, that he was
563 able to send any reinforcements to Oun-Kham to sustain the struggle

The double action by Pavie and by Colonel Pernot in the 648*
cantons of the Black River (January - February 1888). Tired of 175*
waiting in vain, he suddenly decided on January 28, 1888, on the strength of vague rumors indicating the presence of French soldiers in the region of Muong-Lai, to set out alone, or nearly alone, to meet Colonel Pernot. With a fine scorn for danger, he went up the Nam-Ou and the Nam-Ngoua camping in the burned and almost deserted villages and risking being attacked at each bend of the river, but collecting precious information on the movements of the bands and on the state of mind of the populace, from the few inhabitants who had returned, "worried and gloomy," to their daubed huts. Thus he had confirmation of the arrival of the Pernot column in Lai on January 16 after violent engagements with Deo-van-Tri's Black Flags, who had tried to bar its way and which it had hurled back to the north. In the course of his conversations with the native chieftains (immediately won over in their turn by the inexplicable trust which was everywhere inspired by this extraordinary /276/ messenger of peace) he acquired the conviction that the natives who had suffered raids for so long a time were entirely disposed to welcome the French as protectors against the brigands, but that they maintained a reticent attitude out of fear of Siamese reprisals if, as they believed, our troops were only passing through. "Our soldiers are going away," Pavie answered them, "but others will come. Rest assured in this. You have become subjects of France like the Annamites on whom you used to depend."

On February 17 -- with what joy! -- he finally joined the Pernot column in Tuan-Giao while it was still firing on the remains of one last band. He accompanied it as far as the Black River where, without any further difficulty, it effected its junction with the Oudri detachment which was itself solidly established in Son-La. After setting forth in detail to the colonel the fruit of his observations during a whole year in Laos and developing his plans for a "peace mission" whose full success he guaranteed with the tenacious faith of an apostle, Pavie settled on a plan of joint action involving the /579/
creation of posts in Lai-chau, Son-La and Van-Bu to strengthen our intention to maintain our forces in the land, and immediate negotiations with those of the native chieftains who had joined the pirates, especially /277/ with Deo-van-Tri who did not seem to be a common gang leader but an intelligent and loyal adversary who enjoyed great authority and whose submission would be great with consequences. Then he regained Luang-Prabang so as to settle

149: Reinach--190 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Hill Tribes

Almost all are of low birth and are crude and illiterate. They have married Thai or Kha women and thereby founded a stock of halfbreeds. This race is destined to merge with the mass of the Laotians or Thai population and through successive crossings lose all distinctive characteristics. 619 563

The Meos. The Meos are also Yunnanese who have retained a degree of independence and have not been marked with the Chinese imprint like the Hos or adopted baggy clothes and the custom of wearing their hair only in a braid.

They are distributed in groups of a few families each of which live on the peaks of the mountains in northern Laos and the Sib-Song-Chau-Thais. They can be divided into three great families--the blacks, the whites and the reds--which owe their names to the color of certain parts of the women's costume. Thus among the black and red Meos skirts or jackets are light blue in color, but the latter have a wide collar ornamented with black or red embroidery. Finally, a small turban with black and white checks or of red material, depending on the case, completes their garb. Among the white Meos, the women wear a skirt and jacket of unbleached cloth, with a white and blue embroidered collar. [361] 291

The men's clothing is light blue in all cases. It is composed of a broad pair of trousers which come down somewhat below the calf, where the legs are drawn tight, and of a short, tight-sleeved jacket which buttons down one side.

A turban winds around the head and covers their long hair, which may be rolled or braided. 301

The women's hair is parted and wound on the upper part of the nape of the neck in a coil. (1)

(1) See Appendix XIX.

The Meos practice ancestor worship primarily, like many Asian peoples. They have no pagodas or bonzes, but elders perform the office of priests and also administer justice. 769

[268] The Meos bury their dead, and make animal sacrifices on the occasion of births, marriages and deaths so as to gain the favor of the "Phis" or multiple and varied genii in whose existence and influence they believe.

Marriage is as simple as among the other peoples of Laos. [581

Divorce may occur either through mutual consent or in the case of adultery. 586]

10: d'Orleans--308-311 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 582, 684, 836, 848

"Some flirtations are durable, for a young man who has paid court for a long time to a girl generally ends by making her his mistress, but this is not looked upon as at all dishonourable, for there are a great many unmarried women mothers, and some of them are held in as much respect as those [pages 309 and 310 contain illustration] [311] that are married, while marriage often follows the birth of a child. Moreover, if the girl informs her parents and reveals the name of her lover, the latter is bound to pay a fine of about fifteen rupees, or to marry her. All assaults upon women are taxed at varying rates, there being different fines for a kiss upon the mouth or upon the arm, and for rape."

23: Franck--305 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
582

"Half-sisters and half-brothers may marry in Luang Prabang, by the way, which is not without its effect on the reigning house."

he fled secretly by way of the Mékong, but Nang-Keo-Phimpha 643*
learned of his flight and had him pursued and massacred on his 175*
raft a little way downstream from the capital. 662

We can only conjecture as to the motives which impelled this princess, fiercer even than a Frédégonde or a Marguerite de Bourgogne, to make such a hecatomb of kings. Was she a bloodthirsty despot, or simply a royal Lampito with an exasperated temperament? (1) /62/ We do not know, but it is certain that she /582/

1. Marriages between brothers and sisters were always permitted in the royal family of Lan-Xang. They were forbidden, on the other hand, among the common people.

finally inspired such terror in the court that there was no one left to intrigue for the throne, the last two sons of Lane-Kham-Dèng being too young.

Kam-Kheut, king 1435-1438.

It was then that Nang-Keo-Phimpha discovered the son of a palace slave girl who had once been singled out by King Sam-Sène-Thaï for her beauty. The young man, Xieng-Ma by name, conquered the Gorgon by his keen intelligence and a perfect knowledge of the events of the great reign of Oun-Hueun. She had no doubt but that he was her brother, and forced him on the court as sovereign under the name of Kham-Keut (golden birth). Whether the latter was a docile tool in the hands of the princess, or whether Nang-Keo-Phimpha became genuinely and profoundly attached to her creature, calm seemed permanently restored to the palace when Kham-Keut fell sick and died of dropsy after a three years' reign.

Death of Nang-Keo-Phimpha (1438). Then there was an ex- 669
plosion of hatred against Nang-Keo-Phimpha. This death was 643*
seen as a /63/ punishment inflicted on the kingdom by Heaven for 175*
having accepted a usurper. Anger got the better of fear, and the ministers arrested the princess, tied her to the rock of Pha-Dieou and had her shot. "Her body was abandoned to the crows and vultures."

SAI-TIAKAPHAT (1415), KING 1438-1479. 645

The Council of Ministers at once set out to choose a new king 175*
643*

10: d'Orleans--276 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 563, 583, 591, 764, 793 Ethnic subgroups

"Marriages are easily made amongst the Khamouks; the young man's parents give sixty rupees to the girl's father and mother. After the marriage feast, the bridegroom sleeps one night in his father-in-law's house, then takes his wife home with him.

The dead are buried and not burnt; there is no priest, no religious ceremonies, but the master of the house cuts a fowl's throat and the mourners rub their knees with his blood. The men generally follow one stage in the bonzeries. (1) After a few months

1. I question whether this information does not apply more to the Laotians.

they are little bonze or Siang, then grand bonze or Tit ; a man who has not made one stage is Ba."

10: d'Orleans--319 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 563, 583, 591, 764 Ethnic subgroups

[LSS: Among the Meo of Luang Prabang] "The marriages are arranged by the parents, a young girl being rated at 36 rupees and taken, as soon as she is married, to the house of her husband. The bodies of the defunct are interred three days after death."

291 or less degree lightens its rather dark color. The skirt is a true cylinder, with the same diameter all along its length. A woman raises the skirt in a mass like a crown above her head, lets it slide down along her body and fastens it to her waist, without any hooks or fasteners, by tucking it in along her stomach, which is largely left bare. A brightly colored sash of cotton or silk is thrown over one shoulder, sometimes covering the breasts, to complete the costume.

"During the cold season, where there is a winter, a few women cover their trunks with a short jacket. This garment finds favor mainly outside the larger centers.

302 "A certain number of women wear their hair cut in Bressant style, in accordance with the style imported by the Siamese. The greater number wear their long hair rolled into a coil on the top or side of the head. Women's coiffures vary, moreover, depending on the region and on whether they are married or single.

292 "For great ceremonies, wealthy women wear skirts made of cloth spangled with gold or silver, and sashes of the same type.

"In Luang-Prabang they add a silk or velvet jacket decorated with embroidery on the neck, front and cuffs. Merchants can be found in this city who rent out costumes of this type, as well as gold jewelry, for great ceremonies to women who do not have any." (Le Laos français.)

301 Jewelry. Jewels find great favor among the [179] Laotians and
556 are used to complete and enrich their costume. They are not only ornaments, but also the most widespread method for realizing and preserving the liquid part of their fortune. In fact, the inhabitants transform the greater part of [Illustration here] their savings and profits into jewelry, and since they wear them on their body they are spared the use of strongboxes.

[583] The women and children are the ones who wear jewels most. They go into the trousseau of the young bride, and parents give them to their children as the latter grow up, thus putting together a sort of dowry for the time when they reach the age of marriage.

301 [180] Gold and silver are used in making jewelry, and precious
306 stones such as rubies, sapphires and various genuine or imitation gems are sometimes added as ornaments.

Gold is not used in all parts of Laos, but is mainly limited to the large centers located near regularly worked gold-bearing deposits.

[563] Doubtless because of the application of ancient sumptuary laws, silver is the only metal used by certain races--even by the Khas,

10: d'Orleans--279-280 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 517, 584, 832 Ethnic subgroups

"Here we shall have a first glimpse of the customs of Laos; this strange country where love is held in such great respect, that it might be called the kingdom of the flirt. We walk up to the town, and find in the centre a square platform raised upon four posts; from [280] a fireplace formed of stones held in position by woven mats a few logs are throwing a feeble light over the scene. A young girl is seated, a scarf of orange silk knotted upon one shoulder, cleaning cotton by separating it from the seed by hand. Near her stands one of our boatmen, in a small white cloth jacket ornamented with European copper buttons, he is paying compliments to her. Holding one of her hands, he takes out the flowers she has placed in her hair, and passes them through the lobe of his ear. Further on, upon the terrace of a house, another young girl is talking to her lover; a small lamp gives them light, and they are playing at dinner or preparing betel for each other. They will, perhaps, chat together every night, in this way, for several months, simply exchanging ideas before coming to a definite understanding --a marriage generally follows."

10: d'Orleans--370-372 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 524, 533, 584

[LSS: in Paklay] "In the evening the Siamese lieutenant invites us to a particularly original fête. Upon a small terrace in front of our verandah sit a dozen young girls, their [371] busts draped in gold-thread scarves of native make. Opposite them a dozen young men take their places. A man carrying a Laotian organ, which he has difficulty in setting up, follows them. The pipes of the organ are so long--nearly 14 feet--that he is finally obliged to cut a hole in the roof, but the damage can be easily repaired.

We are about to assist at a good game of repartee, between the men and the women, a sort of literary joust.

Each camp has its champion. On one side a young man, with a rather expressive face, contorts his facial muscles so as to produce every sort of mimicry. Opposite is an old woman with a wrinkled and pockmarked skin, though her ugliness down not prevent her, from possessing the gift of quick retort. The organ plays continually on a grave key in a sort of bass, while the persons present accompany it by clapping their hands at certain measures.

When the woman rejects her questioner's propositions,the latter takes two small candles, made of a little wax coiled round a few threads, holds them fixed with the thumb nail, and gesticulates, turning his hands and moving his arms in passes like those of a hypnotiser. To these movements correspond certain shruggings of the shoulders, contractions of the mouth, distortions of the nose and wrigglings in consonance with the

measure of the organ music. When the grimaces are funny the women mark their satisfaction by bursting into peals of laughter.

Of the group of young men some interrupt to support or excite their champion, or they repeat a refrain in chorus. It is generally some popular phrase, [372] the meaning of which is not clear to either the Siamese lieutenant or the interpreter. There is also a series of exclamations, which one repeats twice, these cries corresponding to our shouts of encouragement: 'Keep it up,' 'don't flinch,' 'steady,' and the like: Aou! aou! aoua! ioua! pemma! sempa! satna!

Sometimes the singing is in crescendo time and the singer seems to be in a hurry. The company becomes excited, encouraging and urging him on. A brass bowl is continually passed round, flowing over with tchoum-tchoum. The animation becomes greater and greater and the party breaks up amid a general hubbub. [LSS: for the text of some of the dialogue, see Laotians, category 539, p. 372-373.] "

10: d'Orleans--372-373 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 539, 584

[LSS: For a description of the game of repartee during which this dialogue was spoken, see Laotians, category 533, pp. 370-371] "Here are some scraps of the chanted dialogue which I took down from the lips of the interpreter.

HE.—'I am very well off. I even have some elephants.'

SHE.—'I am not free.'

HE.—'If you marry me, you will have nothing to do and you will be free to act as you wish.'

SHE.—'I am married. I have a child.'

HE.—'That doesn't matter. I'll arrange with your husband so that he will let you go.'

The chorus replies in a refrain too free to be reproduced here.

SHE—'You are married.'

HE.—'Ask the inhabitants of the village; I am not married.'

SHE.--'I have known for a long time that you are poor. You haven't even a rupee.'

HE.—'I haven't a rupee, but we will go into business and we shall have a good deal of money.' [373]

SHE.—'Don't you hope to marry me?'

THE CHORUS.—'It is sad to marry an old woman.'

HE.—'I cannot marry you now, but later on when your husband is dead. You have a very pretty face, pretty as the god in the centre of the pagoda, who is so beautiful that

10: d'Orleans--372-373 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-2
116, 539, 584

I dare not look at him.'

And he pretends to run away in terror. The young girls burst into laughter.

SHE. —'At a small rivulet there is not very much to drink.'

HE. —'Here are two candles. My face is well lighted. Does it please you or not? You must say.'

SHE. —'I love you, and you don't love me. Whom am I to marry?'

HE. —'When we die, we will die together; we shall be burned together.'

SHE. —When the flames mount up you will leave the young married woman.'

He goes up to the group of girls, and lights them with the candles, then returns to make love to the old woman.

HE. — 'If you become my wife I will not abandon you. I could not find any one so pretty as you.'

SHE. —'We are going to bid you good-bye. If you love me we shall meet again in a few days.'

HE. —'When I go away from here I shall find no girl so pretty as you. I shall die.'

Upon this the party breaks up."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

403 electricians hugged each other, and, enchanted by the din, the
527 audience began to drift away from the theatre and make for the dancing floor.

527 The second attraction in order of popularity was a love-court. A
584 quadrangular arrangement of tables had been formed, covered by a
782 thatched roof raised on posts decorated with woven bamboo
793 representations of animals, weapons and phallic emblems. Seated round the tables in the interior of the square were the girls, and their suitors sat facing them. Between the couples had been placed offerings of food, brought by the girls. Originally a tribute to some ancient, forgotten fertility god, a primeval Thai Venus, the offerings would be given, next day, to the bonzes. All through the night the bantering of witticisms, the singing and the exchange of improvised verse would go on, accompanied by the accordion-like
[534] wheezings of the Kène, the Stone Age gourd pipes of Laos. Sometimes through a happy fault in the circuit the splutter and bellow of the loud-speakers would suddenly lapse, and you heard the beehive dronings of the communal love-making, the kènes, and the voice of the presiding bonze, preaching continually in an archaic, incomprehensible language from the wicker cage into which he had been fastened. The cage symbolized the protection of his religion from these earthly distractions. As soon as inspiration failed he would be relieved by the next on the rota of preachers, waiting now to take his place.

584 Love-courts are the accepted preliminary to the consummation of
[533] affairs of the heart, which — despite European conviction that
576 romantic love is a Western invention — are accompanied in Laos by much versifying and mild, self-imposed frustrations. When, for instance, a well-known beauty is wooed by a number of suitors, a serenading match may be arranged on the veranda of her house to permit her to test under competitive conditions the poetic and musical capabilities of each of them. Complete pre-marital freedom
[836] is recognized, but much outward reserve is maintained. There is a time and place for everything. It is incorrect, for example, to

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

acknowledge in the street a lady with whom one happens to be on 584
particularly good terms. These things in Laos are fraught with an 576
etiquette which is the legacy of a highly organized society not too far gone in decay.

The charm of Vientiane lies in the life and the customs of the 346
people. Unless one is an amateur of pagoda architecture there is 531
little else to be seen. The Laotians have preferred to work in wood, rather than stone, and their art, confined chiefly to the decoration by religious artists of the doors, pillars and interiors of pagodas, quickly perishes in such a climate.

Outside the town there is a great, grey, half-decayed *stupa*, built 771
as a tomb for a hair of the Buddha. It is surrounded by a cloister, 755
containing perhaps a thousand Buddha images; a collection of 778
which the people of Vientiane are very proud. But even here, where the religion is practised in its purest form, there is a little degeneration, a little backsliding from the lofty philosophic conception; and the taint of magic practices shows itself. Selecting one of the numerous images as a personal tutelary divinity, the devotee subjects it to a kind of bribery similar to that sometimes practised in Southern Europe with images of the saints. In this case the image's chief function is healing, and when the sufferer recovers from any complaint he hastens to the pagoda to apply gold-leaf to the part of the Buddha corresponding to that where he has felt the pain in his own body. I was interested to deduce from this practice that the people of Vientiane are much plagued by headaches – perhaps [164]
those which accompany malaria.

Standing in a corner of the sanctuary was an ancient ithyphallic 778
statue, an old Hindu divinity, no doubt, which had been worn 789
smooth in the appropriate parts by the feminine adoration of a 892
thousand years. I was told that the women of the French colony who wish for a child frequently emulate their husbands' pose of Laos-ization by coming here secretly to pay their respects. I 000
wondered whether this clandestine tribute might not be extended

643* through the mouth of his chancellor and never speaks to them ex-
576 cept through a go-between..."

643* A "Trojan War" in Tran-Ninh (1651-1652). Under the firm hand
648* of such a monarch, the vassals and tributary princes eagerly com-
175 plied with the slightest of their sovereign's orders. Great was the
584 astonishment, therefore, when it was learned in 1651 that Chao-
Kham-Xan, king of Xieng-Khouang, whom Souligna had asked for the hand of his daughter Nang-Ken-Chan in marriage, had dared to reply that the princess was not free and that he declined the honor of this alliance. Enflamed by the accounts which had been given him of the beauty and wisdom of the "pearl" of Tran-Ninh, the king of Lan-Xang pretended not to notice the affront but gallantly persisted and sent a messenger to take rich gifts to the girl. In vain. Then Souligna sent for the princess manu militari. The detachment was brought to an abrupt halt by the troops of King Chao-Kham-Xan and had to retrace its steps, while the people of Xieng-Khouang foresaw the worst and hastily built a fortress at Pana to protect their capital (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique." Revue indochinoise. Hanoi, 1896./

643* Souligna decided that a small army of two thousand men would
648* be enough to punish Chao-Kham-Xan for his insolence. This force
721 did in fact take the stronghold of Pana by surprise and penetrate into
175* Xieng-Khouang on a bridge /118/ thrown over the ramparts. The king, a prisoner in his own palace, had to give in. But although he surrendered to force he kept a stubborn rancor over this misadventure which was inherited by his son Chao-Kham-Lan who succeeded him in 1688. This prince raised a thousand difficulties in paying the traditional tribute to Lan-Xang, and friendly relations between the two sister states were ended for good and all. In the eighteenth century Xieng-Khouang was to be engaged in a permanent struggle with Souligna's successors, and in the nineteenth century Chao-Noi, a king of Tran-Ninh, was to deliver up the unfortunate king Anou, the last monarch of Vientiane, to Siam.

643* But let us not anticipate further on these events but rather re-
175* turn to the year 1652, when Lan-Xang was shining with all its splendor and when the minor expedition in Xieng-Khouang meant no more to its king than a simple demonstration of his power and his authority.

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wax candles decorated with flowers, cigarettes and a sum of 431
money. (Author's note)

the family from the hands of her patient.

"Two or three days after her confinement ends the mother must [751]
go to the pagoda and give a few presents to the bonzes, who give [792]
her in return a few cotton threads which she fastens to her wrists " (4).

(4) Dr. Estrade, 1895. Dictionnaire et Guide franco-laotien. [113]

Cases of dystocia and other childbearing difficulties are very 844
rare in Laos, thanks to the physiological law which decrees that childbirth shall occur all the more naturally insofar as one comes closer to the primitive type and as one's body has not been deformed either by certain professional attitudes or by artifices of dress. [191] But when any difficulty of this type does occur the Laotian midwives are extremely skilful. Their hands take the place of the steel instruments in our gynecological and surgical arsenal, and their results are usually successful both for mother and child.

When the newly delivered mother is allowed to get up there [554]
occur traditional feasts and celebrations, the brilliance of which
varies with the status of the young mother's parents. It is generally 846
during these happy gatherings that the bonzes or sorcerers choose 527
the name which the newborn child is to bear. They usually base their
choice on some peculiarity of the coloring or eyes, or on a phase of 551
the moon. The name will be replaced by another if the child falls sick, for in this case, as they say, the old name was unpleasing to his "Phis," that is to say to his personal tutelary spirits.

Infanticide. Scarcely any cases of infanticide can be cited in 847
Laos, and abortions are extremely rare or at least very well hidden.
For when cases do occur it is among members of a class which, be- [554]
cause of the rank it holds, is anxious to conceal its faults from the mass of the people.

In popular belief abortion, whether voluntary or natural, is regarded as a punishment of heaven or as a case of aberration which cannot fail to draw down the utmost scorn on the guilty parties and their accomplices.

Marriage. Marriage In Laos is made ready for long in advance, 584
thanks to the liberty which young people of both sexes enjoy. The latter meet one another at every celebration and can communicate

584 their mutual sentiments and decide in complete freedom on the principle of their future union.

Natural inclinations are rarely opposed by parents, and so it is primarily out of form and a sentiment of respect that a young man, after reaching an agreement with his fiancée, sends an old man to convey his proposal to the parents of the future bride.

[554] On the other hand, since Laotian customs establish the size of the dowry which young men must, depending on their social status, [192] deliver to their in-laws, girls eligible for marriage encourage only those suitors who are in a position to provide such a dowry (1).

(1) The sum varies, for the lower and middle classes, between ten and 250 francs. But in the families of notables it may go as high, counting jewelry and gifts, as 1200 or 1500 francs.

When an agreement has been reached the fiancée's parents give a feast to which relatives, friends, neighbors and bonzes are invited. The latter then set a day and hour for celebrating the marriage, taking care to choose a propitious day.

585 On the appointed day the groom, accompanied by his friends and by musicians, goes to the house of his future wife's parents, to whom he delivers the sum agreed on as his dowry as well as the clothes, jewels and various gifts which he may care to add. As a sign of homage he also gives his in-laws wax candles and flowers, which are often accompanied by various foods, brandy, tobacco, etc.

The marriage contract is immediately drawn up in the presence of a mandarin and notables of the region. The act gives the names of the bride and groom, as well as those of their parents and the witnesses and magistrates present. The sum of the dowry, the jewels and other objects delivered by the groom to his future bride and her parents are carefully listed. Then after the document is signed by the young couple the authorities affix their seal to it and it is given to the girl's parents (2).

[212] (2) When the bride or groom does not know how to write, his or her signature is replaced by a black or red thumbprint or by an outline of the joints of the index finger (generally of the left hand).

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colors are bright and harmonious. It is during these days of rejoicing that the first amorous intrigues often spring up between young people which, generally speaking, end in marriage.

Preparations for the funeral celebration went on, and dusk had not yet fallen when music and singing began to be heard and plates of food were passed around, as well as jars full of rice brandy.

Immediately after the death, men went to the forest to select the dead, but not decaying, tree whose trunk was to serve for making the coffin. Others prepared the pedestal on which it was to be placed and the roof which would surmount it.

The coffin was finally finished. Trapezoidal in shape, with the base uppermost, it rested on a wooden pedestal decorated with carvings. The roof placed above it was copied from the roofs of pagodas. The frame was made of bamboo lattice covered with glued calico, and the whole was ornamented with gold paper cutouts, streamers and multicolored cotton floss.

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[205] The body was sealed in its coffin, where it rested on a bed of aromatic branches and leaves. It was fully dressed and surrounded by bedclothes. A sliding cover was dovetailed into place, and all joints sealed with an indestructible caulking compound made from lime, clay, albumen and paddy husks. [Illustration alongside text here]

The catafalque stood in the middle of the room, one of the walls of which had been removed, as we have seen. It was surrounded by flowers, green branches, lighted candles and stick incense perfumed with powdered benzoin.

In the course of the next four days the province bonzes and officials arrived, and all recited the ritual prayers in Pali around the catafalque without understanding anything of what they said but scrupulously observing the consecrated rhythm and intonation.

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In the meantime a funeral pyre had been built on the sandy bank of the Mékong, left bare by the low waters, using about three [206] steres of dry wood which had been impregnated with resin, wood oil and kerosene.

Solidly held in place at the side by six heavy stakes of green wood, the pyre was surmounted by a high canopy or rectangular pavilion, the roof of which rose in tiers and was covered with flowered cotton cloth and decorated with gold paper garlands, cutouts and many-colored streamers.

This pavilion, supported by four posts decorated in the same taste, would presently serve to shelter the coffin.

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Since there is not, so to speak, any class of salaried workers in Laos except in certain types of work and in transport by pirogues and rafts, the inhabitants of any given center lend one another their help in farming, harvesting, building houses or pirogues, etc. Taking turns, the one who has asked help of his neighbors will put on a celebration for them when the work is over, and will himself receive an invitation from someone else in return for help which he has given.

Laotian celebrations, in which the bonzes are never forgotten, are usually given under the verandas of the pagodas or in their dependencies, unless they take place in the host's own home or under sheds specially constructed for the purpose on one side. The latter is always the case in a "Ngan" given for those who have helped in building a house, and the same is true for a birth or marriage. [792]

Celebrations generally begin towards four or five in the afternoon when the heat is beginning to wane. They last all night and sometimes resume on the following day after the guests have relaxed for a few hours. Some "Ngans" go on in this way for nearly a week and are interrupted only by the coming of the Laotian sabbath, a day of absolute rest when only the preparation of food is permitted, and no work or pleasure. By the light of kerosene lamps borrowed here and there, or of resinous torches, the girls, who are decked out in all their finery, are stationed in a line squatting down against a wall or partition. Before them there are [221] vases made of copper, silver or porcelain. They all pretend to be busy with minor tasks and may imitate, for example, the preparation of food. But in reality this is only their way of keeping some kind of countenance.

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The adults and children of both sexes are massed at each end of the row of girls. Then the young men, their heads covered with scarves, come and squat down opposite the girls and with their heads still covered begin an animated conversation which soon turns into regular flirting. If there is enough space the orchestra takes up its position nearby and in the center, between the young people, are the singers, improvisers and "Kene" players. Cakes, fruit, quids of betel, cigarettes, rice brandy and various condiments are passed around.

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Spectators who have not been specially invited come and stand behind the young people, as do passersby who drop in for a quid, a cigarette, a cup of brandy or a bowl of rice, or to listen to the songs and music for a little while.

527 From time to time a girl will get up and leave the celebration,
836 She is soon followed by a young man, and both disappear into the
shadows, escorted for form's sake by a little boy or girl. This is the
584 beginning of a liaison and will doubtless end in marriage, unless the
young gallant is in too much of a hurry, clumsy or flighty and finds
himself faced with paying one of the special fines if he compromises
the girl and refuses to make up for it.

782 Offerings to the pagodas. There are other "Ngans" which have a
half profane and half religious purpose. That is to say, they are
527 established either to thank heaven for a lucky event or to solicit its
clemency. They may occur, for example, either to celebrate a
531 return to health after a long illness, or the success of a trading season
or hunting or fishing expedition, or to call down blessings from on
high on a trip which is being made or planned, etc. These types of
"Ngans" then involve offerings to the pagodas and to the bonzes,
offerings which bear the name of "Tone-Pheung" (literally, wax cut
in pieces). They are so named because of the wax imitation flowers
which decorate [222] a kind of pyramid or small pagoda supporting
them, called "Pha-Sate" (in French, Faithful to God).

These little edifices are built and decorated by the friends or
guests with a rapidity, a taste and an elegance which would be
astounding if we did not know the degree to which artistic feeling
is innate in the Laotian, and if we were not aware of the prodigious
skill with which he is endowed.

Built on a bamboo framework covered with pieces of banana
wood, carved with festoons and ornamental moldings, and arranged
in tiers of roofs, in minarets and in columns, these "Pha-Sate," which
are always between one and two meters in height, seem to be made
of ivory and affect an extraordinary variety of forms each of which is
more graceful than the last and which seem to be inspired by the
architecture of the pagodas of India, Cambodia and Burma.

It will not be in vain to note that the only purpose of these
ephemeral edicules, which will keep their new look for only a short
while, is merely to present the wax offering in a less banal and more
artistic manner than if it had been given in the form of thick, heavy,
massive blocks.

The "Pha-Sate" are mounted on stretchers which are carried by
men. Besides their wax flowers, they are decorated with natural

149: Reinach--175 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai

Building materials, interior arrangement and furniture in Thai houses do not differ in any significant way from what we have described in connection with the Laotians. 341

Births. Like the Laotian women, Thai women generally give birth to children with the greatest ease, and the ceremonies accompanying births are identical. 844

Marriages. Betrothals generally take place among the Thais after the farming work is over, in December or January, during the cold season. Sheds are built in the villages. Fires are laid there and the marriageable girls install themselves there with a spinning wheel, reel or cotton gin to keep them busy and prevent them from losing countenance. The young men come and join them and exchange declarations, compliments, betel quids and cigarettes with them. There it is that promises of marriage are made, which are followed by a request to the girl's parents when she gives her lover permission to do so. 584

A few days later, during a banquet which takes place in the girl's house, the engagement is announced and the young [236] people are then free to see one another and come and go together at all hours and in all places.

The marriage is not celebrated until several months after the betrothal unless traces of pregnancy are evident in the engaged girl, in which case the marriage takes place at once.

The ceremony is much simpler than among the Laotians, but it is followed by a series of banquets which succeed one another for several days and at which great quantities of rice brandy and rice beer are consumed. 585

The groom comes to live in his wife's room on his wedding day. He is supposed to stay in the home of his in-laws for eight years (only three years in some regions) and share in their work. 591

Adultery. Divorce. "Cases of adultery are extremely rare. When such an eventuality does occur, the man is condemned to a fine of seven bars of silver (about 260 francs) and the woman to a fine of six bars of the same metal (about 225 francs). Half of these sums is awarded to the judges and the other half to the husband, who may then either take back or repudiate his unfaithful wife. 586 684

"In the latter case, the unfaithful wife generally marries her accomplice.

"Divorce is rarer, but just as easy among the Thais as among 586

149: Reinach--184 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

291 Men's clothing consists of a jacket and pair of trousers which have the same shape as those of the Lus and are made of coarse cotton cloth manufactured locally. Their headgear is a turban cut from a piece of Turkey-red cotton.

For work, clothing is generally reduced to a narrow strip of cloth forming a belt, one of the ends of which is passed between the legs and fastened in the middle of the back.

During the cold season a jacket is added to this loin-cloth.

The women wear a skirt of the Laotian type which is fastened under the armpits so that it does not come down below the calves of the legs. A short jacket completes their costume. On their head they wear a turban which is generally dark in color. [Illustration alongside text here]

301 Jewelry. Both sexes have silver or copper jewelry such as wide stiff neckbands, bracelets, rings, buttons, clasps, etc. Like the Lus and the Youns, the Khas pierce the lobes of their ears. Often the holes are of such dimensions that a roll of leaves or a bouquet of flowers can be inserted in them.

262 Food. Their diet is very like that of the Laotians and Thais. When there is a shortage of rice its place is taken, until the following harvest, by yams, taros, bamboo sprouts, banana flowers, etc.

462 Occupations. Women and children are given the hardest tasks imaginable, and it is unusual to meet them without baskets on their backs. The men carry only their bag, their sword, their rifle and their pipe.

595 Marriage. Divorce. Adultery. Polygamy is widespread among the Khas, and the number of wives a man possesses is the sign of his wealth. For, regarded as they are rather like beasts of burden and working constantly, the more numerous these wives are the more they will produce.

584 [254] The rules for marriage preliminaries closely resemble the Laotian customs and the ceremony itself, although much less splendid, comprises the same rites. To be sure, the role of the bonzes is filled here by "Pho-Tao," that is to say elders or sorcerers.

586 Divorce may be requested by the wife, or one of the wives, for personal reasons. It may also take place by mutual consent. Finally,
684 it is compulsory in the case of adultery, since the guilty woman must marry her accomplice.

Contrary to what is the case elsewhere, adultery on the part of the husband is punished by a double fine awarded to his wife's family

173: Deydier--36 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

Marriage

In Laos one gets married in the even months. The favorite month is the sixth, that of the feast of rockets, and the last one possible, because in the eighth month the sons-in-law do not dare to interrupt the work in the fields and after that until the twelfth month the Buddhist Lent must be observed. 585 805

[56] The Marriage Proposal. Laotian tradition requires a previous request, and the obligatory giving of the Kha Khun Phi, tribute paid to the guardian genii, also the optional gift of the Kha Dong, the dowery which is given by the husband to the bride or to her parents. [782] 584

The boy's mother, accompanied by one or two aged female relatives, goes to the home of the young girl, and in the course of conversing asks if the girl is of age to be married. The mother is free to answer that her daughter is too young or that no young man loves her, and that she runs the risk of remaining an old maid. In this last event the answer is an acceptance. Then during further visits material questions are settled. Up until the day of marriage the two affianced ones do not exchange a single word, and besides it is not necessary for them to know each other. However, as the Laotian villages are not very big, it is probable that the young people have had the opportunity to meet several times at the boun.

The official request takes place the day before the wedding and on the evening of this day, after dinner, the young man goes to the home of his future bride and with her attends the prayer of the bonzes who bless the water contained in begging bowls. A white cotton cord links together the bonzes, the begging bowls and the two betrothed. The blessed water is kept throughout the night. The next day at the earliest hour the same bonzes, the relatives and friends come and sprinkle the two young people generously with this water. When they have dried themselves and changed their clothes, they make their morning offering to the bonzes who bless them once more. 788 584

The Sou Khouan. This is properly called the marriage ceremony. The days and hours for the ceremony are determined by the aged hora (astrologists or soothsayers) after a minute study of the horoscopes of each one. This ceremony takes place in the home of the young girl. After a [57] family Sou Khouan celebrated at his home, the husband returns to his betrothed accompanied by two comrades who protect him with two parasols and followed by a procession of bearers. 585 [787]

584 their mutual sentiments and decide in complete freedom on the principle of their future union.

Natural inclinations are rarely opposed by parents, and so it is primarily out of form and a sentiment of respect that a young man, after reaching an agreement with his fiancée, sends an old man to convey his proposal to the parents of the future bride.

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When an agreement has been reached the fiancée's parents give a feast to which relatives, friends, neighbors and bonzes are invited. The latter then set a day and hour for celebrating the marriage, taking care to choose a propitious day.

585 On the appointed day the groom, accompanied by his friends and by musicians, goes to the house of his future wife's parents, to whom he delivers the sum agreed on as his dowry as well as the clothes, jewels and various gifts which he may care to add. As a sign of homage he also gives his in-laws wax candles and flowers, which are often accompanied by various foods, brandy, tobacco, etc.

The marriage contract is immediately drawn up in the presence of a mandarin and notables of the region. The act gives the names of the bride and groom, as well as those of their parents and the witnesses and magistrates present. The sum of the dowry, the jewels and other objects delivered by the groom to his future bride and her parents are carefully listed. Then after the document is signed by the young couple the authorities affix their seal to it and it is given to the girl's parents (2).

[212] (2) When the bride or groom does not know how to write, his or her signature is replaced by a black or red thumbprint or by an outline of the joints of the index finger (generally of the left hand).

149: Reinach--146 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Then comes the feast. A suckling pig, a hen, a cock, two bowls of cooked rice, two hardboiled eggs, two small jars containing brandy, a handful of cotton threads and lighted wax candles are placed on a copper platter before a kind of altar erected in the middle of the house. In certain parts of Laos cakes and flowers take the place of these offerings, except for the rice, eggs, candles and cotton thread. These latter are obligatory, according to Laotian custom.

[193] The bride and groom kneel down before the altar, and the marriage ceremony begins. An elderly man, a sorcerer, or the man who has been the go-between in the marriage recites prayers and performs certain ritual practices. Then he attaches cotton threads to the wrists of the bride and groom so as to form bracelets. These are supposed to be "fetishes of happiness." Finally the newlyweds pour out a libation of brandy and all those present drink from the same cup after them, passing it from hand to hand.

In families of notables the bride's parents give back part of the dowry to their son-in-law after he has given it to them, as a mark of esteem and great confidence.

591

If the son-in-law is to live with the bride's parents then the dowry is decreased in accordance with custom, in compensation for the labor which he will furnish to the community (1).

(1) A custom which is quite widely observed decrees that the groom shall live with his in-laws and help them with their work like a son until the time when he has a child. He is then free to go elsewhere and found a new family home. This custom is extremely ancient in origin and contributes greatly to strengthening the bonds of kinship between the groom and his in-laws.

There are cases, however, where the groom already has a house and takes his wife to live there after the marriage ceremony. The newlyweds are then accompanied by their friends. The young men take along noisy instruments with which they make a great racket, while the young women carry the bride's clothes and bedclothes to her new home.

When they reach their home a celebration takes place in which there is no shortage of brandy and during which the bride runs and shuts herself in her room so as to escape the extremely licentious remarks made by those present, who are somewhat drunk after their many libations.

[522 273]

149: Reinach--175 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai

Building materials, interior arrangement and furniture in Thai houses do not differ in any significant way from what we have described in connection with the Laotians. 341

Births. Like the Laotian women, Thai women generally give birth to children with the greatest ease, and the ceremonies accompanying births are identical. 844

Marriages. Betrothals generally take place among the Thais after the farming work is over, in December or January, during the cold season. Sheds are built in the villages. Fires are laid there and the marriageable girls install themselves there with a spinning wheel, reel or cotton gin to keep them busy and prevent them from losing countenance. The young men come and join them and exchange declarations, compliments, betel quids and cigarettes with them. There it is that promises of marriage are made, which are followed by a request to the girl's parents when she gives her lover permission to do so. 584

A few days later, during a banquet which takes place in the girl's house, the engagement is announced and the young [236] people are then free to see one another and come and go together at all hours and in all places.

The marriage is not celebrated until several months after the betrothal unless traces of pregnancy are evident in the engaged girl, in which case the marriage takes place at once.

The ceremony is much simpler than among the Laotians, but it is followed by a series of banquets which succeed one another for several days and at which great quantities of rice brandy and rice beer are consumed. 585

The groom comes to live in his wife's room on his wedding day. He is supposed to stay in the home of his in-laws for eight years (only three years in some regions) and share in their work. 591

Adultery. Divorce. "Cases of adultery are extremely rare. When such an eventuality does occur, the man is condemned to a fine of seven bars of silver (about 260 francs) and the woman to a fine of six bars of the same metal (about 225 francs). Half of these sums is awarded to the judges and the other half to the husband, who may then either take back or repudiate his unfaithful wife. 586 684

"In the latter case, the unfaithful wife generally marries her accomplice.

"Divorce is rarer, but just as easy among the Thais as among 586

178: Deydier--32 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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782

The person whose absent spirits are to be recalled sits next to the pha khouan, on the other side of which is the achar master of ceremonies facing him.

[585]

In the case of a wedding, the bride and bridegroom each sits in front of his and her own pha khouan and achar, the young man being on the right of his affianced.

Those present, consisting of aged persons, notables, relatives, friends and acquaintances, sit around mostly behind the interested parties.

While the candles are lighted, the achar commences to recite the prayer.

After the litanies are ended, the oldest and most respected of the assembly begins a series of the phouk khene (fixing a thread to the wrist) starting with the achar. The latter extends his forearm horizontally, either his right or his left, bent at right angles and held near the elbow by the hand of another person in the gathering. The opposite hand must be held in the attitude of prayer in front of the face as if it were joined to the hand on the other side. The man who will tie the knot then grasps the white cotton thread by the middle, so that the two halves hang down. These he draws over the wrist which is held in both directions of the axis of the arm, in order to sweep away the kho, that is, the misfortunes sent as a punishment for former sins. Then he detaches from the extremity of each thread a little piece which he throws towards the setting sun, thus throwing the kho afar. He then takes the khay khouan, a [51] pellet of rice, a banana, and finally one of the precious objects contained in the pha khouan. These he places in the extended open hand to serve as an offering to the khouan, and brings the small tray containing the khay khouan closer in such a way that the back of this hand is in contact with that of the chicken. Finally, after tying the thread around the wrist, he grasps the loops of the knot between the thumb and the forefinger, and rolls them together for about a second, giving him time to finish the formula of good wishes which he has been murmuring since the beginning while accomplishing the gestures described above.

The symbolical knot tied to the wrist serves to hold the khouan who have just been attracted to it, and prevents them from wandering away again. One can take advantage of the opportunity to "tie the wrist" of anyone present, either as a sign of friendship or of hommage. [576] At the close of the ceremony, which comes to an end without any more formalities, everyone is invited to a meal offered for the occasion.

173: Deydier--36 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

Marriage

In Laos one gets married in the even months. The favorite month is the sixth, that of the feast of rockets, and the last one possible, because in the eighth month the sons-in-law do not dare to interrupt the work in the fields and after that until the twelfth month the Buddhist Lent must be observed. 585 805

[56] The Marriage Proposal. Laotian tradition requires a previous request, and the obligatory giving of the Kha Khun Phi, tribute paid to the guardian genii, also the optional gift of the Kha Dong, the dowery which is given by the husband to the bride or to her parents. [782] 584

The boy's mother, accompanied by one or two aged female relatives, goes to the home of the young girl, and in the course of conversing asks if the girl is of age to be married. The mother is free to answer that her daughter is too young or that no young man loves her, and that she runs the risk of remaining an old maid. In this last event the answer is an acceptance. Then during further visits material questions are settled. Up until the day of marriage the two affianced ones do not exchange a single word, and besides it is not necessary for them to know each other. However, as the Laotian villages are not very big, it is probable that the young people have had the opportunity to meet several times at the boun.

The official request takes place the day before the wedding and on the evening of this day, after dinner, the young man goes to the home of his future bride and with her attends the prayer of the bonzes who bless the water contained in begging bowls. A white cotton cord links together the bonzes, the begging bowls and the two betrothed. The blessed water is kept throughout the night. The next day at the earliest hour the same bonzes, the relatives and friends come and sprinkle the two young people generously with this water. When they have dried themselves and changed their clothes, they make their morning offering to the bonzes who bless them once more. 788 584

The Sou Khouan. This is properly called the marriage ceremony. The days and hours for the ceremony are determined by the aged hora (astrologists or soothsayers) after a minute study of the horoscopes of each one. This ceremony takes place in the home of the young girl. After a [57] family Sou Khouan celebrated at his home, the husband returns to his betrothed accompanied by two comrades who protect him with two parasols and followed by a procession of bearers. 585 [787]

585 In front of the bride's house, guards make a sham defence of the gate of the house. The husband and his retinue can enter only by making a gift of money or alcohol. When he reaches the stairway of the house, the young man may only climb it after having his feet washed on a piece of stone covered with a banana leaf by the sisters or the women servants of the bride. He must pay for this service, then seat himself in front of the two ritual phakhouan next to his bride, who is already sitting there. The Sou Khouan of the wedding resembles the bassi. However at the wedding there are only two phakhouan and everything in the ceremony must be in even numbers. They are, however, larger and better decorated than the ordinary phakhouan. The marriage is celebrated by two individuals officiating who recite sacramental formulas in duet. Then, after tying a large number of cotton threads around their wrists, the married couple prostrate themselves before each of the aged people and those who are present. They are then led to their room by a lady chosen from among the most virtuous.

[801]

Funerals

764 In Laos as in all Buddhist countries, the dead are burned. However, a distinction is made between two kinds of death, normal death
766 and accidental (drowning, suicide or violent death). The dead of the second category must be buried within twenty-four hours. The story is told of a peasant's wife who, having died in childbirth, was quickly cut up in pieces by the villagers who scattered them to the four winds so that she would not become a wandering soul capable of tormenting the living.

764 [58] When there is a death in a house, the body is bathed with tepid water, then with cold water. It is then perfumed and dressed. Two garments are put on it, one wrong side out, the other right side out. The former symbolizes death, the latter life, for the favorite garment of the dead person while alive was chosen. His hair is then combed and he is shackled with a white cotton thread, for he must not return to the world of the living. The same thread is used to wrap around his neck, to tie his two hands together, and his two feet together. This bond must not be cut, so a knot is made at each place where it is attached. This thread also shows man how illusory are the bonds which tie him to the world. Then the body is wrapped in a shroud. It is laid parallel with the largest dimension of the house, as opposed to the living who always lie in the direction of its width.

[823 342]

10: d'Orleans--311 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 586, 593, 627, 684, 837

"Adultery with a married woman, which is of very rare occurrence, entails a fine of 200 rupees; but, after having been very gay in their youth, husband and wife generally settle down quietly, the former often taking it out of his wife for her unceremonious treatment of him beforehand. I happened, while walking about the town one morning, to witness one of these little family scenes. A woman was shrieking and crying because her husband had been beating her, and when I came to question the pair, the man complained that his wife, who had been out to market, had not returned by nine o'clock to get his breakfast ready, so she must have stopped to gossip on the way. Her answer was that she had not heard the gong strike the hour, that she had not stopped on the way home, and that there was no reason why she should have had a beating. The quarrel was eventually made up without having recourse to a divorce, which, though legally recognised, is rarely resorted to."

23: Franck--258-259 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 586

"The code of Laos allows the woman a divorce without contest if the husband stays away from her longer than the length of time he said he would when he left. What an importation this would be in our civilized West! One might fancy that it would make the men of Laos more punctual, more aware of the value of time, than the subway [259] victims of our great metropolis. Yet it is not so, far from so. The lieutenant contended that this is a very just law, for the suffering of the woman from long absence, whetted by the uncertainty of the return, is obviously more than she can stand, more than she should be expected to stand."

25: Brodrick--106 [3] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 562, 586, 883

"Laotian women seem never to have been parked and compressed into any sort of seclusion. Divorce is easy and a manner of seeking it was most charmingly civilized. If a husband had reason to think that his wife did not like him, he placed flowers upon her pillow. If she could still tolerate him, or if she had not any new plans, then she left the flowers untouched for three days. If she desired to get rid of her man, she threw the flowers away, whereupon he walked out and got a divorce.

And at the Love Courts, the phousao and the phoubao, the girls and the boys are free and equal, at least as far as the conventions rule."

149: Reinach--147 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Polygamy. Although polygamy is not the rule in Laos, it is sanctioned by custom, and the only limits as to the number of wives one man may possess are the extent of his resources and his personal taste for becoming the husband of a greater or lesser number of wives. 595 554

Since infertile unions are regarded as a punishment of [194] heaven, and since physiological defects are beyond the comprehension of the Laotians, a husband who has no children has two courses between which he can choose:

1. To repudiate his sterile wife. He must then leave her all their property gains since their marriage and half of their common property: [586]

2. To keep this wife and take a second one.

Recourse is preferably had to the last solution in most cases. By acting thus the husband avoids making restitutions which would often be difficult for him. Moreover, his first wife often persuades him to take a second wife who will be under her orders and almost become her slave.

This is what does happen if the husband has enough money for several wives. They are all under the domination of the first, never sit at the same rank as she and may not wear jewels or clothes which are as rich and sumptuous as hers. They are, in a way, legal concubines.

These secondary wives are ranked in accordance with their date of entry into the polygamous household and are designated as the first wife, second wife, third wife, fourth wife, etc. In the house, except for the times when the husband or master keeps them with him, they are employed as servants for all the household tasks, farming, spinning cotton, weaving cloth, etc.

In the case the first wife should die, and according to the will of the husband, the second wife takes her place and the others advance one notch.

There is also another very curious type of polygamy which is encouraged by the nomadic habits of the Laotian traveler or trader and which, "utile dulci," yields him profit, security and pleasure. Some natives are, in fact, married at several different places, often quite far from one another and generally situated at the spots where periodic markets are held. 438 595 485

The advantages of this type of polygamy--from the Laotian point of view, of course--are that the husband can have an associate

586 "If a husband remains absent for more than three years without sending news of his whereabouts, a divorce in the wife's favor is legally established. The same period of time and the same conditions are required to break an engagement which has been publicly announced by the parents.

"When a man and wife have had enough of living in common they take leave of one another by dividing their common acquisitions, except for the fact that each one takes back what he brought with him to the marriage. A woman who wants a divorce places a bouquet and two wax candles on the common bed.

"Usually a husband leaves his wife free to separate from him and has recourse to law only to obtain restitution of any part of the common property which his wife may have taken with her illegally.

"A wife who has committed adultery is at the discretion of her husband, who may demand that she be meted out the "Royal Penalty," that is to say either death or life imprisonment. He may also be content with a fine. We should hasten to say that the outraged husband always asks for the fine, which is inflicted on both guilty parties, the adulterous wife and her lover. The fine varies, depending on the region, from 170 to 300 francs.

"If a husband brings three complaints against his wife for adultery with three different persons, he is the one who is punished the third time, for he is considered to be a complaisant husband.

"Relations between unmarried persons are regarded as adulterous.

"A case is also considered adulterous, and punished in the same way, if any man and married woman are surprised alone in an isolated spot or are found talking together in the husband's house with no witnesses present.

"Adultery on the part of the husband is covered by the local law within the general formula which assimilates relations between two unmarried persons to adultery." (Le Laos français.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

548 Prostitution. The facilities provided by Laotian customs in the matter of marriage and divorce are such that prostitution does not, so to speak, exist. It is true that a few women are found in the large centers, especially since our settlement in Laos, who are prostitutes or are notoriously known to pursue clandestine prostitution, but this is an exception due solely to the presence of native troops and Oriental "boys" hired as servants [200] by Europeans. These women are,

149; Reinach--175 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai 341

Building materials, interior arrangement and furniture in Thai houses do not differ in any significant way from what we have described in connection with the Laotians.

Births. Like the Laotian women, Thai women generally give birth to children with the greatest ease, and the ceremonies accompanying births are identical. 844

Marriages. Betrothals generally take place among the Thais after the farming work is over, in December or January, during the cold season. Sheds are built in the villages. Fires are laid there and the marriageable girls install themselves there with a spinning wheel, reel or cotton gin to keep them busy and prevent them from losing countenance. The young men come and join them and exchange declarations, compliments, betel quids and cigarettes with them. There it is that promises of marriage are made, which are followed by a request to the girl's parents when she gives her lover permission to do so. 584

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The groom comes to live in his wife's room on his wedding day. He is supposed to stay in the home of his in-laws for eight years (only three years in some regions) and share in their work. 591

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586 the Laotians." (Le Laos français.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

764 Deaths, Funerals. Everything takes place among the Thais
769 as among the Laotians. The poor are buried, while well-to-do people are cremated in great pomp. Celebrations take place at which animal are sacrificed, there is a great deal to eat and quantities of rice brandy and rice beer are consumed. But here there is ancestor worship, and so the altar of the "Phis" of the house and the body itself receive offerings as long as the funeral feasts last.

After cremation, which, as in India, is practiced on a raised pyre at the bottom of a pit dug in the ground, the ashes and burnt bones are sealed in a jar with a few silver coins placed there to pay for the dead person's food during his wanderings through "space."

The jar is buried on the site of the pyre. Then [237] [Illustration] [238] [Blank page] [239] the mattresses, bolster and pillow of the deceased are placed on top, as well as food and a drinking vase full of water. All of his clothes are fastened to poles planted fan-wise on one side of the tomb. Sometimes a fence closes off the site of the tomb.

In some regions the jar containing the remains and ashes of the deceased is buried in a hidden place in the mountains, known only to the dead person's closest relatives.

This procedure, which is not a ritual one, is doubtless intended to place the mortal remains beyond the reach of any profaners of sepulchres who might be attracted by the temptation of the few coins mixed with the ashes.

Finally, a little house is often built over the tomb which is supposed to represent the dwelling place of the deceased.

527 Games, Celebrations, Festivals. Like their Laotian brothers, the Thais are great lovers of celebrations. The chief holiday, one which is celebrated in May or June every year and during which all work ceases for four days, is that of the dead or Boun-Phi-Tai.

782 Animal sacrifices are made to the different genii, and are
769 accompanied by prayers in honor of the dead. The favor of each genie or "Phi" spirit is gained by sacrificing a particular animal, as a dog for the "Phi" of tigers, chickens and pigs for the "Phis" of the mountains, a goat for those which watch over the roads leading to watercourses, and buffalo and oxen, finally, for the "Phis" of the

149; Reinach--184 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

291 Men's clothing consists of a jacket and pair of trousers which have the same shape as those of the Lus and are made of coarse cotton cloth manufactured locally. Their headgear is a turban cut from a piece of Turkey-red cotton.

For work, clothing is generally reduced to a narrow strip of cloth forming a belt, one of the ends of which is passed between the legs and fastened in the middle of the back.

During the cold season a jacket is added to this loin-cloth.

The women wear a skirt of the Laotian type which is fastened under the armpits so that it does not come down below the calves of the legs. A short jacket completes their costume. On their head they wear a turban which is generally dark in color. [Illustration alongside text here]

301 Jewelry. Both sexes have silver or copper jewelry such as wide stiff neckbands, bracelets, rings, buttons, clasps, etc. Like the Lus and the Youns, the Khas pierce the lobes of their ears. Often the holes are of such dimensions that a roll of leaves or a bouquet of flowers can be inserted in them.

262 Food. Their diet is very like that of the Laotians and Thais. When there is a shortage of rice its place is taken, until the following harvest, by yams, taros, bamboo sprouts, banana flowers, etc.

462 Occupations. Women and children are given the hardest tasks imaginable, and it is unusual to meet them without baskets on their backs. The men carry only their bag, their sword, their rifle and their pipe.

595 Marriage. Divorce. Adultery. Polygamy is widespread among the Khas, and the number of wives a man possesses is the sign of his wealth. For, regarded as they are rather like beasts of burden and working constantly, the more numerous these wives are the more they will produce.

584 [254] The rules for marriage preliminaries closely resemble the Laotian customs and the ceremony itself, although much less splendid, comprises the same rites. To be sure, the role of the bonzes is filled here by "Pho-Tao," that is to say elders or sorcerers.

586 Divorce may be requested by the wife, or one of the wives, for personal reasons. It may also take place by mutual consent. Finally,
684 it is compulsory in the case of adultery, since the guilty woman must marry her accomplice.

Contrary to what is the case elsewhere, adultery on the part of the husband is punished by a double fine awarded to his wife's family

Kha

586 684 and to the family of his accomplice. In a case of flagrante delicto, however, he has the right to kill the guilty parties.

[462] Kha women, when married, are renowned for their austerity, and their conduct is usually exemplary. Moreover, they are very soon disfigured by precocious and repeated childbearing, as well as by the difficult work which they do, and after two or three years of marriage the poor women are no longer tempting to anyone.

764 Deaths. Cremation is not practiced by the Khas. They bury their dead in as summary a fashion as the Lus, and for a few days bring food to the freshly filled grave. Then the latter is abandoned.

When a chief or a rich man is to be buried, the body is placed in a coffin hewn from a tree trunk.

181 Character. Like all oppressed peoples, the Khas are reserved and timid. They are afraid of innovations and new faces. But in intimate gatherings with their own people they are just as merry and love music, dances, celebrations and festivals just as much as the other peoples of Laos.

535 536 Music and dancing. They know certain dances imitated from the Lus, pantomimes (1) which resemble the I-Ke of the Burmese,

(1) They also have the habit of performing scenes in pantomime, rather like extremely primitive ballets. We shall describe one such scene:

"A group of girls, guarded by two respectable men, are pursuing the pleasures of dancing. A rogue comes up and tries to make off with one of the girls. After a few unsuccessful attempts he succeeds in eluding the guards' vigilance, jumps forward to seize the girl on whom he has designs, and clasps her in his arms. But his happiness is too much for him and he falls senseless at the feet of the girl he wanted to abduct." (Le Laos français.) - [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

and [255] singsong legends in which the r's and k's roll out in terrible fashion. They also have songs which they accompany on flutes, clarinets and single-stringed violins. Some tribes have xylophones, these being instruments composed of bamboo tubes of [Illustration here] different thickness and length, each of which produces a tone varying with its size. It will be seen that by striking with a [256] stick of wood on these tubes, a combination of more or less harmonious sounds will

533

149: Reinach--190 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Hill Tribes

Almost all are of low birth and are crude and illiterate. They have married Thai or Kha women and thereby founded a stock of halfbreeds. This race is destined to merge with the mass of the Laotians or Thai population and through successive crossings lose all distinctive characteristics. 619 563

The Meos. The Meos are also Yunnanese who have retained a degree of independence and have not been marked with the Chinese imprint like the Hos or adopted baggy clothes and the custom of wearing their hair only in a braid.

They are distributed in groups of a few families each of which live on the peaks of the mountains in northern Laos and the Sib-Song Chau-Thais. They can be divided into three great families--the blacks, the whites and the reds--which owe their names to the color of certain parts of the women's costume. Thus among the black and red Meos skirts or jackets are light blue in color, but the latter have a wide collar ornamented with black or red embroidery. Finally, a small turban with black and white checks or of red material, depending on the case, completes their garb. Among the white Meos, the women wear a skirt and jacket of unbleached cloth, with a white and blue embroidered collar. [361] 391

The men's clothing is light blue in all cases. It is composed of a broad pair of trousers which come down somewhat below the calf, where the legs are drawn tight, and of a short, tight-sleeved jacket which buttons down one side.

A turban winds around the head and covers their long hair, which may be rolled or braided. 301

The women's hair is parted and wound on the upper part of the nape of the neck in a coil. (1)

(1) See Appendix XIX.

The Meos practice ancestor worship primarily, like many Asian peoples. They have no pagodas or bonzes, but elders perform the office of priests and also administer justice. 769

[268] The Meos bury their dead, and make animal sacrifices on the occasion of births, marriages and deaths so as to gain the favor of the "Phis" or multiple and varied genii in whose existence and influence they believe.

Marriage is as simple as among the other peoples of Laos. [581]

Divorce may occur either through mutual consent or in the case of adultery. [586]

643* capture later on in a return offensive (1).
175*

1. The Annals also state that two of his grandsons, Tia-Oun and Tiao-Thep, came and settled in Luang-Prabang during the wars which followed.

INTHA-SOM, KING 1727-1776.

643* Having attained his ends, Intha-Som had himself solemnly
●587 crowned and married Khamone-Noi's wives. Only Thene-Sao seems
175* to have raised any objections to accepting her new husband. At first she refused categorically, then proposed the condition that the
/428/ first son whom she should bear should inherit the succession. Intha-Som agreed and all was arranged.

648* In the following year he received a mission from the Sip-Song-
643* Panas, whose leader, Pha-No-Muong of Muong-La, explained to
175* him that his master had to pay China a tribute of two elephants /189/
563 which he had not been able to procure in his territory and which he begged his neighbor to be so kind as to furnish him.

Intha-Som had too many obligations towards this prince not to present them to him gratis, but he profited by the occasion in order to inform the envoys of the trouble being caused him by his former allies, the "Mousseux," who, according to him, were mistreating the inhabitants of the region and against whom he was powerless precisely by reason of the services which they had rendered him before his accession to the throne. Could not the embassy from the Sip-Song-Panas ask the emperor of China to recall these people to their homes (1)?

1. Intha-Som's grounds for complaint against the "Mousseux" seem rather improbable if we may judge of them by their present-day descendants, who are gentle, out-going and hospitable. Patriarchal in their mores, they had fled the insurrections in Yunnan and were then seeking in Laotian territory only the tranquillity which they could not find in their own land. We are therefore justified in seeing in Intha-Som's accusations against them a mark of the spirit of ingratitude and duplicity which he manifested in many circumstances of his troubled life.

Pha-No-Muong agreed to transmit this wish to Pekin, but observed that ambassadors who could speak directly in the name of the

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

and to produce an occasional tranquil canvas, but Luang Prabang has 000 not yet found a Gauguin.

On the day after our arrival I was invited home by Dupont to meet his wife, whose bicycle was still in pieces when he got back. They lived in a charming Mediterranean sort of house that had nestled down well among the pagodas. It was full of animals, including a large, handsome, domesticated goat that delighted to lurk behind furniture and charge unsuspecting guests.

Madame Dupont was pretty and gay, tall for a Laotian and 837 evidently as nearly European in type as Dupont had been able to 588 find. They seemed very attached to each other. Dupont assured me that jealousy was quite unknown in Laos, and that his wife not only expected him to have adulterous adventures while away from home, but actually advised him in the precautions to take. He did not know whether she allowed herself similar liberties, but thought it likely that she did. At all events he didn't see how he could very well show himself less civilized about it than was she. I was sorry not to be able to understand anything his wife said, except the inevitable *bo pen nhang* which was repeated several times. In a polite effort to make me feel at home, Madame Dupont brought out the family snapshot album and we turned the pages together. There were one or two photographs, evidently taken by her husband, of not fully dressed ladies who were also not Madame. She drew my attention to these, giggling slightly.

After supper, an army officer came in with another Laotian lady. Speaking in an extraordinary whisper, he told me that she was a Princess – a member of the royal family – and entitled to a parasol of five tiers. He admitted, quite frankly, that there was no shortage of princesses in Luang Prabang, and all genuine. They had been friends for fifteen years now, he whispered, although they had never troubled to marry . . . why, he couldn't think. It was easy enough. Dupont agreed with him here, mentioning the case of a subordinate of his who had recently arrived. 'At six o'clock,' Dupont said, 'he expressed the wish to get married. My wife went out to look for a

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

837 suitable girl, and was back with one by six-thirty. At seven the
588 bonzès came and performed a marriage ceremony which took half an hour. At seven-thirty we opened a bottle of champagne and drank to the health of the bride and bridegroom, and by eight they were already in bed.'

548 The evening was rounded off by a routine visit to the local opium den,[1] which, probably by design, was as decrepit and sinister as a waxworks exhibit. We stayed only a few minutes in this green-lit, melodramatic establishment, but it was clear that the unprofitable puff at the pipe was not to be avoided. One had to make some show of going to the devil.

000 I was lodged in the minor palace of the *Conseiller de la République*, the senior French official in Northern Laos, a Monsieur Leveau. The *Conseiller* was a man whose shyness and slight reserve of manner failed to mask a quite extraordinary hospitality. He never, for instance, issued a formal invitation to a meal, preferring with an air of casual assumption to say something like: 'Of course, you'll be dining at home tonight.' Monsieur Leveau was married to a Laotian wife, to whom I was not presented, and the huge official building always seemed strangely empty. We dined facing each other across a darkly gleaming wasteland of ambassadorial table. Sometimes a Laotian servant stole into the room carrying dishes; trailing behind him the distant sounds of a domestic interior. These were immediately sealed off by the closing of the door, leaving us to the vault-like silences of the huge room. As we sat there the light bulbs gave out in various parts of the room and were swiftly re-
365 placed. In Luang Prabang the electric current was switched on at the same time as the water was turned off – at seven-thirty. But the result was no more than a feeble striving of the filament, and the lamp in my bedroom produced a light considerably less than that of one candle. Monsieur Leveau partly got over this difficulty by enormously over-running lamps intended for a much lower voltage, but they did not last long.

[1] [at Luang Prabang. 286
-- Analyst]

10: d'Orleans--312-313 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 162, 589, 793

"All the members of the religious corporation reside in the buildings near the pagodas, and they comprise nearly a tenth of the population, as a portion of the [313] body is constantly shifting. Moreover, women dressed in white, generally old maids or widows, also have their heads shaved and become female priests, their special duty being to make the collections at the pagodas."

149: Reinach--146 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

585

Then comes the feast. A suckling pig, a hen, a cock, two bowls of cooked rice, two hardboiled eggs, two small jars containing brandy, a handful of cotton threads and lighted wax candles are placed on a copper platter before a kind of altar erected in the middle of the house. In certain parts of Laos cakes and flowers take the place of these offerings, except for the rice, eggs, candles and cotton thread. These latter are obligatory, according to Laotian custom.

[193] The bride and groom kneel down before the altar, and the marriage ceremony begins. An elderly man, a sorcerer, or the man who has been the go-between in the marriage recites prayers and performs certain ritual practices. Then he attaches cotton threads to the wrists of the bride and groom so as to form bracelets. These are supposed to be "fetishes of happiness." Finally the newlyweds pour out a libation of brandy and all those present drink from the same cup after them, passing it from hand to hand.

In families of notables the bride's parents give back part of the dowry to their son-in-law after he has given it to them, as a mark of esteem and great confidence.

591

If the son-in-law is to live with the bride's parents then the dowry is decreased in accordance with custom, in compensation for the labor which he will furnish to the community (1).

(1) A custom which is quite widely observed decrees that the groom shall live with his in-laws and help them with their work like a son until the time when he has a child. He is then free to go elsewhere and found a new family home. This custom is extremely ancient in origin and contributes greatly to strengthening the bonds of kinship between the groom and his in-laws.

There are cases, however, where the groom already has a house and takes his wife to live there after the marriage ceremony. The newlyweds are then accompanied by their friends. The young men take along noisy instruments with which they make a great racket, while the young women carry the bride's clothes and bedclothes to her new home.

When they reach their home a celebration takes place in which there is no shortage of brandy and during which the bride runs and shuts herself in her room so as to escape the extremely licentious remarks made by those present, who are somewhat drunk after their many libations.

[522 273]

149: Reinach--175 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai 341

Building materials, interior arrangement and furniture in Thai houses do not differ in any significant way from what we have described in connection with the Laotians.

Births. Like the Laotian women, Thai women generally give birth to children with the greatest ease, and the ceremonies accompanying births are identical. 844

Marriages. Betrothals generally take place among the Thais after the farming work is over, in December or January, during the cold season. Sheds are built in the villages. Fires are laid there and the marriageable girls install themselves there with a spinning wheel, reel or cotton gin to keep them busy and prevent them from losing countenance. The young men come and join them and exchange declarations, compliments, betel quids and cigarettes with them. There it is that promises of marriage are made, which are followed by a request to the girl's parents when she gives her lover permission to do so. 584

A few days later, during a banquet which takes place in the girl's house, the engagement is announced and the young [236] people are then free to see one another and come and go together at all hours and in all places.

The marriage is not celebrated until several months after the betrothal unless traces of pregnancy are evident in the engaged girl, in which case the marriage takes place at once.

The ceremony is much simpler than among the Laotians, but it is followed by a series of banquets which succeed one another for several days and at which great quantities of rice brandy and rice beer are consumed. 585

The groom comes to live in his wife's room on his wedding day. He is supposed to stay in the home of his in-laws for eight years (only three years in some regions) and share in their work. 591

Adultery. Divorce. "Cases of adultery are extremely rare. When such an eventuality does occur, the man is condemned to a fine of seven bars of silver (about 260 francs) and the woman to a fine of six bars of the same metal (about 225 francs). Half of these sums is awarded to the judges and the other half to the husband, who may then either take back or repudiate his unfaithful wife. 586 684

"In the latter case, the unfaithful wife generally marries her accomplice.

"Divorce is rarer, but just as easy among the Thai as among 586

10: d'Orleans--276 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 563, 583, 591, 764, 793 Ethnic subgroups

"Marriages are easily made amongst the Khamouks; the young man's parents give sixty rupees to the girl's father and mother. After the marriage feast, the bridegroom sleeps one night in his father-in-law's house, then takes his wife home with him.

The dead are buried and not burnt; there is no priest, no religious ceremonies, but the master of the house cuts a fowl's throat and the mourners rub their knees with his blood. The men generally follow one stage in the bonzeries. (1) After a few months

1. I question whether this information does not apply more to the Laotians.

they are little bonze or Siang, then grand bonze or Tit ; a man who has not made one stage is Ba."

10: d'Orleans--319 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 563, 583, 591, 764 Ethnic subgroups

[LSS: Among the Meo of Luang Prabang] "The marriages are arranged by the parents, a young girl being rated at 36 rupees and taken, as soon as she is married, to the house of her husband. The bodies of the defunct are interred three days after death."

25: Brodrick--106 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 342, 592

"[HD: In Luang Prabang province] you go out into the shapeless streets of straw huts and tall trees, of a European-style house here and there, of spires and steep roofs, of a brand-new royal palace, of bamboo huts on piles with three compartments, two for the public and one sacred to the family."

181 bread by their work, they have scarcely a care for the morrow.
461 Scrupulous observers of the traditions handed down to them by their ancestors, they live an utterly carefree life and instinctively dread everything foreign or unknown to them.

463 Occupations. The men busy themselves with the tasks of farming, fishing and hunting. They are very industrious and skilled farmers,
241 and can draw admirably on the soil's resources. They bring in the water needed for irrigating their rais or mountain ricefields through ingenious
462 canals built along the sides of hills, and they also know how to capture springs, often very distant ones, for the same purpose. To decorticate paddy, they use mills driven by artificial waterfalls. The women perform the household chores, take care of the children, make and mend clothes, harvest and spin cotton, breed silkworms, unwind the cocoons and mill the silk. Theirs also is the task of supplying the home with water and with wood which they gather in the forest, as well as sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, getting in and decorticating the rice. These many tasks leave Thai women and girls little leisure, and it would thus seem only natural that they should profit by a momen of pleasure, whenever one presents itself in the midst of their multiple duties. They do, in fact, go in for fun eagerly and behave as keenly, despite their more reserved appearance, as their Laotian sisters.

361 Houses. There is no difference between Laotian villages and Thai villages, except that the latter are better kept and cleaner.
342 Thai houses are generally longer and higher than those of the
592 Laotians, by reason of the custom which decrees that the whole family-parents, children and grandchildren--shall live under the same roof. Some Thai houses are as much as thirty meters long and from eight to ten meters wide. In rare cases one finds much larger houses which are from seventy to seventy-five meters long and twenty-five meters wide.

342 Thai houses very often have no verandas on their long sides, but always have two, one at each end, which are covered by rounded roofs
554 and serve as reception terraces or antichambers.

The houses of mandarins and notables can be distinguished from the others by the fact that the roof rafters and the trusses of the gables extend above the line of the roof and cross. These members are decorated with wooden silhouettes or scallops ending in discs which, depending on their number and arrangement, indicate the rank of the house's owner.

516 progresses at an even, elongated pace, carrying as much as 30 kilo-
417 grams in his pack without even seeming to suspect the feats of strength,
[132] suppleness and balance which he accomplishes. As long as he remains on high ground his resistance to fatigue is very great indeed, but he cannot go down to the lowlands without danger, especially in the hot season.

101 Certain authors claim that the word "Meo" which, when pronounced with a certain intonation, means cat in several Indo-Chinese languages, was given to these folk by reason of their agility. However, we must note that in [109] Laotian the word "Meo" used to designate these mountainfolk is neither written or pronounced like the word meo which is used to designate cats. There is the same difference between these two words as there is in French between the words maitre and mètre.

342 A Meo house is built at ground level on slightly leveled ground. The walls are made of puddled clay or of ill-fitting boards, and the house is roofed with thatch or crudely-squared wooden shingles. The doors are made of wood which has been shaped with an ax, and there
[592] are no windows. Often several families live in the same house, and then each has a fireplace to itself and a compartment which serves it as a bedroom. In the common room there is an oven and fireplaces above which objects are placed to dry on a bamboo framework. Behind the house a narrow passageway is left free separating the
[343] building from the sheer mountainside. In front there is a narrow veranda where the horses are kept when they are not housed in a stable built on piles and overhanging the mountainside, as are the animal barn and pig sty, the rice granary and the goat pen. This system has the advantage of protecting the animals from the dampness of the ground, since the planks which form the floor jut out over empty space on their solid piles.

[101] Inside the house there are a few furnishings, as among all peoples of Chinese origin. There are benches, tables, camp beds, dishes,
352 iron and copper cooking utensils and opium smoking accessories, all
356 so repulsively filthy that even the least delicate would hesitate to enter and stay in these hovels, where vermin swarm under the protection of the ancestors' altar.

Although amongh themselves and with their families the Meos
198 speak a rather unharmonious language, nearly all the men can understand and speak Qouane-hoa, the language of the Chinese mandarins,
212 which is the official language in Yunnan. They can neither read nor write Chinese characters, and have no system of writing of their own.

10: d'Orleans--311 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 586, 593, 627, 684, 837

"Adultery with a married woman, which is of very rare occurrence, entails a fine of 200 rupees; but, after having been very gay in their youth, husband and wife generally settle down quietly, the former often taking it out of his wife for her unceremonious treatment of him beforehand. I happened, while walking about the town one morning, to witness one of these little family scenes. A woman was shrieking and crying because her husband had been beating her, and when I came to question the pair, the man complained that his wife, who had been out to market, had not returned by nine o'clock to get his breakfast ready, so she must have stopped to gossip on the way. Her answer was that she had not heard the gong strike the hour, that she had not stopped on the way home, and that there was no reason why she should have had a beating. The quarrel was eventually made up without having recourse to a divorce, which, though legally recognised, is rarely resorted to."

149: Reinach--191 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Hill Tribes

595 There is polygamy among the Meos, and the Meo women do not enjoy any higher regard than the Kha women.

[101] The Yaos. The Yaos have the same origin as the Meos, and are strikingly like them in many respects. Their mores, their beliefs and their habits are identical.

619 As we have seen above, the Yaos are divided into three varieties, these being the Lantenes, the Khao and the Ao-Tchaine.

291 The Lantenes (blacks) wear broad trousers, a long smock buttoning
302 at the side and a turban, all made of black cottonstuff. They wear their hair long and either wound under a turban or braided in Chinese style.

[342] Their houses are like those of the Meos and shelter several families, each of which has its own quarters. They are generally clean and well kept-up.

593 The mores of the Lantene Yaos are patriarchal, and these folk
562 are monogamous. The women are very reserved and do not let themselves be seen much by strangers. They enjoy a certain respect and are treated with consideration by their husbands.

231 The Lantenes are great livestock breeders, and cultivate the opium
241 poppy in addition to rice and maize. They are skilled hunters of wild animals, and each man owns a rifle from which he is rarely separated.

224 Besides a dialect peculiar to them, they speak Quoan-hoa (a
[212] Cantonese idiom), and many of them can write Chinese characters.
198 The Khao Yaos are less outgoing than their fellows and do not
101 greet strangers with as much good will.

The men's clothing is like that of the Lantenes, [269] but the
291 women are garbed in a different manner and wear their hair in a special way which has earned their tribe the name "Khao" (horns).

Over a pair of black trousers ornamented with colored embroidery and held in place by leggings, Khao Yao women wear a tunic which comes down to the knees but the flaps of which are fastened to the belt. This tunic also has colored embroidery on the chest, back, neck and cuffs, and is held shut with wide silver hooks.

302 Their hairdress consists of a coil which is smeared with wax and lacquer to hold it in place and in which a wooden socket is imbedded. A light bamboo framework is inserted into the socket, and over this is spread a red cloth or a black cloth embroidered in red. The women thus appear to have two horns on their head.

301 Silver jewelry, neckbands, bracelets and ear pendants are worn by the Khao Yaos.

000 indispensable for us to be acquainted with customs of our French friends. This is to prevent that in the course of a French-Laotian gathering we should be embarrassed in our actions and gestures. The French on their side should not be ignorant of our customs; a gesture of Laotian politeness might well be misinterpreted by those who are unacquainted with our customs, and that would be a regrettable misunderstanding.

How a Laotian Mandarin Should Behave.

647 576 A high Laotian functionary, in order to be worthy of his rank, must have a different bearing depending on whether he finds himself in the exercise /977/ of his functions, among his family, or at private gatherings.

577 647 In the office. --In his office the mandarin behaves in an irreproachable fashion in order to show himself worthy of the functions that he holds. In this way he sets a good example to the officials who are under his authority. Before he reprimands one of his subordinates, he must have thought the matter over to get a clear idea of the effects that his reprimand may have. The man who has received the reprimand will not fail to answer, in effect, any unfounded criticism. If the head of a department hands out reprimands on every possible occasion, even for minimal matters, his staff will end up by being used to his unnecessary harangues. By this process one scarcely makes oneself obeyed and respected. In short, the mandarin should "turn his tongue seven times in his mouth" before speaking; he has a correct appearance and is concerned about his reputation and his honor.

593 647 665 In the family. --The mandarin must be a good father of his family in the company of his wife and of his children. He facilitates the household work entrusted to his wife, in place of picking quarrels with her from vain motives. Crude forms of expression may give rise to arguments. It is up to you, mandarin, to avoid them. It is possible that your wife may throw you into a fit of anger. In that case it is up to you to control yourself and at the same time to try and appease your companion by consoling words. If one of the partners in a marriage is "fire," so goes a Laotian adage, the other must

naturally be "water." These two elements, opposed though they are 3
to one another, nonetheless go together. If you should happen to 647
raise your voice, see to it that it does not reach the ears of your 565
neighbors who will be sure to laugh at your domestic misunderstanding.
There is a good way to appease your anger: that is to go out and get
some fresh air. A moment of distraction will calm your irritation.
This precious and effective remedy is called, according to a Laotian
expression, "to caress one's heart with a hand drenched with fresh
water."

On a walk and on a visit.--Formerly it used to be considered 574
a disgrace for a mandarin to go for a walk by himself or to visit minor 647
functionaries. Nowadays this is no longer the case. A Laotian 565
Minister goes out alone without being accompanied by the traditional 178
retinue. He visits all classes of society without being criticized for
it by anyone at all.

At a private gathering.--In contrast to the customs of former
times, present-day mandarins accept the invitation of a simple
citizen. The host very often organizes various diversions: dances, /533/
lamvong, orchestras, songs etc. The Ministers willingly participate /535/
in these; they sing, dance, and pay their respects to the phousaos
while they mingle with the crowd. Certain Laotians whom I consider
backward criticize the liberal manner on the part of our Ministers.
Our great mandarins are their own masters. Let them turn a deaf
ear to these carpings. /978/

Honor Laotian Women

Some people consider the Laotian woman as an inferior 562
creature.

Certain women, it appears, are not permitted to eat with
their husband. Miserable husbands! You consider then that your
better half is like an animal?

Certainly, tradition says: "The woman must sleep with her /513/
head lower than her husband's. She must go to bed after him and
she must get up before him. The husband must have eaten three /264/
mouthfuls of rice before the wife can begin to eat in her turn."

These counsels of our fathers are valuable, but they are far
from indicating that the woman is inferior to the man. They recommend,

7: Thompson--379 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
595

"The Laotians find the indissolubility and relative asceticism of a Christian marriage far less congenial than their traditional polyandry and polygamy."

10: d'Orleans--299 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 595, 643

"The native Government acts under the control of the Commissioner. [LSS: the Siamese Commissioner] At the head of it are two kings, one for peace and the other for war, who reign in concert. The royalty is hereditary, and, owing to the existence of polygamy, the royal family is a numerous one and is related to all the families in the city. The two reigning kings (1) bear the names of Chao Kham Souck and Chao

1. According to Hallett (p. 32), the kings of Luang Prabang, like those of Lahon, Lapoon, Peh, and Tern, have only the title of Chao Huang (great prince), while those of Xieng Maï and Nau are Chou Che Wit (lord of life). The former are only entitled to kill criminals by piercing their breasts with a lance, while the latter are said to have the right to behead them.

Boune Khong (now called by the Siamese Chao Ratchapha Khinaï). Their father Chao Boune Kham, after a reign of twenty years, abdicated, and he has now become, at the age of eighty-two, a sacred personage and more or less of a demi-god."

643* could not tolerate the Thai alliance without giving up the prestige of
648* his victories of 1555. By 1563 he had judged that the rapid recovery of
726 the Siamese was a threat to his power, and when the rains ceased in
175* November he assembled his army, penetrated into Xieng-Mai territory, forced the king of Ayuthya to abdicate, led him away in captivity and sent his lieutenants against Lan-Xang. One of these was the Siamese prince Sang-Kao, a traitor to his country. Setthathirath put two armies into the field which took the offensive and at first gained several victories -- one at Pak-Houi where Sang-Kao was crushed and one at Muong-Kem, but they then had to fall back before the Burmese horde which swept up to the walls of Vientiane. The Burmese generals deliberated too long over the best means of capturing the city, and when they did decide to act it was too late, for Settathirath had disappeared. The capital was seized and the Oupahat (1)

1. Neither the Annals of Lan-Xang nor those of Xieng-Mai enable us to identify the Oupahat or second king who was left at Vientiane by Setthathirath. This gap is all the more surprising in that this first dignitary of the court was to reign ten years later. The Laotian chronicles indicate only that he was Setthathirath's brother-in-law, and continue to designate him by his title of Oupahat even during the period of his reign. His merit as a sovereign was, moreover, somewhat questionable, as may be seen in what follows, and it may be that the first writers of the Annals kept silent intentionally about a prince who was imposed by Burma and who was regarded by many as a usurper. All kinds of suppositions are possible. Perhaps he was one of the two younger brothers of Setthathirath who tried to accomplish the schism of 1547 and who are not once mentioned in the Annals after the unity of the kingdom was restored in 1548.

was captured together with three of the /87/ king's wives, (1) their

1. Setthathirath had allied himself by marriage with most
/595/ of the neighboring kings -- Xieng-Mai, Annam, Ayuthya. He had also married daughters of several vassals.

daughters and some twenty concubines, but after a week's rest the Burmese had to go in pursuit of the Laotian army. They caught up with it after two day's march and defeated it after a bloody combat

669 royal troops succeeded in dispersing the partisans of Intha-Som and
175* forced them, after a bloody encounter, to retreat in disorder along the Nam-Ou. Ong-Ek swam across the river and fled to Phoutong-Nongboua. As for Intha-Som, he was able to gain the Sip-Song-Panas where he kept a close watch on events and waited for a more favorable opportunity.

Finally free to organize his conquest, King-Kitsarath endeavored to restore some measure of order in the kingdom, which was greatly in need thereof. Aided by his cousin Khamone-Noi (1), he succeeded

1. See p. 133.

within a few years in restoring tranquillity to his subjects. Luang-
/633/ Prabang, once again a royal metropolis, was slowly repopulated and resumed the foremost place in a diminished State.

633 Gracefully stretching across the junction of the Mekong and the
175* Nam-Khane and dominated by the verdant hill of the "Phou-Si," the
133 city regained some of its animation and gradually became covered /181/ with new buildings grouped around the ancient pagodas which recalled the past grandeur of the legendary Muong-Swa.

"Moreover, the configuration of the principality's territory and the particular topography of the region combined at this river junction to provide all the elements for the prosperity of a great city. Luang-Prabang is in fact contained in the immediate zone where the region's three great navigable watercourses converge on the Mekong. These watercourses (Nam-Ou, Nam-Suong, Nam-Khane) have in the past favored the political centralization of the country as well as trade relations with China, Tonkin and Annam. Whereas both upstream and downstream for a distance of several hundred kilometers the banks of the river are constantly cut deep between the mountains and nowhere offer a surface of flat land which would lend itself to large agglomerations, here nature has provided on both banks a broad extent of land which can be cultivated as ricefields and is capable of supplying all the needs of a large population" (1).

1. Cf. Captain Cupet, Mission Pavie, Vol. III /Voyages au Laos et chez les sauvages du Sud-Est de l'Indochine (1900)/, p. 34.

643* At his death, which occurred about 1726, King-Kitsarath left
595 three daughters born of three different wives /182/ /Page 182 is
175*

devoted to an illustration: "Junction of the Nam-Khane and the 643*
Mekong at Luang-Prabang." --Translator/ /183/ whom he had 595
chosen in Luang-Prabang itself from the families of his mandarins. 175*

KHAMONE-NOI, KING 1726-1727.

Khamone-Noi succeeded him and took as wives two of the dead /595/
king's daughters, Thene-Sao and Thene-Kham. But Intha-Som at 175*
once began to agitate. Not daring to hope that the family of the 669
Sip-Song-Panas would lend him aid against one of its children, he 643*
addressed himself to some newcomers to the land who had been 563
infiltrating for some time into the valley of the Nam-Ou. These /167/
were the "Mousseux," mountainfolk driven out of Yunnan by the
religious wars (1). Although their temperament was not at all war-

1. Violent Moslem rebellions were then devastating southern China.

like, these fugitives nevertheless agreed, since they had no choice, 721
to lend their aid to Intha-Som. In return the latter promised their 643*
leaders La-Nga and Noli that he would recognize and confirm their 175*
occupation of Muong-Yo and Boun-Neua as soon as he became king. 669
563

Submission of Intha-Som (1726). But the Mousseux (2), al-

2. The word "Mousseux" is the word which most nearly approaches the native appellation. With their slender figures, their rather white coloration, their prominent cheekbones and their well-shaped and not flattened noses, the "Mousseux" type has a greater affinity with the Indo-European type than with the yellow race type. /142/

though they were supported by Nha-No- '184/ Muong of Muong-La, failed in their march on Luang-Prabang and Intha-Som had no other recourse than to make his submission. He gave up his weapons, took an oath of obedience and fidelity in the pagoda of Xieng-Thong, and was given permission to live in the capital, where he settled near the Vat-Visoun with a large retinue of Mousseux.

He was quite determined not to keep his word. The king, moreover, was not at all worried and did not even have him watched.

149: Reinach--147 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Polygamy. Although polygamy is not the rule in Laos, it is sanctioned by custom, and the only limits as to the number of wives one man may possess are the extent of his resources and his personal taste for becoming the husband of a greater or lesser number of wives. 595 554

Since infertile unions are regarded as a punishment of [194] heaven, and since physiological defects are beyond the comprehension of the Laotians, a husband who has no children has two courses between which he can choose:

1. To repudiate his sterile wife. He must then leave her all their property gains since their marriage and half of their common property; [586]

2. To keep this wife and take a second one.

Recourse is preferably had to the last solution in most cases. By acting thus the husband avoids making restitutions which would often be difficult for him. Moreover, his first wife often persuades him to take a second wife who will be under her orders and almost become her slave.

This is what does happen if the husband has enough money for several wives. They are all under the domination of the first, never sit at the same rank as she and may not wear jewels or clothes which are as rich and sumptuous as hers. They are, in a way, legal concubines.

These secondary wives are ranked in accordance with their date of entry into the polygamous household and are designated as the first wife, second wife, third wife, fourth wife, etc. In the house, except for the times when the husband or master keeps them with him, they are employed as servants for all the household tasks, farming, spinning cotton, weaving cloth, etc.

In the case the first wife should die, and according to the will of the husband, the second wife takes her place and the others advance one notch.

There is also another very curious type of polygamy which is encouraged by the nomadic habits of the Laotian traveler or trader and which, "utile dulci," yields him profit, security and pleasure. Some natives are, in fact, married at several different places, often quite far from one another and generally situated at the spots where periodic markets are held. 438 595 485

The advantages of this type of polygamy--from the Laotian point of view, of course--are that the husband can have an associate

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595 in each center who will represent him, handle business in his absence,
485 collect at leisure the stock of trading merchandise needed for the next [195] trip, and also provide a home for him where he is sure to find a smiling face and a warm welcome in the course of his wanderings.

554 Among the nobility and the so-called princely families polygamy
595 is the rule and is almost obligatory for the sake of prestige, which demands a greater or lesser number of concubines depending on the husband's rank. It may sometimes happen, for various reasons, that there are two wives whose progeniture enjoy a higher rank and inherit the titles and duties of the father. It also happens, in this social milieu, that the first wife or wives will see that their husband is growing old, worn out and morose, and will seek to distract him during his last years by making him marry quite young girls for whom he is more of a father than a husband but who give him the illusion of rejuvenation and bring joy and gaiety into the house with the light of their youth (1).

(1) Thanks to the docile character of Laotian women in general, and also to the atavistic imprint of custom which makes them regard polygamy as an entirely natural status, peace and harmony are rarely troubled in such households. A hierarchy naturally arises among the various wives and concubines. Each of them remains in the place assigned to her by the date of her entry into the household and enjoys any special favors which may be conferred on her by their common husband without arousing any jealousy.

Quarrels between wives are so rare that when one does by chance occur the corporal punishments decreed by ancient custom are unhesitatingly applied. The situation is of such a nature as to preserve among Laotian wives a spirit of conciliation and amiability which is not the least of their charms.

832 Kissing. Punishment for amatory offenses. Like most of the
834 peoples of the Far East, the Laotians do not indulge in kissing, at least not in the European manner. They rub their noses against the skin of their children or wives and sniff more or less noisily.

Although the morals of the Laotians seem excessively free to us and their remarks, songs and gestures often border on what we would describe as obscenity, we should not conclude that the Laotians are deliberately lewd or cynical. They are instinctively careful to be

149: Reinach--184 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

291 Men's clothing consists of a jacket and pair of trousers which have the same shape as those of the Lus and are made of coarse cotton cloth manufactured locally. Their headgear is a turban cut from a piece of Turkey-red cotton.

For work, clothing is generally reduced to a narrow strip of cloth forming a belt, one of the ends of which is passed between the legs and fastened in the middle of the back.

During the cold season a jacket is added to this loin-cloth.

The women wear a skirt of the Laotian type which is fastened under the armpits so that it does not come down below the calves of the legs. A short jacket completes their costume. On their head they wear a turban which is generally dark in color. [Illustration alongside text here]

301 Jewelry. Both sexes have silver or copper jewelry such as wide stiff neckbands, bracelets, rings, buttons, clasps, etc. Like the Lus and the Youns, the Khas pierce the lobes of their ears. Often the holes are of such dimensions that a roll of leaves or a bouquet of flowers can be inserted in them.

262 Food. Their diet is very like that of the Laotians and Thais. When there is a shortage of rice its place is taken, until the following harvest, by yams, taros, bamboo sprouts, banana flowers, etc.

462 Occupations. Women and children are given the hardest tasks imaginable, and it is unusual to meet them without baskets on their backs. The men carry only their bag, their sword, their rifle and their pipe.

•595 Marriage. Divorce. Adultery. Polygamy is widespread among the Khas, and the number of wives a man possesses is the sign of his wealth. For, regarded as they are rather like beasts of burden and working constantly, the more numerous these wives are the more they will produce.

584 [254] The rules for marriage preliminaries closely resemble the Laotian customs and the ceremony itself, although much less splendid, comprises the same rites. To be sure, the role of the bonzes is filled here by "Pho-Tao," that is to say elders or sorcerers.

586 Divorce may be requested by the wife, or one of the wives, for personal reasons. It may also take place by mutual consent. Finally,
684 it is compulsory in the case of adultery, since the guilty woman must marry her accomplice.

Contrary to what is the case elsewhere, adultery on the part of the husband is punished by a double fine awarded to his wife's family

149: Reinach--191 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Hill Tribes

595 There is polygamy among the Meos, and the Meo women do not enjoy any higher regard than the Kha women.

[101] The Yaos. The Yaos have the same origin as the Meos, and are strikingly like them in many respects. Their mores, their beliefs and their habits are identical.

619 As we have seen above, the Yaos are divided into three varieties, these being the Lantenes, the Khao and the Ao-Tchaine.

291 The Lantenes (blacks) wear broad trousers, a long smock buttoning
302 at the side and a turban, all made of black cottonstuff. They wear their hair long and either wound under a turban or braided in Chinese style.

[342] Their houses are like those of the Meos and shelter several families, each of which has its own quarters. They are generally clean and well kept-up.

593 The mores of the Lantene Yaos are patriarchal, and these folk are monogamous. The women are very reserved and do not let them-
562 selves be seen much by strangers. They enjoy a certain respect and are treated with consideration by their husbands.

231 The Lantenes are great livestock breeders, and cultivate the opium
241 poppy in addition to rice and maize. They are skilled hunters of wild animals, and each man owns a rifle from which he is rarely separated.

224 Besides a dialect peculiar to them, they speak Quoan-hoa (a
[212] Cantonese idiom), and many of them can write Chinese characters.
[198] The Khao Yaos are less outgoing than their fellows and do not
101 greet strangers with as much good will.

The men's clothing is like that of the Lantenes, [269] but the
291 women are garbed in a different manner and wear their hair in a special way which has earned their tribe the name "Khao" (horns).

Over a pair of black trousers ornamented with colored embroidery and held in place by leggings, Khao Yao women wear a tunic which comes down to the knees but the flaps of which are fastened to the belt. This tunic also has colored embroidery on the chest, back, neck and cuffs, and is held shut with wide silver hooks.

302 Their hairdress consists of a coil which is smeared with wax and lacquer to hold it in place and in which a wooden socket is imbedded. A light bamboo framework is inserted into the socket, and over this is spread a red cloth or a black cloth embroidered in red. The women thus appear to have two horns on their head.

301 Silver jewelry, neckbands, bracelets and ear pendants are worn by the Khao Yaos.

23: Benedict
113, 197, 601

ALl Southeast Asia
Lahu AP13
Laotians AM8

/For a linguistic reconstruction of the kinship terminology of the Lahu and Laotians, see ALl Southeast Asia, 23: Benedict: category 116, pp. 198-205, 230-235./

10: d'Orleans--268 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 609, 727, 177.72 Siam
636.72

"At first they refuse to let us have any provisions, and as we are now without food I am reduced to extreme measures. The villagers assert that they have neither fowls nor eggs in the place.

'If you do not rear poultry,' I reply, 'we may consider that all we find are wild birds,' and I tell the interpreter to open a hen-house and take out two chickens, offering fifteen pence for them, which is, of course, accepted. When the owners have once examined the coins, sounded them and found them good, they regain confidence and bring us some eggs. Their distrust arises from the proceedings of the Siamese soldiers, who, as they travel, requisition everything they require without any payment; the villagers thought that we might do the same, but now they realize that we are honest people."

10: d'Orleans--275 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 609, 764

"In the evening some natives come and beg us not to enter the village near which we have halted, for a man has died there, and the funeral is being celebrated by a great feast, at which a good deal of tchoum tchoum will be drunk; our presence would be a constraint upon the guests."

10: d'Orleans--305 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 147, 157, 463, 563, 609 Ethnic subgroups

"The Kas of Luang Prabang appear to be very shy, and I could not induce them, even by the promise of presents, to let me photograph them, the only means by which I succeeded being an order from the Siamese Colonel, while, when brought up, they were so intimidated that I could count their pulses beating at more than eighty to the minute. When walking in the streets they proceed as if they were afraid that some one was going to hurt them, and, being more laborious if less educated than the Laotians, they are employed by the latter to fashion the metals, to look after the stock and to cultivate the soil, so that they fill much the same part that the Lacædemonians of old did, except that they are not so badly used."

10: d'Orleans--315 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 181, 517, 609

"... They are a curious people; lazy without being fools; of equal fortune, as a rule, without great wealth or great distress; of a fairly pacific character; well disposed towards foreigners without exhibiting the intolerable curiosity of the Chinese; very religious, more, perhaps, from habit than from strong convictions; and, what is so rare in the East, treating women and girls with deference. For, while very free in their morals, they have their serenades and their 'Courts of Love,' reviving in the midst of Indo-China practices which belong rather to the Europe of the Middle Ages. There is something poetical, chivalrous and French, or, to go back to an earlier period, something Athenian in the inhabitants of the Laos; and if they have not the artistic feeling of the Greek, they have no desire for a knowledge of luxury. Having very little to earn, they do not work much and their existence is more unfettered."

10: d'Orleans--321-322 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 153, 609, 793, 871

"At first, we received several visits from an aged bonze, also occupying an important position, who had been for many years friendly to the French. 'They are fathers and brothers to me,' he would say. During the second half of our visit, he had been [322] seized with a wasting illness, and we frequently went to see him. One of the interpreters of the Consulate was teaching his pupils French, and they struck me as being very intelligent, while their lessons were well done."

10: d'Orleans--379 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 554, 609

"The natives here seem very peaceful, and we get on very well with them. We are looked upon as important personages, or we should not be admitted into the sala where we pass the night and which bears the following inscription:--'Reserved for great men and mandarins.' "

23: Franck--264-265 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 231, 482, 609

"Higher up there were two or three villages that seemed to have inhabitants of both sexes and all ages, some of whom we now and then met making their way along the winding, perpetually climbing road. The sound of our horn drove them mad. The more fearful tried their best to climb the sheer earth or rock wall of the blasted mountain-slide; the others, as if imploring us to be merciful and realize that they would run away if they could, snatched themselves bare-headed and, placing their hats against their stomachs, tried to break their spines in kowtowing to me as they might to a long dead emperor suddenly returned to earth. A few, less obsequious, or less quick-witted, watched us pass with open mouths and stupefied expressions, bawling children scurrying in and out between their legs. Near the top of the climb there suddenly appeared horses and other pack-animals, and the panic we created among these unusual carriers in Indo-China could not easily be described. We passed not a [265] few traveling pigs along the way too, for wherever there is Chinese culture there must also be pork. Though they are credited with infinite patience, the Chinese will not drive pigs to market. But the Annamese, more afraid of work perhaps, rather than more patient, usually try to, with a cord tied to each porker's leg. This may possibly be easier than the Chinese way of bodily carrying them, two on a one-man shoulder-pole or one between two men, so that carrier and carried, bound to market in this undignified manner, seem fellows in misery. In Hanoï and the larger towns of Annam this more certain form of transportation may also now and then be seen. But the Annamese pig is ordinarily

driven, which is hard on motorists. For most of the pigs we met were too strong for the holder, and yet not quite strong enough to get away entirely and dash themselves over the mountain-side. Therefore, as they seemed bent on suicide in any form--and who could blame them?--the car always had to wait while the would-be pig-driver and several of his fellows united in one mighty tug of war that dragged the squealing animal out from under our wheels. For the most foolhardy of Annamese chauffeurs, however disdainful of the pig-driving populace, would scarcely have risked running over one of these porcine obstructions on this pathway along the bottomless pit."

23: Franck--280 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 175, 609 Ethnic subgroup

"In Xieng Khuang there stands a monument to six Frenchmen, five of them killed in France during the war, and one, like the dozen native soldiers whose names also appear on it, tué par les Méos rebelles. It seems there was a great Miao uprising in the Laos during the winter of 1918-19, the bloodiest battle of which took place at Nong-het, between the 'rebels' and the French, more exactly the native soldiers of the French. It was no surprise to be told that German agents and money had fomented the rebellion, though saner French residents admit that the Miao had long wished to be ruled by their own rather than by Laosian chieftains. That was no unnatural demand, and by the terms of the peace now reigning between them and the French it has been granted. Nor does this change seem to put any great burden upon Miao justice, for in cases involving more than five piastres the contestants may appeal to the French authorities, whom they evidently trust more than they do their own chieftains. The end of the rebellion was typical of these stiff-necked mountaineers. The French issued an ultimatum that the Méo must submit by 9 p.m. on a certain day; and at 8:59 exactly, while the French commanders sat with their watches in their hands, the Miao chieftain strode in and capitulated. The puzzle still remains how a race without clocks managed to time themselves so dramatically. Now they seem quite friendly, though it is not they who put their palms together above their heads and come to the squat when a white man goes by."

23; Franck--332 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 511, 609 Ethnic subgroup

"The Kha villages I saw were the lowest type of human dwelling; filth and stupidity seemed to be the prevailing characteristics. All our romantic yarns about the simple life of savages leave us with the false impression that they are hardier than civilized people, and the writers rarely mention the dirty, the truly animal conditions in which they live. The Kha are as innocent of any idea of cleanliness as the lowest class of Chinese, in great contrast to the Tai about them, and it is not strange that they have more smallpox than the rest of the population. Some were so timid that I had to drive them out of their reed and grass huts into the light necessary for photography, just as one might drive some wild animal out of its warm but dirty lair, so timid that I had to manhandle a group of both sexes that came along the trail one day, ~~before they~~ gave up their temptation to run away without posing for my dreaded camera."

23: Franck--334 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 211, 609, 771 Ethnic subgroup

"In contrast to China, the only visible evidences of religious belief in these wilder parts of Luang Prabang kingdom are bamboo arrows and bits of woven wicker squares and the like, beside the trail here and there. These, the prince told me, were warnings, either that a trap of arrows had been set for wild animals somewhere on the path leading off into the brousse, or that a Kha village was engaged in formalities to which strangers were not invited. Docile as they are, the Kha have been known to kill even Frenchmen who have overlooked or persisted in disobeying these warnings. Hence little is known of the religion of this primitive tribe, except that it acknowledges innumerable genii, good and bad, and that there are many things the visitor must not do, many things taboo not only for the Kha themselves but for any one who enters their villages, because to do them would be to stir up the evil spirits to wreak vengeance on the villagers themselves."

23: Franck--336 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 576, 622, 609 Ethnic subgroup

"Village chiefs bent low before the emissary of the king, putting their hands on their knees, for evidently this prince was not close enough to royalty to be worthy of the complete squat; or the people here may have been more independent. In turn the head-man of a village is a real boss-provided he has a very commanding way. This one of Ban-namon, otherwise known as Muong Kassy--ban seems to mean town, and a muong is a division something like the commune of France--did not have much head-man personality, or he had less respect or fear for princely orders than his attitude suggested; so that when I went for my daily conversation with my family I had also to wire back to the commissaire and insist on fresh horses, for none had been provided, the strict orders of the king and the French notwithstanding."

23: Franck--337 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 609 Ethnic subgroup

"The Kha should have been most weary of us all, but they crawled obsequiously in on their hands and knees to bring me water in a section of bamboo or to hand me anything I asked or the prince sent them for."

23: Franck--342 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 609

"The half-naked women had little objection to posing for their pictures, though they were fully as modest as their sisters anywhere else. Some of them would not have commanded princessly salaries in a New York extravaganza, unless they could have worn masks; others were distinctly attractive even in features."

23: Franck--344-345 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 461, 609

"On the other hand these naïve jungle-dwellers do not lack physical fear. They crouched at the trail-side raising palmed hands to me; in the more settled districts farther south long rows of them crowded against the wall of the mountain road, even turning their faces away, as if fearing a blow, which seemed to speak badly for their rulers, whether the old ones or the present French--or were they merely dazzled by my magnificence? When our pace grew too slow to be borne, I could always drive the coolies on by galloping after them shouting, whereupon they actually ran. But soon they settled down to an almost lazy stroll again, covering hardly half the ground of the incessant dog-trot of the indefatigable Chinese; nor were there by any means as many smiles and [345] childish pleasantries as among those far harder workers and sufferers of many times greater hardships."

68: Mouhot--120-121 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians·
116, 609, 122, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"I was again delayed a few days at Korat before I could obtain elephants, in consequence of the absence of the viceroy; but on his return he received me in a friendly manner, and gave me a letter of introduction to the governors of the provinces under his jurisdiction. He likewise furnished me with two elephants for myself and servants, and two others for my baggage; so at last I was able to set out for Chaiapume. Before I started, the Chinese with whom I lodged gave me the following advice: --'Buy a tam-tam, and, wherever you halt, sound it. They will say, "Here is an officer of the king;" robbers will keep aloof, and the authorities will respect you. If this does not answer, the only plan to get rid of all the difficulties which the Laotian officials will be sure to throw in your way is to have a good stick, the longer the better. Try it on the back of any mandarin who makes the least resistance and will not do what you wish. Put all delicacy aside. Laos is not like a country of the whites. Follow my advice, and you will find it good.'

I was, however, much better received on my second visit to Chaiapume, and required neither tam-tam nor cane. The sight of the elephants and the order from the viceroy of Korat made the mandarin as supple as a glove, and he provided me with other elephants for a visit to some ruins existing about 3 leagues north of the town, at the foot of a mountain. The superstitious Laotians say that [121]these ruins contain gold, but that every one who has sought for it has been struck with madness."

68: Mouhot--129-130 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 122, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"[HD: Going north to Pak Lai] I soon found that, but for the letter from the governor of Korat, I should have met everywhere with the same reception as at Chaiapume; however, this missive was very positively worded. Wherever I went, the authorities were ordered to furnish me with elephants, and supply me with all necessary provisions, as if I were a king's envoy. I was much amused to see these petty provincial chiefs executing the orders of my servants, and evidently in dread lest, following the Siamese custom, I should use the stick.

One of my men, to give himself importance, had tied one of these bugbears to the arms which he carried, and the sight of it alone sufficed, with the sound of the tam-tam, to inspire fear, whilst small presents judiciously distributed, and a little money to the cornacs, [HD: elephant drivers] procured me the sympathy of the people.

Most of the villages are situated about a day's journey from one another, but frequently you have to travel for three or four days without seeing a single habitation, [130] and then you have no alternative but to sleep in the jungle."

68: Mouhot--154 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 431, 576, 556, 609

"I am literally pillaged by these petty mandarins and chiefs of villages, [HD: in southern Luang Prabang province] and have to give away guns, sabres, lead, powder, colours, pencils, and even my paper; and then, after having received their presents, they will not put themselves out of their way to do me the smallest service. I would not wish my most deadly foe, if I had one, to undergo all the trouble and persecution of this kind which I have encountered."

68: Mouhot--258-260 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-4
116, 122, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"[HD: Excerpt from one of Mouhot's letters to his wife] You will be much surprised on receiving this letter to see it dated from Saraburi, [HD: in Siam] for if you have received the one I wrote in January, you must believe me to be already in Laos. But man proposes, and God disposes. However, to reassure you, I must begin by saying that I am in perfect health, and full of strength and hope. All goes well with me.

I had in fact reached Laos. I arrived at Korat after a tedious and troublesome journey, for I had only a few oxen for my baggage, and was forced to walk myself. From there I went to Chaiapume, and here an animal of the mandarin species made himself great, and under the pretext of having no elephants refused me the means of going further, and was so rude and impolite to me that I determined at once to return and protest against the very insufficient protection which had been granted to me. Indeed, I could do nothing else, not being able to go on. The elephant which had brought me to Chaiapume took me back to Korat, and there I found a mandarin from Bangkok, who had been sent to fetch a white elephant which had been taken in Laos. I begged him to let me join his party, and he lent me two elephants, one for my servant and luggage, and one for myself. I left Phrai at Korat, with the greater part of my possessions, having hired a room for him in the house of a Chinese, and a week afterwards found myself back at Saraburi, in company with this strange divinity (who, by the way, had

more black than white about him), and of the grand personage who had been sent to escort him, and who had showered on him every kind of attention during the journey. He had an escort of fifty foot soldiers and several on horseback. As for me, I wanted for nothing; at every halt the mandarin sent me ducks, fish, fruit, sweetmeats, &c., and he was [259] also kind enough to allow me eight men as night-guards to watch round my fire. In return, I discovered for him in the mountains large quantities of copper, and even gold, which delighted him.

The whole province of Saraburi was in motion to do honour to the white elephant; the King and all his court are coming here; the ministers are here already to watch over him. I decided, therefore, to apply to the Siamese, hoping to obtain more from them than from the Europeans; and yesterday hearing of the arrival of Khrom Luang, the King's brother, I hastened to address myself to him. He, however, had only passed through, and was gone to Prabat, to join the King. However, I found here the man I wanted, the mandarin who has most interest in Laos, and without a letter from whom it would have been difficult to proceed. I did not know him, but I went to him to ask about the Prince, and told him what I wanted. 'I am your man,' said he; 'the Prince can only give an order for me to write a letter, such as I will give you, if you like.' I accepted gladly, and promised him in return my double-barrelled gun, which I could easily replace, 'if

he would only furnish me with the means of travelling through Laos without expense, and would bring the Chaiapume mandarin to reason.' The poor governor of Saraburi was with us, and had to remain more than an hour amidst a number of others kneeling on the bare ground, while I was seated on the mat of the mandarin, by his side, eating sweetmeats and drinking tea, while he dictated a letter in which he called the governor of Chaiapume a fool, and threatened to deprive him of his office, and of this letter I was to be the bearer; and he promised me another general one on the morrow, in which he stated that if I did not receive efficient aid it might bring on a war; [HD: i. e. with France who was then occupying Cochinchina] and this he also repeated to all the chiefs present. My cause was gained, and I could plainly see that our affairs must be going on well in Cochin China; the echo of the cannon had its effect in Siam. However, I had pro-
[260] mised him my gun, and evidently he wished to have it before he gave me the letters This morning, therefore, I took it to him all cleaned and furbished up. He was delighted with it, and gave me at once the letter for Korat and Chaiapume, and to-morrow I am to have one which will carry me all through Laos without any expense but a few ticals to the cornacs: [HD: i. e. elephant drivers] Without this, judging by what I had to pay for an elephant from Korat to Chaiapume, my purse would have been exhausted by the time I reached the north of Laos, and I should not have had the means of returning without

sending to Bangkok to ask for help, which would have been a work of difficulty, and, what is worse, I should have been exposed all along the route to the insolence of these arrogant mandarins. Now, they will all humble themselves before me, taking me for some important personage sent by the Emperor Napoleon or Queen Victoria to collect butterflies, insects, and birds for them. I shall no longer travel on foot, but on elephants, and shall want for nothing. Agree, then, with me, that out of evil comes good, or rather, that God does all for the best. When at Chaiapume I found myself obliged to retrace my steps, after so many fatigues, and so great a waste of money, I was only downcast for a few minutes; God almost immediately inspired me with the idea that all would turn to my advantage, and this persuasion never left me again. Unaccountably to myself, I was gayer on my return than I had been in coming, although then I was everywhere well received and kindly treated by the people. Even after my discourteous reception [HD: by the mandarin] at Chaiapume, all the inhabitants came to see me, to bring me little presents, and to express their regret that they could not aid me from fear of their chief. The head of the monastery took me to see some ruins similar to those in Cambodia, and gave me a tiger-skin; and all along the road I experienced the same kindness, and numbers came to me to ask for advice and various remedies."

68: Mouhot--265-266 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 609, 643, 648

"[HD: Excerpt from one of Mouhot's letters to his wife] During my journey through the forests I enjoyed in anticipation the pleasure I should enjoy on reaching Louang Prabang, the capital of the province of Laos, in writing you good long letters containing all details of my journey; but [266] I reckoned without my host, and it will be several weeks before I can enjoy any repose, or carry my wishes into execution.

In the villages through which I passed no great degree of curiosity was manifested; but here, where the population is greater, I am surrounded by a compact and curious crowd, which extends even to the walls of a pagoda adjoining the caravanserai where I am lodged by the favour of his Majesty the King. Besides, I, in my turn, see people of various nations and tribes who excite my curiosity. Judge, therefore, if it be easy to collect my ideas. However, I profit by the occasion of the king's departure for Bangkok in a few days to pay his tribute, [HD: to the King of Siam] and who has offered to take charge of any letters for me, to give some signs of life to you."

68: Mouhot--268-269 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 123, 576, 609, 646

"No event could have caused more sensation here [HD: in Luang Prabang] than the arrival of 'the long-bearded stranger.' From the humblest to the greatest--for even here are distinctions of rank--every one [269] looks on a 'white' as a natural curiosity, and they are not yet satisfied with looking--nothing is talked of but the stranger. When I pass through the town in my white dress, to go to the market or to visit the pagodas or other interesting places, the people crowd round me, and look after me as long as they can catch a glimpse of me. Everywhere I go complete silence reigns, and I am treated as though I were a sovereign or prince, and the council, by order of the king, have given to me as to them power of life or death over his subjects. Poor people! why can I not raise you from the abasement into which you have fallen?"

68: Mouhot--269 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians

116, 276, 609

"I am overwhelmed with presents of all kinds in return for the slightest favour shown to these unfortunate people. [HD: i. e. the Laotians in the city of Luang Prabang] They seem to me some of the most to be pitied that I have seen; even the women and children are opium-eaters: they might really be called a nation of crétins."

68: Mouhot--272-273 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 644, 556, 609

"[HD: Excerpt from a letter written by Mouhot in Luang Prabang to his brother] After waiting for ten days I have at length been presented to the king with great pomp. The reception room was a shed such as they build in our villages on fête-days , but larger and hung with every possible colour. His Majesty was enthroned at one end of the hall, lazily reclining on a divan, having on his right hand four guards squatting down, and each holding a sabre: behind were the princes all prostrated, and farther off the [273] senators, with their backs to the public and their faces in the dust; then in front of his Majesty was your poor brother, dressed all in white, and seated on a carpet, with teacups, basins, and spittoons in silver placed by his side, contemplating this grotesque scene, and having some trouble to preserve his gravity as he smoked his pipe. The visit cost me a gun for the king and various small presents for the princes, for one cannot travel here without being well furnished with presents for the kings, princes, and mandarins. Luckily it is not here as in Siam; the natives are willing to help me, and for a few inches of brass wire I get a beautiful longicorn or some other insect, and these are brought to me on all sides: thus I have succeeded in largely increasing my collection, but five pieces of red cloth [HD: brought as a trade item] have disappeared already.

The day after my first audience I had another from the second king, who wished also for a present. I sought among my stock, which anywhere else would cause me to be

68: Mouhot--272-273 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 644, 556, 609

taken for a dealer in old stores, and found a magnifying glass and a pair of old-fashioned spectacles with round glasses, which make him look like a gorilla without hair, a little cake of soap (he had great need of it), a bottle of eau-de-cologne, and a bottle of brandy. This last was opened on the spot and duly appreciated. You see all this is expensive, but I am obliged to pay these good people, and the king has been kind to me; and is going to carry my letters for me." [HD: on his trip to Bangkok to pay tribute to the King of Siam]

68: Mouhot--276-277 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 122, 174, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"Notwithstanding the small population of Korat, it is the chief town of a province, or rather an extensive state, containing eleven towns or boroughs, chief towns of districts, and a great number of villages, more or less populated. Fifteen days' [277] journey brings you from Korat to Bassac on the banks of the Mekon, and in the same latitude.

My intention was to proceed northwards, only stopping in the province of Louang Prabang, and then to descend the river as far as Cambodia. I hired elephants, and five days after, having passed through several villages inhabited by the descendants of ancient Siamese colonists who had taken refuge there in time of war, passing continually through forests of resin trees thinly scattered, I arrived at Ban Prang, a village where I discovered a ruined tower, and also the remains of an ancient temple. The next place I arrived at was Chaiapoune, the principal Laotian town in the north, and the chief town of the district. Here also I found ruins; but they were inconsiderable, and seemed more like a Laotian imitation than the work of Khmer Dôme. The inscriptions on the other temples in the province of Korat resemble those of Ongcor: here I found upon a block of broken slate-stone an inscription in Laotian characters, but which is unintelligible even to the inhabitants of the country. These, with some remains of idols and towers at the foot of a mountain in the district, were the only vestiges of that ancient

68: Mouhot--276-277 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 122, 174, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

civilization which I discovered in the north. Everything leads me to suppose that here also were the limits which separated the kingdom of Cambodia from that of Vieng Thiane, destroyed during the last war which the Siamese raised against the Western Laotians or white-bellies. It was in this district that I was stopped in my travels by the authorities of the country, who treated me with great rudeness, and who forbade the people to let me have any means of transport, even after seeing my passport. I was therefore obliged to retrace my steps, deploring the expense and loss of time in the best part of the year, and which will cause me serious inconvenience."

What would he have said -- and what would not have been 132
his delight -- if he had reached the smiling capital not in July
when the tropical sun does indeed alternate its hottest rays with
cataracts of the most violent downpours, but in December or
January during the delicious Laotian winter which spreads the
sweet coolness of Mediterranean springtime over an autumnal
decor? He could scarcely have been able, in the course of his /361/
hunts for insects, to grasp /223/ a fugitive vision, between two
tornadoes, of the golden minaret of the Phou-Si, the sacred hill
in the heart of the city, or of the harmonious suburbs all trembling
in their mantles of verdure, or of the flaming twilights on the
misty mountains at whose feet winds the capricious Nam-Khane, a
true river of diamonds by moonlight...

"The city," he explains, "is built on both banks of the river, 361
but the greater number of dwellings are built on the left bank. The
largest part surrounds an isolated peak which is a hundred and some
meters high and at the summit of which a pagoda has been estab-
lished."

On August 5 he was presented "to the princes who govern this 643*
little State and who bear the title of kings." He depicts them
(Tiantha-Koumane and his brother the Oupahat Oun-Kham) with a
dash of bantering irreverence, then immediately acknowledges that
the king is "kind and good" to him (1).

1. "He takes care of my letters. He himself will take them 643*
to Bangkok where he goes, I believe, to take his oath of /648*/
allegiance and vassaldom." "I do not know why," he con-
tinues, "but they display in my behalf all that they are
capable of imagining in the way of pomp and splendor."

He is thus the first to note the dominant character trait of this 609●
kind, open-hearted /224/ and hospitable people. Tiantha- 157
Koumane was certainly ignorant of his guest's capacities and had 643*
no opinion on the naturalist Mouhot, who was still quite unknown
in Europe. It was therefore not the scholar whom he intended to
honor, but simply the stranger and the traveler whose visit was a
happy event for the kingdom, an event which should be celebrated
with great pomp and with general rejoicing. All the Frenchmen
from Pavie down to our own day who have explored the principality
have been given a welcome which has always been just as spontane-
ous and have been received with the same eager and smiling good
grace.

influence of any foreign propaganda and that their revolt did not L
at any time assume the character of an anti-French manifestation. M
Thus their uprising had no repercussions on the other ethnic groups 563
in Laos, which in spirit and in deed stood behind our repressive 669
measures.

They returned in peace to their agricultural labors (chiefly the L
cultivation of poppies) in their precipitous solitudes. A special M
administrative statute gave them the cantonal and communal 563
autonomy which they desired, with no Laotian or Annamite inter- 636
mediary. No matter how infrequent their contacts with the popu- 609
lations of the valleys and plains, it is quite certain that racial
antagonism (exploited by agitators during the revolt) was maintain-
ing a state of mind among their groupings which was suspicious and
devoid of friendliness towards the native authorities. The reforms 178
which were put into effect seem to have yielded good results. In 563
the same way, a prudent policy towards the still unsubdued tribes
of Lower Laos, one which will avoid direct conflict with their
customs /362/ and prejudices, will gradually tame these last repre-
sentatives of another age whom the opening-up of means of com-
munication will finally incorporate into the larger Indo-Chinese
family.

/ Pages 363-367 contain a Bibliography. Page 368 is blank. Pages 000
369-375 contain an Alphabetical Index of Names Mentioned. Page
376 is blank. --Translator/

Colonial

commercial and industrial mission was attached to the former, and it was to study the question of means of communication by land and river, to create trading posts, to collect samples, to examine the commercial methods in use and to determine the nature and value of the products of the Mékong basin. Funds for this mission, which left France with an initial stock of fifteen tons of various kinds of merchandise, were provided by a syndicate which had just been formed, with an initial capital of 100,000 francs, under the name of French Syndicate [12] of Upper Laos. It included representatives of Parisian trade and industry who had united for the experiment thanks to the initiative of M. Léon Tharel, the president of the group.

175 654 433 [439]

All throughout 1890 and 1891 the missions fulfilled their tasks with ardor, not without constant struggle against the implicit hostility of the Siamese, which although occasionally concealed under an [Illustration here] affable outward mask nonetheless continued to manifest itself and created obstacles everywhere in the hope of discouraging the valiant explorers and causing their work to fail.

In spite of the difficulties which they encountered, the two missions were successful in their delicate enterprise and the results of the latter were most significant. From that point on we were in possession of precise information concerning the whole region extending from Yunnan to Cambodia.

What was more, by continuing the tradition begun by Mouhot, the [13] Lagrée mission, Harmand, Néis, etc. we had made contact with the Laotian people and made them know and love the French name. In us they saluted their future liberators and the ones who would come to free them from the brutal and detested Siamese yoke.

175 609 654

Finally--a fact of no less importance--thanks to the activities of the commercial mission, to the trading posts which it had established and to the contacts and arrangements which it had prepared, we were in possession from that time on of private commercial interests in the Mékong basin. Thus greater force was given to the rights which we already had to intervene in Laos against Siamese intrigues in the name of our protégés, the emperor of Annam and the king of Cambodia.

Frightened and surprised by the results which France had achieved in so short a time in the Mékong valley, despite the ambushes which it had laid on all sides and the hostile maneuvers which it had supported, Siam began to fear that France might invade its Laotian territories. It then invoked the friendship of Great Britain and

648 175

China and Indo-China (1).

[113] (1) E. Picanon, Le Laos français. 1901, Challamel. [Paris]

II

173 Laos, Thais and Khas. Although the Laotian legends
563 attribute the same origin to all of these (Mueng-Theng or Dien-Bien-
144 Phu) and say that they all came from the same "gourd" (Nam-Tao-Phoun), it is hardly likely that the Laotians and the Khas have a common origin. Indeed, the characteristics which serve to distinguish the two races are too numerous and too marked, both from the point of view of the racial types themselves and as regards language, mores and religious beliefs.

144 Nor can it be affirmed that the Khas are the representatives of
174 the aboriginal population, for before any of their people had mounted the throne of Luang-Prabang, six kings foreign to their race had already occupied it--if we may regard the list of the first kings of the land which is preserved in the Phong-Sa Va-Dan (annals of the kingdom) as correct--and of these conquering princes the first is said to have come from India, and the second from Cambodia.

In any case, the Khas are said to have preceded the Laotians in the land, and it was not until the reign of their fourth and last king that they are supposed to have been conquered and driven out or enslaved by the Laotians, who had come down from Dieu-Bien-
• [609] Phu. Since that time, and despite many revolts of which the last is almost recent, the Khas have never ceased being "a folk taillable and liable to forced labor at pleasure" for their vanquishers, and their name has become a synonym for a low person or slave in the current
[56] idiom. Not until 1895 were the Khas once and for all freed--freed is perhaps not the word, for in the strict sense they were never slaves--or at least summoned to enjoy a system of rule similar to that of the other natives and which left no margin for arbitrariness and vexations.

173 In designating Dien-Bien-Phu as the cradle of the Laotian people, or at least in attributing to the Laotians and the Thais a common origin, legend seems to be in agreement with reality. There are indeed many points of resemblance and contact between the two peoples. The type is invariably the same, although finer in the native of Luang-
175 Prabang than in the native of Lai-Chau or Dien-Bien-Phu. Not more
291 than two hundred years ago the Laotians still wore, like the black Thais, the Annamite costume and their hair wound in a coil. It
177 was doubtless after contact with the Siamese--who had themselves

Kha
Meo

619 traditions and the annals which I have been able to consult, they are
643 the descendants of the last kings of the land before the Cham invasion.
[648 The kings of Cambodia have had to appeal to them for help on one
175] or two critical occasions, and it was in return for services rendered
that the king of Cambodia, up until recent times, used to send them
563 presents every year (annual tribute, according to them, payment of
which stopped only five years ago).

[726] They have never been willing to recognize our authority. The king of Pa-Tao-Ia, who is situated on the Laotian side, twice attacked the Government Commissioners of Stung-Treng when the latter were making a tour of inspection in this region, first in December 1894 and a second time in January 1897. They were given a severe lesson this second time, for the village was entirely destroyed and they suffered many losses. The Sadete Loum (the Master of water) settled on the Annamite side alongside the Master of fire after the affair, and since that time has given no further orders to our faithful Djarais.

[108]

APPENDIX XIX
NOTE ON THE MEOS

563 The Meo has a savage and distrustful character. He does not
609 like the presence of foreigners, or even of people of his own race.

Clinging to the side of a mountain, and always as high up as possible, he asks only to be allowed to live in peace in his wild solitude and bodes no ill to anyone provided he is left alone and independen

He is a great hunter of wild beasts and large game. More in-
433 dustrious than the Thais, he makes all his farming implements him-
241 self (picks and shovels), as well as his wooden buckets and mills for
grinding maize and paddy. He raises fine poultry, pigs, oxen, goats
231 and horses with particular care and success. If he stays in one place for any length of time he also produces, in addition to the maize and rice which form the basis of his food supply and the opium which he smokes, very fine eggplants, gourds, sweet potatoes and non-sweetened batatas very much like the common potato, sorrel, green beans and all the French vegetables whose seeds are given him. On his heights he cultivates the fruit trees which merely vegetate in the plains, such as the peach tree, and the peaches which he harvests can compete without any fear with those of our own country.

The Meo climbs like a cat. Over sheer paths, up ladders com-
516 posed of a single bamboo pole standing upright in which notches are
417 cut at regular intervals which are large enough for two toes, the Meo

25: Brodrick--91 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 101, 619

"The Laos hate being so called; they, as the Shans, the Siamese and the Thos, profess themselves Thais, but the Laos name is one given by neighbours, and the French when they came to know and to govern the land of the Laos, called it just 'Laos.' Therefore, another designation had to be found for the people, so the bastard term, Laotians, was coined and it has now become classic."

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[525]
422

Tribal Tai

s the long pirogue, and the jockeys are the oarsmen. Nor will it be n vain to remark that, as in our races, heavy wagers are often laid by the owners and the lovers of this kind of sport.

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Thais or Phou-Thais. The Thais or Phou-Thais are divided into four distinct groups. These are:

1. The Khao-Thais (white);
2. The Dam-Thais (black);
3. The Deng-Thais (red);
4. The Neua-Thais (northern).

The Khao-Thais are the result of marriages between Chinese men and Dam-Thai women, or vice versa, although the former case is the most frequent. They do not form large agglomerations, but only isolated family groups in the midst of the surrounding population. They are found only in the northern part of the Sib-Song-Chau-Thais, a territory which is dependent on Laos from the ethnographic point of view but administratively attached to Tonkin.

The following is what is known of their origin: [229] [Illustration] [230] [Blank page] [231]

"Around 1600 a rebel Chinese leader assembled a few partisans, set sail from Canton and landed at Haiphong. From there he went on to Bac-Ninh, continually increasing the number of his men. At Bac-Ninh the rebel leader received an envoy from the king of Annam, who asked him to help put down the Thais and the Muongs of the Black River. The Chinese leader accepted, and after leaving Bac-Ninh he went to Lao-Kay, from which point he soon entered the province of the Sib-Sing-Chau-Thais. After defeating the Thais and the Muongs he was given this province out of gratitude for his help. His troops, worn out by the campaign, settled in the country and lost no time in marrying Thai women. It was from such unions that the white Thais were born" (1).

(1) E. Picanon, op. cit. [Le Laos français, Paris, 1901.]

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Dam-Thais and Deng-Thais. These two varieties have a common origin and belong to the same family (2). The different names which

(2) Thais are found in nearly all of Laos, where they are scattered among the Laotian population. They are particularly numerous in the Hua-Pahn, where they are in the majority in certain muongs.

619 they bear come, as in the case of the Khao-Thais, from peculiarities
[291] of costume. In fact, whereas the Dam-Thais, both men and women,
only wear clothing which is dark blue and almost black, with no
563 colored ornamentation, the Deng-Thais, although they wear the
same kind of clothing, always add a few ornaments such as embroidery,
galloons or red turbans.

Physical appearance. Costume. The Thais have strongly marked
142 features and stern faces. Their complexion is clear and rather swarthy,
461 and they are quite tall. They are more hardy and above all more
industrious than the Laotians.

Like the Annamites, the men let their hair grow. They bind it
302 up in a coil on the top of the head and cover it with a vast turban,
291 the ends of which fall onto their shoulders on either side of the face.
Men's clothing consists of a broad pair of trousers with a very low
seat and a straight tunic buttoned along the side which comes down
to the knees. A sort of sash made of the same kind of cloth hugs the
[286] waist over the tunic, as a belt would do. The material used by the
Thais for clothing are made of cotton which is generally grown locally
and which the [232] women spin, weave and dye themselves. Their
garments, made with very coarse, irregular thread, have a rough ap-
pearance but are very solid.

The women's figures are thick-set but not fleshy. Their faces,
142 which are more rounded than elongated, are pleasant and their eyes
are beautiful. But childbearing and the work of the fields soon destroy
their gracefulness, and after the age of twenty-five their figures thicken,
their wrists and ankles become heavy and their faces begin to harden
and wrinkle. [Illustration alongside text here]

[286] The Thai woman wears a skirt which is quite similar to the Laotian
skirt, but made of coarser cloth and dyed the same color as the men's
291 clothing. Over this she wears a very short jacket made of the same
cloth which is buttoned down the front and sometimes embellished
563 with chased silver work. The height of elegance is for the jacket to
be cut in such a way that when the woman moves in a certain way it
lets a little skin be seen above the skirt waist. Outside the home and for
ceremonies the women put on a sort of dressing gown which covers their
other clothing and comes down to the ankle. Its sleeves are very close-
fitting, and the garment buttons straight down the front to a point below
the waist. A strip of dark violet cloth, for the Dam-Thais, and red for

149; Reinach--178 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai

•619 The Neua-Thais. The Neua-Thais differ very little, in all
361 respects, from their fellows. They generally live on higher ground than the other Thais, but they change the location of their village quite frequently. [241] [Illustration] [242] [Blank page] [243]

291 The women knot their skirts under their armpits, above their breasts, and always wear a very short jacket made of cotton, silk or velvet, depending on the season.

231 They engage in sericulture, and with the silk spin and weave brocaded cloth with harmonious colors.

779 At the same time as ancestor worship, the Neu-Thais practice an attenuated form of Buddhism. Pagodas are rare and the bonzes, few in number, serve several centers in turn.

461 Their character is docile. They do not have a very marked taste for trade and are content to be excellent farmers and livestock breeders.
276 Unfortunately, they are inclined to be opium smokers. This is doubtless due to the proximity of the Meos and Yaos who are the producers of the drug.

619 The Phou-Eunes. This branch of the Thai family is very close to
101 the Laotians in mores and customs.

There are only a few modifications in costume and language, modifications due to the age-old proximity of the Annamites and the continuous relations which have existed between the two peoples.
[438] These latter may be explained by the fact that the territory long inhabited by the Phou-Eunes in the east and southeast of Tran-Ninh is situated on the Tonkin Gulf side, and that their produce naturally flows towards the ports on the Annamite coast (1).

(1) To be sure, there are several groupings of Phou-Eunes in the Mekong basin, in Tran-Ninh, to the northeast of Vien-Tiane and in Camkeut-Cammon.

361 The Phou-Eunes prefer to live in high valleys and on high plateaus where the climate is quite severe during the winter. They are more reserved in character than the Laotians, more industrious and less inclined to celebrations and festivities of all kinds.

779 Their religion is Buddhism, but the bonzes are less numerous than elsewhere. It is probable that the little taste which Phou-Eunes have for the religious life is due to the influence of nearby Annam, where the bonzes are a long way from being venerated and coddled as they are in Laos.

149: Reinach--179 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai

Men's and women's clothing varies little in [244] form from that of the Thais. Under their jacket, however, the women wear a breast-cloth attached to the neck and waist by cords, like the Annamite and Tonkinese women. 291

The Lus. Two centuries or so ago the Lus, who also belong to the Thai race, used to live in the "Shan states" between the Salouen and the Nam-Hon, where they were surrounded by a drifting population composed of Burmese, Kunes, Ngieous, etc. [Illustration alongside text here.] 619 175

Following emigrations, they came to Laos and formed two distinct agglomerations.

Some Lu families have settled in the course of this century on the territory of Luang-Prabang. Today these Lus form villages composed exclusively of people of their race, but live on good terms with the Laotians, whose language and customs they have adopted. [563]

In the old Lu kingdom of Muong-Sing, on the other hand, this people has retained its habits, that is to say its character and temperament are like those of the Burmese. 101

There the Lu is boastful, full of arrogance, a braggart and insolent, but a little firmness is enough to humble his pride. [105]

Lus have a clear complexion, delicate features, keen eyes and a swinging stride. The men are generally tattooed from the calf of the leg to above the navel, and they also have tattoos on their chest, [245] neck, shoulders and arms which are generally red and in the shape of squares with rounded corners. They have long hair rolled in a coil on top or slightly to one side of the head. This coil is wrapped in an enormous turban which they wear tilted over one ear. Many of them have a moustache. This they train upwards, a trait which gives them a conquering air, and to keep it up they smear it with wax. [Illustration alongside text here] 142 304 302

The men's costume consists of a pair of full trousers and a short jacket buttoned along the side. It is made of cotton and is dark blue, almost black, in color. The bottoms of the trousers, the edges of the jacket, the cuffs of the sleeves and the armholes are ornamented with three galloons (blue, white and red) which are quite narrow. Their holiday clothes are often made of silk in varied colors. 291

The women wind their hair into a heavy coil on top of the head and on the side of the coil they place a broad circular plaque of chased silver. They wear skirts like the Laotian women, but the stripes are very broad, run crosswise and are in bright colors. They [302] [301]

149: Reinach--181 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai

whole match, instead of keeping their legs rigid and remaining on 535
the same line, the opponents turn constantly around a central point and raise each leg in turn, the knee bent. This exercise, in which all four limbs work at once and which requires a sure eye and rapid execution, is surely one of the most graceful in existence when it is performed with the facile ease and supreme elegance of the Lus.

"Lu dancing has that particular character of morbidness which one finds among most Mohammedan peoples and also in Spain. The men (for the men are the ones who dance) imprint on their feet only those movements which are indispensable for making the body pivot and facilitating slow, undulating movements by the hips, torso and arms. The dancers are accompanied by tom-toms and kettledrums, and they sigh out lingering, voluptuous chants which harmonize well with their movements. These are veritable harem dances, or such as dancing girls might perform." (Le Laos français.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

We have already seen what the religion of the Lus is like, and 771
need add only that their bonzes are highly respected and that the pagodas are much frequented by the children and young people. Thus 212
the number of scholars is higher among the Lus than among the Laotians. Many women even know how to read and write.

The Lus do not cremate their dead, but bury them, even at a 764
very shallow depth, after wrapping the bodies in a mat or a piece of cloth. The bonzes recite a few prayers over the grave when it has been filled, and in return for this service usually receive an object of some value which belonged to the deceased.

[250] The tombs are not kept up.

The Youns. The natives called Youns are Laotians who have 619
settled on the right bank of the Mekong, in the basin of the Upper 304
Menam and in the territories of Xieng-Hai, Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen. There are, however, Youns living in French Laos where they have mixed with the other Laotians. [Illustration alongside text here]

The Youns may be distinguished from their fellow Laotians by the extent to which they are tattooed. Whereas a Laotian will only be tattooed from the bend of the knee to the waist, a Youn will be tattooed from the calf of the leg to the chest. This has caused the inhabitants of the right bank to be baptized "Black Bellies" (Lao-Phoung-Dam), while those of the left bank are called Lao-Phoung-Khao or "White Bellies."

Tribal Tai
Kha

291 The men's costume is like that of the Laotians. A few, however, have adopted the Burmese costume, turban and all, in which case they let their hair grow and roll it in a coil instead of having a brush cut.

The women wear a very long skirt with broad stripes running across it which is fastened beneath the breasts. The bust is covered by a closed jacket or bodice which is cut straight and made of cotton or silk [302] [301] of varied colors. Their hair is rolled in a coil on the nape of the neck or is held in place around the head by a narrow band of cloth and allowed to fall freely down the back. Both sexes wear metal cylinders in their ears, like the Lus, and silver jewelry.

[142] The Youns are more robust than their fellows, and also more industrious. The women are perhaps less pretty than the Laotian women, but they are just as friendly and merry.

276 [251] Both men and women chew betel, and also "Mieng" (green tea, fermented and salted). They smoke tobacco in enormous cigarettes rolled in dried banana leaves. [Illustration alongside text here]

The Youns are primarily farmers and livestock breeders. They excel in breeding and training oxen as draft animals.

212 We have seen that the Youns, although they speak the same language as the Laotians, have their own form of writing which is generally 292 used for religious writings. Their bonzes, who are highly learned for the most part, are renowned for their expert knowledge of the rites of the Buddhist religion.

101 Marriage, divorce, polygamy, births, funerals, celebrations and festivities are all the same among the Youns as among the Laotians, except for a few minor differences in detail which we need not mention here.

THE KHAS

619 Before entering into detail about the mores and customs of the main Kha families, we shall again have recourse to the learned work 181 by the Superior Resident in Laos in order to give a general sketch of this race which represents at least a third of the population.

[252] "They are to be found throughout the territory, and are divided into more than sixty families. As much as those who inhabit northern Laos are docile, manageable and respectful, so are those who inhabit the southern part of Laos proud, independent and warlike, particularly the tribes inhabiting the mountains which separate us from Annam.

Kha

result. But the Kha ideal is to possess a battery of gongs of different 533
sizes and timbres, and with these they manage to obtain quite perfect chords.

Industry. Withdrawn in their mountains where they live in small 433
isolated groups, the Khas use their leisure time to make many basket-work and hollow-ware products which have a mark of elegance and a great deal of delicacy. Other tribes make paper from wood pulp, weave mats from rattan and bamboo bark, etc. They use all these products in trade.

Finally, certain Khas exploit deposits of iron ore and transform 316
it into farming implements, while others wash gold-bearing sands.

In general, although the Khas are industrious they work only to 461
procure what is strictly indispensable. They cannot resign themselves to staying away from home for any length of time and dread any stay in the low country, which they say is unhealthy for them. Since they [313]
have particular aptitudes for woodcutting, however, they have been successfully employed to cut teak wood in the forests on the right bank of the Mekong which are situated in Siamese territory. But it must be admitted that there they are in mountainous country and in the midst of forests, as in their native region.

The Khas of southern Laos. In southern Laos Khas are found who differ very little from those of Upper Laos. We shall not concern ourselves with them, but shall deal briefly with the many more numerous ones who have particular mores and customs.

The Djarais, the Rades, the Bahnars, the Cedangs, the Peunongs, [619]
the Rognaos (1), etc. are the principal types of these Kha tribes,

(1) See Appendix XVIII.

which for the most part are still independent.

These people are proud, large and muscular, supple, trained in 181
all forms of bodily exercise, bold, warlike and brave.

These qualities, moreover, have been developed by their pe- 567
culiar way of [257] [Illustration] [258] [Blank page] [259] life.
Accustomed to hunting slaves from which they extracted large profits 721
by selling them on the banks of the Mekong, these Khas have had to resort to continual expeditions in order to obtain their human game.

For many long years, in fact, they could acquire [Illustration 567
here] the gongs, buffalo, metals, textiles, etc. which they needed only by selling captives, generally Annamites, whom they went and

equipment.

411 [264] "It should be noted that these folk do not have rifles. Their crossbows are quite large, and shoot pointed barbed arrows, which are poisoned in time of war, over great distances.

"The spears are of average length. The shafts are made of very beautiful barnboo, and the iron points are of varied shapes.

"The swords have long hilts ornamented with tin, and the blades are slightly curved.

"Among the Djarais bucklers are made of wood and shielded with tin. Among the Kasengs they are made of buffalo hide, and among the Cedangs of buckskin with the fleece left on.

"Among the Cedangs the bucklers take the shape of a shield, while their shape varies among the others." (Le Laos français.)

[Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos). "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

563 619 Khas of mixed blood. In the section on races we have seen what mixtures were produced from crossings between Khas and other members of the great Thai family. Their distribution is as follows:

1. The Phou-Phays and Phou-Thengs are found scattered everywhere throughout northern Laos;

2. Sos and Seks are found in Luang-Prabeng, Tran-Ninh and Cammon;

3. The Soues inhabit the high valleys of the Se-Bang-Hien and the Sedone and the northern slopes of the plateau of the Bolovens.

The evolution of all these mixed blood varieties is not yet complete, and many have partly retained their original dialects. Certain tribes, however, have completely adopted the mores and languages of the dominant races to which they owe their existence, and these have pagodas, bonzes, etc.

RACES OF MONGOL ORIGIN

619 563 We know that individuals of Mongol origin inhabit northern Laos and are grouped in three principal varieties known as Hos, Meos and Yaos.

The Hos. The Hos are inhabitants of Yunnan who came to Laos either with the robber bands (1875-1888) or with caravans. [265] [Illustration] [266] [Blank page] [267]

They settled in Laos, abandoning their guns and packs to become farmers, hog breeders, tea planters, ect.

Hill Tribes

Almost all are of low birth and are crude and illiterate. They have married Thai or Kha women and thereby founded a stock of halfbreeds. This race is destined to merge with the mass of the Laotians or Thai population and through successive crossings lose all distinctive characteristics. 619 563

The Meos. The Meos are also Yunnanese who have retained a degree of independence and have not been marked with the Chinese imprint like the Hos or adopted baggy clothes and the custom of wearing their hair only in a braid.

They are distributed in groups of a few families each of which live on the peaks of the mountains in northern Laos and the Sib-Song Chau-Thais. They can be divided into three great families--the blacks, the whites and the reds--which owe their names to the color of certain parts of the women's costume. Thus among the black and red Meos skirts or jackets are light blue in color, but the latter have a wide collar ornamented with black or red embroidery. Finally, a small turban with black and white checks or of red material, depending on the case, completes their garb. Among the white Meos, the women wear a skirt and jacket of unbleached cloth, with a white and blue embroidered collar. [361] 291

The men's clothing is light blue in all cases. It is composed of a broad pair of trousers which come down somewhat below the calf, where the legs are drawn tight, and of a short, tight-sleeved jacket which buttons down one side.

A turban winds around the head and covers their long hair, which may be rolled or braided. 301

The women's hair is parted and wound on the upper part of the nape of the neck in a coil. (1)

(1) See Appendix XIX.

The Meos practice ancestor worship primarily, like many Asian peoples. They have no pagodas or bonzes, but elders perform the office of priests and also administer justice. 769

[263] The Meos bury their dead, and make animal sacrifices on the occasion of births, marriages and deaths so as to gain the favor of the "Phis" or multiple and varied genii in whose existence and influence they believe.

Marriage is as simple as among the other peoples of Laos. [581]

Divorce may occur either through mutual consent or in the case of adultery. [586]

Hill Tribes

595 There is polygamy among the Meos, and the Meo women do not enjoy any higher regard than the Kha women.

[101] The Yaos. The Yaos have the same origin as the Meos, and are strikingly like them in many respects. Their mores, their beliefs and their habits are identical.

619 As we have seen above, the Yaos are divided into three varieties, these being the Lantenes, the Khao and the Ao-Tchaine.

291 The Lantenes (blacks) wear broad trousers, a long smock buttoning
302 at the side and a turban, all made of black cottonstuff. They wear their hair long and either wound under a turban or braided in Chinese style.

[342] Their houses are like those of the Meos and shelter several families, each of which has its own quarters. They are generally clean and well kept-up.

593 The mores of the Lantene Yaos are patriarchal, and these folk are monogamous. The women are very reserved and do not let them-
562 selves be seen much by strangers. They enjoy a certain respect and are treated with consideration by their husbands.

231 The Lantenes are great livestock breeders, and cultivate the opium
241 poppy in addition to rice and maize. They are skilled hunters of wild animals, and each man owns a rifle from which he is rarely separated.
224 Besides a dialect peculiar to them, they speak Quoan-hoa (a
[212] Cantonese idiom), and many of them can write Chinese characters.
198 The Khao Yaos are less outgoing than their fellows and do not
101 greet strangers with as much good will.

291 The men's clothing is like that of the Lantenes, [269] but the women are garbed in a different manner and wear their hair in a special way which has earned their tribe the name "Khao" (horns).

Over a pair of black trousers ornamented with colored embroidery and held in place by leggings, Khao Yao women wear a tunic which comes down to the knees but the flaps of which are fastened to the belt. This tunic also has colored embroidery on the chest, back, neck and cuffs, and is held shut with wide silver hooks.

302 Their hairdress consists of a coil which is smeared with wax and lacquer to hold it in place and in which a wooden socket is imbedded. A light bamboo framework is inserted into the socket, and over this is spread a red cloth or a black cloth embroidered in red. The women thus appear to have two horns on their head.

301 Silver jewelry, neckbands, bracelets and ear pendants are worn by the Khao Yaos.

Kha

563 their prisoners among the Djarais. This state of affairs cannot go on
567 [106] indefinitely, and after settling the question of the Djarais which is more urgent, it will be necessary for Annam and Laos to pacify these tribes by a common agreement.

563 4. Rognao, Bahnar, Goelar and Habau Khas. These tribes, over whom the missionaries exercise moral authority and n v of whose
797 villages are Catholic, can be regarded as pacified even nough they do not pay any tribute. I have previously explained why it would not be politic, in my opinion, to require tribute in this region as of the present time.

These tribes, which are entirely located in Laotian territory, are quite tranquil but in continual dread of undertakings by their Djarai neighbors.

563 5. The great Djarai tribe, which is by far the most important and most numerous in the estimation of the missionaries. It is said to include nearly 150,000 inhabitants and is the finest racial type which I have seen in all the Kha region.

Many villages are subject to our authority and pay the head tax. Others, such as those which I found in the valley of the Psi and on the Sesane, obey our orders, keep the roads in repair, receive traders and travelers with perfect hospitality and will pay tribute whenever we wish.

563 But there are two groups which are absolutely rebellious to our
[619 643] penetration. These are: 1) the groups of villages of Pley-Qho and Pley-Denang immediately south of the mission; and 2), somewhat further to the south, the group of the Sadetes whose two chieftains, the kings of water and fire, inhabit the points which are marked on
579 the map as Pa-Tao-Ia and Pa-Tao-Ngo.

The first of these groups has continuously committed hostile
563 acts against us. They are the ones who attacked the convoy of M.
668 Navelle when this official came to visit the mission, who have constantly attacked convoys on the road from Ang-Ke to Kon-Toum,
726 who more recently robbed a Laotian hunter of merchandise valued at more than 1,000 piasters and pierced him with sword thrusts, and, finally, who attacked M. Lacouture and killed one of his guides. These villages are dreaded by all their neighbors. It was they against whom Meyréna (1) marched, but his success was not sufficiently

(1) Since I have been led to pronounce the name of the man who dreamed of creating a Cedang kingdom, I should say a few words regarding this adventure which seems to me to have been greatly exaggerated.

Kha

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I shall not dwell on all the personalities implicated in the matter, for I have neither the right nor the means to define the responsibilities incurred, but shall simply say that his authority has never been recognized by the Khas in any effective fashion. In a gathering held in the common house of Kon-Hoirin and at which the representatives of some twenty Cedang villages were present, he appeared in the guise of one who had come to lead them in their defense against attacks by their neighbors and to command them against the enemy Djarais (the tribes of Pley-Qho and Pley-Demang, to be exact). His proposal was naturally accepted, and was also given sanction by some semblance of an expedition against the Djarais. When the Cedangs did not take all the booty and especially all the prisoners that they had anticipated, they broke off relations with Meyréna. What is more, when Father Vialleton, the director of the Catholic mission of the Bahnars and a man of extremely subtle mind, subsequently realized what the situation was, he did not want to enter into open conflict with Meyréna but was content to set up a confederation of the Bahnar, Rognao and Goelar tribes, a confederation which had the Kha chieftain of the village of Kon-Toum at its head, but which was under the moral and actual leadership of Father Vialleton. This master stroke, the only purpose of which had been to prevent Meyréna's authority from prevailing over these tribes, dealt the death blow to the kingdom of which he had dreamed and he was obliged to leave the country.

Such, in all its simplicity, is the truth of this adventure when disengaged from all the little incidents of a more or less humorous nature which occurred at the time.

followed up. It is [107] now necessary that this den of bandits should disappear or surrender. The hatred which they have aroused against themselves is so great that during my inspection tour all the neighboring tribes, including the Cedangs, asked permission to join forces with me and march against them immediately. I had to promise that satisfaction would be given them.

When this group has disappeared or surrendered, all the hesitant factions of Djarais, Salangs and Halangs-Doang will make their submission once and for all.

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As for the second group, that of the Sadetes, the question is a ticklish one. The two Sadete kings are unquestionably the religious leaders of all the Kha tribes south of the Cedangs. According to the

619 traditions and the annals which I have been able to consult, they are
643 the descendants of the last kings of the land before the Cham invasion.
[648 The kings of Cambodia have had to appeal to them for help on one
175] or two critical occasions, and it was in return for services rendered
that the king of Cambodia, up until recent times, used to send them
563 presents every year (annual tribute, according to them, payment of
which stopped only five years ago).

[726] They have never been willing to recognize our authority. The king of Pa-Tao-la, who is situated on the Laotian side, twice attacked the Government Commissioners of Stung-Treng when the latter were making a tour of inspection in this region, first in December 1894 and a second time in January 1897. They were given a severe lesson this second time, for the village was entirely destroyed and they suffered many losses. The Sadete Loum (the Master of water) settled on the Annamite side alongside the Master of fire after the affair, and since that time has given no further orders to our faithful Djarais.

[108]

APPENDIX XIX
NOTE ON THE MEOS

563 The Meo has a savage and distrustful character. He does not
604 like the presence of foreigners, or even of people of his own race.

Clinging to the side of a mountain, and always as high up as possible, he asks only to be allowed to live in peace in his wild solitude and bodes no ill to anyone provided he is left alone and independen

He is a great hunter of wild beasts and large game. More in-
433 dustrious than the Thais, he makes all his farming implements him-
241 self (picks and shovels), as well as his wooden buckets and mills for grinding maize and paddy. He raises fine poultry, pigs, oxen, goats
231 and horses with particular care and success. If he stays in one place for any length of time he also produces, in addition to the maize and rice which form the basis of his food supply and the opium which he smokes, very fine eggplants, gourds, sweet potatoes and non-sweetened batatas very much like the common potato, sorrel, green beans and all the French vegetables whose seeds are given him. On his heights he cultivates the fruit trees which merely vegetate in the plains, such as the peach tree, and the peaches which he harvests can compete without any fear with those of our own country.

516 The Meo climbs like a cat. Over sheer paths, up ladders com-
417 posed of a single bamboo pole standing upright in which notches are cut at regular intervals which are large enough for two toes, the Meo

7: Thompson--363 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 101, 131, 621

"Laos is a ribbon of a country stretching from Cambodia to the Yunnanese frontier, and entirely dominated by the Mekong River. That great waterway is so imperfect a means of communication that the geographic diversity of the country and its peoples has free rein. Laos is covered with muongs or totally independent village groups. They have only been united under either a powerful neighbouring state like Siam or Cambodia, or when the two strongest among them--the principalities of Luang-Prabang and Vientiane--had kings energetic enough to achieve a confederation."

7: Thompson--369 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 621, 647

"As in Cambodia, the Laotian Protectorate was an immense success because it floated gently on top of the old native administration, giving an appearance of modernization to what had always existed and with which it did not interfere. The identical organization of all the muongs was a great help to the French. If the government of the Annamite countries erred on the side of over-direct administration, that of the Indianized countries was criticized as too superficial. Laos, it was said, had administrators but no administration. They collected taxes which had no accurate basis of assessment, received the semi-annual oath of functionary fidelity, and requisitioned labour and provisions. The native chieftains remained the real administrators, but no effort was made to select, train, and supervise the most able among them, or to give them regular salaries, and no longer let them take a percentage of the taxes and fines. Little was done, and that little was for the benefit of the few Europeans in the country."

7: Thompson--375-376 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 147, 461, 464, 621

"Labour, as is the case in so many tropical countries of great potential wealth, is the second greatest need. The Laotians' inadequacy, both numerically and psychologically, combined with the country's inaccessibility are almost insuperable obstacles to industrial or commercial progress. This was plainly seen when Laos's vast mineral wealth, especially in tin, attracted capitalist investment in the discreditable wave of mining speculation that spread over Indo-China in the late [376] 1920's. The Laotians have no sense of time, and a thousand obstacles and superstitions interfere with the accomplishment of work at a fixed date. Their physical stamina is not proof against epidemics, especially those maladies brought from foreign countries. Whole villages displace themselves at the slightest provocation. One Laotian proverb says: 'At the end of three days change your house; at the end of three years change your village.' What started as a necessity to escape invaders or soil exhaustion has become a habit, and a means of escaping any regular irksome task. The ease with which the Laotians drift across the Mekong into Siamese territory makes the French authorities very loath to take strict measures with them. Moreover, the European residents themselves, who would normally be the motive force behind any change, succumb to the prevailing atmosphere of su-su, the Oriental equivalent of dolce far niente."

7: Thompson--371 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 101, 174, 621

"The origin of the Laotian people is the object of much speculation. In all probability they were driven southward from Thibet and China in successive waves. They were and are to-day governed by petty chieftains and divided into families, each of which forms a community under the authority of the eldest son of its most ancient branch."

51: Nguyen Quoc Dinh--52 S-3 (no date) 1941 Laotians
116, 621 Chinese

Laos was the last country in Indochina to be taken by France. This territory had been claimed continually by the kings of Annam and Cambodia on the one hand, and by the kings of Siam on the other. France, defending the sovereign rights of the countries it protected, intervened in Laos in 1883 and established a protectorate there, in spite of the Siamese claims, which was finally made official by the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, and the treaty of February 13, 1904, in which Siam gave up its former claims (36).

(36) Galembert, op. cit.

Therefore, all measures of reorganization were taken much later in Laos than they were in the other countries. There was only one law about Asiatic foreigners which appeared January 7, 1919, and which dealt with the Chinese congregations. This delay can also be explained by the small number of Chinese living in this territory, and by the fact that their position did not attract the attention of the authorities at an early date.

10: d'Orleans--356 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 114, 211, 622

"So far as the ethnography, the flora and the fauna of Laos are concerned, no better authority is to be had than the French naturalist, Henri Monhot, whose scientific missions were paid for with English money and who succumbed to an attack of fever at Luang Prabang on the 10th of November, 1861. A small monument erected to his memory by the Garnier Mission was restored by M. Pavie, and it is a whitewashed cenotaph upon which may be read in blue letters the inscription

H. MONHOT,
1890.

The site of this is a space which has been cleared in the woods which skirt the Nam Kane about an hour's march above Luang Prabang, Monhot having died in a village beyond this. The chief of a Leu village receives six piastres to keep the monument in order and collect insects, besides being the ballet-master and master of ceremonies in his native place."

23: Franck--336 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 576, 622, 609 Ethnic subgroup

"Village chiefs bent low before the emissary of the king, putting their hands on their knees, for evidently this prince was not close enough to royalty to be worthy of the complete squat; or the people here may have been more independent. In turn the head-man of a village is a real boss-provided he has a very commanding way. This one of Ban-namon, otherwise known as Muong Kassy--ban seems to mean town, and a muong is a division something like the commune of France--did not have much head-man personality, or he had less respect or fear for princely orders than his attitude suggested; so that when I went for my daily conversation with my family I had also to wire back to the commissaire and insist on fresh horses, for none had been provided, the strict orders of the king and the French notwithstanding."

A DRAGON APPARENT

000 There was a recognized place about a mile up the river, which was free from weed and rock, and once again, because the water was deep and swiftly running, it was very cold and refreshing. We had
515 been swimming round for an hour or so when we noticed a number of Laotian girls hanging about. They were not watching us, but sauntering backwards and forwards in twos and threes, chatting to each other. By the time there were twelve of them, Dupont, keeping well in the water called to them and asked if we were disturbing them in any way. One of the girls came to the edge of the bank, bowed, and looking down at her feet said that it was their usual bathing time, but that there was no hurry, of course. Dupont asked the girls if they would retire for a moment, and they walked a short distance away and stood in a preoccupied circle while we got out of the water. We then dressed quickly and walked on down the path leading to their village. After about a hundred yards we looked back. All the girls, quite naked, were in the water. At that moment two bonzes were strolling slowly along the bank past them; but the girls paid no attention. The bonzes were wrapped in the mantle of holy invisibility.

622 When we reached the village, Dupont asked punctiliously for
304 the headman, making the excuse that he wanted to visit the pagoda. It was quite evident that this headman was in the good graces of the garrison, and probably supplied them with labour. He was very dignified and had a fine house, with European furniture. Although barefooted, he wore a French suit. On the suggestions of the soldier from the camp he took down his trousers and showed us his legs, which from ankles to thighs were tattooed, in the local manner, so
796 closely that he seemed to be wearing stockings. The annual *boun*[1]
782 had just been celebrated at the local pagoda and a bonze was in the
532 act of sweeping into a heap the votive offerings with which the floor
285 of the courtyard was littered. There was a great collection of elephants, buffaloes, peacocks and tigers, all woven in basket-work. The kind of thing that Picasso produces when he is not painting, but perhaps rather better. They seemed to me to be of

[1] [i.e., religious festival.-- Analyst]

644 The functionaries responsible for minor duties inside the palace, under the orders of their chief the Maha-Monti, are the:

Maha-Nosit, Lasa-Nosit, Lasa-Mat, Sanet, Sakame-Nane, Latsavat, Out-Thamonti, Sene-Thong-Niot, Sathipavot.

[652] [493] The treasurers, storekeepers and palace guards have the
647 titles of:

Phaya-Vi-Sai-Monthiene, Phone-Seuk-Khoua, Phone-Seuk-Sai.

697 Finally the jailers and scourgers (or executioners) under the command of the king or of the head of the justice department:

Phone-Tesak, Sa-Phakdi, Sa-Dab-Khame, Vong-Phouthone.

635 In the provinces, the head of a muong bears a title which is
631 personal to him, "Phaya" or "Phya," to which he adds that of "Tiao-Muong" and the name of the province, as Phaya-Si-Vorarat-Phrak-Di, Tiao-Muong-Vien-Tiane.

Under his command he has principal mandarins in the number of three, who bear the titles of "Oupahat," "Latsavong" and "Latsaboute." Each of them is generally responsible for the administration of one part of the muong, under the supervision of the "Tiao-Muong."

These high officials are seconded, depending on the importance of the muong, by a larger or smaller number of counselors or judges who bear the titles of "Sen," "Tiane," "Khang," etc.

Muongs are generally divided into cantons, and the heads of the latter bear the title of "Taseng." Each canton includes several [623] villages or "Bans," and each of these has at its head a mayor who is usually called "Pho-Ban" (the father of the village). The head of a village is aided by a kind of council or assembly of notables, the titles of whom are "Pia," "Luong," "Koun," "Sen," "Mune" or "Nai."

643 The four principal leaders of a muong, that is to say the "Tiao-
646 Muong," the "Oupahat," the "Latsavong" and the "Latsaboute" (1),

(1) In the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc, the heads of muongs bear the following titles: "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong), "Phya-Hua-Pahn" (Oupahat), "Phya-Balat" (Latsavong), "Phya-Kam" (Latsaboute). In accordance with custom, these offices are hereditary and sons succeed their fathers, except for the office of "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong) where the rule is not absolute.

are [494] elected either by the nobles or by commoners who possess certain aptitudes and sufficient intellectual culture. The whole population, nobles, officials and common people, are consulted. Then the

648* edition), Paris, 1911./, p. 9.
175*
654 the name French Syndicate of Upper Laos, which placed a first ship-
/439/ ment of fifteen tons of merchandise at the expedition's disposal.

Pavie set sail again on November 17 for /293/ Bangkok, where he stayed for only two weeks, just long enough to make contact again with our representative in Siam and to reopen negotiations with the Siamese foreign minister, who was specially appointed for the purpose by King Chulalongkorn.

On January 23, 1890 he reached Hanoi and rejoined his old and his new companions (including, among the latter, the embassy attache Lefevre-Pontalis, the vice-consul Lugan, the trader Macey, Professor Counillon, the Postal Commissioner de Coulgeans, the naturalist Le Dantec and the officers Riviere, Friquegnon, de Malglaive, Dugast and Cogniard). He divided them into several groups of operators who scattered on February 3 throughout Tran-Ninh, Cammon and the region of Stung-Treng, while he himself set out for Luang-Prabang with a last group of "fervent disciples," where he arranged to meet all the members of the mission six months later so that they could coordinate their first labors over the winter months.

Duly provided, through the intermediary of Governor General Piquet, with the authority of the king of Cambodia and that of the emperor of Annam for settling questions of frontier delimitation, and with a passport from the Chinese government /294/ which would eventually allow him to explore the Yunnanese frontiers, he first
/624/ went to Muong-Lai where Deo-van-Tri was waiting for him. Faithful to his promise, now that all his brothers had all been freed Cam-Sinh's son awaited his arrival so that he could offer himself to the French authorities, "placing all his pride in giving himself up to that man who had restored calm to his land" (1).

1. Cf. Mission Pavie, "Geographie et Voyages," Vol. II, p. 12.

Pavie had an enchanted voyage. Although the magnificent valley of the Black River no longer held for him the powerful attraction of the unknown, still he felt a profound joy as he daily noted the changes for the better which had occurred since his last trip among
/727/ these peoples. "The influence of Pennequin (who had accompanied
/178/ him with Vacle and Lefevre-Pontalis) was there, clearly marked at each step... no more Flags in the well-known colors, all had

"The story of Auguste Pavie should be placed in the hands of 000
our youth. It is a magnificent lesson in itself. To the ambitious
it shows how far a desire /338/ to learn combined with the passion
for action can lead; to patriots how one can serve one's country;
and to all how an ardent soul can ennoble the most humble tasks
and, springing from the humblest origins, can rise to the most
honored and most envied posts" (1).

1. Quoted by Colonel Friquegnon. Cf. Bulletin de l'Asie francaise, November-December 1925, No. 236, p. 356.

Final organization (1895-1899). The administrative organiza- 631
tion of the new possession had only been sketched out by Pavie dur- 642
ing his hasty descent of the Mekong. It was taken up and completed
by Superior Resident Boulloche, who was sent out on a mission in
May 1895. Laos was first divided into two territories or commands:

1. Upper Laos, with its capital at Luang-Prabang, including all the Muongs of the left bank situated between Yunnan, the British Shan States, Tonkin, Annam and Cammon exclusively, with the exception of the cantons of the Black River and a large part of the Houa-Phans; the first of these latter were attached to Tonkin and the second to the province of Thanh-Hoa (Annam);

2. Lower Laos, with its capital at Khong, formed of all the regions which had formerly been dependencies of the old /339/ kingdom of Vientiane and which were contained between the Annamitic Chain and the Mekong from Cammon to Cambodia.

A superior commandant was placed at the head of each of these 624
divisions, who was directly responsible to the governor general of 635
Indo-China. Each command was then subdivided into provinces or
"commissionerships" (six for Upper Laos, seven for Lower Laos),
each formed of a group of several muongs and headed by "govern-
ment commissioners" who were then given (except in Luang-Prabang)
the most varied duties and the most absolute initiative -- general
administration, police, taxes, public works, justice, public educa- /647/
tion and even, in most cases, medical help.

In 1899 the two circumscriptions were united under the authority 642
of a superior resident (1) with his seat in Savannakhet (shortly there-

1. Cf. decree of the governor general of February 6 and decree of the President of the Republic of April 19.

after in Vientiane), and unified Laos took its place in the Franco-

563 deserves full study but would be beyond the scope of the
669 present work, which is strictly limited to an account of historical events.

The mountain tribes of Upper Laos. The mountain tribes of Upper Laos, on the other hand, have been subject to more or less violent unrest during the period 1914-1921.

The Lus of Muong Sing and of the Sip-Song-Panas, as well as the representatives of the many races which inhabit this land with a chaotic relief structure, had previously accepted the establishment of French guardianship without any hostile reaction, for the misdeeds of the Lu chieftain Van-Na-Poum, who was, all in all, only a common bandit who robbed the people by force of arms /356/ and was killed in 1910 by our militia after he had wounded Inspector Nollin, who was sent to arrest him, cannot be regarded as acts of out-and-out rebellion. But in the first months of the World War the Yunnanese frontier, which was well-known to smugglers and brigands, was troubled by a marked recrudescence of outlawry, and suddenly in November 1914 Chinese bands, which were probably encouraged by Annamite agitators in contact with the Germans who had been expelled from Indo-China, broke out in the Muong-Hou and the Houa-Phan, burned the capital at Sam-Neua, at which time Administrator Lambert was massacred, killed Militia Inspector Tuyaa who was sent against them, and spread terror throughout the whole region.

624 1. The Muong-Sing incident (1914-1916). Phra-Ong-Kham, the
669 Chao-Fa of Muong-Sing, who was the son and the successor in 1907 of the prince who had spontaneously turned to Auguste Pavie in the past when he wished to escape British domination (1), did not share

1. See above, p. 331.

his father's sentiments with regard to France's representatives. His abuses of his power had gained him vigorous protests on the part of the government commissioner's delegate, and he had sworn to /357/ revenge himself on the latter by -- quite simply -- having him assassinated. His plot was discovered and he fled to China (December 2), from which point he gave active help to the brigands by inciting his subjects to revolt and by propagating false rumors designed to discredit French prestige among the populace.

Even though the latter responded half-heartedly at best to his

urgings, no less than three successive expeditions (the Sourisseau, 624
Friquegnon and Dussault columns) and two years of difficult and 669
costly operations were necessary to restore order and suppress the Yunnanese bands. The deposition of the Chao-Fa -- applicable both to himself and his heirs -- was decreed in April 1916, and the former principality was converted into a simple "muong." Phra-Ong-Kham died in China in 1923, and when his family offered to make its submission it was given permission to return to Muong-Sing.

2. The Meo rebellion (1919-1921). While these events were M
transpiring the Meos, who lived mainly high up on the peaks of 563
Luang-Prabang and Tran-Ninh (1), had maintained a proper atti- 669
L

1. See above, p. 212. 787

tude even though approached by the Chao-Fa and the /358/ Chinese brigands. Nor had they seemed at first to pay any more attention to the movement which their fellows in Tonkin had just initiated in the basin of the upper Black River.

Continuing to live apart from other races in jealous isolation, they had nevertheless seemed for some time past to be moving towards closer terms with the provincial administration, which had succeeded in interesting them in road projects. But in July 1919 one of the leaders of the Tonkin rebellion who was being pursued by our troops and was called Batchay came to seek refuge among them. From this lair he sent out emissaries whose mission it was to devote themselves to secret propaganda efforts among the Meo groupings of Upper Laos in favor of a king who, "accomplishing the will of Heaven, was to bring them happiness, peace and prosperity." The rumor rapidly circulated among these credulous tribes that a prophecy which had fallen from the sky was summoning all Meos to revolt and form a great independent kingdom with its capital at Dien-Bien-Phu or Muong-Heup. To the accompaniment of incantations and magic formulas, the able-bodied population was called to march against the Laotians, Khas and Annamites and to build the palace of the awaited sovereign.

/359/ In vain did the king of Luang-Prabang send messages to L
the Meo leaders in protest against these absurd rumors. Within a M
few weeks armed bands were formed which began to ransom and 563
pillage the villages of Tran-Ninh, Luang-Prabang and the Houa- 669
Phan. Our militia had to occupy the outpost of Muong-Heup, which

"There are not only the spirits, ghosts and demons themselves, but there are also their servants in human shape, there are sorceresses and there are witches, and these last can, and do, change themselves into tapeworms, gnawing at your guts until you die, so the moment that you must know that you have a witch-tapeworm inside you, you must send for the wise man, who will pinch and prick you until the bewitched tapeworm crawls out in fear. There are also what are known as hereditary or innocent witches, poor women who have not acquired but have only inherited their dread arts; such innocents can be cured, it seems, and are more to be pitied than reviled.

But there was no quarter shown to wizards. If a man was marked as a wizard he must emigrate or be slain. And we may take it that in a rather 'primitive' and static and isolated community, a 'wizard' was often no more than a queer fellow who thought for himself and did not like the way of life of the majority, had different tastes in meat and drink, did not care for sports, dances and festivals, possibly was sexually aberrant, in fact the sort of scoundrel who must be suppressed if society is to be kept decent and reasonably conservative. In some communities such deviant members are more lucky and are straightway hailed as shamans or medicine-men. But the Laotians just did not like wizards at all. Before the French got to interfering with good old customs, there was an ordeal for wizards and their accusers. Two pots of boiling coconut oil were set up. Into one pot went the sorcerer and into the other his denouncer. Whoever got out of his pot first was cracked over the head and disposed of.

So, underneath all the easy-going, good nature of the Laotians lie, when the conventions are outraged, some definite reactions of a rather violent kind. One wonders what has happened to these reactions now that they cannot be released in a right and proper and traditional way. For, if we can say that the Laotians have little or no religion, in the sense of a way of life or a moral discipline, they are filled and informed with beliefs."

115: Le Boulanger--74 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

"But in regard to the kingdom's laws, it is a certain fact that 671
there are very few of them, because, in my opinion, there is no 571
great need of any in order to live in accordance with the customs 626
of the land. The people are brought up to work, to have very little
to do with foreigners, not to undertake anything which might dis-
turb them and to live an idle and /115/ listless life although not
lacking any of the things necessary to preserve it. The king's will,
which does not greatly interfere with his people, takes the place
of a great many laws for them. . . . The manner in which the in-
habitants of the land live with one another is highly civil and
obliging. Unfriendliness and quarrels are banished. . . they all have
enough to live on and get along on, so that one does not hear of
thieves except as a thing quite out of the ordinary. . . . But the /565/
mandarins do not behave in the same way. Indeed, their insolence
and their insulting and criminal conduct dim the praise which the
common people merit on this account, because they abuse the
power which they have in the kingdom, and when they see some-
thing which pleases them. . . they act in such wise as to find means
for taking possession of it.

"But if we should now pass to the person of the king in order to 643*
describe him, there is no monarch, no matter how powerful, whom 174
he does not regard as beneath him, and it would indeed seem that 648
he affects not to yield in any particular to the emperors of China. . .
Only rarely does he appear in public. . . preferring to be worshiped
by his people as a hidden God rather than as a man like themselves
and of the same nature. . . He allows himself to be seen only twice
/116/ a year, for a period of three days, by his people, who re-
ceive this grace from their prince with such gratitude and joyous
sentiments that he forgets nothing on these occasions which might
contribute to their amusement. For this purpose there are several /527/
elephants which are trained to do a thousand little tricks and several wild
animals which are kept chained and made to fight. . . finally there
are wrestlers and gladiators and others, with their skirmishes which
last until last until evening and terminate all this rejoicing. . .

"Of all the prerogatives which he (the king) has, and which are 643*
a further mark of the extent of his power, that of having several 576
petty tributary kings in his dependency who come to his court to do
him homage and acknowledge him as their sovereign and who give
him superb presents, is by no means the least. He receives these
ambassadors in a great parlor seated on an extremely high throne
and garbed in his ceremonial robes, and replies to their civilities

10: d'Orleans--291-292 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 175, 627, 631, 721

"It may be remarked that the centre of Indo-China, and especially the region traversed by the upper course of the Mekong, is made up of kingdoms and principalities, formed for the most part out of the same territory which surrounds a town, always at loggerheads with one another, absorbed one after the other by the strongest States and only maintaining their independence in the interval through the rivalry of their powerful neighbours. Paying tribute first to the one side and then to the other, sometimes [292] to both at once, these Laos States have often been as reasonably considered Burmese as Annamite, or later on, as Siamese. At war with Annam now and again, the Laotians of this region conquered Tonquin eight centuries ago, but it is, none the less, with the Court of Hué that Luang Prabang preserves the closest ties. The chronicles of the town, which have been very conscientiously kept and which were saved from the flames by M. Pavie, testify in many passages to this state of dependency; and among these annals may be found the narrative of an invasion of Annamite troops in the seventeenth century which led to the suicide of the sovereign of Luang Prabang. (1) At a more

1. The legend has it that the king, when on the point of being made prisoner, had himself attached to the trunk of an elephant and the animal taken down into the river. A pagoda was erected in memory of the drowned ruler.

recent date eye-witnesses have related the expedition of Deo Van Tri referred to in a previous chapter, the Laĩ chief assuming his right to treat with the king upon behalf of the Emperor of Annam."

10: d'Orleans--311 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 586, 593, 627, 684, 837

"Adultery with a married woman, which is of very rare occurrence, entails a fine of 200 rupees; but, after having been very gay in their youth, husband and wife generally settle down quietly, the former often taking it out of his wife for her unceremonious treatment of him beforehand. I happened, while walking about the town one morning, to witness one of these little family scenes. A woman was shrieking and crying because her husband had been beating her, and when I came to question the pair, the man complained that his wife, who had been out to market, had not returned by nine o'clock to get his breakfast ready, so she must have stopped to gossip on the way. Her answer was that she had not heard the gong strike the hour, that she had not stopped on the way home, and that there was no reason why she should have had a beating. The quarrel was eventually made up without having recourse to a divorce, which, though legally recognised, is rarely resorted to."

10: d'Orleans--291-292 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 175, 627, 631, 721

"It may be remarked that the centre of Indo-China, and especially the region traversed by the upper course of the Mekong, is made up of kingdoms and principalities, formed for the most part out of the same territory which surrounds a town, always at loggerheads with one another, absorbed one after the other by the strongest States and only maintaining their independence in the interval through the rivalry of their powerful neighbours. Paying tribute first to the one side and then to the other, sometimes [292] to both at once, these Laos States have often been as reasonably considered Burmese as Annamite, or later on, as Siamese. At war with Annam now and again, the Laotians of this region conquered Tonquin eight centuries ago, but it is, none the less, with the Court of Hué that Luang Prabang preserves the closest ties. The chronicles of the town, which have been very conscientiously kept and which were saved from the flames by M. Pavie, testify in many passages to this state of dependency; and among these annals may be found the narrative of an invasion of Annamite troops in the seventeenth century which led to the suicide of the sovereign of Luang Prabang. (1) At a more

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23: Franck--320-321 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 631

"There are really four kings in the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha, or were until one of them recently died. None of them are to be replaced, however, as they pass on toward Nirvana, except this real one with the title of Majesté. The others are merely Excellences. Twice a year all the chiefs of Luang Prabang, which is a province of Laos as well as a kingdom, come to the capital for a conference under the [321] French commissaire. It is a leisurely conference, one fancies, for the people of Luang Prabang, high or low, do not include the word 'hurry' in their active vocabulary."

25: Brodrick--12 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
631, 642

"Constitutions were adopted in 1947 for both Cambodia and the Laos, but in the latter country the sovereign has rather more power than in the former. All the public acts of H. M. King Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia must be countersigned by the Prime Minister and another member of the Cabinet. Only one countersignature is required in the Laos where, moreover, when Parliament is not sitting the monarch may govern by decrees which, however, must be ratified later by the elected representatives of the people.

After the Japanese surrender the 'Free Laotians' (protected by the Chinese army of occupation) secured the abdication of King Sisavong Vong of Luang Prabang. A 'constitutional' government was then set up which restored the King as the ruler of an independent Laos comprising not only his former kingdom of Luang Prabang, but all the Laotian territories of Indo-China."

25: Brodrick--86 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 631

"The Laos, a country without a name, is just the land of the Lao people split into two parts--the southern and eastern, that was administered directly by the French, and the north-western, ... the kingdom of Luang-Prabang ruled over by His Majesty King Sisavang Vong."

25: Brodrick--102-103 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-2
116, 162, 631

"The Kingdom of Luang-Prabang, despite its meagre population, does extend over what, in almost any other part of the world, would be a great area. In addition to the province of Luang-Prabang itself, and that of Houaphan, . . . there is northern Phong-Saly marching with Chinese Yünnan and the jumbled mountains of western Tongking. In all this Phong-Saly there are no more than fifty Europeans and few enough Laotians. . . . Phong-Saly is a region of a hundred peoples, many of whom burn the vegetation to sow their hardy crops. A region of a hundred peoples, immigrants from the north like the Thais themselves, of the tall and graceful Lu, of the Phu Noi, of the Meo, broad-faced and cheerful, whose women wear immense turbans rolled and rolled and twisted to inverted cones, of tribes half-naked, of tribes gorgeously robed in complicated fashions, of the A Kha from Yünnan, a people whose jingling, bold-eyed women induce some fanciful Frenchmen to call them the gypsies of Indo-China. And then there are the Kha Khmu, negroid, dark and squat, without doubt an ancient stock showing something of that pre-Indonesian type once spread far and wide in all Indo-China. And each group lives isolated from its neighbours by language, customs and tradition, and even by style of architecture. One would hardly think that such variety could be displayed in setting up a bamboo hut. . .

There is a relatively small area known as the Haut-Mékong wedged in between Luang-Prabang, China, Burma and Siam, but the Haut-Mékong is no part of the Realm of Ten

Thousand Elephants and is directly administered by the French, who gained their footing here during the negotiations, quarrels and manoeuvring between France and Britain in the eighties and nineties of the last century. [103] The capital of the Haut-Mékong, Ban-Houei-Sai, on the left bank of the Mekong, is full of immigrant Burmans."

26: Brodrick--60 S-3 (1939) 1944 Laotians
116, 631, 177.63 France
636.63

"Most of the Laos region is under direct French administration, but the kingdom of Luang-Prabang (consisting of the provinces of Luang-Prabang, of Houaphan and of the Fifth Military Territory) is a 'protectorate.' Until 1893 the Siamese were in effective possession of about one-half of the Luang-Prabang realm, but by 1904 the French had obtained the cession of the whole of the kingdom."

28: Crawfurd--215-216 G-3 (1821) 1830 Laotians - 1-2
116, 162, 361, 631

"The country of the Lao, a people speaking a dialect of the Siamese language, appears to be divided between the Siamese, the Chinese, and the Burmans. It is composed of petty states, tributary to those three powers. Four of these are under the dominion of Siam; namely, Changmai, Lan-chang, Pasak, and Luang-phra-bang. Their chiefs are hereditary princes. The first of those named places, has sometimes been written Zimai and Jang-mai, and is evidently the district which the authors of the Modern Universal His- [216] tory have converted into a kingdom, under the name of Jangoma. The town is situated upon the Menam, where it is so shallow as only to be navigable for small canoes. The distance from Bangkok to it was described to me as a month's journey, chiefly by water. Lan-chang, always considered the capital of Lao, is situated in about 15° 45' North latitude, on the great river of Kamboja, which is here as broad and as large as the Menam at Bangkok. It was described to me as being as populous as this last place; of which I have great doubt, because it has comparatively little foreign trade, is not much resorted to by Chinese, and is not the seat of a court. Among its inhabitants are said to be about eight thousand Chinese of the neighbouring province of Yunan, commonly known to the Siamese by the names of Ho and Nung-seh. Besides the four towns, with their provinces, above stated, a fifth considerable place was mentioned to me by a native of the country, under the name of Siang-kwang, situated about fifteen days' journey to the north-east of Lang-chang. An alphabet, and other specimens

of the language of the inhabitants of this portion of Lao, was shown to me at Bangkok. It appeared to be rude, and did not, as usual, follow the classification of the Nagri. The Siamese reckon, in all their portion of Lao, one hundred and one towns, large and small."

68: Mouhot--85-86 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 131, 728, 631, 162, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"A great number of the inhabitants of this province [HD: i.e. Saraburi, in Siam] are natives of Laos, and are principally captives brought from Vien Chang after the insurrection there. The provinces of Boatioume and Petchaboune are peopled by Siamese, for Laos proper only commences at M'Lôm. Boatioume, Petchaboune, Sôm, and some other provinces in the north and east, are governed by Siamese mandarins of rank more or less elevated; that is to say, several of them have the power of life and death, and are [86]then considered as viceroys. The most distant provinces belong to the empire of Siam, and form a part of it."

68: Mouhot--105-106 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 631, 122, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"On the 28th February, 1861, I arrived at the town of Chaiapume, [HD: at that time a Laotian town tributary to Siam] and presented myself before the governor to request his permission to hire some elephants or oxen to enable me to continue my journey. I showed him my French passport, and also gave him the letter from Khrom Luang, [HD: one of the brothers of the King of Siam] and another from the Governor of Korat; [HD: an important outlying province of Siam. See category 116, p. 115] but all in vain. He replied that, if I wanted oxen or elephants, there were plenty in the forest. I might easily have done without the assistance of this functionary, and procured animals from people in the village; but they would have made me pay two or three times the ordinary price, and my purse was too slenderly filled to allow of my submitting to this extortion, which would probably be repeated at every station.

The only thing left me to do, therefore, was to retrace my steps, and, leaving one of my servants at Korat with [106] my baggage, to return to Bangkok and claim aid from the consul, the ministers, or the king himself; for there is a treaty between the Governments of Siam and France, concluded by M. de Montigny, which obliges the king to afford assistance and protection to the French, and especially to missionaries and naturalists. It was a sad loss of time for me, and might occasion me serious inconvenience; for, if I were delayed, the rainy season might surprise me in the midst of the

68: Mouhot--105-106 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 631, 122, 177.63 Siam
636.63

forests before I could reach a healthier region, and the consequences might be fatal. However, I was forced to submit, and I returned to Bangkok."

68: Mouhot--113 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 579, 162, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"These precautions are very necessary, for Korat is a nest of robbers and assassins, the resort of all the scum of the Laotian and Siamese races. Bandits and vagrants, escaped from slavery or from prison, gather here like the vultures and wolves which follow armies and caravans. It is not that they enjoy complete immunity, for the [HD: Siamese] governor, son of Bodine, the general who conquered Battambong and the revolted provinces, is viceroy of the state, has absolute power of life and death, and is, they say, very severe, cutting off a head or a hand with little compunction. But still it is Siamese justice, 'non inviola:' there are neither gendarmes nor police; the person robbed must himself arrest the offender and bring him before the judge. Even his neighbour will give no assistance in the capture."

68: Mouhot--115 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 439, 631, 651, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"The merchants who bring silk, [HD: to Korat, Siam] which, though of inferior quality, is an important article of commerce, come from Laos, Oubone, Bassac, and Jasoutone.

The entire province of Korat comprises a number of villages, and more than eleven towns, some containing as many as fifty or sixty thousand inhabitants. This little state is simply tributary, [HD: to Siam] but on condition of furnishing the first and most considerable levy of men in case of war.

The tribute consists of gold or silver, and in several districts, amongst others those of Chaiapume and Poukiéan, amounts to eight ticals a head. Some pay in silk, which is weighed by the mandarins, who, as with the cardamom at Pursat, and the langoutis at Battambong, buy a further quantity on their own account, and at their own price.

Elephants are numerous, and a great many are brought from the north of Laos as far as Muang-Lang. I should think there must be more than a thousand of these animals in each province. Oxen and buffaloes were formerly exceedingly cheap, but the distemper, which has for some years committed great ravages among the herds, has doubled or tripled the price. They are brought southward from the extreme north of East Laos, and even from the frontiers of Tonquin."

68: Mouhot--120-121 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
Siam
116, 609, 122, 631, 177.63
636.63

"I was again delayed a few days at Korat before I could obtain elephants, in consequence of the absence of the viceroy; but on his return he received me in a friendly manner, and gave me a letter of introduction to the governors of the provinces under his jurisdiction. He likewise furnished me with two elephants for myself and servants, and two others for my baggage; so at last I was able to set out for Chaiapume. Before I started, the Chinese with whom I lodged gave me the following advice: --'Buy a tam-tam, and, wherever you halt, sound it. They will say, "Here is an officer of the king;" robbers will keep aloof, and the authorities will respect you. If this does not answer, the only plan to get rid of all the difficulties which the Laotian officials will be sure to throw in your way is to have a good stick, the longer the better. Try it on the back of any mandarin who makes the least resistance and will not do what you wish. Put all delicacy aside. Laos is not like a country of the whites. Follow my advice, and you will find it good.'

I was, however, much better received on my second visit to Chaiapume, and required neither tam-tam nor cane. The sight of the elephants and the order from the viceroy of Korat made the mandarin as supple as a glove, and he provided me with other elephants for a visit to some ruins existing about 3 leagues north of the town, at the foot of a mountain. The superstitious Laotians say that [121]these ruins contain gold, but that every one who has sought for it has been struck with madness."

68: Mouhot--129-130 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 122, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"[HD: Going north to Pak Lai] I soon found that, but for the letter from the governor of Korat, I should have met everywhere with the same reception as at Chaiapume; however, this missive was very positively worded. Wherever I went, the authorities were ordered to furnish me with elephants, and supply me with all necessary provisions, as if I were a king's envoy. I was much amused to see these petty provincial chiefs executing the orders of my servants, and evidently in dread lest, following the Siamese custom, I should use the stick.

One of my men, to give himself importance, had tied one of these bugbears to the arms which he carried, and the sight of it alone sufficed, with the sound of the tam-tam, to inspire fear, whilst small presents judiciously distributed, and a little money to the cornacs, [HD: elephant drivers] procured me the sympathy of the people.

Most of the villages are situated about a day's journey from one another, but frequently you have to travel for three or four days without seeing a single habitation, [130] and then you have no alternative but to sleep in the jungle."

68: Mouhot--251 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 122, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"I have done everything in my power to obtain letters and passports [HD: to Laos] from the French and Siamese authorities here, [HD: i.e. in Bangkok, Siam] but all have been nearly useless. I have obtained nothing but a letter from the King's brother, [HD: Khrom Luang] who has the superintendence of the provinces north of Laos, and with that I trust to be able to get on."

68: Mouhot--256-257 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 122, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"When I reached Chaiapume, I went to the governor with my letters, and asked him to lend me elephants to enable me to continue my journey, that being the only method of travelling among these mountains; but he refused me decidedly, and consequently I have been forced to retrace my steps. Here one can do nothing without the help of the people in power.

I therefore returned to Korat, and established Phrai in a [257] hut which I hired of a Chinese; and went myself to Bangkok, to procure from the authorities orders to the different governors of provinces to aid me instead of throwing obstacles in my way."

68: Mouhot--258-260 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-4
116, 122, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"[HD: Excerpt from one of Mouhot's letters to his wife] You will be much surprised on receiving this letter to see it dated from Saraburi, [HD: in Siam] for if you have received the one I wrote in January, you must believe me to be already in Laos. But man proposes, and God disposes. However, to reassure you, I must begin by saying that I am in perfect health, and full of strength and hope. All goes well with me.

I had in fact reached Laos. I arrived at Korat after a tedious and troublesome journey, for I had only a few oxen for my baggage, and was forced to walk myself. From there I went to Chaiapume, and here an animal of the mandarin species made himself great, and under the pretext of having no elephants refused me the means of going further, and was so rude and impolite to me that I determined at once to return and protest against the very insufficient protection which had been granted to me. Indeed, I could do nothing else, not being able to go on. The elephant which had brought me to Chaiapume took me back to Korat, and there I found a mandarin from Bangkok, who had been sent to fetch a white elephant which had been taken in Laos. I begged him to let me join his party, and he lent me two elephants, one for my servant and luggage, and one for myself. I left Phrai at Korat, with the greater part of my possessions, having hired a room for him in the house of a Chinese, and a week afterwards found myself back at Saraburi, in company with this strange divinity (who, by the way, had

more black than white about him), and of the grand personage who had been sent to escort him, and who had showered on him every kind of attention during the journey. He had an escort of fifty foot soldiers and several on horseback. As for me, I wanted for nothing; at every halt the mandarin sent me ducks, fish, fruit, sweetmeats, &c., and he was [259] also kind enough to allow me eight men as night-guards to watch round my fire. In return, I discovered for him in the mountains large quantities of copper, and even gold, which delighted him.

The whole province of Saraburi was in motion to do honour to the white elephant; the King and all his court are coming here; the ministers are here already to watch over him. I decided, therefore, to apply to the Siamese, hoping to obtain more from them than from the Europeans; and yesterday hearing of the arrival of Khrom Luang, the King's brother, I hastened to address myself to him. He, however, had only passed through, and was gone to Prabat, to join the King. However, I found here the man I wanted, the mandarin who has most interest in Laos, and without a letter from whom it would have been difficult to proceed. I did not know him, but I went to him to ask about the Prince, and told him what I wanted. 'I am your man,' said he; 'the Prince can only give an order for me to write a letter, such as I will give you, if you like.' I accepted gladly, and promised him in return my double-barrelled gun, which I could easily replace, 'if

he would only furnish me with the means of travelling through Laos without expense, and would bring the Chaiapume mandarin to reason.' The poor governor of Saraburi was with us, and had to remain more than an hour amidst a number of others kneeling on the bare ground, while I was seated on the mat of the mandarin, by his side, eating sweetmeats and drinking tea, while he dictated a letter in which he called the governor of Chaiapume a fool, and threatened to deprive him of his office, and of this letter I was to be the bearer; and he promised me another general one on the morrow, in which he stated that if I did not receive efficient aid it might bring on a war; [HD: i.e. with France who was then occupying Cochinchina] and this he also repeated to all the chiefs present. My cause was gained, and I could plainly see that our affairs must be going on well in Cochin China; the echo of the cannon had its effect in Siam. However, I had pro-
[260] mised him my gun, and evidently he wished to have it before he gave me the letters This morning, therefore, I took it to him all cleaned and furbished up. He was delighted with it, and gave me at once the letter for Korat and Chaiapume, and to-morrow I am to have one which will carry me all through Laos without any expense but a few ticals to the cornacs. [HD: i.e. elephant drivers] Without this, judging by what I had to pay for an elephant from Korat to Chaiapume, my purse would have been exhausted by the time I reached the north of Laos, and I should not have had the means of returning without

sending to Bangkok to ask for help, which would have been a work of difficulty, and, what is worse, I should have been exposed all along the route to the insolence of these arrogant mandarins. Now, they will all humble themselves before me, taking me for some important personage sent by the Emperor Napoleon or Queen Victoria to collect butterflies, insects, and birds for them. I shall no longer travel on foot, but on elephants, and shall want for nothing. Agree, then, with me, that out of evil comes good, or rather, that God does all for the best. When at Chaiapume I found myself obliged to retrace my steps, after so many fatigues, and so great a waste of money, I was only downcast for a few minutes; God almost immediately inspired me with the idea that all would turn to my advantage, and this persuasion never left me again. Unaccountably to myself, I was gayer on my return than I had been in coming, although then I was everywhere well received and kindly treated by the people. Even after my discourteous reception [HD: by the mandarin] at Chaiapume, all the inhabitants came to see me, to bring me little presents, and to express their regret that they could not aid me from fear of their chief. The head of the monastery took me to see some ruins similar to those in Cambodia, and gave me a tiger-skin; and all along the road I experienced the same kindness, and numbers came to me to ask for advice and various remedies."

68: Mouhot--276-277 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 122, 174, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"Notwithstanding the small population of Korat, it is the chief town of a province, or rather an extensive state, containing eleven towns or boroughs, chief towns of districts, and a great number of villages, more or less populated. Fifteen days' [277] journey brings you from Korat to Bassac on the banks of the Mekon, and in the same latitude.

My intention was to proceed northwards, only stopping in the province of Louang Prabang, and then to descend the river as far as Cambodia. I hired elephants, and five days after, having passed through several villages inhabited by the descendants of ancient Siamese colonists who had taken refuge there in time of war, passing continually through forests of resin trees thinly scattered, I arrived at Ban Prang, a village where I discovered a ruined tower, and also the remains of an ancient temple. The next place I arrived at was Chaiapoune, the principal Laotian town in the north, and the chief town of the district. Here also I found ruins; but they were inconsiderable, and seemed more like a Laotian imitation than the work of Khmer Dôme. The inscriptions on the other temples in the province of Korat resemble those of Ongcor: here I found upon a block of broken slate-stone an inscription in Laotian characters, but which is unintelligible even to the inhabitants of the country. These, with some remains of idols and towers at the foot of a mountain in the district, were the only vestiges of that ancient

68: Mouhot--276-277 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 122, 174, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

civilization which I discovered in the north. Everything leads me to suppose that here also were the limits which separated the kingdom of Cambodia from that of Vieng Thiane, destroyed during the last war which the Siamese raised against the Western Laotians or white-bellies. It was in this district that I was stopped in my travels by the authorities of the country, who treated me with great rudeness, and who forbade the people to let me have any means of transport, even after seeing my passport. I was therefore obliged to retrace my steps, deploring the expense and loss of time in the best part of the year, and which will cause me serious inconvenience."

133 vast impenetrable forests and "the traveler sees only tall grass or
137 gigantic trees intertwined with lianas, then all at once, through a break in the foliage, he discovers the cascades of a river. This is the only noise to interrupt the impressive silence of these great forests" (2).

2. L. de Reinach, Le Laos, 1911.

133 Set against the huge mountain masses of Yunnan, this tormented region has always been the natural refuge of peoples driven out of India or China by famine, great invasions or religious discord, and its orography explains, in large measure, the multiplicity of tiny
/631/ states which were formed there throughout the ages. Its abrupt defiles radiate out and, so to speak, become calmed in the valleys of the Ménam, the Mékong and the Red River, and its principal substructure spreads out /5/ and ends in a vast plateau known as the plateau of Tran-Ninh, whose hillocks are planted with pine trees and drop suddenly from east to west.

In the southeast, however, the Tran-Ninh plateau clings "like an excrescence" to a long artery known as the Annamitic Chain which forms a distinct line of demarcation between Laos and Annam. This chain runs parallel to the coast in a northwest-southeast direction, and its peaks go all the way down to the Mékong by successive stages, first forming plateaus or folds of ground covered with thick forests (dông in Laotian), then slighter undulations where there are forest glades (khok in Laotian), and finally vast ricefields ending in the river.

The Mékong. This great river frontier which, over 800 kilometers of its length, marks the political separation of French Indo-China from the kingdom of Siam, gives life to Laos, together with its tributaries, "as the Nile constitutes Egypt." It fertilizes it with
/226/ its alluvia, feeds the native with its fish and guarantees transport for
/505/ his rafts and pirogues from north to south. But this liquid highway where nature seems to have taken pleasure in piling up obstacles and which is cut by numerous rapids and barred by waterfalls, can not be
/502/ /6/ regarded as usable for regular navigation over all of its length.
133 Fed by the melting snows of Tibet, the Mékong enters Laos through a capricious gorge, widens for a moment in the alluvia of an old lake basin and narrows again towards Luang-Prabang. Grandiose surroundings framed by the blue line of the far-off peaks give it what

539 separated the peoples and divided them among his sons:
174 1. Khoun-Lo received Muong-Swa, the land of millions of ele-
773 phants and of white parasols (Lan-Xang-Hom-Khao);

2. Chet-Chuong received Muong-Phoueun (plateau of Tran-Ninh and valley of the Nam-Nhiep as far as the vicinity of Borikane);

/32/ 3. Nhi-Fa-Lane received Muong-Ho (Sip-Song-Panas, the land of the Twelve Thousand Ricefields);

4. Chu-Song received Prakan (the Thai regions of Upper Tonkin and of the Black River);

5. Saya-Phong received Muong-Nioun (Xieng-Mai or Lan-Na, the land of millions of ricefields);

6. Kham-In received Muong-Louvo (Siam or Lan-Piyea, the land of millions of granaries);

7. Louk-Poun, finally, received Hongsavadi (Pegou and Pagan).

Before sending them forth Khoun-Borom said to the seven kings who were his children: "You shall live peacefully and as good neighbors, the elder ones not quarreling with their younger brothers... Go forth, and remember that you were born of the same womb."

174 It is not impossible that this division, in spite of its fabulous
631 character, should mark the first stage of the history of the Thaïs in the Mékong valley, at a time which the legend does not indicate but which might belong to the second half of the thirteenth century. This date would indeed correspond approximately to an inscription of Rama-Khameng, king of Sukhothaï, "written in Cambodian characters on the four sides of a sandstone stele" and translated by Father Schmitt, in which are mentioned for the first time the names of Vientiane and Vien-Kham (Tran-Ninh) in /33/ the basin of the "Khong river" (1). But whereas the Thais of the Ménam had suc-

1. Cf. Mission Pavie, ibid. /Études diverses, Vol II, "Recherches sur l'Histoire du Cambodge du Laos et du Siam" (manuscripts translated by Auguste Pavie's Cambodians)/, pp. 175ff., and G. Maspero, "Le Royaume de Vieng-Chan" (Revue indochinoise, 1904, pp. 497 and 498).

ceeded, in the course of relatively brief stages, in forming a compact Siamese kingdom which was rapidly freed from Kmer domination, the Thaïs of the Mékong remained divided for a much longer time.

Having probably come from their land of origin through the secondary valleys of the Nam-Ta, the Nam Ou and the Nam-Ngun, they founded more or less rival principalities: Cri Cudhamanagari (Muong-Swa-Luang-Prabang); Muong Phoueun (Xieng-Kham, later

Xieng-Khouang) and Candanapuri (Sayfong-Vientiane). At 174
first all these had to recognize the suzerainty of Angkor (2), then 631

2. Cf. G. Maspero, Ibid., and "Sayfong, une ville morte" (Bulletin de l'E.F.E.O., Vol. III, No. 1, January-March 1903).

they were conquered by the king of Sukhothai, as is revealed to us precisely by the inscription of Rama-Khameng.

This lack of unity between the principalities is to be ex- 174
plained in large part by the geographical configuration of the 631
country. The many level stretches of the Mékong, "separated 133
by rapids which were difficult to negotiate" and by this very fact "almost /34/ foreign to one another" (1), placed serious obstacles

1. Cf. G. Maspero, ibid. (Moeurs et coutumes de l'ancien Laos, p. 225.)

in the way of any political fusion of groups which were nevertheless of the same race and the same language and whose frontiers touched one another. It required all the energy of Fa-Ngoun "the Conqueror," the prince of Muong-Swa, to achieve Laotian unity in the following century after many campaigns, and even then chiefs of provinces (muong) continued to govern their fiefs in a spirit of independence which unceasingly impelled them to shake off the yoke of the sovereign. This vestige of feudalism was to remain, in the last analysis, the dominant characteristic of the whole history of these principalities which were shut off from one another in a natural isolation which favored the persistence of local authorities

/35/ CHAPTER IV
THE KINGDOM OF LAN-XANG (1353-1707)

Previous to 1315 A.D., the date of birth of Fa-Ngoun, the 175
tradition of Muong-Swa has preserved only a long list of names of native chieftains which unrolls into a tortuous labyrinth where Ariadne's thread is often broken. From the fables contained in the manuscripts on latania leaves which Auguste Pavie searched through meticulously during his first stay in Paklay, it is possible

643* one of his father's wives. He was now wandering about haphazardly
175* and implored their protection.
726
648* Capture of Xieng-Khouang. Fearful lest there should be an alliance
721 between Souvanna-Kham-Phong and the king of Tran-Ninh (whose reinforcements might take them from the rear in their direct march on Muong-Swa), they agreed to support the rebel. They went up the Nam-Nhiep and lay siege to Xieng-Khouang which they took by assault and whose king was put to death and replaced by Kham-Gno who acknowledged himself their vassal.

Capture of Xieng-Thong (Luang-Prabang). Reinforced by a Phoueun contingent, they then moved forward towards Xieng-Dong-Xieng-Thong. Their troops were divided into two armies, and one of these, under the command of Fa-Ngoun, entered the valley of the Nam-Khane. The other, under Phi-Fa, went down the Nam-Suong,
721 but the latter was stricken with cholera and died on the march at Hat-
643* Thoi. When he reached Dane-Khoua, Fa-Ngoun demanded that his
726 grandfather, Kham-Phong, abdicate in his favor. The latter was
175* highly indignant and moved to attack his grandson, whom he en-
648* countered at Pak-Ming. His troops were defeated and had to retreat
/762/ in disorder, /44/ his capital was captured and the old sovereign, "mad with shame and grief," hanged himself in his palace at Xieng-Thong.
726 At the age of thirty-seven Fa-Ngoun proclaimed himself king of
643* "Lan-Xang" and at once demanded submission of all the Thaï princes
175* of the Mékong. Without awaiting their "reactions" he set out to make
● 631 his authority accepted, and in a sort of triumphal march received the submission of all the chieftains of the northern muongs as far as the limits of the kingdoms of Xieng-Maï (Lan-Na) and Xieng-Houng (Sip-Song-Panas). He met with greater resistance in the south and had to enter into a struggle to the death against Phaya-Phao, prince of Vientiane, who had taken the leadership of the opposition.
175* The discovery by Georges Maspero in 1902, in the vicinity of the
633 present-day administrative capital of French Laos, of steles of Kmer
648* origin amidst the ruins of twenty-eight pagodas, makes it possible to
631 suppose that the first capital of the land was Say-Fong, that "dead city" stifled by the forest. In the time of its splendor it was the advanced citadel of Cambodian hegemony in Thaï territory, but its importance declined quite rapidly, doubtless with the first blows struck against the suzerainty of Angkor by the kings of Sukhothaï and

of Ayuthya. /45/ And even before it disappeared it had been 175*
supplanted by Vientiane, which was built some ten kilometers 633
upstream, unless the two cities formed a single immense one or 648*
unless the first one moved without changing its name at first 631

Capture of Phaï-Nam (Vientiane) Whatever the case may be, 643*
the center of resistance against Fa-Ngoun was then called "Phaï- 721
Nam" (thorny bamboos) because of the impenetrable vegetable 175*
belt which defended it like veritable ramparts. It resisted re- 725
peated assaults and Fa-Ngoun was able to get the better of it only 633
by using a ruse. He had gold and silver projectiles shot at the 631
bamboo enclosure and then simulated a retreat. The besieged
army, seeing the royal troops fall back, thought that their delivery
was at hand and came out to pick up the precious projectiles. Then
the assailants suddenly returned to the charge and entered the city
without difficulty (1). Phaya-Phao had to make his submission.

1. These tactics are celebrated in several Thaï legends to explain the capture of a stronghold.

He received his pardon and was kept on as governor of the principality.

In memory of this episode, the city was baptized /46/ "Vien-Kham" which signifies "gold enclosure." This was later corrupted to "Vientiane" (sandalwood enclosure) (1)

1. There is permanent confusion in the Laotian chronicles between the Vien-Kham on the banks of the Mékong and the Vien-Kham in Tran-Ninh.

Formation of the kingdom of Lan-Xang (1353). Fa-Ngoun, 643*
henceforth the uncontested master of a vast kingdom, gave it a 175*
strong organization and ruled over it as a despot. 642

He summoned an Oupahat or second king to him to assist him
in his political duties and instituted a Council of ministers chosen /646/
from the princes of royal blood and arranged in a hierarchy according to their respective ranks and attributions. But he would
suffer no infringement on his own authority, neither at court or
in the provinces. He took terrible reprisals against the vassals
who did not obey his orders blindly, and replaced nearly all of
them in succession with mere governors as the fancy took him.

643* Complaints against such tyranny, which had heretofore been un-
175* known in the region of Lan-Xang, reached his father-in-law the king
642 of Cambodia. The latter summoned his son-in-law to Angkor and in the name of the Buddhist precepts advised him to use /47/ moderation and "pity towards the weak" (1). Fa-Ngoun seemed to accept the

1. According to Auguste Pavie's translators, Fa-Ngoun was content merely to send an embassy to Angkor at the request of Queen Nang-Kéo.

lesson, was baptized in accordance with the rites of the Hinayana and himself urged that a Cambodian mission composed of clergymen, scholars and artisans be sent to Muong-Swa. Pha-Maha-Pasaman-Théla-Tiao, the head of the mission, brought the sacred books of orthodox Buddhism and a statue of Buddha which had been given to the Kmer sovereign by the king of Ceylon in the ninth century. This statue was the Prabang, which became the palladium of the kingdom of Lan-Xang (2).

2. When the mission passed through Vientiane the governor Phao is supposed to have requested and obtained the right to keep the statue in the city for three years. Many legends recount the voyage of the Prabang in diverse manners and disagree as to the route followed. Here again it may be a question of the Vien-Kham in Tran-Ninh.

346 The Prabang. When they reached their destination the Kmer
175* workers began the construction of a temple, the Vat-Gnot-Kéo, where
643* the Prabang was solemnly placed in 1358. But it was not until two
103 centuries later, when the seat of the capital was transferred to Vientiane by the king Setthathirat (1563), that the name of Luang-Prabang was given to the city.

643* /48/ When he returned to his States Fa-Ngoun proclaimed him-
175* self Supreme Chief of religion and resumed, with a severe hand al-
631 though never exceeding the bounds of firmness, the administration of the various territories which then made up the kingdom of Lan-Xang. These were, namely, Muong-Swa in the strict sense; Xieng-Khong in the north (present region of Houei-Sai); Vientiane, Hoi-Luang and Xieng-La (on the Mékong downstream from Vientiane), Muong-Kabang (Bassac) in the south; Kham-Keut (now the province of Cammon) and Muong-Van (Savannakhet) in the east.

victorious (1), and this expedition, which would seem to have 648*
643*

1. With the help of Trân-Ninh. 728
175*

been imposed on him, is the only campaign which is related during his long forty-three year reign.

According to the Annals he strictly observed the Buddhist teach- 643*
ing and followed, in a more docile manner than his father had 175*
done, the pious counsels of Pha-Maha-Pasaman-Thala-Tiao, his /645
spiritual director, "and so his kingdom knew a long period of 792/
peace and prosperity." He was a great builder of temples, and erected the pagodas of Manorom, Ouposot (with a library which was given the manuscripts which had been brought from Angkor), and Xieng-Kang which was built in memory of his daughter, the young princess Sivayaka, who died of smallpox at the age of twelve.

The Three Hundred Thousand Thaïs. In 1376 he gave orders 161
for a general census of the inhabitants of Lang-Xang. The results 175*
gave 300,000 "registered" Thaïs, not counting women, children, 654
bonzes, foreigners, slaves and Khas (2), and Oun-Hueun took /53/

2. The number of registered non-Thaïs was about 400,000.

/C.A.M. Translator's note. Page 53 is devoted to a map: "Lan-Xang and surrounding regions at the death of Fa-Ngoun (1374)". /
as his reigning name Phaya-Sam-Sène-Thaï, the King of the Three Hundred Thousand Thaïs.

Social Organization. These folk then constituted a society 631
grouped by families and divided into Nobles and Commoners. The 565
Nobles were given certain privileges and helped to administer the 175*
kingdom, from the dignitaries who were princes of royal blood down to the simple officials who were responsible for collecting taxes, for assembling labor drafts, for transporting goods, etc.

In the provinces the heads of circumscriptions (Muongs) were elected either from the Nobles or from the Commoners, but the choice of the electors generally fell on the son or some relative of the person who was to be replaced, unless there were some unworthiness or notorious incapability.

Frontier agreements with the neighboring kingdoms. In conse- 631
sequence of agreements reached with the princes of the peninsula, 643*
the frontiers of Lan-Xang were permanently fixed from Khone in 175*
the south to Pha-Day in the north, and from Siam in the west to 653
Annam in the east. With this last country, to which Souligna had bound himself by taking one of King Le-duy-Ky's daughters as a concubine, it was agreed that all the people who lived in "houses on piles and with verandas" should be called subjects of the king of /342/ Vientiane, and that those who inhabited houses "without piles or verandas" should belong to Annam.

The stay of the Dutchman Van Wusthof in Vientiane (1641). 175*
In 1641 Vientiane was visited by the Dutch traveler Van 114
Wusthof (2). /105/ The account which he has left of his stay in the

2. A Jesuit, Father Jean-Marie Leria, had visited Vientiane before Van Wusthof and had returned to Annam by way of Hinboun and Vinh. Cf. G. Maspero, op. cit. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./, and P. Martini, Relation de divers voyages curieux, published at Paris in 1666, "chez Sebastien Marbre-Cramoisy, imprimeur du Roy, rue Saint-Jacques, aux Cicognes."

capital of Lan-Xang contains precious information, even though it remains rather vague because of a lack of previous knowledge and of impartial observation (1). Thus Buddhism in Laos, for example,

1. Histoires singulieres qui se sont passees dans les royaumes du Cambodge et au pays du Laos, aux Indes orientales depuis l'annee 1635 jusqu'en l'annee 1664 avec le voyage des Neerlandais du Cambodge, en remontant la riviere de Laos, a Vinejan, la cour de S. M. le roi de Laos et enfin le cruel massacre qui a eu lieu au Cambodge par les Indiens en l'an 1643, published at Haarlem without any author's name and printed in 1669 by "Pieter Casteleyn, imprimeur demeurant au marche, dans la couronne imperiale." Cf. G. Maspero, op. cot. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./

appeared to him as a crude "paganry," and the number of bonzes scandalized him, as did the morals of the gentle and sensual

633 be seen from a great distance. To be sure, it extends over a prodigi-
174 ous area and is so large that one would take it for a city... The king's
344 apartments, which are embellished with a superb and magnificent portico and a large number of beautiful rooms accompanied by a large parlor, are all made of wood which will not decay and ornamented inside and outside with excellent bas-reliefs so delicately gilded that they seem rather to be covered with flakes of gold than gold leaf.

"From that point one enters the courtyards which are extremely spacious, and one first sees a long line of houses built entirely of brick and roofed /113/ with tile in which the second wives usually stay, and outside another row of houses built alongside in the same symmetry for the mandarins' officers. I could write a whole volume if I undertook a minute description of all the other parts of the palace, the riches, the departments, the gardens and a number of other such things...

565 "The houses of the principal lords and of well-to-do persons are
342 very high and beautiful, and are all made of wood with a great deal
352 of artifice and a greater or lesser number of ornaments, depending on the expense to which the individuals are willing to go, but I must confess that the common people and the poor are housed extremely badly
/793/ and that their dwellings are cabins and huts rather than houses. Only the talapoins (bonzes), who are the priests of the idols, have permission to build their monasteries and houses out of brick and stone. Instead of rugs and other such furnishings, persons of quality use small reed mats in which the weave is so delicate and so highly ornamented with figures and various leaf patterns that, to my mind, there is nothing more beautiful nor more pleasing to the eye. They ordinarily use them to cover the walls of /114/ their rooms and houses inside and outside, which they keep very clean and of which they take particular care...

643* "The king is absolute and independent... all the land belongs to
/423/ him, and he disposes as absolute lord of all that his subjects possess...
● 631 offices, employment, honors and wealth depend absolutely on the
174 king, who raises those persons who please him most to the highest offices in the kingdom.... The principal dignities and offices of the kingdom are eight in number. The first is that of viceroy general... and because the kingdom is divided into seven provinces seven other viceroys are appointed... there are also other governments of less consequence which depend on the former both in respect to civil affairs and to those which concern war.... Each of these provinces has
/701/ its militia, which consists of infantry and cavalry.

domains after the retreat of the Chinese plunderers who 643*
had driven them out. 648*
175*

who made common cause with them and raised an army of six thousand men in Muong-Hou and Muong-Thene, which he placed at their disposition.

The two brothers then returned to Luang-Prabang, attacked it 643*
and entered without any difficulty. Indeed Thao-Nong, not feel- 642
ing able to resist them, had abandoned the city and taken the 175*
Prabang to Vientiane. King-Kitsarath at once assumed the title of King of Luang-Prabang and notified Sai-Ong-Hue that he regarded himself henceforth as sole master of the Laotian provinces to the north of Xieng-Khane, leaving "the king of Vientiane" sovereignty over the southern provinces (1707).

Schism of Lan-Xang into two kingdoms: Luang-Prabang and Vientiane (1707).

We do not know how Sai-Ong-Hue received this ultimatum which cut off from his kingdom /134/ nearly half of the territory under his authority. Indeed, he was in no position to undertake another large-scale expedition, preoccupied as he doubtless was with strengthening his status in Vientiane itself first, where his Annamite army had perhaps not been received with any great enthusiasm by his new subjects. He therefore had to accept his cousin's ultimatum, and Laos was divided into two independent kingdoms.

In the north was that of Luang-Prabang, which had as its limits 642
Xieng-Khane, Pa-Kau-Dai (Kham-Phe-Khao), the Sip-Song-Chau- 631
Thai (the twelve cantons of the Black River) and six cantons of the Houa-Phans (Thousand Springs).

In the south was the kingdom of Vientiane, which stretched from Xieng-Khane to Sup-Mi, to the Khone waterfalls, Phou-Sang-Tang-Hoe and Ba-Tam-Tan-Kao.

This was the end of Lan-Xang, for this schism was to be a 643*
mortal one. 648*

From that time on the two principalities never ceased being 175*
jealous of one another, tearing at one another and increasing their servitude towards foreigners by calling the neighboring princes to their aid in order to recreate, each to his own profit, a Laotian unity which had become impossible by the terms of the old adage: "Every divided kingdom /135/ must perish." It was a fratricidal struggle in

Laotian provinces, over which it exercised only nominal authority as yet (2). It must, however, combat the rights which Annam /161/

2. Even over the old principality of Vientiane, now three-quarters depopulated, where it had had the wisdom, or the weakness, to leave the old chiefs of muongs in charge of the government and had required of them only an oath of fidelity and the payment of personal and land taxes in the form of one large annual tribute. /631/

might one day be led to assert over these regions, and it must place them under military occupation so as to present the emperor Tu-Duc, and eventually the Quai d'Orsay, with a fait accompli without further delay. The great invasion of Tran-Ninh by the Hos was to furnish it a pretext in 1873.

/242/ Invasion of Tran-Ninh by the Hos (1872). A large band 563
of "Red Flags," numbering about two thousand pirates who had 175*
been driven out of the Black River by the "Yellow Flags" towards /167/
the end of 1871, fell upon the plateau by way of Xieng-Ko, which /579/
it sacked despite the desperate resistance of the inhabitants, and entrenched itself in the island of Bandon near the village of Banban. A first column which Chao-Hung sent against it fled bravely at the first contact with the invaders, and since everything ends in a song in the land of Laos, their panic was at once turned to ridicule and put in couplets which are still sung today (1).

1. The following is a translation of the first of these 539
couplets:

Sanousit leaves his opium pipe which is lost.
Sisania throws away his opium lamp.
Chao-un-Vico abandons his Annamite gong.
All is lost, all is thrown away.
They hide in the forest, gasping with fear.
They do not even keep so much as a pin.
They hasten homewards through the brush.
By the shortest road.
For three days it is impossible to eat.
Chao-un-Vico's face is no longer human (fear has distorted his features).

"It seems that this refrain was sung whenever Sanousit, 563
175*

643* Indeed King Zakarine, no matter what his attitude of detachment
648* towards power, was noteworthy for his simplicity, his good sense and
175* his ability to see /323/ the usefulness of certain reforms. For he was
/178/ very poorly seconded by the mandarins of the kingdom council (Senam),
/646/ who were "incompetent men and scoffers dominated by their immediate and individual interests" (1). On the whole, however, the

1. Cf. ibid., p. 78.

642 political and social organization which we found was a good one,
178 and we acted wisely in preserving all the mechanisms of the native administration and in respecting the traditions, customs and mores of the populations throughout all of Laos, insofar as they were compatible with our own institutions (2). This was all the more easy for

2. Thus we were led to suppress radically the slave traffic which was enriching a few Siamese, Cambodian, Laotian and Burmese mandarins. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos (Posthumous edition), Paris, 1911./, pp. 230 ff.

us in that all the Laotian muongs (whether or not they were dependencies of Luang-Prabang) had a similar organization which was a smaller model of that of the kingdom (except for the Senam) and
647 was an obvious vestige of the epic times of Fa-Ngoum and the great
642 State of Lan-Xang (3). Like the king, the governors of /324/
631

3. The following was, in outline, the political organization of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang in 1894:

/643/* At its head the king, the great master of existences (Somdet-Phra-Chao), and the second king, the great master responsible for the preservation of property (Chao-Maha-Oupahat).

Then came the minister princes: the Ratsavong or first prince and right-hand minister; the Ratsabout or second prince and left-hand minister; and the Komakhoune or third and fourth princes and ministers of the center and of the civil services.

The first three mandarins, who bore the title of Phaya,
/646/ were, in order of importance: 1) the Phaya Muong-Sen or
/693/ first right-hand mandarin, head of the Senam and head of of justice; 2) the Phaya Muong-Tiane or first left-hand

mandarin and head of the tribunal; 3) the Phaya Muong- 647
Khang or first mandarin of the center and head of the Serv- 642
ice of public works, transports, etc. 631

The Senam was composed of the Phaya Muong-Khoua or /646/
second right-hand mandarin, and of four councillors under the direction of the Phya Muong-Sen.

The judges or Kromakanes, who were under the Phaya /693/
Muong-Sen and the Phaya Muong-Tiane, numbered seven in all and included the Phaya Muong-Sai or second left-hand mandarin.

Last came the mandarins responsible for the collection of /653
taxes, the assembling of labor drafts and the transport of 644/
bamboo, rattan, thatch and pirogues for the king's service and the public services; then the pages and chamberlains or mahaleks, the military leaders, the functionaries responsible for petty tasks inside the palace, the treasurers, storekeepers, etc.

The reader will note the insignificant position reserved /701/
for the military mandarins in this hierarchy. Of Sam-Sene-Thai's powerful army (see above, p. 56), nothing at all remained.

provinces were aided by an Oupahat, a Ratsavong and a Ratsabout who, like the court dignitaries, gave their orders to the tassengs or canton heads who had authority over the village leaders (naibans). By establishing the different government commissions in Laos Pavie therefore strengthened the native authorities in their age-old prerogatives and the princes of Luang-Prabang in /325/ their dynastic rights and privileges. In order to mark their absolute attachment to France and to give more force to their vehement protests against awarding Siam the part of the kingdom situated on the right bank, the latter insisted on receiving, in solemn fashion and as soon as possible, the investiture of the government of the Republic from the
commissioner general. After his return from Muong-Sing eight 643*
months later, Pavie drew up on parchment in Hanoi the titles of the old king Oun-Kham, of King Zakarine, of his brother and of the Oupahat Boun-Khong, and on April 19, 1895 proceeded to this important ceremony.

"All those who had a part in the control of affairs," he wrote as he finished the account of his mission, "were present. The entire populace was invited. In the name of the government of the

643 Republic and by delegation of the governor general of Indo-China, I confirmed the status of the princes in Laos, which had become a French possession. They piously accepted, from the man who loved their country so greatly, the responsibility of continuing under France's authority to lead it with wisdom and goodness" (1).

1. Mission Pavie, "Geographie et Voyages," Vol. II, p. 382.

/326/ Provisory administrative organization (July-August 1894).
642 Anxious to complete the provisional organization of the country and
631 to rejoin the Chinese and British missions of the Upper Mekong, he
647 left Luang-Prabang for the south on July 9, 1894, leaving his second-in-command Lefevre-Pontalis to establish in the north, together with Messrs. Macey and Garanger, the commercial agencies of Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen and the future commissions of Poukha and Muong-Ha-Hine (in the two Muong-Hou, while awaiting the imminent delimitation of the territory).

When he passed through Vientiane (July 14) he established M. Lugan in the new province which had been formed of the muongs of Tourakom, Borikane, Patchoum etc. and chose the site of the future commercial agency in Nongkhay. Then, continuing to go down-river, he made contact with the leaders of the left bank (including, among others, at the junction of the Nam-Nhiep, Chao-Kham-Ngon who was the last descendant of Chao-Noi and whom he had recognized as chaumuong of Xieng-Khouang).

In Middle Laos he took all necessary steps to establish the authority of the delegates of the superior resident in Annam over the old circumscriptions of Tran-Dinh, Cam-Lo and Quang-Dinh; to organize the regions of Hinboun /327/ /Page 327 is devoted to an illustration: "Bridge over the Nam-Khane at Luang-Prabang."--Translator/ /328/ (Faureville) and of Song-Khone (Savannakhet); and finally to make ready for the trips of the commercial agents destined for the posts on the right bank at Lakhone-Panom, Ban-Mouk and Kemmarat. Where the river joined the Sebanghien he was joined by the administrator Od'endhal who had just reached Song-Khone, and he agreed with him to extend the administration of this region as far as the muongs of Saravane and Attopeu.

In the south he visited the commercial agency which had been established ever since 1892 at Bassac, and greeted the latter's

phantom king (1) who had remained "under the guardianship of a 642
631

1. Chao-Kham-Souk, one of Chao-Houy's sons (see above 647
p. 168 and p. 177, note 2) who had been placed on the /175e/
throne by Bangkok in 1863. His fief had been dismembered by the treaty of 1893 and was in reality no longer anything but a Siamese province. He was to die in 1899.

Siamese agent of an inferior type." At Khong he met Commander Tournier, who had been placed in charge of the Legion troops stationed between Stung-Treng and the islands of Khone, and who was also invested with civil powers in the muongs of the left bank while awaiting the imminent arrival of administrators from Cochinchina (this latter country was to organize the southern Laotian provinces at the expense of its own budget). On August 9 he wit- 654
nessed the arrival of Lieutenant-commander Simon, the leader of 505
a hydrographic mission /329/ which had been planned the year before by M. Delcasse. This mission was to employ the sloops La Grandiere and Massie and to go on surveillance duty on the Middle and Upper Mekong. With this purpose it was to: 1) trans-ship its cargo at Khone; 2) cross the dangerous defiles of Kemmarat by every possible means; and 3) stop "only where it was materially and absolutely impossible to get through." At the cost of tremendous effort the mission was to reach Luang-Prabang on September 1 and Tang-Ho on October 25, 1895 at a distance of 2500 kilometers from the sea and an altitude of more than four hundred meters (1). On

1. The bold results of the Simon mission demonstrated the possibility of organizing a regular navigation service from Saigon to Luang-Prabang by using either steam sloops or pirogues, depending on the season. The service was later established.

August 13 Pavie reached Pnom-Penh and then went to Hatien where 648*
the gunboat Vipere was waiting for him. The latter took him to 175*
Bangkok on the 20th, and scarcely had he landed when he hastened to inform both the Quai d'Orsay and Prince Devawongse of the discoveries he had made all along the Mekong, namely that the treaty had not been made known to the populace and that the king of Siam's proclamation relative to the return of former inhabitants of the left bank of the river to their own country was still unknown

"The story of Auguste Pavie should be placed in the hands of 000
our youth. It is a magnificent lesson in itself. To the ambitious
it shows how far a desire /338/ to learn combined with the passion
for action can lead; to patriots how one can serve one's country;
and to all how an ardent soul can ennoble the most humble tasks
and, springing from the humblest origins, can rise to the most
honored and most envied posts" (1).

1. Quoted by Colonel Friquegnon. Cf. Bulletin de l'Asie francaise, November-December 1925, No. 236, p. 356.

Final organization (1895-1899). The administrative organiza- 631
tion of the new possession had only been sketched out by Pavie dur- 642
ing his hasty descent of the Mekong. It was taken up and completed
by Superior Resident Boulloche, who was sent out on a mission in
May 1895. Laos was first divided into two territories or commands:

1. Upper Laos, with its capital at Luang-Prabang, including all the Muongs of the left bank situated between Yunnan, the British Shan States, Tonkin, Annam and Cammon exclusively, with the exception of the cantons of the Black River and a large part of the Houa-Phans; the first of these latter were attached to Tonkin and the second to the province of Thanh-Hoa (Annam);

2. Lower Laos, with its capital at Khong, formed of all the regions which had formerly been dependencies of the old /339/ kingdom of Vientiane and which were contained between the Annamitic Chain and the Mekong from Cammon to Cambodia.

A superior commandant was placed at the head of each of these 624
divisions, who was directly responsible to the governor general of 635
Indo-China. Each command was then subdivided into provinces or
"commissionerships" (six for Upper Laos, seven for Lower Laos),
each formed of a group of several muongs and headed by "govern-
ment commissioners" who were then given (except in Luang-Prabang)
the most varied duties and the most absolute initiative -- general
administration, police, taxes, public works, justice, public educa- /647/
tion and even, in most cases, medical help.

In 1899 the two circumscriptions were united under the authority 642
of a superior resident (1) with his seat in Savannakhet (shortly there-

1. Cf. decree of the governor general of February 6 and decree of the President of the Republic of April 19.

after in Vientiane), and unified Laos took its place in the Franco-

149: Reinach--4c G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

102
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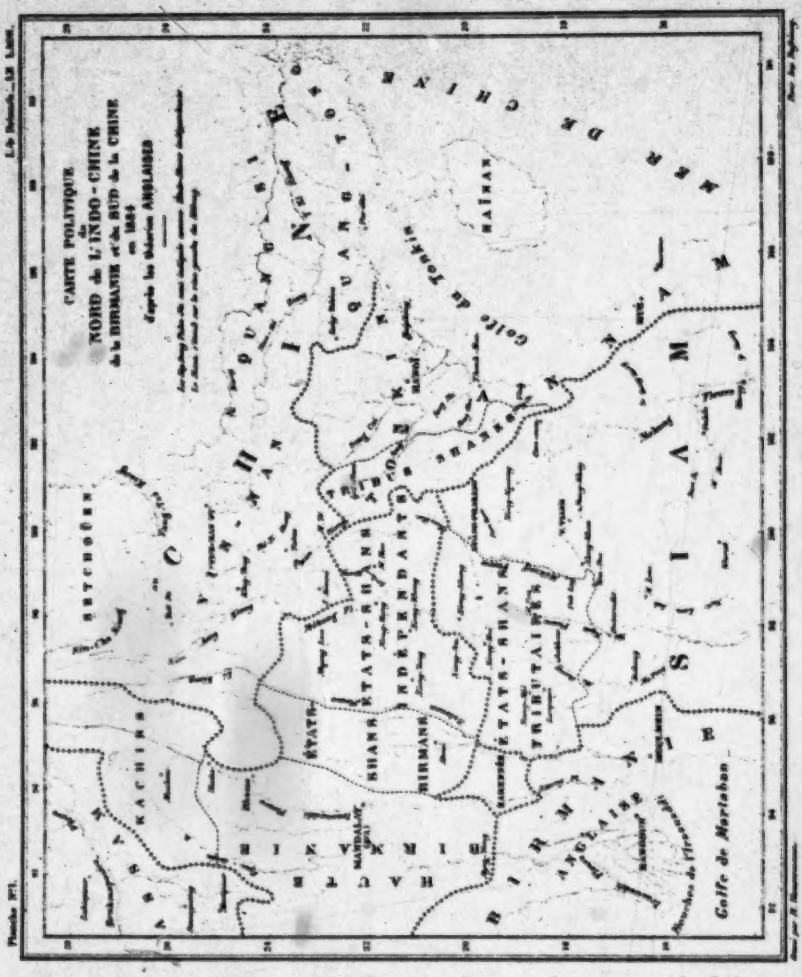

Political Map of the North of Indo-China, of Burma and of the South of China in 1884 according to British theories.

Plate 1 /facing p. 8/

149: Reinach--10b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

102
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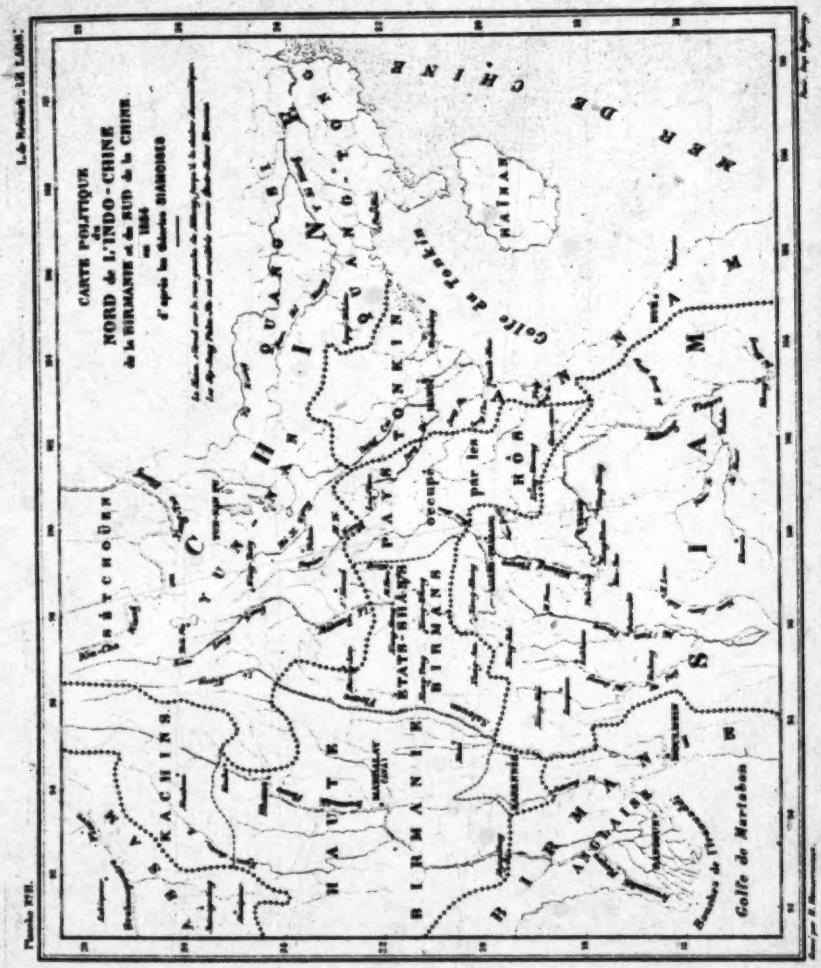

Political Map of the North of Indo-China, of Burma and of the South of China in 1884 according to Siamese theories.

Plate 2 /facing p. 16/

149: Reinach--15b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

102
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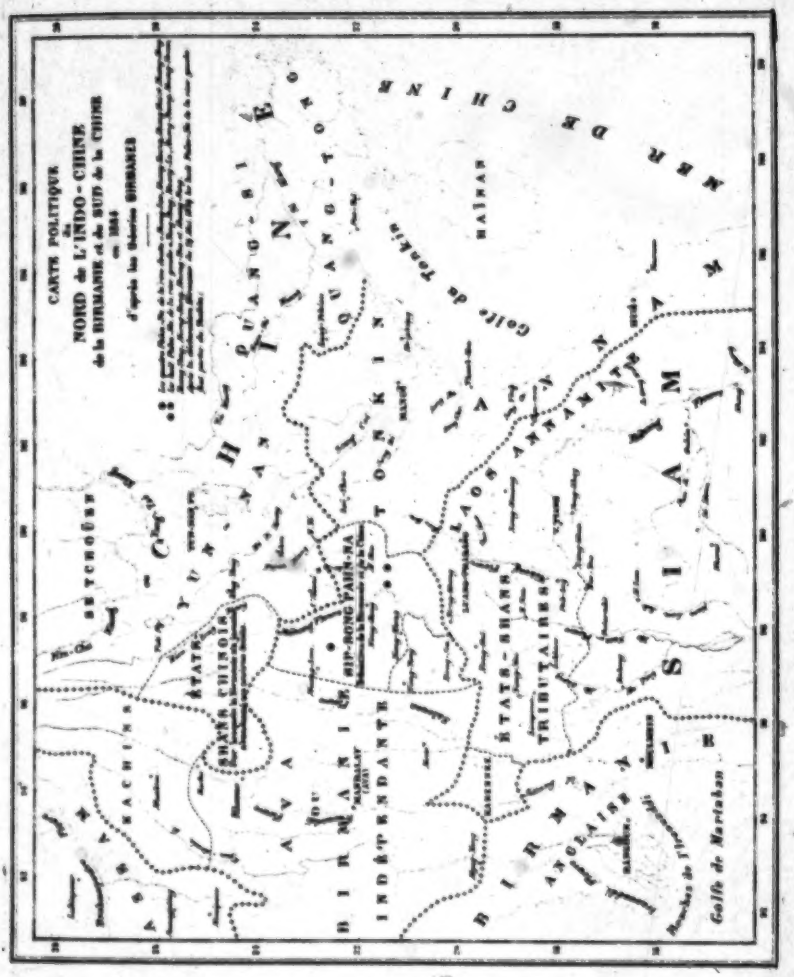

Political Map of the North of Indo-China, of Burma and of the South of China in 1884 according to Burmese theories.

Plate 3 /facing p. 24/

149: Reinach--23a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

102
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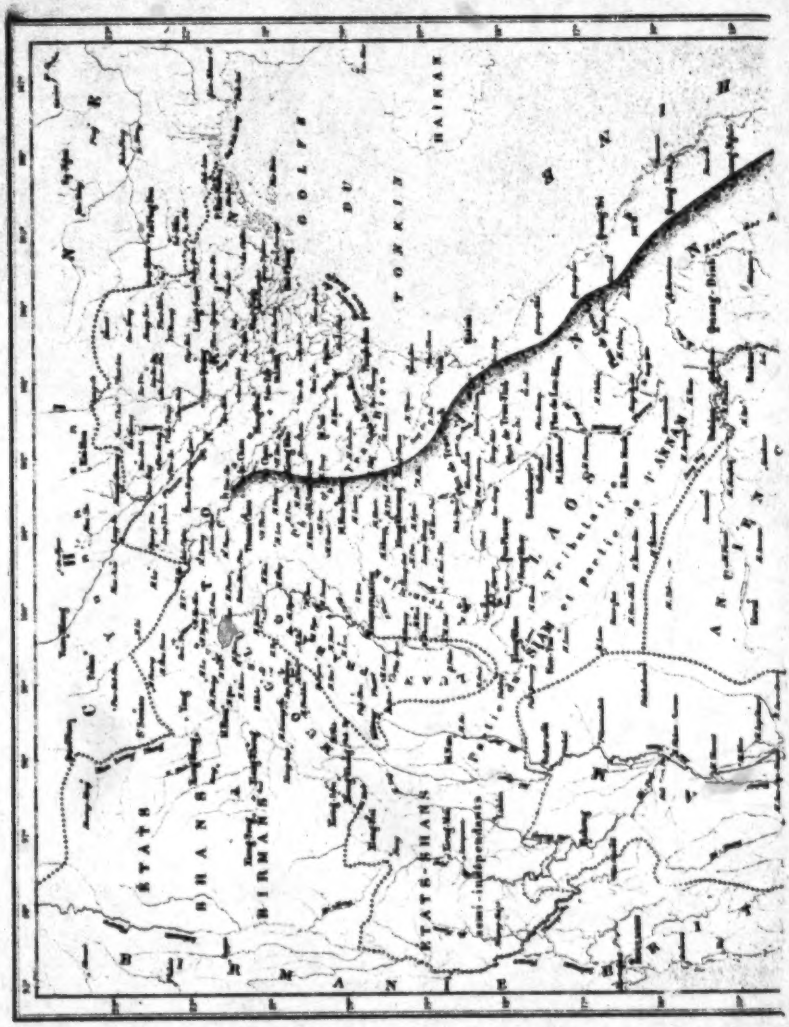

Political Map of Indo-China in 1893 before the Franco-Siamese Treaty of October 3.

Plate 4 Part A /between pp. 32 and 33/

149: Reinach--23b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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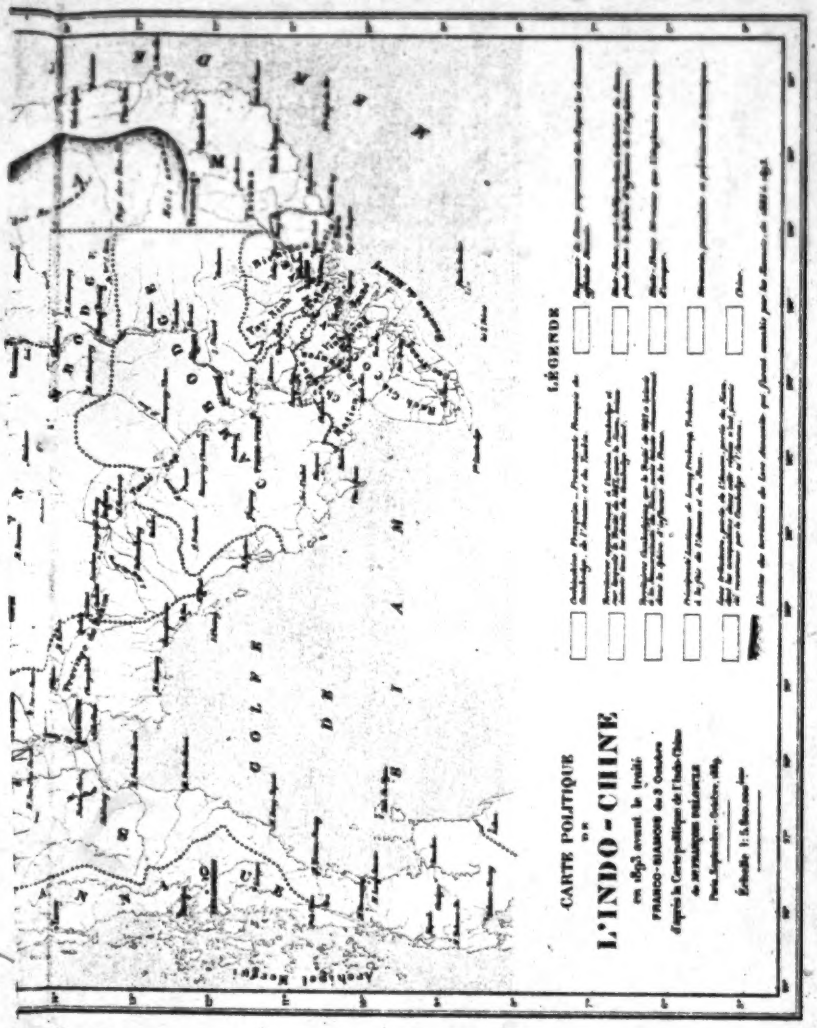

Political Map of Indo-China in 1893 before the Franco-Siamese Treaty of October 3.

Plate 4, Part B /between pp. 32 and 33/

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"The administration of public works of Cochinchina was particularly responsible for carrying out the work. The operation was directed by Messrs. Gubiand, the engineering director of public works, and Crouzat, the chief clerk of the department of civil engineering [conducteur principal des ponts et chaussées], and was fully successful despite the haste, the difficulties and the mishaps and tribulations which we had to undergo.

"On October 31, 1893, five months after the mission's arrival in Saigon, two ships, the Massie and the Ham-Luong, had passed the Khône waterfalls.

"The Ham-Luong was a sloop from Cochinchina which was sent at the last [68] moment and in all haste to replace the La Grandière numerically and provisorily, the latter being disabled below the falls as the result of grave damage to the engine."

After they had been floated in the upper reach the Massie and the Ham-Luong pushed on to Bassoc immediately, then to the junction with the Sé-Moun. The Massie finally reached Kemmarat on February 28, 1894, after successfully passing the 120 kilometers of rapids just below it. There the Massie had to wait for high water before it could pass the Keng-Sa, one of the most dangerous obstacles in this region. In the high water season of 1894 it was in the Vien-Tiane reach, where it showed the French flag over an extent of more than 500 kilometers. On September 5, 1894, the La Grandière went to Khône in its turn, on its way from one reach to another, and then in November caught up with the Massie which it soon passed. Finally in August 1895 Lieutenant Commander Simon took the La Grandière through the series of rapids stretching over a distance of 350 kilometers between Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang, which he reached on September 1.

[631
648]

"This brilliant success demonstrated France's power to the friendly and hostile populations of the banks of the Mékong. Through the more frequent sight of our officers, our weapons and our cruising steamships, which ammounted to ambulatory offices, it strengthened the work accomplished by our diplomats on the left bank, which belonged to us henceforth" (1).

[113]

(1) Lanier, L'Asie, 1898. Selected readings in geography.

We rejoice at being able to render deserved homage here to the abilities of Commander Simon who, in the midst of the greatest

under the rocks, where it loses itself in an immense grotto. It can be navigated by pirogues in all seasons from Keng-Kièt on. 505 133

The large island of Don-Don is found between Pak-Hin-Boun and Lakhône.

Lakhone is an important center on the right bank located opposite Tha-Khèk, which is the nearest point to the Annam coast on the whole Mékong (1). [361]

(1) From Tha-Khèk to the mouth of the Cua-Nhuong (Hatinh) is reckoned 180 kilometers as the crow flies.

Just below the 17th parallel is found Muong-Panom, the holy city [87] [Illustration] [88] [Blank page] [89] of Laos and a celebrated spot of pilgrimage, by reason a That (1) which is said to contain relics [778]

(1) A that is a kind of stele or four-sided pyramid.

of Buddha. Opposite Panom, on the left bank, the Sé-Bang-Faï flows into the Mékong.

The Sé-Bang-Faï comes from the Annamitic Chain. It has a sinuous and extremely long course, but cannot be navigated in any season except by pirogues as far as Pou-Houa, that is to say for a distance of about eighty kilometers.

Below its mouth, and thirty kilometers upstream from Savannakhèt, is the Keng-Kabao. The latter deserves mention here, for during the low water period it forms an insurmountable obstacle for steam launches, which never go below this point from November to July.

Difficulties in navigation do not begin until after Hueûn-Hin, and the steam launches of the River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des Messageries fluviales] could reach that point during the high water period if there were any commercial advantage to be gained by so doing.

A series of rapids stretches over a length of about 160 kilometers between Hueûn-Hin and Pak-Moun. These are known as the "rapids of Kemmarat" because of the large muong (2) on the right bank which

(2) Muong = province; also means capital of a province. [631]

is located along this part of the river. They are a succession of rapids

648 "However, since it did not appear advisable to sanction the abandon-
439 ment of the commercial agencies by an official act, which might
175 have been regarded by the Laotian people and by the Court of Bangkok as a modification of the policy followed in the Mekong valley by the French Government," the positions were not discontinued, but only the officials who had held them.

It is thus that today the ten commercial agencies are directed by the administrators of neighboring provinces or by chief clerks or chief guards who perform the functions of commercial agents.

• 631 Temporary organization. Government com-
175 missionerships. Missions. As soon as the terms of the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, became known, various missions originating in Annam and Cochinchina were sent to Laos to reconnoiter, and set up a temporary organization for the territories on the left bank of the Mekong to which Siam had abandoned its claims.

In Upper Laos our agents, who were already established on the right bank at Luang-Prabang, took possession of the territory bearing this name. Then in the course of the first half of 1894, when the government commissioner M. Vacle had arrived, they settled in the former Annamite phus of Tran-Bienh and Tran-Ninh and in the territory of [Map, unpaged, inserted here] [273] Vien-Tiane. Somewhat later the assistant commissioner of the French Republic in Laos (1) and

(1) The general commissioner of the French Republic in Laos, M. Pavie, was the chief of two frontier delimitation missions which operated in the basin of the Red River, the Black River and the Mekong. His assistant commissioner was M. Lefèvre-Pontalis.

one of our former commercial agents in Luang-Prabang went out to reconnoiter and organize the territories of Xieng-Khong (left bank), Poukha and Muong-Sing (2).

(2) A newly appointed government commissioner went out to take possession of the territory of the two Muong-Hou and settled at Muong-Ha-Hine to await the impending delimitation of the territory.

In middle Laos, two administrative agents delegated by the

5 149: Reinach--193a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

102
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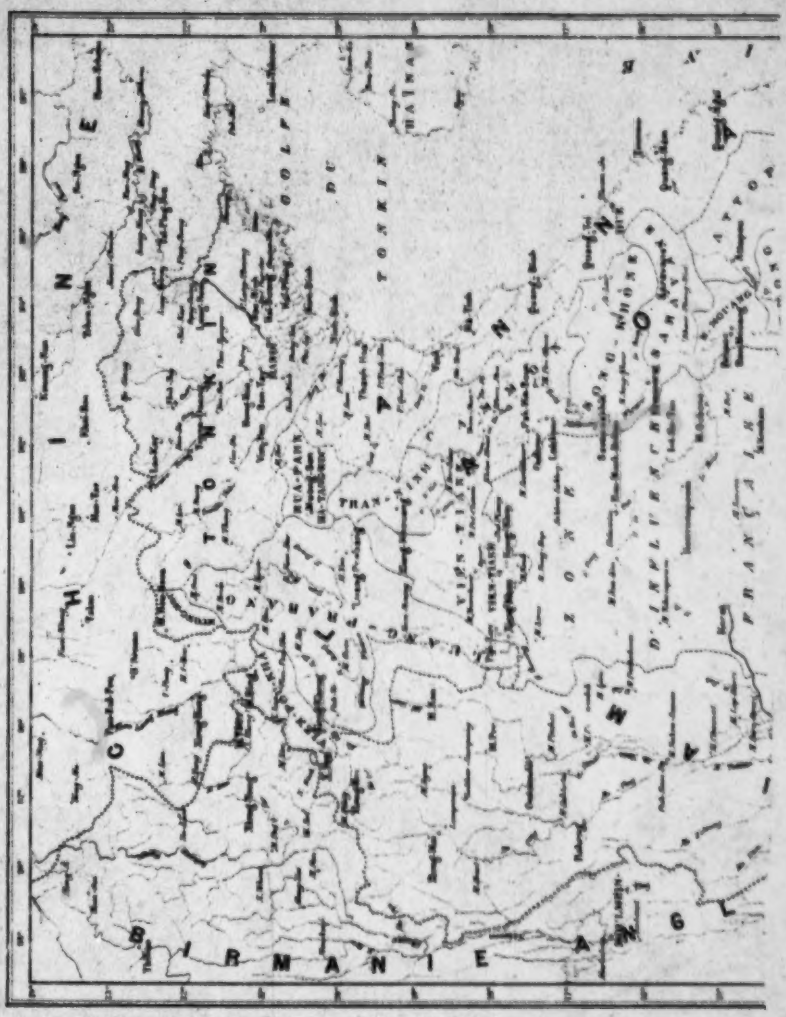

Political Map of Indo-China in 1901.

Plate 5, Part A /between pp. 272-3/

149: Reinach--193b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

102
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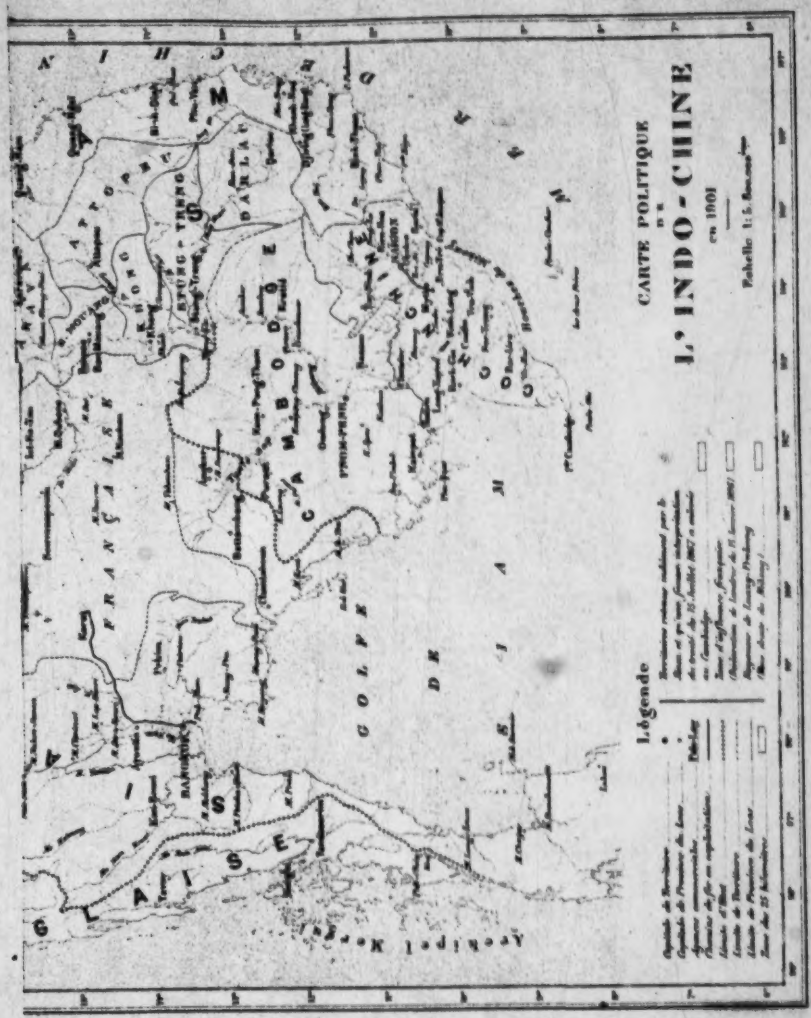

Political Map of Indo-China in 1901.

Plate 5, Part B /between pp. 272-3/

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Superior Resident in Annam established our authority in the former Annamite phus of Tran-Dinh, Tran-Tinh, Lac-Bien, Cam-Lo and Quang-Dinh. They founded the centers of Faureville (now Pak-Hin-Boun) and Song-Khone (3).

(3) The capital of the province of Song-Khone was soon after transferred to Savannakhet.

In the south Commander Tournier, who had already been placed in command of the troops stationed at Khong, Stung-Treng, Attopeu and Ban-Mouang, was at the same time entrusted with civil authority in these territories.

At the beginning of the second half of 1894 three administrators set out from Cochinchina to succeed Commander Tournier, who had been appointed to a mission for delimiting the Sino-Annamite frontiers, and to organize the provinces of Khong, Ban-Mouang, Attopeu and Stung-Treng at the expense of the Cochinchinese budget.

Permanent organization. The Superior Resident on service and the Superior Commandants. In 1895 M. Bouilloche, Superior Resident on service in Laos, was made responsible for organizing our new possession on a permanent basis.

Laos was divided into two parts, named Upper Laos and Lower Laos, each of which was autonomous. The former included all the territories between Yunnan, the Anglo-Shan States, Tonkin and Annam as far as the [274] northern limits of Cammon. The capital of Upper Laos was Luang-Prabang.

Lower Laos included all the territories situated between the Mekong and the Annamitic Chain, from the northern limits of Cammon to Cambodia. Its capital was Khong.

A high official with the title of Superior Commandant was placed at the head of each of these divisions. He was directly responsible to the Governor General and had the duties and privileges of Superior Residents in the other parts of Indo-China.

Each of these divisions of Laos was organized into a certain number of commissionerships, respecting in most cases the old administrative subdivisions or those which had been newly created by the Siamese. The Sib-Song-Chau-Thais, however, which had previously been dependencies of Luang-Prabang, were joined administratively to Tonkin, and in 1898 part of the territory of the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc was attached to the province of Tanh-Hoa (Annam).

631 Upper Laos contained six commissionerships and Lower Laos seven.
175 Each was directed by an official with the title of Government Commissioner [Commissaire] (similar to the title of "commissioner" in British possessions). He was assisted by a clerk, scholars and a native interpreter.

Because of their many and varied duties, government commissioners must have extensive knowledge. In fact, these officials are responsible for general administration, police, collecting taxes and duties, selling opium, public works, justice, public education and, in centers without doctors, for the health service.

A further factor to complicate their task is that the circumscriptions are large and communications difficult.

247 Just as in physiology "the function creates the organ," so must our agents become topographers, naturalists, geologists, engineers, architects, etc. all at the same time. Each of them devotes his talents to the task, striving to do his best and able to count only on himself. [275] [Illustration] [276] [Blank page] [277] Their task is facilitated, however, by the zeal and specialized knowledge of the clerks and leaders of the native guard, who are inspectors and chief guards, former officers or sub-officers of the army. Most of these agents have been on campaigns in Algeria or in the colonies and are used to shifting for themselves, to use an expression which is as apt as it is picturesque.

To this system of individual initiative Laos owes the fact of possessing comfortable, durable and healthy installations built of wood, brick or cobwork which certain other colonies, although better endowed from the point of view of the availability of many technical services, did not possess to so high a degree after they had been established for ten years.

631 Present organization. By decree of the Governor General dated February 6, 1899, the two divisions of Laos were joined
642 and a united Laos was placed under the authority of a Superior Resident (1) named by decree of the President of the Republic. This same edict

(1) The enlightened choice of the Government fell on Lieutenant-colonel Tournier, former Superior Commandant in Lower Laos.

abolished the positions of Superior Commandants in Upper and Lower Laos.

Like Cochinchina, Laos is a direct dominion, but is administered according to the forms of a strict protectorate and therefore does not

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have any elected councils or parliamentary representation. Today it constitutes one of the five states in the Indo-Chinese union.

A consequence of the unification of Laos was its division into provinces and the incorporation of its officials, who had heretofore been a staff apart, in the ranks of the Indo-China Civil Service. 631

The government commissioners have therefore become civil service administrators.

Today each of the fourteen provinces of Laos is placed under the authority of an Administrator, and the latter is seconded by a civil service clerk. 635

Native guard. In Laos there are no detachments of the troops stationed in Indo-China, but only a native civil guard [278] composed partly of Annamites and partly of Laotians. It constitutes a police force which is distributed in detachments of varying size under the command of inspectors and chief guardsmen. It is entirely at the disposition of the administrators who are heads of provinces. This native guard numbers twenty-seven inspectors and chief guardsmen and 850 men, of which 320 are volunteer Annamite enlisted men recruited in Annam and Tonkin, and 530 are natives recruited from all the races of Laos. It may be called on to lend its support, if the need arise, to the native authorities who are responsible for maintaining order and security in their respective territories. Peace and order are so perfect in Laos, however, that one can go about freely without an escort. 701

The treasury service. The treasury service in Laos is headed by a bursar who holds the title of "Chief Bursar of the Treasury Service in Laos." He handles all matters dealing with receipts, expenditures and treasury operations in Laos in the same forms and according to the same rules as the other bursars who are heads of services in Indo-China. 652

He is assisted by a deputy bursar.

These two agents reside in Vien-Tiane.

Medical service. This service includes three colonial physicians on detachment in Laos who are in charge of the infirmaries at Luang-Prabang, Vien-Tiane (formerly at Pak-Hin-Boun) and Khong. They care for all sick persons, whether European or native, as has been noted above (1). 744

(1) See Chapter III, Health Service.

149: Reinach--201 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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161

PROVINCE OF MUONG-HOU

Area: 4,500 square kilometers

Population: 4 Europeans, 8,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 187

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages	Registered inhabitants
Hou-Neua	49	1,362 (?)
Hou-Tai	35	

Muong-Hou-Neua (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Luang-Prabang: 766 kilometers.

Population:

4 Europeans, 250 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Muong-Hou-Neua.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Muong-Hou-Neua.....Complete office.

149: Reinach--202 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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PROVINCE OF VIEN-POUKHA

Area: 13,000 square kilometers.

Population: 6 Europeans, 23,986 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 167

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of Villages	Registered inhabitants
Vien-Poukha Xieng-Khong Xieng-Sene Luong-Nam-Tha Mugne Sing	524	10296

Muong-Sing (capital).

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Xieng-Khong and Luang-Prabang: 876 (?) kilometers.

Population:

3 Europeans, (?) natives.

Posts occupied by the Native Guard:

Muong-Sing..... 1 chief guardsman.
Xieng-Khong: 1 chief guardsman performing the functions of commercial agent.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Vien-Poukha
Muong-Sing
Xieng-Khong } Complete offices.

149: Reinach--203 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

635
•631
161

[289] PROVINCE OF THE HUA-PAHN-HA-TANG-HOC

Area: 8,000 square kilometers.

Population: 3 Europeans, 15,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 188

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages	Registered inhabitants
Son	78	4,800 (?)
Xieng-Kho	139	
Het	49	
Hua-Muong	83	

Muong-Son (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Luang-Prabang: 744 kilometers.

Population:

3 Europeans, 228 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Muong-Son.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

none.

149: Reinach--204 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

635
631
161

[290] PROVINCE OF LUANG-PRABANG

(right and left banks)

Area: 73,750 square kilometers

Population: 13 Europeans, including 1 merchant; 121,900 natives
(67,500 on the left bank)

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 165

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages	Registered persons
Luang-Prabang	108	29,494
Pak-Hou	145	
Houng-Sa	27	
Pak-Ta	297	
Sagabouri	76	
Outhai-Thani-Si-Pak-Lay	114	
Houng-Sieng-Houne	224	
Sai	206	
Ngoi	222	
Pak-Seng	206	
Xieng-Ngeun	108	
Khassy	59	

149: Reinach—206 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[291] PROVINCE OF TRAN-NINH

635
631
161

Area: 20,000 square kilometers.

Population: 5 Europeans, including 2 merchants; 35,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 175.

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of Villages	Registered persons
Khat	34	8,000
Kham	209	
Khang	25	
Soui	110	
Sen	67	
Khouang	220	
Mok	35	

Xieng-Khouang (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Tourakhome: 240 (?) kilometers.

Population:

5 Europeans, 150 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Xieng-Khouang.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

none.

149: Reinach--207 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

63 [292] PROVINCE OF VIEN-TIANE

635

Area: 20,000 square kilometers.

161 Population: 22 Europeans including 4 merchants; 50,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 205

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages	Registered persons
Vien-Tiane	222	11,500 (?)
Pat-Choum	54	
Borikane	41	
Tourakhome	185	

Vien-Tiane (capital).

Seat of the Superior Residency

Population:

21 Europeans, 2,700 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Vien-Tiane.....1 inspector, 1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Vien-Tiane.....Complete office.
Pat-Choum.....Secondary office.

Health service:

[743] 1 infirmary with 1 colonial physician.

149: Reinach--209 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

63/ [293]
635
162

PROVINCE OF CAMMON

Area: 30,000 square kilometers.

Population: 8 Europeans including 1 merchant, 30,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 100.

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Tha-Khek	113		1,480	
Pak-Hin-Boun	94		1,271	
Mahasay	200		1,262	
Kham-Keut	63		665	
Cammon	48		702	

Pak-Hin-Boun (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane: 348 kilometers.

Population: 4 Europeans, 250 natives.

Posts occupied by the Native Guard:

Pak-Hin-Boun.....1 chief guardsman.
Nape.....1 inspector.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Pak-Hin-Boun.....Secondary office.

Religion:

1 seminary at Don-Done
1 director.
2 missionaries.

[97]

149; Reinach--210 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

631
635
162

[294] PROVINCE OF SONG-KHONE

Area: 21,000 square kilometers.

Population: 16 Europeans, 45,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 214.

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Khantabuli (Kong--Savannakhet and Sapang-Tong	130		2,914	
Champone(Muong--Sanumane)	119		2,856	
Song-Khone (Muong-Lahanam)	88		1,345	
Phong	53		320	
Tchepone(Muong--Xieng-Hom)	16	34	404	463
Vang (Muong-Vang-Kham and Kong-Atsapone	42	16	584	111
Phabang	6	4	28	42
Phalane	18	31	300	358
Phin	4	13	112	86
Nong	1	8	20	80

149: Reinach--212 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

631
635
162

[295] PROVINCE OF SARAVANE

Area: 12,000 square kilometers.

Population: 3 Europeans, 30,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 250

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Khamthong-Niai	63	56	1,050	770
Kong	15		483	
Saphat	13	5	250	57
Smia	5	2	135	54
Wapy	34	16	693	201
Southabali	11	18	150	160
Saravane	48	100	1,315	1,364
Khamthong-Noi	14	3	225	57
Lakhone-Peng	5		92	

Saravane (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane:
1. by land as far as Savannakhet by way of Muong-Kong, 728 kilometers
2. by river via Pak-Se-Done, 895 kilometers.

Population: 3 Europeans, 650 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Saravane.....1 chief guardsman

Postal and Telegraph service:

Saravane, Kamthong-Niai.....Secondary offices.

149: Reinach--213 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

635 [296]
631
162

PROVINCE OF BAN- MOUANG

Area: 6, 000 square kilometers.

Population: 7 Europeans including 2 merchants, 36, 000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 600.

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Fiafay	43	51	1, 816	854
Pak-Sedone	47	71	1, 978	1, 114
Sa-Phai	20	5	1, 062	67
Souvannakhili	11		405	

Ban-Mouang (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane: 760 kilometers.

Population: 4 Europeans, 350 natives.

Post occupied by the native guard:

Ban-Mouang.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Ban-Mouang.....Complete office.

Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet:

Agency at Don-Kho with 1 European agent.

149: Reinach--214 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

635
631.
162

[297] PROVINCE OF ATTOPEU

Area: 18,000 square kilometers.

Population: 11 Europeans, 64,600 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 360.

Administrative Divisions

Muong	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Attopeu	28	59	1,300	1,956

Attopeu (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Fiafay: 927 kilometers.

Population:

3 Europeans, 900 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Attopeu.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Attopeu.....secondary office.

Religion:

Catholic mission of the Bahnars.

1 provicar superior, 7 missionaries, 7 Christian communities.

Kon-Toum, Kon-Money, Kon-Ketou, Kon-Xabang, Kon-Ngo, Kon-Trang, Ro-Hay.

149: Reinach---215 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

635
•631
162

[298]

PROVINCE OF KHONG

Area: 3,000 square kilometers.

Population: 14 Europeans, 26,800 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 900 (?)

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Khong	76	13	4,323	147
Siempang	19	24	540	392

Khong (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane: 862 kilometers.

Population: 7 Europeans, 600 natives.

Administrative post at Khone: 1 delegate of the commissioner.

Posts occupied by the Native Guard:

Khong
Khone } 1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Khong.....Complete office.
Khone.....Secondary office.

Health service: 1 infirmary at Khong with 1 colonial physician.

Laotian Fleet: Launch "Haiphong" with 1 European engineer.

Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet: Agency at Khone with 3 European agents.

Steam launch: "Garcerie" at Ban Dong with 3 Europeans.

149: Reinach--216 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

635
631
162

[299] PROVINCE OF STUNG-TRENG

Area: 20,000 square kilometers.

Population: 9 Europeans including 2 merchants, 60,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 300.

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Stung-Treng	61	114	1,441	3,201

Stung-Treng (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane: 942 kilometers.

Population: 9 Europeans, 1,500 natives.

Posts occupied by the Native Guard:

Stung-Treng
Ban-Phi } 1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Stung-Treng.....Complete office.

Laotian Fleet: Launch "Argus".

Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet:

Agency at Stung-Treng with 1 European agent.

Launches: "Cygne", "Mouette".

149: Reinach--217 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[300] PROVINCE OF DARLAC

635
•631
162

Area: 10,500 square kilometers.

Population: 4 Europeans, 25,200 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 250 (?).

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Darlac	1	98	60	6,000

Darlac (capital).

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Stung-Treng: 1,282 (?) kilometers.

Population: 3 Europeans, (?) natives.

Posts occupied by the Native Guard:

Ban-Don.....1 chief guardsman.

Darlac.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

None.

644 The functionaries responsible for minor duties inside the palace, under the orders of their chief the Maha-Monti, are the:

Maha-Nosit, Lasa-Nosit, Lasa-Mat, Sanet, Sakame-Nane, Latsavat, Out-Thamonti, Sene-Thong-Niot, Sathipavot.

[652] [493] The treasurers, storekeepers and palace guards have the
647 titles of:

Phaya-Vi-Sai-Monthiene, Phone-Seuk-Khoua, Phone-Seuk-Sai.

697 Finally the jailers and scourgers (or executioners) under the command of the king or of the head of the justice department:

Phone-Tesak, Sa-Phakdi, Sa-Dab-Khame, Vong-Phouthone.

635 In the provinces, the head of a muong bears a title which is
631 personal to him, "Phaya" or "Phya," to which he adds that of "Tiao-Muong" and the name of the province, as Phaya-Si-Vorarat-Phrak-Di, Tiao-Muong-Vien-Tiane.

Under his command he has principal mandarins in the number of three, who bear the titles of "Oupahat," "Latsavong" and "Latsaboute." Each of them is generally responsible for the administration of one part of the muong, under the supervision of the "Tiao-Muong."

These high officials are seconded, depending on the importance of the muong, by a larger or smaller number of counselors or judges who bear the titles of "Sen," "Tiane," "Khang," etc.

Muongs are generally divided into cantons, and the heads of the [623] latter bear the title of "Taseng." Each canton includes several villages or "Bans," and each of these has at its head a mayor who is usually called "Pho-Ban" (the father of the village). The head of a village is aided by a kind of council or assembly of notables, the titles of whom are "Pia," "Luong," "Koun," "Sen," "Mune" or "Nai."

643 The four principal leaders of a muong, that is to say the "Tiao-
646 Muong," the "Oupahat," the "Latsavong" and the "Latsaboute" (1),

(1) In the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc, the heads of muongs bear the following titles: "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong), "Phya-Hua-Pahn" (Oupahat), "Phya-Balat" (Latsavong), "Phya-Kam" (Latsaboute). In accordance with custom, these offices are hereditary and sons succeed their fathers, except for the office of "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong) where the rule is not absolute.

are [494] elected either by the nobles or by commoners who possess certain aptitudes and sufficient intellectual culture. The whole population, nobles, officials and common people, are consulted. Then the

10: d'Orleans--296 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 632, 643

"In this district, the king had perhaps formerly less authority ; the villages were subject to him by the ties of vassaldom, and, being impelled by a community of interests, formed a federation round the town as a common centre; and Luang Prabang provided a body of militia but did not find any forced labour."

643* one of his father's wives. He was now wandering about haphazardly
175* and implored their protection.
726

648* Capture of Xieng-Khouang. Fearful lest there should be an alliance
721 between Souvanna-Kham-Phong and the king of Tran-Ninh (whose reinforcements might take them from the rear in their direct march on Muong-Swa), they agreed to support the rebel. They went up the Nam-Nhiep and lay siege to Xieng-Khouang which they took by assault and whose king was put to death and replaced by Kham-Gno who acknowledged himself their vassal.

Capture of Xieng-Thong (Luang-Prabang). Reinforced by a Phoueun contingent, they then moved forward towards Xieng-Dong-Xieng-Thong. Their troops were divided into two armies, and one of these, under the command of Fa-Ngoun, entered the valley of the Nam-Khane. The other, under Phi-Fa, went down the Nam-Suong,
721 but the latter was stricken with cholera and died on the march at Hat-
643* Thoi. When he reached Dane-Khoua, Fa-Ngoun demanded that his
726 grandfather, Kham-Phong, abdicate in his favor. The latter was
175* highly indignant and moved to attack his grandson, whom he en-
648* countered at Pak-Ming. His troops were defeated and had to retreat
/762/ in disorder, /44/ his capital was captured and the old sovereign, "mad with shame and grief," hanged himself in his palace at Xieng-Thong.

726 At the age of thirty-seven Fa-Ngoun proclaimed himself king of
643* "Lan-Xang" and at once demanded submission of all the Thaï princes
175* of the Mékong. Without awaiting their "reactions" he set out to make
631 his authority accepted, and in a sort of triumphal march received the submission of all the chieftains of the northern muongs as far as the limits of the kingdoms of Xieng-Maï (Lan-Na) and Xieng-Houng (Sip-Song-Panas). He met with greater resistance in the south and had to enter into a struggle to the death against Phaya-Phao, prince of Vientiane, who had taken the leadership of the opposition.

175* The discovery by Georges Maspero in 1902, in the vicinity of the
633 present-day administrative capital of French Laos, of steles of Kmer
648* origin amidst the ruins of twenty-eight pagodas, makes it possible to
631 suppose that the first capital of the land was Say-Fong, that "dead city" stifled by the forest. In the time of its splendor it was the advanced citadel of Cambodian hegemony in Thaï territory, but its importance declined quite rapidly, doubtless with the first blows struck against the suzerainty of Angkor by the kings of Sukhothaï and

of Ayuthya. /45/ And even before it disappeared it had been 175*
supplanted by Vientiane, which was built some ten kilometers 633
upstream, unless the two cities formed a single immense one or 648*
unless the first one moved without changing its name at first 631

Capture of Phaï-Nam (Vientiane) Whatever the case may be, 643*
the center of resistance against Fa-Ngoun was then called "Phaï- 721
Nam" (thorny bamboos) because of the impenetrable vegetable 175*
belt which defended it like veritable ramparts. It resisted re- 725
peated assaults and Fa-Ngoun was able to get the better of it only 633
by using a ruse. He had gold and silver projectiles shot at the 631
bamboo enclosure and then simulated a retreat. The besieged army, seeing the royal troops fall back, thought that their delivery was at hand and came out to pick up the precious projectiles. Then the assailants suddenly returned to the charge and entered the city without difficulty (1). Phaya-Phao had to make his submission.

1. These tactics are celebrated in several Thaï legends to explain the capture of a stronghold.

He received his pardon and was kept on as governor of the principality.

In memory of this episode, the city was baptized /46/ "Vien-Kham" which signifies "gold enclosure." This was later corrupted to "Vientiane" (sandalwood enclosure) (1)

1. There is permanent confusion in the Laotian chronicles between the Vien-Kham on the banks of the Mékong and the Vien-Kham in Tran-Ninh.

Formation of the kingdom of Lan-Xang (1353). Fa-Ngoun, 643*
henceforth the uncontested master of a vast kingdom, gave it a 175*
strong organization and ruled over it as a despot. 642

He summoned an Oupahat or second king to him to assist him
in his political duties and instituted a Council of ministers chosen /646/
from the princes of royal blood and arranged in a hierarchy according to their respective ranks and attributions. But he would suffer no infringement on his own authority, neither at court or in the provinces. He took terrible reprisals against the vassals who did not obey his orders blindly, and replaced nearly all of them in succession with mere governors as the fancy took him.

pious king who justified the bonzes' prophecies by his deeds. He 643*
built a magnificent pagoda to the memory of his father, the
Wat-Visoun (2), the materials for which were requisitioned from 346
175*

2. The edifice which bears this name dates from the time of the king Zakarine (1898). The enormous "stupa" next to it, which covered rich treasures which have only recently come to light, is now in the process of being restored.

the vassals of the northern provinces. Legend has it that the raft
carrying the columns provided by the king of Tran-Ninh sank /539/
downstream from Pak-Vet, and the inhabitants of the region still
say today that they can be seen at certain times of the year beneath the waters of the Nam-Khane.

Edict against the cult of the "Phis." The king's great piety 771
and his mystical attachment to the /73/ dogmas of orthodix 175*
Buddhism made him intolerant of the Brahmanic practices which 643*
continued to be honored by the peoples of his States. In 1527 he
prohibited the cult of the Genii and decreed that all the temples
erected to the "Phis" should be demolished. A pagoda called
"Sisouvannathevalok" (1) was built on the very site of the sanctuary/778/

1. This pagoda was destroyed by a tornado in 1883. The king at that time, His Majesty Sisavang-Vong, had it rebuilt in 1905 on the original foundations.

of the tutelary Genie of the capital. But it was impossible, even
for the supreme chief of existences, to drive from the heads of
people as fatalistic as his subjects were the innumerable superstitions
which they attached to accidents, to diseases and to the phenomena
of sky, earth and water. Despite the royal ordinances the cult of
the "Phis," together with a belief in sorcerers and witches, persisted and still persists today.

Phothisarath was the first of the kings of Lan-Xang to leave his 663
Xieng-Thong palace and reside at Vientiane for many years. 175*

Thanks to its central location and its comparative nearness to 633
the kingdoms of Ayuthya and Annam, this city had grown extensively as a consequence of the development of trade. The
Kmers, who had been in full decline /74/ since the ruin of Angkor
by the kings of Ayuthya, no longer had any influence there. The

663 Thais of the Menam, on the other hand, who were rid of the Cam-
175* bodians in the south but were pressed by the Burmese in the north, were
633 coming there in increasing numbers in search of gum lac and benzoin,
/439/ which they took back with them and sold to the Dutch navigators who had been sailing the waters of the Indian Ocean ever since the sixteenth century.

643* War against Ayuthya (1536). Phothisarath had just settled in
721 Vientiane when he received a visit from Ekaracha, the prince of
175* Ayuthya, who had been driven out and was being pursued by his relative the Phaya-Attit. He welcomed the fugitive and refused to give him up, and war was the result. The king of Ayuthya was halted at Muong-Khuk (1) by the Lan-Xang troops before he could even cross

1. On the right bank, a little way downstream from Vientiane.

the river and had to beat a retreat. He died when he reached home from a wound received in the course of the battle.

643* Relations with Annam. Phothisarath confirmed his peaceful in-
648* tentions with respect to the king of Annam. Relations between the
175* two peoples had become more frequent since their violent /75/ contact in 1479, and quite a few Annamites had remained in Lan-Xang after the retreat of Lê-Thanh-Tôn's troops. The two sovereigns exchanged presents and established neighborly relations between their States which were marked by a cordiality heretofore unknown, even before Lê-Loi and Lane-Kham-Dèng. This was true to such a degree that Lan-Xang became the refuge of the partisans of the Lê while the Mac usurpers held sway. One of these partisans, Nguyên-Câm, who was the ancestor of the present royal family, came to seek asylum there around 1530.

Succession of Xieng-Mai. In 1546 the throne of Lan-Na (Xieng-Mai) became vacant, and Phothisarath claimed the succession rights which he held through his mother, a princess of that kingdom. To establish his claim he sent the governor Sene-Si-Mun-Muong with a sizeable armed force which dispersed the local pretenders and rapidly overcame any hesitation on the part of the latters' partisans. The chief of the bonzes came in person to offer the crown of Lan-Na to the king of Lan-Xang, and the king accepted it in behalf of his eldest son,

When he returned to his States, Setthathirath endeavored to 726
win over permanently to his cause the chieftains of Lakhone, 643*
Xieng-Khong, Xieng-Hai, /80/ Muong-Pray and Muong-Nan who 648*
had not supported Bureng-Naung, and when he was sure of their 175*
support he advanced as far as Xieng-Sen. But there he soon learned
that the governor of Xieng-Hai had been taken prisoner by the
Burmese and that his sister Nang-Kalay had been treacherously ab-
ducted. In spite of his anger, he judged it prudent to withdraw in
the company of his allies, who left their governments in the hands
of Bureng-Naung's lieutenants.

Treaty of alliance with Ayuthya (1560). In order to oppose the 728
common danger, he took the first steps towards reconciliation with 643*
the king of Ayuthya, to whom he proposed a treaty of alliance. 648*
The Siamese, who were rebuilding the ruins of their capital with 175*
courage but not without disquietude, joyfully accepted and their
prince gave one of his daughters to Setthathirath. A frontier
pyramid was built on the watershed between the basin of the Mekong
and that of the river of Nan which flows down to the Menam. Sol-
emnly surrounded by their courts, the two kings swore reciprocal
friendship and assistance: "May the ties that bind us be prolonged
from father to son down to our grandchildren and great-grandchil-
dren; may quarrels be unknown between us and peace continue to
reign /An unpaged photograph is inserted between pp. 80 and 81:
"The That-Luong at Vientiane."--Translator/ /81/ until the day
when the sun and the moon fall to the surface of the earth" (1).

1. Cf. Lefevre-Pontalis, La lutte des Thaïs contre les
Birmans au seizieme siecle.

Vientiane, capital of Lan-Xang (1563). In order to avoid any 643*
surprise by the common enemy as well as to maintain the connec- 648*
tion with Ayuthya, Setthathirath left Luang-Prabang permanently 175*
and transferred the capital of Lan-Xang to Vientiane.
He was the true founder of this city which owes to him the 633
splendor with which it shone during all of the seventeenth century 643*
and part of the eighteenth. He first surrounded it with solid bas- 175*
tion fortifications (2), then in the center near the river built the 172

2. From the vestiges which still remained around 1900 be- /712/
fore the canal was dug and the circular boulevard laid out,

633 Lunet de la Jonquiere has deduced that the ramparts of
643• Vientiane were composed of brick walls from four to six
175• meters in height with an earth banquette inside. They in-
172 cluded three sections, the salients of which were provided
/712/ with circular forts about eight meters high. Two gates
which were fortified and crowned with spearhead ornaments
gave entrance to the second section, one on the east towards
the That-Luong, and the other on the west at the exit of the
present Luang-Prabang road.

royal palace in the pagoda of which the emerald Buddha (Pra-Keo), the sign of power and command /82/ which he had brought from Xieng-Mai in 1548 (1), was placed.

/778/ 1. The emerald Buddha was in reality cut from a block of green jasper. The Siamese were to capture it in 1778 and take it to Bangkok, of which it became the tutelary divinity and where the sumptuous temple which rises today in the first court of the royal palace was built for it in 1785.

172 Of the eighty some pagodas which Vientiane was to boast, the
633 Wat Pra-Keo was assuredly one of the greatest and most beautiful.
175• "The trees which veil it (today), the lianas which tie it to the columns and spread a mysterious shadow over its ruins make the visitor feel something of what the soul of the ancients felt on the threshold of a sacred wood. Brick openwork forms the enclosure and monumental staircases lead to the parvis. A dragon writhes on the ramps and raises its menacing head in a last coil. The columns of the gallery are graceful, tall, slender and without a base, but end in a capital of long, sharp leaves which fold outwards and look as though they were raised by the weight which they bear..." (2).

2. De Carne, op. cit. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois. Paris, 1872./

175• The sanctuary was built on a terrace with three levels. The facade
172 opened onto a monumental portico whose three gateways and side
346 windows were richly framed /83/ /Page 83 is devoted to an illustra-
532 tion: "Ruins of the Pra-Keo at Vientiane"--Translator./ /84/ with many-colored sculptures. The whole edifice was entirely gilded on the outside.

they at least preserved their individuality and the prerogatives of 648*
their government. 175*

/98/ Xieng-Khouang, the capital, was then a large and beautiful city whose numerous inhabitants were protected by an enclosure 633
of deep moats and by forts which crowned the surrounding hillocks. 175*
The immense stone jars scattered pell-mell over its plain in the 172
time when the Khas dominated the region (1) and "the wealth of

1. Legend has it that these jars were constructed by the /415/
aboriginal Khas. For what purpose? -- A mystery. They may originally have been storehouses which served to shelter provisions on a road which has been frequented in all periods by migrating peoples. Perhaps rather they were designed to collect rainwater. Perhaps, finally, these monumental vases were simply mausoleums in which offerings were piled up to the shades of the dead.

its sixty-two pagodas and of its shining Thats whose sides concealed treasures" had given it a renown which went far abroad.

Friendly relations were therefore resumed, as in the past, be- 648*
tween the two States. Lan-Xang was again preparing to live in 643*
peace in its rediscovered autonomy when Nokeo-Koumane died 175*
while still very young and without leaving any survivors, in 1596
after a five years' reign.

THAMMIKARATH (1582), KING 1596-1622.

New disorders were to be feared, /99/ /Page 99 is devoted to 643*
an illustration: "Tran-Ninh. The Plain of the Jars."--Translator/ 175*
/100/ and new competitions for the throne. Such was not the case, for the moment, thanks to the authority of Vongsa, a cousin by marriage of the dead king, who although was only fourteen years old was able to rally the suffrage of the court to his name. His mother was a sister of Setthathirath's last wife. The dynastic link was thus rather tenuous and the local chronicles do not fail to point out that on this date the power passed to the "junior" branch of the Khoun-Lo succession.

Vongsa reigned under the name of Thammikarath. In 1598 a 557
son Oupagnouvarath was born to him, who had scarcely reached 643*
man's age when he developed a keen interest in the administration 175*
of his country. By virtue of his intelligence and his precocious maturity of mind he soon acquired a genuine popularity both among

la Sainte-Chapelle, a la seconde boutique, a l'enseigne 175*
du Voyageur. 114
/127/

naivete, the work /111/ does not have the ring of sincerity which constitutes the merit of the Dutch account. It was probably written from the reminiscences of Father J. M. Leria (1) and is of value

1. Father Giovanni-Maria Leria, a Piedmontese Jesuit, left Cambodia in April 1642 accompanied by some Cochinchinese neophytes with a caravan of Laotian traders who were returning to their country. He remained in Laos for five years "despite the opposition and the intrigues of the bonzes" and did not leave Vientiane until December 2, 1647. (Cf. Fr. Garnier, 1871, and Father Alex. de Rhodes, 1651.)

only as a document at second hand. It will nevertheless be of some interest to extract the following passages:

"In the East it (the kingdom of the 'Langiens') has the kingdom 131
of Tonkin which stretches to the southwest towards Cochinchina, 175*
and further to the South that of Cambodia; in the southwest and the west the kingdom of Pegou; and in the north that of Ava and the province called U or Lu (2), and still further again to the north as

2. See below, p. 176, note 1.

far as the frontiers which limit it in this direction, where there are certain peoples who are called Gnai. . . .

"Because of its fertility and because the things necessary to life 421
are found there in abundance, the kingdom is so heavily populated 433
that only a little while ago in the census which was taken of per- 161
sons who were /112/ judged fit to serve the king at war and to bear arms, 500,000 were counted, not including the old people who are so numerous and so rubust that even of those who are a hundred years old a very large army might be formed for the defense of the kingdom if the need should arise. . .

"The chief city and the one in which the king ordinarily stays 633
is situated in the middle of the kingdom, eighteen degrees toward 174
our Arctic pole, and is called Langione. It has good moats and 344
extremely high walls on one side, and on the other the great river to defend it against the undertakings of enemies. . . . The royal palace, the structure and symmetry of which are admirable, can

633 be seen from a great distance. To be sure, it extends over a prodigi-
174 ous area and is so large that one would take it for a city... The king's
344 apartments, which are embellished with a superb and magnificent portico and a large number of beautiful rooms accompanied by a large parlor, are all made of wood which will not decay and ornamented inside and outside with excellent bas-reliefs so delicately gilded that they seem rather to be covered with flakes of gold than gold leaf.

"From that point one enters the courtyards which are extremely spacious, and one first sees a long line of houses built entirely of brick and roofed /113/ with tile in which the second wives usually stay, and outside another row of houses built alongside in the same symmetry for the mandarins' officers. I could write a whole volume if I undertook a minute description of all the other parts of the palace, the riches, the departments, the gardens and a number of other such things...

565 "The houses of the principal lords and of well-to-do persons are
342 very high and beautiful, and are all made of wood with a great deal
352 of artifice and a greater or lesser number of ornaments, depending on the expense to which the individuals are willing to go, but I must confess that the common people and the poor are housed extremely badly
/793/ and that their dwellings are cabins and huts rather than houses. Only the talapoins (bonzes), who are the priests of the idols, have permission to build their monasteries and houses out of brick and stone. Instead of rugs and other such furnishings, persons of quality use small reed mats in which the weave is so delicate and so highly ornamented with figures and various leaf patterns that, to my mind, there is nothing more beautiful nor more pleasing to the eye. They ordinarily use them to cover the walls of /114/ their rooms and houses inside and outside, which they keep very clean and of which they take particular care...

643* "The king is absolute and independent... all the land belongs to
/423/ him, and he disposes as absolute lord of all that his subjects possess...
631 offices, employment, honors and wealth depend absolutely on the
174 king, who raises those persons who please him most to the highest offices in the kingdom.... The principal dignities and offices of the kingdom are eight in number. The first is that of viceroy general... and because the kingdom is divided into seven provinces seven other viceroys are appointed... there are also other governments of less consequence which depend on the former both in respect to civil affairs and to those which concern war.... Each of these provinces has
/701/ its militia, which consists of infantry and cavalry.

115: Le Boulanger--87 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

/136/ /Blank page/ /137/

CHAPTER V

THE LAOTIAN PRINCIPALITIES FROM 1707 TO 1836

Political situation of the Indo-Chinese peninsula at the dawn of 175*
the eighteenth century. As of the date which we have now reached, the political map of the Indo-Chinese peninsula had undergone profound modifications in the last three hundred years if we consider the limits assigned to the various Thai kingdoms which issued forth from Khoun-Borom's partitioning. Under the impulse of dynastic ambitions, the latter tried in their turn to dominate their neighbors, and the most fortunate among them became surrounded with vassal principalities which, so to speak, served the purpose of buffer states and passed from one hand to another according to the whims of fortune.

Lan-Xang had had its life. Having lost its independence and its 633
unity, it was to disappear as a state which was the embodiment of 175*
great and powerful suzerainty and which had long been solidly based in the Mekong valley on the traditional alliance /138/ with the Kmer kingdom, then in full decline itself, and the Siamese and Annamites were to divide the spoils.

Tran-Ninh, which had endured the Laotian protectorate with 636
impatience ever since Souligna's expedition, was to profit by the 648*
circumstances in order to enter into open struggle with the kings of Vientiane. The latter would still be strong enough for another century to extract payment of their tribute by means of repeated expeditions, but the result of these perpetual hostilities would be to throw the princes of Xieng Khouang into the arms of the Annamite suzerain, who was to impose the most severe of dominations on them.

The Burmese empire was no more than a glorious memory. The 175*
land of the Irrawaddy, unified in the eleventh century, disjointed 101
in the thirteenth and regrouped in the sixteenth by Bureng-Naung, had since the conqueror's death again been divided into two enemy kingdoms, Burma in the north and Pegou in the south. With the same language, the same civilization and subject to the same influences, the two twin States were all the more eager to combat one another and no one could possibly have foreseen the end of this long duel even at the very moment (1710) when the Burmese hero Alompra was born, who was to reimpose unity and fill the peninsula with the clash of his arms in his turn.

669 royal troops succeeded in dispersing the partisans of Intha-Som and
175* forced them, after a bloody encounter, to retreat in disorder along the Nam-Ou. Ong-Ek swam across the river and fled to Phoutong-Nongboua. As for Intha-Som, he was able to gain the Sip-Song-Panas where he kept a close watch on events and waited for a more favorable opportunity.

Finally free to organize his conquest, King-Kitsarath endeavored to restore some measure of order in the kingdom, which was greatly in need thereof. Aided by his cousin Khamone-Noi (1), he succeeded

1. See p. 133.

within a few years in restoring tranquillity to his subjects. Luang-
/633/ Prabang, once again a royal metropolis, was slowly repopulated and resumed the foremost place in a diminished State.

633 Gracefully stretching across the junction of the Mekong and the
175* Nam-Khane and dominated by the verdant hill of the "Phou-Si," the
133 city regained some of its animation and gradually became covered /181/ with new buildings grouped around the ancient pagodas which recalled the past grandeur of the legendary Muong-Swa.

"Moreover, the configuration of the principality's territory and the particular topography of the region combined at this river junction to provide all the elements for the prosperity of a great city. Luang-Prabang is in fact contained in the immediate zone where the region's three great navigable watercourses converge on the Mekong. These watercourses (Nam-Ou, Nam-Suong, Nam-Khane) have in the past favored the political centralization of the country as well as trade relations with China, Tonkin and Annam. Whereas both upstream and downstream for a distance of several hundred kilometers the banks of the river are constantly cut deep between the mountains and nowhere offer a surface of flat land which would lend itself to large agglomerations, here nature has provided on both banks a broad extent of land which can be cultivated as ricefields and is capable of supplying all the needs of a large population" (1).

1. Cf. Captain Cupet, Mission Pavie, Vol. III /Voyages au Laos et chez les sauvages du Sud-Est de l'Indochine (1900)/, p. 34.

643* At his death, which occurred about 1726, King-Kitsarath left
595 three daughters born of three different wives /182/ /Page 182 is
175*

149: Reinach—205 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Luang-Prabang (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane: 1. By the Mekong, 426 kilometers;
2. By land, 290 kilometers.

Population:

10 Europeans, 5,900 natives.

Posts occupied by the Native Guard:

Luang-Prabang.....1 chief guardsman.

Muong-Sai.....2 chief guardsmen.

Postal and Telegraph service:

1 inspector, head of the service.

Luang-Prabang.....Complete office.

Ban-Nam-Bac.....Complete office.

Muong-Sai.....Secondary office.

Health service:

1 hospital with 1 colonial physician.

Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet:

Agency at Luang-Prabang with 1 European agent.

149; Reinach--211 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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161

Savannakhet (capital).

Distance from Vien-Tiane: 483 kilometers.

Population: 13 Europeans, 300 natives.

Posts occupied by the native guard:

Savannakhet.....1 inspector.

Muong-Phin.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Savannakhet.....Complete office.

Song-Khone.....Complete office.

Muong-Phin.....Secondary office.

Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet:

Main agency at Savannakhet with workshop and slipway (3 Europeans).

Launches:

"Trentinian" with 3 Europeans.

"Colombert" with 3 Europeans.

"Massie," a replacement for the other two in case of damages.

149: Reinach--365 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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[480] Construction of this line was authorized by the law of December 25, 1898, but its extension to the Mekong, and that is to say the means of entrance into Laos, is classified among the lines of third-degree urgency for which routes have scarcely been outlined.

Another railway has also been planned from Binh-Dinh to Attopeu, with the same third-degree urgency classification as the line from Savannakhet to Quang-Tri. It seems astonishing that anyone should have thought, even as a line of third-degree urgency, of a line which would start from the sea and end in a cul-de-sac, crossing one of the most mountainous regions which is inhabited by Kha tribes who are still partly unpacified. It may be that there is some thought of facilitating, by means of such a line, the exploitation of the gold and copper-bearing deposits in the region of Attopeu, even though it has now been established that the best deposits are located on the Se-Sane, more than 50 kilometers to the south of this point as the crow flies. It is also to be feared that by reason of the nature of the terrain this line may cost as much as 200,000 francs per kilometer, if the conditions of its route be compared with those of the lines estimated at 125,000 francs.

The projected Savannakhet-Quang-Tri railway does not seem to be the best solution for creating an entry into Laos and an outlet to the sea.

In the first place, it is not the shortest and most economical, despite the low elevation of the ridge of Ai-Lao, which is only 410 meters in altitude.

Besides, Savannakhet has never been a trade center and market of distribution and transit like Luang-Prabang, Pak-Lay, Nong-Khay and Bassac.

To be sure, it is an administrative center situated opposite the market of Ban-Mouk and the seat of the main office of the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [Compagnie des Messageries Fluviales], which has storehouses, a depot, workshops, etc. there. But this center was built up from nothing scarcely six years ago. The market of Ban-Mouk is an unimportant one, and the office of the River Merchant Fleet is inaccessible to its steam launches during a large part of the year.

[481] If Nong-Khay, instead of Ban-Mouk, were located opposite Savannakhet, there would be an advantage to capturing this great market in which the major part of the trade of Upper and Middle Laos is centered, and to turn this trade away from Bangkok to the profit of Tourane. But one must surrender to the evidence, for Nong-Khay

653 is no further from Vinh than Savannakhet is from Tourane. In fact,
496 the distance by steamship to Hin-Boun (or Tha-Kek) and from there
185 to Ben-Thuy [Illustration here] (port of Vinh) by way of Nape, the
438 ridge of Tram-Mua and Ha-Trai by railway is only 500 kilometers,
whereas it is also 500 kilometers from Savannakhet to Tourane.

•633 It has been objected that the ridge of Tram-Mua, the highest
496 point on the line in question, is at an altitude of more than 1,200
meters, that many calcareous peaks encumber the route, and that
185 the port of Ben-Thuy has a sand bar (that of Cua-Hoi) which leaves
a depth of water of only 1.5 to 4.5 meters, depending on the tide.

All of this information is correct, although somewhat exaggerated. The ridge of Tram-Mua is not an insurmountable obstacle, and the road which crosses it leaves the Mekong at the 250 meter level and manages to reach it by rounding the [482] peaks of Pou-Hak and Pou-Kha-Sak and by rising gradually, ascending 1000 meters over a distance of about 140 to 150 kilometers.

Ha-Trai, moreover, which is situated on the river of Ngan-Pho, is at approximately the 100 meter level, and the descent from the ridge requires half a day on elephant back. The slope is very steep, without any doubt, on the Annamite side, since it represents the hypotenuse of a right triangle with a base 15 kilometers long and an altitude of 1,100 meters. It is not such, however, as to make the establishment of a railroad impossible, and cog-railways could also be used, as in Switzerland, at the steepest parts of the route.

Finally, the bar of Cua-Hoi is only an imaginary obstacle. Indeed, it would be sufficient merely to extend the railway beyond the bar, where the foundation is everywhere solid enough, or else to dredge a channel.

From the financial point of view the advantage also lies with the Hin-Boun-Ben-Thuy project, which will cost 30 millions instead of 61. Indeed, expenditures of 24 millions are anticipated for the Quang-Tri-Tourane section, to which 37 millions must be added for the Quang-Tri-Savannakhet section (about 300 kilometers at 125,000 francs per kilometer), whereas if we assume a cost of 150,000 francs (1) per kilometer for the Hin-Boun-Ben-Thuy line (about 200 kilometers),

(1) Cost anticipated for the Vietri-Lao-Kay and Saigon-Qui-Nhon lines.

we are confronted with an expenditure of 30 millions. The difference between 30 and 61 millions is so great that it would even be possible

10: d'Orleans T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
~~563, 634.~~ 721, 175. 72 Ethnic subgroups

[LSS: For the history of the family of Deo Van Tri, chief of the Lai district and for the history of the wars in the area of Laichau and Luang Prabang, see Indochina, category 116, pp. 204-209.]

23: Franck--302 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 101, 161, 634

"Laos has eight divisions, of which Luang Prabang is the largest and the only one still boasting a king of its own. A century ago most of it belonged to ethnologically related Siam. I have already mentioned that this greatest division of French Indo-China, about as large and of much the same shape as Italy, has fewer inhabitants than Detroit. This is largely because it was so often sacked, and its people killed by the Chinese, who wanted the land, or carried off by the Siamese to populate her sparsely settled regions along Menam."

23: Franck--312-313 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 554, 634

"... His Majesty was about to confer upon me his most regal decoration, the most prominent of the many medals on the breasts of the commissaire and of [313] the king himself, both in bronze and in the flesh, the highest honor of which this protected Oriental potentate is capable, something corresponding in Luang Prabang to the order of the Rising Sun in Japan, to wit: the order of the Million Elephants and the White Parasol! For you must know that Luang Prabang is not only the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha but even more officially the Kingdom of the Million Elephants and the White Parasol, just as King Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah's real title is Master of Heaven and of Life. I do not know whether it is actually claimed that there are so many pachyderms in the kingdom at the same time, but a little exaggeration is always admissible in the tropics; or it may be that the souls of departed elephants are also included in the reckoning."

23: Franck--352 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 101, 634

"I trust that the reader has not confounded Laos with Luang Prabang, which is merely the largest and most western division of it, its lone king decidedly subordinate to this lean and competent Frenchman whose palatial Résidence I had occupied in Vientiane. Besides Luang Prabang and the 5me Territoire that goes with it, and spacious Tranninh of Xieng Khuang, there are half a dozen other divisions in this sparsely settled territory ruled over by my déjeuner host across the plain board camp-table."

How could I, the chieftain of a small State, have done so, when 648*
the emperor of Annam found the undertaking beyond his strength?" 175*

Minh-Mang scorned to answer this impertinent reply and contented himself with having the accused man executed with great pomp. He even granted him magnificent funeral rites. Chao-Noi's family had their lives spared, and his children remained in Hue for five years and were then exiled to Hatinh.

The kingdom of Xieng-Khouang had the same fate /179/ as /635/
that of Vientiane, and was suppressed. It was annexed to Annam and became a prefecture of the empire, divided into eight huyen, under the name of Tran-Ninh-Phu-Tam-Vien. A Quan-Phu was placed over it and settled at Muong-Kham with a garrison of five hundred soldiers (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique." Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./

II. -- LUANG-PRABANG

KING-KITSARATH, KING 1707-1726.

King-Kitsarath and Intha-Som, who had long been united in 643*
misfortune and in their stubborn struggle against Thao-Nong and 175*
Ong-Hue (2), fell out shortly after their common victory.

2. See above, p. 133.

Revolt of Intha-Som. Jealous of his brother's authority and 669
discontent with the limited role which he was henceforth to play, 175*
Intha-Som intrigued against King-Kitsarath and commissioned Ong-Ek, the prince of Tran-Ninh and his "inseparable friend" (3), to

3. Ong-Ek was, according to certain chronicles, the father-in-law of Ong-Hue.

assemble troops secretly. A small army was formed of highly disparate elements recruited in Muong-Ou, in /180/ Dien-Bien-Phu and even in Burma and Yunnan. Then when he thought himself ready for action Intha-Som took charge of the operations and entered into open revolt against his brother.

King-Kitsarath had to undertake a veritable expedition. The

"The story of Auguste Pavie should be placed in the hands of 000
our youth. It is a magnificent lesson in itself. To the ambitious
it shows how far a desire /338/ to learn combined with the passion
for action can lead; to patriots how one can serve one's country;
and to all how an ardent soul can ennoble the most humble tasks
and, springing from the humblest origins, can rise to the most
honored and most envied posts" (1).

1. Quoted by Colonel Friquegnon. Cf. Bulletin de l'Asie francaise, November-December 1925, No. 236, p. 356.

Final organization (1895-1899). The administrative organiza- 631
tion of the new possession had only been sketched out by Pavie dur- 642
ing his hasty descent of the Mekong. It was taken up and completed
by Superior Resident Boulloche, who was sent out on a mission in
May 1895. Laos was first divided into two territories or commands:

1. Upper Laos, with its capital at Luang-Prabang, including all the Muongs of the left bank situated between Yunnan, the British Shan States, Tonkin, Annam and Cammon exclusively, with the exception of the cantons of the Black River and a large part of the Houa-Phans; the first of these latter were attached to Tonkin and the second to the province of Thanh-Hoa (Annam);

2. Lower Laos, with its capital at Khong, formed of all the regions which had formerly been dependencies of the old /339/ kingdom of Vientiane and which were contained between the Annamitic Chain and the Mekong from Cammon to Cambodia.

A superior commandant was placed at the head of each of these 624
divisions, who was directly responsible to the governor general of 635
Indo-China. Each command was then subdivided into provinces or
"commissionerships" (six for Upper Laos, seven for Lower Laos),
each formed of a group of several muongs and headed by "govern-
ment commissioners" who were then given (except in Luang-Prabang)
the most varied duties and the most absolute initiative -- general
administration, police, taxes, public works, justice, public educa- /647/
tion and even, in most cases, medical help.

In 1899 the two circumscriptions were united under the authority 642
of a superior resident (1) with his seat in Savannakhet (shortly there-

1. Cf. decree of the governor general of February 6 and decree of the President of the Republic of April 19.

after in Vientiane), and unified Laos took its place in the Franco-

and, even as they retain their smiling native good nature, they are 643*
becoming increasingly adapted with each passing day to the rude 178
necessities of modern existence in the hectic struggle between individuals and peoples.

Nearly identical results have been achieved in the other parts of Laos where /354/ the influence of our administrators is exercised in a more direct manner, even though it is still usually based on the ascendancy which the local mandarins have retained over the populace.

Annexation of the territory of Bassac (1905). It was thus that 635
the territory of Bassac on the right bank, which was in full disorder 175*
when it was returned to France, was pacified by the Laotian "governor" whom we appointed there. Annexed in January 1905 to the province of Ban-Mouang, this territory had been abandoned in the previous year by the oupahat Boua-Laphan, who was the successor of King Kham-Souk (1) and who had taken refuge at Ban-Toung-

1. See above, p. 328.

Loung in the Siamese district of Oubone. In a most loyal manner Chao-Nhouy, one of Kham-Souk's sons, offered us his services and took an oath of fidelity before Superior Resident Mahe on October 14, 1905. He was named governor of the region, and since then has not ceased to give the French administration the benefit of his influence and his devotion (2).

2. The "delegation" which replaced the commercial agency in Bassac was discontinued in 1908 and the capital of the circumscription, which took the name of province of Bassac, *was transferred from Ban-Mouang to Pakse.*

/355/ The Khas of Lower Laos. The Khas of Lower Laos have 563
remained perfectly peaceful ever since their 1901 escapade was 669
suppressed. They have even tended imperceptibly to come out of their fierce isolation as new means of communication have connected their villages, which only yesterday were hidden in the brush, with the vast network of roads now under construction which will soon open up the Laotian hinterland (1).

1. The question of the Indo-Chinese "Moi hinterland"

642

have any elected councils or parliamentary representation. Today 631
it constitutes one of the five states in the Indo-Chinese union.

A consequence of the unification of Laos was its division into 631
provinces and the incorporation of its officials, who had heretofore been a staff apart, in the ranks of the Indo-China Civil Service.

The government commissioners have therefore become civil service administrators.

Today each of the fourteen provinces of Laos is placed under the 635
authority of an Administrator, and the latter is seconded by a civil service clerk.

Native guard. In Laos there are no detachments of the 701
troops stationed in Indo-China, but only a native civil guard [278] composed partly of Annamites and partly of Laotians. It constitutes a police force which is distributed in detachments of varying size under the command of inspectors and chief guardsmen. It is entirely at the disposition of the administrators who are heads of provinces. This native guard numbers twenty-seven inspectors and chief guardsmen and 850 men, of which 320 are volunteer Annamite enlisted men recruited in Annam and Tonkin, and 530 are natives recruited from all the races of Laos. It may be called on to lend its support, if the need arise, to the native authorities who are responsible for maintaining order and security in their respective territories. Peace and order are so perfect in Laos, however, that one can go about freely without an escort.

The treasury service. The treasury service in Laos 652
is headed by a bursar who holds the title of "Chief Bursar of the Treasury Service in Laos." He handles all matters dealing with receipts, expenditures and treasury operations in Laos in the same forms and according to the same rules as the other bursars who are heads of services in Indo-China.

He is assisted by a deputy bursar.

These two agents reside in Vien-Tiane.

Medical service. This service includes three colonial 744
physicians on detachment in Laos who are in charge of the infirmaries at Luang-Prabang, Vien-Tiane (formerly at Pak-Hin-Boun) and Khong. They care for all sick persons, whether European or native, as has been noted above (1).

(1) See Chapter III, Health Service.

647 or one official or agent of the public force for every 6,528 inhabitants (2). The cost for salaries and accessory items for the same personnel

(2) In Cochinchina there is one official for every 1,659 inhabitants.

force is 609,000 francs.

[286] 2. ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

635 Laos contains fourteen circumscriptions, to wit:

The province of Muong-Hou,	capital at	Muong-Hou-Neua.
" " " Vien-Poukha (1),	" "	Muong-Sing

(1) This province is sometimes called "Western Upper Laos."

" " " Hua-Pahn,	" "	Muong-Son.
" " " Luang-Prabang,	" "	Luang-Prabang.
" " " Tran-Ninh,	" "	Xieng-Khouang.
" " " Vien-Tiane,	" "	Vien-Tiane (seat of the Superior Residency, capital of French Laos).
" " " Cammon,	" "	Pak-Hin-Boun.
" " " Song-Khone,	" "	Savannakhet.
" " " Saravane,	" "	Saravane.
" " " Ban-Mouang,	" "	Ban-Mouang.
" " " Attopeu,	" "	Attopeu.
" " " Khong,	" "	Khong.
" " " Stung-Treng,	" "	Stung-Treng.
" " " Darlac,	" "	Darlac.

The following tables give useful information on each of these provinces.

149: Reinach--201 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

631 [287]
•635
161

PROVINCE OF MUONG-HOU

Area: 4,500 square kilometers

Population: 4 Europeans, 8,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 187

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages	Registered inhabitants
Hou-Neua	49	1,362 (?)
Hou-Tai	35	

Muong-Hou-Neua (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Luang-Prabang: 766 kilometers.

Population:

4 Europeans, 250 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Muong-Hou-Neua.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Muong-Hou-Neua.....Complete office.

149: Reinach--202 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

631
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161

PROVINCE OF VIEN-POUKHA

Area: 13,000 square kilometers.

Population: 6 Europeans, 23,986 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 167

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of Villages	Registered inhabitants
Vien-Poukha Xieng-Khong Xieng-Sene Luong-Nam-Tha Mugne Sing	524	10296

Muong-Sing (capital).

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Xieng-Khong and Luang-Prabang: 876 (?) kilometers.

Population:

3 Europeans, (?) natives.

Posts occupied by the Native Guard:

Muong-Sing..... 1 chief guardsman.
Xieng-Khong: 1 chief guardsman performing the functions of commercial agent.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Vien-Poukha
Muong-Sing
Xieng-Khong
} Complete offices.

149: Reinach--203 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

635 [289] PROVINCE OF THE HUA-PAHN-HA-TANG-HOC

631

161

Area: 8,000 square kilometers.

Population: 3 Europeans, 15,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 188

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages	Registered inhabitants
Son	78	4,800 (?)
Xieng-Kho	139	
Het	49	
Hua-Muong	83	

Muong-Son (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Luang-Prabang: 744 kilometers.

Population:

3 Europeans, 228 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Muong-Son.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

none.

149: Reinach--204 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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[290] PROVINCE OF LUANG-PRABANG

(right and left banks)

Area: 73,750 square kilometers

Population: 13 Europeans, including 1 merchant; 121,900 natives
(67,500 on the left bank)

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 165

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages	Registered persons
Luang-Prabang	108	29,494
Pak-Hou	145	
Houng-Sa	27	
Pak-Ta	297	
Sagabouri	76	
Outhai-Thani-Si-Pak-Lay	114	
Houng-Sieng-Houne	224	
Sai	206	
Ngoi	222	
Pak-Seng	206	
Xieng-Ngeun	108	
Khassy	59	

149: Reinach--208 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotian: AM8

[291] PROVINCE OF TRAN-NINH

635
631
161

Area: 20,000 square kilometers.

Population: 5 Europeans, including 2 merchants; 35,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 175.

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of Villages	Registered persons
Khat	34	8,000
Kham	209	
Khang	25	
Soui	110	
Sen	67	
Khouang	220	
Mok	35	

Xieng-Khouang (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Tomakhome: 240 (?) kilometers.

Population:

5 Europeans, 150 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Xieng-Khouang.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

none.

63 .635 161

[292]

PROVINCE OF VIEN-TIANE

Area: 20,000 square kilometers.

Population: 22 Europeans including 4 merchants; 50,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 205

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages	Registered persons
Vien-Tiane	222	11,500 (?)
Pat-Choum	54	
Borikane	41	
Tourakhome	185	

Vien-Tiane (capital).

Seat of the Superior Residency

Population:

21 Europeans, 2,700 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Vien-Tiane..... 1 inspector, 1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Vien-Tiane..... Complete office.
Pat-Choum..... Secondary office.

Health service:

1 infirmary with 1 colonial physician.

743

149: Reinach--208 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

635.

Treasury:

1 bursar, head of the service and 1 deputy bursar.

Religion:

1 Christian community at Pak-Sane with 1 missionary. [79]

Laotian Fleet:

Launch "Ham-Luong" with 1 European engineer.

Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet:

Agency at Vien-Tiane with 1 European agent.

149: Reinach--209 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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162

PROVINCE OF CAMMON

Area: 30,000 square kilometers.

Population: 8 Europeans including 1 merchant, 30,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 100.

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Tha-Khek	113		1,480	
Pak-Hin-Boun	94		1,271	
Mahasay	200		1,262	
Kham-Keut	63		665	
Cammon	48		702	

Pak-Hin-Boun (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane: 348 kilometers.

Population: 4 Europeans, 250 natives.

Posts occupied by the Native Guard:

Pak-Hin-Boun.....1 chief guardsman.
Nape.....1 inspector.

Postal and Telegraph services:

Pak-Hin-Boun.....Secondary office.

Religion:

1 seminary at Don-Done
1 director.
2 missionaries.

[97]

149: Reinach--210 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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[294] PROVINCE OF SONG-KHONE

Area: 21,000 square kilometers.

Population: 16 Europeans, 45,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 214.

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Khantabuli (Kong-Savannakhet and Sapang-Tong	130		2,914	
Champone(Muong-Sanumane)	119		2,856	
Song-Khone (Muong-Lahanam)	88		1,345	
Phong	53		320	
Tchepone(Muong-Xieng-Hom)	16	34	404	463
Vang (Muong-Vang-Kham and Kong-Atsapone	42	16	584	111
Phabang	6	4	28	42
Phalane	18	31	300	358
Phin	4	13	112	86
Nong	1	8	20	80

149: Reinach—212 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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[295] PROVINCE OF SARAVANE

Area: 12,000 square kilometers.

Population: 3 Europeans, 30,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 250

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Khamthong-Niai	63	56	1,050	770
Kong	15		483	
Saphat	13	5	250	57
Smia	5	2	135	54
Wapy	34	16	693	201
Southabali	11	18	150	160
Saravane	48	100	1,315	1,364
Khamthong-Noi	14	3	225	57
Lakhone-Peng	5		92	

Saravane (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane:
1. by land as far as Savannakhet by way of Muong-Kong, 728 kilometers
2. by river via Pak-Se-Done, 895 kilometers.

Population: 3 Europeans, 650 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Saravane.....1 chief guardsman

Postal and Telegraph service:

Saravane, Kamthong-Niai.....Secondary offices.

149: Reinach--213 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

635 [296]
631
162

PROVINCE OF BAN- MOUANG

Area: 6,000 square kilometers.

Population: 7 Europeans including 2 merchants, 36,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 600.

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Fiafay	43	51	1,816	854
Pak-Sedone	47	71	1,978	1,114
Sa-Phai	20	5	1,062	67
Souvannakhili	11		405	

Ban-Mouang (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane: 760 kilometers.

Population: 4 Europeans, 350 natives.

Post occupied by the native guard:

Ban-Mouang.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Ban-Mouang.....Complete office.

Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet:

Agency at Don-Kho with 1 European agent.

148: Reinach--214 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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[297] PROVINCE OF ATTOPEU

Area: 18,000 square kilometers.

Population: 11 Europeans, 64,600 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 360.

Administrative Divisions

Muong	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Attopeu	28	59	1,300	1,956

Attopeu (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Fiafay: 927 kilometers.

Population:

3 Europeans, 900 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Attopeu.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Attopeu.....secondary office.

Religion:

Catholic mission of the Bahnars.

1 provicar superior, 7 missionaries, 7 Christian communities.

Kon-Toum, Kon-Money, Kon-Keton, Kon-Xabang, Kon-Ngo, Kon-Trang, Ro-Hay.

149: Reinsch---215 G-3 (no date) 19901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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[298]

PROVINCE OF KHONG

Area: 3,000 square kilometers.

Population: 14 Europeans, 26,800 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 900 (?)

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Khong	76	13	4,323	147
Siempang	19	24	540	392

Khong (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane: 862 kilometers.

Population: 7 Europeans, 600 natives.

Administrative post at Khone: 1 delegate of the commissioner.

Posts occupied by the Native Guard:

Khong
Khone } 1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Khong.....Complete office.
Khone.....Secondary office.

Health service: 1 infirmary at Khong with 1 colonial physician.

Laotian Fleet: Launch "Haiphong" with 1 European engineer.

Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet: Agency at Khone with 3 European agents.

Steam launch: "Garcerie" at Ban Dong with 3 Europeans.

149: Reinach--216 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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162

[299] PROVINCE OF STUNG-TRENG

Area: 20,000 square kilometers.

Population: 9 Europeans including 2 merchants, 60,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 300.

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Stung-Treng	61	114	1,441	3,201

Stung-Treng (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane: 942 kilometers.

Population: 9 Europeans, 1,500 natives.

Posts occupied by the Native Guard:

Stung-Treng
Ban-Phi } 1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Stung-Treng.....Complete office.

Laotian Fleet: Launch "Argus".

Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet:

Agency at Stung-Treng with 1 European agent.

Launches: "Cygne", "Mouette".

149: Reinach--217 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[300]

PROVINCE OF DARLAC

635
631
162

Area: 10,500 square kilometers.

Population: 4 Europeans, 25,200 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 250 (?).

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Darlac	1	98	60	6,000

Darlac (capital).

Distance from Vien-Tiane by way of Stung-Treng: 1,282 (?) kilometers.

Population: 3 Europeans, (?) natives.

Posts occupied by the Native Guard:

Ban-Don.....1 chief guardsman.

Darlac.....1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

None.

644 The functionaries responsible for minor duties inside the palace, under the orders of their chief the Maha-Monti, are the:

Maha-Nosit, Lasa-Nosit, Lasa-Mat, Sanet, Sakame-Nane, Latsavat, Out-Thamonti, Sene-Thong-Niot, Sathipavot.

[652] [493] The treasurers, storekeepers and palace guards have the
647 titles of:

Phaya-Vi-Sai-Monthiene, Phone-Seuk-Khoua, Phone-Seuk-Sai.

697 Finally the jailers and scourgers (or executioners) under the command of the king or of the head of the justice department:

Phone-Tesak, Sa-Phakdi, Sa-Dab-Khame, Vong-Phouthone.

635 In the provinces, the head of a muong bears a title which is
631 personal to him, "Phaya" or "Phya," to which he adds that of "Tiao-Muong" and the name of the province, as Phaya-Si-Vorarat-Phrak-Di, Tiao-Muong-Vien-Tiane.

Under his command he has principal mandarins in the number of three, who bear the titles of "Oupahat," "Latsavong" and "Latsaboute." Each of them is generally responsible for the administration of one part of the muong, under the supervision of the "Tiao-Muong."

These high officials are seconded, depending on the importance of the muong, by a larger or smaller number of counselors or judges who bear the titles of "Sen," "Tiane," "Khang," etc.

Muongs are generally divided into cantons, and the heads of the [623] latter bear the title of "Taseng." Each canton includes several villages or "Bans," and each of these has at its head a mayor who is usually called "Pho-Ban" (the father of the village). The head of a village is aided by a kind of council or assembly of notables, the titles of whom are "Pia," "Luong," "Koun," "Sen," "Mune" or "Nai."

643 The four principal leaders of a muong, that is to say the "Tiao-
646 Muong," the "Oupahat," the "Latsavong" and the "Latsaboute" (1),

(1) In the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc, the heads of muongs bear the following titles: "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong), "Phya-Hua-Pahn" (Oupahat), "Phya-Balat" (Latsavong), "Phya-Kam" (Latsaboute). In accordance with custom, these offices are hereditary and sons succeed their fathers, except for the office of "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong) where the rule is not absolute.

are [494] elected either by the nobles or by commoners who possess certain aptitudes and sufficient intellectual culture. The whole population, nobles, officials and common people, are consulted. Then the

643 canton heads and heads of villages, who might be described as can-
646 tonal and municipal delegates, gather in the capital of the muong to vote on the names of candidates which are presented. The name of the one who obtains the most votes is then presented by the province administrator to the superior resident, who accepts or rejects him after studying his personal qualities, his aptitudes, his background, etc. In the case of a rejection the electors are consulted a second time. The superior resident names the four chiefs of muongs by delegation from the governor general. These latter may not begin office until they receive their commission, insignia and seal from the French government.

In general, the electors' choice falls on a son, brother or nephew of the high official who is to be replaced, unless he is unworthy or notoriously incapable.

635 Mandarins of lesser importance are named by the province head
647 with the approval of the persons under his administration and of the superior resident.

647 Officials receive a salary only in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang
652 and in the provinces of Vien-Tiane and Muong-Hou. Everywhere else they must be content with a fee equivalent to one-tenth of the sums they collect as taxes.

[693] In their capacity as judges, the muong authorities also collect legal costs and shares in the sums of certain fines, as is the custom of the land.

647 Such, in its general outline, is the organization of the Laotian
576 administration. It generally functions well, is sufficient to the needs of the natives and makes it possible for us, despite the vast extent of our possession, to keep only a few European officials there.

[192] The outer forms of respect towards great men, mandarins and anyone who holds a rank are dictated by Laotian etiquette, as in Siam. One does not speak to a king, a [495] [Illustration] [496] [Blank page] [497] prince or a leader as one would to an equal or an inferior. There are special expressions which are peculiar to the representatives of certain social classes or to the holders of dignities. But even while it conserves, at bottom, the ritual ceremonial forms, Laotian etiquette is paternal and much more spontaneous and genuinely respectful than elsewhere.

When they speak to the king, to princes, to great men, etc., inferiors prostrate themselves, with forehead on clasped hands, near the ground, or with their hands clasped above their head. Outside of this particular case, those present may remain squatting, smoke, talk, laugh and even disturb the audience somewhat. Moreover, no lack whatsoever of respect is to be seen in this liberty.

115: Le Boulanger--87 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

/136/ /Blank page/ /137/

CHAPTER V

THE LAOTIAN PRINCIPALITIES FROM 1707 TO 1836

Political situation of the Indo-Chinese peninsula at the dawn of 175*
the eighteenth century. As of the date which we have now reached, the political map of the Indo-Chinese peninsula had undergone profound modifications in the last three hundred years if we consider the limits assigned to the various Thai kingdoms which issued forth from Khoun-Borom's partitioning. Under the impulse of dynastic ambitions, the latter tried in their turn to dominate their neighbors, and the most fortunate among them became surrounded with vassal principalities which, so to speak, served the purpose of buffer states and passed from one hand to another according to the whims of fortune.

Lan-Xang had had its life. Having lost its independence and its 633
unity, it was to disappear as a state which was the embodiment of 175*
great and powerful suzerainty and which had long been solidly based in the Mekong valley on the traditional alliance /138/ with the Kmer kingdom, then in full decline itself, and the Siamese and Annamites were to divide the spoils.

Tran-Ninh, which had endured the Laotian protectorate with 636
impatience ever since Souligna's expedition, was to profit by the 648*
circumstances in order to enter into open struggle with the kings of Vientiane. The latter would still be strong enough for another century to extract payment of their tribute by means of repeated expeditions, but the result of these perpetual hostilities would be to throw the princes of Xieng Khouang into the arms of the Annamite suzerain, who was to impose the most severe of dominations on them.

The Burmese empire was no more than a glorious memory. The 175*
land of the Irrawaddy, unified in the eleventh century, disjointed 101
in the thirteenth and regrouped in the sixteenth by Bureng-Naung, had since the conqueror's death again been divided into two enemy kingdoms, Burma in the north and Pegou in the south. With the same language, the same civilization and subject to the same influences, the two twin States were all the more eager to combat one another and no one could possibly have foreseen the end of this long duel even at the very moment (1710) when the Burmese hero Alompra was born, who was to reimpose unity and fill the peninsula with the clash of his arms in his turn.

to Chao-Noi to deliver the fugitive up to him as soon as he entered 648*
Chao-Noi's States. 175*

The only alternative was an unpleasant one for the king of Xieng-Khouang, who doubtless regretted, although somewhat tardily, that he had not given more support to his neighbor when there was perhaps still time. To give Anou up would be to expose himself to reprisals from their common suzerain the emperor of Annam, while to conceal his presence in his domain was surely to draw down the immediate wrath of Siam.

Captivity and death of Anou (1831-1835). Losing his head, he 727
met the most immediate threat by arresting Anou and holding him 643*
prisoner in /176/ Muong-Soui until the arrival of the Siamese en- 175*
voy, a Lu chieftain named Chao-Nan (1). The vanquished king

1. Up until the end of the eighteenth century the Lus formed /563/
an important group in the kingdom of Xieng-Kheng. Their /636/
chieftain, the Chao-Fa, who was then a tributary of Burma, had his residence at Muong-Sing. After Phia-Tak's victories over the Burmese, certain Lu families served the Siamese while others dispersed in the mountains of Luang-Prabang and Xieng-Mai and the Chao-Fa settled in Muong-You to remain under the protection of the king of Burma. See below, Chapter VIII, p. 331 (question of the Sip-Song-Panas), and 355.

was put in golden chains and sent on a richly caparisoned elephant to Bangkok, where he found a luxurious prison which had been prepared to receive him (1831). He remained there for four years and died in circumstances which have remained mysterious (2).

2. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique." Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./ Some accounts claim that he poisoned himself. Mgr. Pallegoix relates that he was placed in an iron cage and exposed to the insults of the populace, and that he succumbed to the bad treatment which he had to endure.

Destruction of the kingdom of Vientiane. Siam made an ordi- 727
nary Siamese province out of the old kingdom of Vientiane, a kind 175*
of military frontier land which it called "Lao Phoueun." It would /642/

579 ravaging the region of Dien-Bien-/246/ Phu as far as Muong-Ngoi.
563 King Oun-Kham was growing old and carefree and felt incapable,
727 when left entirely to his own resources, of calming the mortal dis-
175* quietude of his people. Thus Siamese agents, the number of whom
/648/* was constantly on the increase, were welcomed all along the Upper
Mekong as the only protectors from whom effective aid could be ex-
pected.

● 636 Relations with the cantons of the Black River. The man Cam-
175* Sinh, who was of Chinese origin himself, was nevertheless a friend
of the princes of Luang-Prabang, but he was then too preoccupied
with driving the invaders out of his own domains to lend any support
to his neighbor.

His remote ancestors were military mandarins in Quang-Si and had settled three hundred years previously in Muong-Lai, which they had pacified in behalf of the king of Anna. Their authority extended around Lai-Chau as far as Yunnan in the north and Muong Theng in the south (Dien-Bien-Phu, the legendary cradle of the Laotian race). At this time they had reached a peaceful agreement
/728/ with the kings of Lan-Xang, most likely Nokeo-Koumane or Thammi-Karath who had just /247/ shaken off the Burmese yoke (1) and who

1. See above, pp. 97 and 100.

were glad to give them charge of the "white" and "black" Thais of the region in exchange for a triennial payment of thirty-three taels of silver "and one horse" (2). Relations had subsequently become

2. Cf. the Chronicle of Muong-Lai given by Deo-van-Tri to Auguste Pavie in 1894.

completely friendly and trusting to such a degree that when Cam-Sinh was in conflict with several of his relatives around 1850 he had not hesitated to place two of his children, one of whom was Deo-van-Tri, in Souka-Seum's hands (3).

3. See above, p. 213, note.

669 Revolt of the Khas of Muong-Ngoi (1876). It was not until 1876,
175* after he had temporarily driven back the Yellow Flags, that he was
563 able to send any reinforcements to Oun-Kham to sustain the struggle

departed... tranquillity was established to such a degree that one 654
would have thought the recent past was quite remote." 648*
175*

Submission of Deo-van-Tri (April 1890). He met Deo-van-Tri
on April 7. Under his proud exterior, the heir of the great feudal 175*
lords of the Thai cantons could not conceal /295/ his feelings of 636
deep emotion and gratitude from the liberator of his family, and
Pavie knew that this old adversary of his country was henceforth won
over for good and all. As the first proof that he had rallied to the
French cause, Deo-van-Tri gave him the seal which had been de-
livered to the sovereigns of Laos by China and stolen by his own Hos
when Luang-Prabang was sacked (1), then he returned some thirty

1. See above, p. 191, note 1. Pavie writes in Vol. II, p. 21: "It (the seal) constitutes a document establishing the vassaldom of this land (Luang-Prabang) to China, whose rights over it have become ours."

women and children from the Laotian capital who had been held captive ever since 1887. Finally, in "simple and worthy" language, he expressed his ardent desire to enter into active and devoted co-operation with the mission. During the days which followed he conversed at length of his family's past, of his own, of that of the cantons, of "the good which he saw could be done for the general prosperity of the region, of his campaigns with Luu-vinh-Phuoc, of his campaign in Luang-Prabang and his conduct towards the proscribed regent of Annam to whom he had been devoted in his misfortune and who, once he had reached safety thanks to him, had tried to have him massacred for fear that he might later reveal the secret of his sanctuary."

/296/ Pavie persuaded him without difficulty to accompany him as far as Theng, and their life together during five weeks was enough to ensure Deo-van-Tri's attachment to the French leader and his companions. Sure of him and certain that he had his confidence, even while journeying along Pavie commissioned him to organize administrative transports on the Black River and to make preparations for a voyage of exploration which he planned to make with him at the beginning of winter along the Yunnanese border and as far as the western frontier of the Sip-Song-Panas to fix the limits of the Thai cantons of the Upper Mekong where the last Chinese bands were still flourishing.

175* 636 Upon his departure from Muong-Lai he told him of his desire to go to Nam-Youn with the colonel and Lefevre-Pontalis to greet his old father Cam-Sinh and his mother, both of whom had been ill for some time now: "Both the family and the people," noted Pavie, "were infinitely grateful to us for this visit to the two old people whom death was to carry off shortly thereafter." It was there that on April 12, after the evening meal and before the ancestors' altar, Deo-van-Tri rose deeply moved in the midst of his own people and said:

"We shall be faithful to the kings of Annam. Anyone who loses the memory of good deeds becomes unhappy. Our bones shall be transformed into dust, /A photograph, unpaged, is inserted here between pp. 296 and 297: "Auguste Pavie (standing, third from the left)."--Translator/ /297/ but what shall never perish is the memory of this visit which you have made to our father in his home."

Deo-van-Tri was to keep this solemn promise loyally and was to remain until his death, which occurred in 1908, the most precious collaborator of the French in Tonkin, ensuring the security of the regions over which he had been given administration (1).

1. As he had promised, he guided Pavie, Lefevre-Pontalis and Vacle into the Sip-Song-Panas in January 1891, and by his knowledge of the country, his experience and his personal ascendancy over the natives greatly contributed to the expedition's success. Upon his return (in May) he became permanently reconciled at Van Bu with his old enemy the Quang-Phong, who had become the native leader of the upper Red River. Shortly thereafter he was made a chevalier of the Legion of Honor. In 1894 and 1895 his intelligent cooperation enabled the last Pavie mission to delimit the frontier with China in six months' time and to take part in all the studies going forward for a settlement with Britain. At the time of his death (at the age of fifty-eight) he had for eighteen years been maintaining at the Colonial School a group of his sons and nephews which he renewed every three years, as a mark of devotion and trust. It was the eldest of these children who succeeded him in 1908.

648* 175* Sojourn in Luang-Prabang (May-July 1890). On May 23 the mission's convoy landed in Luang-Prabang on the right bank, where the consular house which had in the meantime been completed by

115: Le Boulanger--209 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(20th Cent.) Laotians AM8
Kha Am7

Franco-Siamese treaty of October 7, 1902. Finally after more 648*
than three years of negotiations which were skilfully terminated in 175*
Paris by the Phyas Sri and Suriya, a new treaty was signed on October 7, 1902 by the terms of which we gave Siam back its liberty on the right bank of the river in exchange for the return to the French authorities of the territories of Melouprey and Tonle-Repou in Cambodia and of Bassac in Lower Laos. The king of Luang-Prabang obtained the frontier correction /343/ which he had been claiming for nine years, but we allowed Siam to retain the status of suzerain with respect to our protege as regarded this large part of his domains. As for our Asiatic nationals residing in Siam, we lost touch with them to such a degree that the revision of their lists was left to the entire discretion of the Siamese authorities.

This treaty provoked the sharpest and most fully justified protests on the part of the colonial group in the Chamber. How had the high competence of Auguste Pavie and the repeated advice of our successive ministers in Bangkok led the Quai d'Orsay to conclude a treaty which did not decide anything and which, in exchange for slight territorial satisfactions in the south, completely abandoned our influence over the whole Laotian right bank to the north of the Se-Moun? Under the pressure of parliament, which refused to ratify the treaty, the talks had to be resumed with more care given to "making our rights and interests respected."

Insurrection of the Khas of Lower Laos (1901-1907). The necessi- L
ty for reaching some kind of agreement, however, was becoming all K
the more desirable on both sides in that Lower Laos had for /344/ 669
about a year been the theater of an insurrection, as violent as it was 175*
singular, by the Khas on both banks of the Mekong. 563

The fief of Bassac, which was administered by the descendants of L
Chao-Houy (1) in behalf of the king of Siam, had lost much of its K
/636/

1. See above, pp. 168; 177, note 2 and 328, note 1.

importance for the latter ever since the treaty of 1893 had amputated the muongs of Saravane and Attopeu. All this region, which was populated mainly by Khas (Boloven, Alak, Nha-Heun, on the left bank), had been only sparsely colonized by a few Phou-Thai and Laotian families, and Siamese domination over these tribes which were refractory to all authority had never been more effective than the purely nominal domination of the old kings of Vientiane (2).

2. See above, p. 90, the campaign of Setthathirath in

influence of any foreign propaganda and that their revolt did not L
at any time assume the character of an anti-French manifestation. M
Thus their uprising had no repercussions on the other ethnic groups 563
in Laos, which in spirit and in deed stood behind our repressive 669
measures.

They returned in peace to their agricultural labors (chiefly the L
cultivation of poppies) in their precipitous solitudes. A special M
administrative statute gave them the cantonal and communal 563
autonomy which they desired, with no Laotian or Annamite inter- 636
mediary. No matter how infrequent their contacts with the popu- 609
lations of the valleys and plains, it is quite certain that racial
antagonism (exploited by agitators during the revolt) was maintain-
ing a state of mind among their groupings which was suspicious and
devoid of friendliness towards the native authorities. The reforms 178
which were put into effect seem to have yielded good results. In 563
the same way, a prudent policy towards the still unsubdued tribes
of Lower Laos, one which will avoid direct conflict with their
customs /362/ and prejudices, will gradually tame these last repre-
sentatives of another age whom the opening-up of means of com-
munication will finally incorporate into the larger Indo-Chinese
family.

/ Pages 363-367 contain a Bibliography. Page 368 is blank. Pages 000
369-375 contain an Alphabetical Index of Names Mentioned. Page
376 is blank. --Translator/

636.10 -----636.88

10: d'Orleans--362-363 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 276, 439, 655, 177.27 Siam
636.27

"... The opium monopoly has been set up in Luang Prabang by the Siamese. Not content with having, during the past century, ruined and depopulated the valley of the Mekong, and with weighing it down with taxation, they now seem anxious to crush its trade and arrest its growth. From our point of view, it is a matter of indifference to us if the relations between Luang Prabang and China become less close and friendly, and we may even turn this change to our profit, for the caravans which were wont to bring opium down the routes parallel with the Mekong, will find it answer [sic] their purpose to branch off in the direction of the Black River, and to effect their exchanges with Upper Tonkin.

I can answer for the fact that during the past year only one caravan reached Luang Prabang from the north, this consisting of sixty mules from Xieng [363] Hong, which took a month upon the journey by short stages, eight being loaded with iron, four with tea, and the rest with Chinese groceries, sugar, opium and a little silk."

10: d'Orleans--330 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 443, 651, 177.44 Siam
636.44

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "In the market, each vendor has his own special stall, while the representatives of the same trade are all placed together, and a tax of twenty-five cowries is collected from each of them every morning by soldiers told off for the purpose, whereas the street hawkers are exempted from all dues."

10: d'Orleans--360 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 441, 563, 177.44 France
636.44

"The trade of Laos, like that of the greater part of Siam, is carried on by the Chinese, who form a sort of freemasonry among one another against the foreigner and are constantly pushing forward their advance posts. Masters of the Customs, more intelligent, more hard working, more temperate and more rapacious than the Siamese, they constitute the commercial class, and they have a way of insinuating themselves into the secrets of the natives and transferring their money into their own pockets which we neither could nor would wish to imitate. Our task is a higher one, and it consists, upon the one hand, in undertaking and carrying out such enterprises in the way of mining as I have described above, and upon the other in supplying the native or Chinese middlemen with the raw material and with our national goods upon as reasonable terms as English or German merchandise."

6: Goudal--32-33 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-1-3
116, 466, 651, 177.46 France
636.46

Laos. -- An Order of 12 May 1914 regulated labour dues for natives and assimilated Asiatics between 18 and 60 years of age who inhabit the territory of Laos.

Registered Laotians are required to provide 16 days' labour per annum, which may be commuted at the rate of 0.40 piastre, while 'Khas' must provide 20 days.

The commutation of labour dues is optional. Labour conscripts may only be recruited within a radius of 100 kilometres from the place of employment or at a maximum of five days' march for the outward and return journeys. No wages are paid for days thus worked, but each day taken up by the journey from the village to the place of work is paid at the rate of 30 cents. At least one-quarter of the labour called up must be employed solely on communal work. The commutation fee is fixed at 0.25 piastre.

An Order of 18 June 1929 increased the commutation fee to 0.30 piastre.

An important Circular issued on 21 June 1934 laid down the measures to be taken by the Residents in Laos to secure that the recruiting and employment of requisitioned labour should be carried out in the best conditions and with due attention to the requirements of health and hygiene.

6; Goudal--32-33 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-2
M6, 466, 651, 177.46 France
636.46

The recruitment of labour must be carried out with the greatest care and under the supervision and responsibility of the indigenous authorities. Sick and infirm persons, elderly persons and children may not be employed in any circumstances. When the workplace is far from the village, the workers must be carried in service lorries or canoes.

Before work is begun the encampments must be carefully organised. The workers' food must be the object of strict supervision, and every care must be taken to avoid victimisation of the workers by itinerant traders.

As a rule a dresser must be made responsible for the health in all workplaces employing at least 50 workers. The workers must be supplied with tools and implements so as to secure a maximum individual output.

In the management and organisation of workplaces, every effort must be made to co-ordinate administrative supervision, the work of the indigenous authorities and the technical instructions issued by the public works services.

It is thus clear that the regulation of labour dues has undergone practically the same evolution in all the countries of the Union. The old system of compulsory labour, which in theory was subject [33] to no restrictions, has been reduced to a reasonable number of days by the French authorities, while the work exacted from the inhabitants has been

restricted to the district in which the latter live, so as to avoid long absences from home and transfer to distant places. The regulations recommend the avoidance of mass levies likely to empty the villages of their able-bodied population, and discourage the requisitioning of labour during periods of agricultural activity. The introduction of certain measures for the protection of the workers' health (infirmaries in the work-places, etc.), together with the compulsory supply of appropriate tools and implements has certainly introduced a more humane element in the labour system. Finally, the general adoption of commutation fees has led to dues being treated as a tax (in three countries, the dues are included in the personal tax). Only for certain tribes in mountainous districts is the character of the former compulsory labour system still maintained."

6: Goudal--42-43 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians
116, 466, 482, 653, 177.46 France
636.46

"In Laos, the regulation of compulsory labour for public purposes has been the subject of a number of legislative measures, including an Order by the Senior Resident of 27 June 1933 which closely resembles that issued by the Governor-General of 5 February 1932.

Moreover, in the countries of the Union where this form of labour is still permitted, Orders are issued periodically establishing the [43] maximum weight of the load carried by porters and the rates of wages payable to such workers. Annual reports are also sent to the central administrative authorities on the value and usefulness of requisitioned labour. If the present effort made by the authorities is continued, it is practically certain that in the near future compulsory labour levies for transport work and large-scale public works will become a thing of the past."

6: Goudal--161-162 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-1-2
116, 466, 671, 177.46 France
636.46

"Laos--Sections 197-201 of the Laotian Civil Code provide for two methods of assessing workmen's compensation, according to whether the accident was or was not the consequence of an operation or dangerous work for which no special remuneration was laid down to offset the risk. If the accident is caused by dangerous work, the liability of the employer is regulated as follows: in the case of death or permanent total incapacity, the victim or his dependants are entitled, according to their situation, to an allowance amounting to 100 piastres for officials, 80 piastres for an employee of the administration or a skilled worker exercising a remunerative trade, and 50 piastres for all other workers.

These allowances are reduced to one-half or to one-quarter of the stated amount when the victim's working capacity is reduced, even permanently, by 50 or 25 per cent.

In case of temporary incapacity, the person liable in case of accident is required to pay as damages to the injured party the cost of the treatment entailed and in addition, throughout the whole period of incapacity, full wages in the case of an official, 0.55 piastre a day in the case of an employee of the administration or a skilled worker, and 0.25 piastre a day in the case of all other persons. [162]

All the above-mentioned allowances are reduced by one-half if the injured person is under age and has undertaken the operation or dangerous work with the authorisation of his parents.

6: Goudal--161-162 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-2
116, 466, 671, 177.46 France
636.46

Among other classes of work, the Civil Code classifies the following as dangerous: scaling of tall trees, going down wells or underground caves or passages, diving into a deep or rapidly flowing part of a river, the capturing of wild animals, the training of untamed animals, pursuit of criminals, etc.

When, on the other hand, the accident is not the result of dangerous work, but is nevertheless incurred in the course of, or arising out of, paid employment, the employer is required, in case of death or permanent incapacity, to pay to the victim an allowance equal to one-half of the corresponding indemnity established for injuries caused by dangerous work. In case of death he must also pay the cost of burial or cremation.

If the accident results in minor injuries, the employer must provide the injured person with medical attendance and food throughout the period of temporary incapacity.

Finally, in no case is the employer responsible for accidents resulting from unavoidable circumstances."

6: Goudal--166 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians
116, 466, 647, 177.46 France
636.46

"In Laos, no local labour inspectorate has so far been established. An Order of 22 December 1932 required the inspector of political and administrative affairs to carry out the duties of local labour inspector in addition to his own work. Subsequently, as the first-class administrator of the civil services who carried out these double duties was not replaced, the chief administrative officer of the Cammon province was entrusted with the duties of labour supervisor for all mining undertakings situated in his area.

It would seem that the cuts in the estimates, which led to a reduction in the staff of the various local inspectorates, have resulted in an unfortunate decline in the activity of these services. (1)

1. We read, for example, in the Annual Report of the Tonking Labour Inspectorate for the period 1 July 1933-30 June 1934: 'The attachment of the labour inspectorate to the Fifth Bureau has resulted in greatly reducing the sphere of activity of the labour inspector, whose time is mainly taken up by his duties as chief of the Bureau of Economic Affairs; his tours of inspection have thus been reduced to those which are strictly necessary'."

25: Brodrick--85 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 131, 489, 177.48 France
636.48

"The Laos was, and indeed still is, a country happy in its isolation. It is land quite difficult of access. There are no railways. There is only one all-weather road crossing the country and that in the Lower Laos. Moreover, in my day, at least, that is to say on the very eve of the last World War, you did not just start off for the Laos as you would for any other part of Indo-China, discreet inquiries were made. The French liked to keep their Laos uncontaminated by foreigners.(1)

1. The total area of the Laos is just under 90,000 square miles and the population, at the last census, was just over one million. There is no all-weather road right up the Mekong Valley and the highways from the east cannot be used during the rains except for that across the Lower Laos from Dong-Ha to Kabao. Much of the Laos is, therefore, except for air-communication, cut off from the outer world for at least five months out of every year."

3: Robequain--94 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 496, 177.49 France
636.49

"Laos still lacks railways. Some years ago surveys were completed on the projected line from Tan Ap to Thakhek, which had been selected as the shortest and most convenient route between the coast of Annam and the Mekong. About twenty kilometers of rail were laid from Tan Ap as far as Xom Cuc, and téléférique built to hoist material and supplies from the workyards to Mu Gia Pass which will be traversed by a tunnel at an altitude of 370 meters; a service road was built in order to assure the easy maintenance of the téléférique. The roadbed beyond Thakhek was also started, but budgetary difficulties caused the stoppage of work."

23: Franck--346 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 491, 177.49 France
636.49

"Had it been in China or South America, this important trail between the two principal capitals of Laos would be impassable, in spots at least, which is the same thing so far as an overland trip is concerned, during the rainy season that was now upon us. Thanks to the few French overlords, however, mile after mile was welded together by many woven-bamboo bridges that sagged like bed-springs under our weight."

3: Robequain--113-116 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians-1-5
116, 133, 503, 505, 177.50 France
636.50

"The Mekong appeared to offer a splendid means of penetrating the plateaus and mountains of Laos. At one time it was even suggested that Saigon could be one of the great ports for Southern China. As early as 1866, the Doudart de Lagrée and Francis Garnier mission realized the difficulties[114]of navigating the river above Kratié. This large river, as a matter of fact, is still very young as far as physical geography is concerned, or rather, a series of recent and still only partially explained tectonic episodes have renewed its youth. It consists of a chain of calm-surfaced reaches, separated by rapids or falls. The chief obstacle to navigation is at Khône where the arms of the river, spread out over an area several kilometers wide, drop 15 meters through torrential and rock-studded channles or cataracts. Here precisely is the border between Cambodia and Laos. Other rapids are scattered both up and down stream, making navigation by launch difficult and uncertain throughout entire sections between Kratié and Savannakhet. It is only at Savannakhet ('the gateway to paradise') that the great navigable reaches begin which permit launches to sail as far as several kilometers above Vientiane without breaking bulk.

Europeans were eager to tame the Mekong. As early as 1890 the Messageries

3: Robequain--113-116 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians-2
116, 133, 503, 505, 177.50 France
636.50

Fluviales de Cochinchine had organized a steamship line which, with the help of some trans-shipment, operated as far as Khône. For more than two years the launch, Argus, tried to get past the Khône barrier through the channels which canoes sometimes used in descending the river. In view of the failure of these attempts, a narrow guage railway was built across Khône Island, and by this means gunboats and then launches were carried to the upper river in 1893.

Conditions of navigation have been improved since then, but scouring the river channels has not always produced the desired results, since the river's reactions are difficult to predict; buoying had been improved up to 1925; more than a thousand towers, buoys and landmarks had been built. Hundred-ton launches, drawing one and one half meters, can reach as far as Khône, at high water, about three months a year; in other months, the section between Kratié and Khône, much of which had to be traversed by canoe up to 1900, can now be covered, with only one trans-shipment, by a short thirty-ton launch which can manage the sharp turns of the narrow channels. Above Khône, the most difficult passage is through the sandstone canyon of Kemmarat, where the river attains [115] a depth of eighteen meters during the heavy floods and the current in some rapids is from nine to ten knots. Since 1910 more powerful launches have been put into service, and were later supplied with semi-Diesel engines; they have gradually reduced the number of changes but the Keng Sa rapids are still impassable at low water

and necessitate trans-shipments to motor-canoes.

In 1895 a small gunboat, the Lagrandière, went up above the Savannakhet-Vientiane reaches to within 50 kilometers of the Yunnan frontier, about 2,500 kilometers from the sea and 400 meters above sea-level; this was a purely sporting exploit. Since then other steamboats have gone up as far as Luang Prabang, but it was realized that regular traffic could not be maintained through one section, dotted with dangerous rapids. Nevertheless, the trip between the two Laotian capitals previously made by native canoes plying upstream, and by rafts going downstream, has been very much speeded up since 1930 by the use of motor canoes.

In brief, progress is summed up in the following figures; in 1900, at low water, it took 65 days or more to go from Saigon to Luang Prabang; in 1909 the time was reduced to a maximum of 50 days; in 1937 the upstream trip took 37 days, downstream 27; and at high water, it took 27 or 22 days, respectively.

In spite of all this, French Upper Laos is still farther from Saigon by water than Saigon is from Marseille. Even below Vientiane in Lower Laos, the transport capacity of the Mekong depends on the obstacles encountered between Savannakhet and Khône. It is difficult to cut down the present length of the time needed for the journey: the narrowness of the channels and the limited power of the engines which can negotiate them do not

permit increasing the useful cargo beyond 100 tons. At low water, trans-shipment is a heavy burden on shipping. In 1936 only 4,644 tons of freight passed the port of Khone going downstream (10) and 5,286 tons upstream.

10. Excluding teak logs which are floated down the river.

Thus the high hopes for the Mekong as a means of transportation have been dashed. Experts believe that if additional improvements could increase the traffic to 25,000 tons a year, [116] this is a maximum which would be hard to surpass. Railways and highways will therefore have to furnish transportation which will be justified in the future by our reasonable expectations for an enlarged Laotian economy, if not by its extent at present. (11)

11. The arguments in favor of the water route are set forth by Colonel Bernard in the Bulletin du Comité de l'Indochine, February 20, 1936. Navigation on the Mekong has undergone great changes since the end of 1937, at the expiration of the contract of the Campagnie Saigonnaise de Navigation et de Transports, which had replaced the Messageries Fluviales. Steam launches no longer negotiate the Kemmarat narrows;

3: Robequain--113-116 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians-5
116, 133, 503, 505, 177.50 France
636.50

there is no longer a regular service between Paksé and Savannakhet. From Savannakhet to Vientiane service is now assured by a company employing flat-bottomed barges and from Vientiane to Luang Prabang and Xieng Sen by motor canoes."

10: d'Orleans--300-301 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 436, 455, 525, 651, 177.52 Siam
636.52

"In addition to the forced labour, there is, the capitation tax, the opium tax, and the monopoly of the tchoum-tchoum, but the monopoly of gaming, which is the source of large revenue in Siam itself, has been suppressed here by the Siamese as being immoral. It is the same with the speculation upon the money exchange, which is not yet resorted to in Luang Prabang. In the valley of Ménam, more especially, the money in use is composed of earthenware counters, the circulation of which is suspended or the value altered by a Government decree, large profits being thus secured in very arbitrary fashion. Another source of profit [301] for the treasury of Luang Prabang is the produce of the customs, there being a tax of three per cent. upon the merchandise and of a basket of salt upon each canoe, which comes up from the south with a load of it."

7: Thompson--371-372 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 565, 567, 177.56 France
636.56

"The people were simply divided into slaves and freemen. Of the former there were three kinds: slaves for debt, by sale, or by capture. Slave-trading used to be enormously profitable, for the offspring of slaves were born into perpetual slavery. In 1880 the King of Siam made a generous reform. The descendants of slaves were henceforth to be freemen, and it was made much easier for debt slaves to buy their freedom. No mention was made, however, of captured slaves, but severe penalties were meted out to men convicted of slave-trading. One of the first steps taken by the French was the abolition of the slave trade, despite its affecting important Laotian, Cambodian, Siamese, and even Burmese commercial interests. Next, debt slavery was attacked in 1896, and for this Tournier found an ingenious solution. Special attention [372] was paid to the Khas, who lived in a state of serfdom, and this provoked a series of revolts. Their enfranchisement was begun in 1898, and nowadays a form of patron-client relationship has been evolved, but the bond is easy. It is almost impossible to wipe the slate clean, for many of the slaves resist change, since it is an easier way of getting rid of a debt than by working as freemen."

26: Brodrick--60 S-3 (1939) 1944 Laotians
116, 631, 177.63 France
636.63

"Most of the Laos region is under direct French administration, but the kingdom of Luang-Prabang (consisting of the provinces of Luang-Prabang, of Houaphan and of the Fifth Military Territory) is a 'protectorate.' Until 1893 the Siamese were in effective possession of about one-half of the Luang-Prabang realm, but by 1904 the French had obtained the cession of the whole of the kingdom."

68: Mouhot--85-86 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 131, 728, 631, 162, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"A great number of the inhabitants of this province [HD: i.e. Saraburi, in Siam] are natives of Laos, and are principally captives brought from Vien Chang after the insurrection there. The provinces of Boatioume and Petchaboune are peopled by Siamese, for Laos proper only commences at M'Lôm. Boatioume, Petchaboune, Sôm, and some other provinces in the north and east, are governed by Siamese mandarins of rank more or less elevated; that is to say, several of them have the power of life and death, and are [86]then considered as viceroys. The most distant provinces belong to the empire of Siam, and form a part of it."

68: Mouhot--105-106 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 631, 122, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"On the 28th February, 1861, I arrived at the town of Chaiapume, [HD: at that time a Laotian town tributary to Siam] and presented myself before the governor to request his permission to hire some elephants or oxen to enable me to continue my journey. I showed him my French passport, and also gave him the letter from Khrom Luang, [HD: one of the brothers of the King of Siam] and another from the Governor of Korat; [HD: an important outlying province of Siam. See category 116, p. 115] but all in vain. He replied that, if I wanted oxen or elephants, there were plenty in the forest. I might easily have done without the assistance of this functionary, and procured animals from people in the village; but they would have made me pay two or three times the ordinary price, and my purse was too slenderly filled to allow of my submitting to this extortion, which would probably be repeated at every station.

The only thing left me to do, therefore, was to retrace my steps, and, leaving one of my servants at Korat with [106] my baggage, to return to Bangkok and claim aid from the consul, the ministers, or the king himself; for there is a treaty between the Governments of Siam and France, concluded by M. de Montigny, which obliges the king to afford assistance and protection to the French, and especially to missionaries and naturalists. It was a sad loss of time for me, and might occasion me serious inconvenience; for, if I were delayed, the rainy season might surprise me in the midst of the

68: Mouhot--105-106 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 631, 122, 177.63 Siam
636.63

forests before I could reach a healthier region, and the consequences might be fatal. However, I was forced to submit, and I returned to Bangkok."

68: Mouhot--113 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 579, 162, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"These precautions are very necessary, for Korat is a nest of robbers and assassins, the resort of all the scum of the Laotian and Siamese races. Bandits and vagrants, escaped from slavery or from prison, gather here like the vultures and wolves which follow armies and caravans. It is not that they enjoy complete immunity, for the [HD: Siamese] governor, son of Bodine, the general who conquered Battambong and the revolted provinces, is viceroy of the state, has absolute power of life and death, and is, they say, very severe, cutting off a head or a hand with little compunction. But still it is Siamese justice, 'non inviola:' there are neither gendarmes nor police; the person robbed must himself arrest the offender and bring him before the judge. Even his neighbour will give no assistance in the capture."

68: Mouhot--115 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 . Laotians
Siam
116, 439, 631, 651, 177.63
636.63

"The merchants who bring silk, [HD: to Korat, Siam] which, though of inferior quality, is an important article of commerce, come from Laos, Oubone, Bassac, and Jasoutone.

The entire province of Korat comprises a number of villages, and more than eleven towns, some containing as many as fifty or sixty thousand inhabitants. This little state is simply tributary, [HD: to Siam] but on condition of furnishing the first and most considerable levy of men in case of war.

The tribute consists of gold or silver, and in several districts, amongst others those of Chaiapume and Poukiéan, amounts to eight ticals a head. Some pay in silk, which is weighed by the mandarins, who, as with the cardamom at Pursat, and the langoutis at Battambong, buy a further quantity on their own account, and at their own price.

Elephants are numerous, and a great many are brought from the north of Laos as far as Muang-Lang. I should think there must be more than a thousand of these animals in each province. Oxen and buffaloes were formerly exceedingly cheap, but the distemper, which has for some years committed great ravages among the herds, has doubled or tripled the price. They are brought southward from the extreme north of East Laos, and even from the frontiers of Tonquin."

68: Mouhot--120-121 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians·
Siam

116, 609, 122, 631, 177.63
636.63

"I was again delayed a few days at Korat before I could obtain elephants, in consequence of the absence of the viceroy; but on his return he received me in a friendly manner, and gave me a letter of introduction to the governors of the provinces under his jurisdiction. He likewise furnished me with two elephants for myself and servants, and two others for my baggage; so at last I was able to set out for Chaiapume. Before I started, the Chinese with whom I lodged gave me the following advice: --'Buy a tam-tam, and, wherever you halt, sound it. They will say, "Here is an officer of the king;" robbers will keep aloof, and the authorities will respect you. If this does not answer, the only plan to get rid of all the difficulties which the Laotian officials will be sure to throw in your way is to have a good stick, the longer the better. Try it on the back of any mandarin who makes the least resistance and will not do what you wish. Put all delicacy aside. Laos is not like a country of the whites. Follow my advice, and you will find it good.'

I was, however, much better received on my second visit to Chaiapume, and required neither tam-tam nor cane. The sight of the elephants and the order from the viceroy of Korat made the mandarin as supple as a glove, and he provided me with other elephants for a visit to some ruins existing about 3 leagues north of the town, at the foot of a mountain. The superstitious Laotians say that [121] these ruins contain gold, but that every one who has sought for it has been struck with madness."

68: Mouhot--129-130 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 122, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"[HD: Going north to Pak Lai] I soon found that, but for the letter from the governor of Korat, I should have met everywhere with the same reception as at Chaiapume; however, this missive was very positively worded. Wherever I went, the authorities were ordered to furnish me with elephants, and supply me with all necessary provisions, as if I were a king's envoy. I was much amused to see these petty provincial chiefs executing the orders of my servants, and evidently in dread lest, following the Siamese custom, I should use the stick.

One of my men, to give himself importance, had tied one of these bugbears to the arms which he carried, and the sight of it alone sufficed, with the sound of the tam-tam, to inspire fear, whilst small presents judiciously distributed, and a little money to the cornacs, [HD: elephant drivers] procured me the sympathy of the people.

Most of the villages are situated about a day's journey from one another, but frequently you have to travel for three or four days without seeing a single habitation, [130] and then you have no alternative but to sleep in the jungle."

68: Mouhot--251 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 122, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"I have done everything in my power to obtain letters and passports [HD: to Laos] from the French and Siamese authorities here, [HD: i.e. in Bangkok, Siam] but all have been nearly useless. I have obtained nothing but a letter from the King's brother, [HD: Khrom Luang] who has the superintendence of the provinces north of Laos, and with that I trust to be able to get on."

68: Mouhot--256-257 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 122, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"When I reached Chaiapume, I went to the governor with my letters, and asked him to lend me elephants to enable me to continue my journey, that being the only method of travelling among these mountains; but he refused me decidedly, and consequently I have been forced to retrace my steps. Here one can do nothing without the help of the people in power.

I therefore returned to Korat, and established Phrai in a [257] hut which I hired of a Chinese; and went myself to Bangkok, to procure from the authorities orders to the different governors of provinces to aid me instead of throwing obstacles in my way."

68: Mouhot--258-260 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-4
116, 122, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"[HD: Excerpt from one of Mouhot's letters to his wife] You will be much surprised on receiving this letter to see it dated from Saraburi, [HD: in Siam] for if you have received the one I wrote in January, you must believe me to be already in Laos. But man proposes, and God disposes. However, to reassure you, I must begin by saying that I am in perfect health, and full of strength and hope. All goes well with me.

I had in fact reached Laos. I arrived at Korat after a tedious and troublesome journey, for I had only a few oxen for my baggage, and was forced to walk myself. From there I went to Chaiapume, and here an animal of the mandarin species made himself great, and under the pretext of having no elephants refused me the means of going further, and was so rude and impolite to me that I determined at once to return and protest against the very insufficient protection which had been granted to me. Indeed, I could do nothing else, not being able to go on. The elephant which had brought me to Chaiapume took me back to Korat, and there I found a mandarin from Bangkok, who had been sent to fetch a white elephant which had been taken in Laos. I begged him to let me join his party, and he lent me two elephants, one for my servant and luggage, and one for myself. I left Phrai at Korat, with the greater part of my possessions, having hired a room for him in the house of a Chinese, and a week afterwards found myself back at Saraburi, in company with this strange divinity (who, by the way, had

more black than white about him), and of the grand personage who had been sent to escort him, and who had showered on him every kind of attention during the journey. He had an escort of fifty foot soldiers and several on horseback. As for me, I wanted for nothing; at every halt the mandarin sent me ducks, fish, fruit, sweetmeats, &c., and he was [259] also kind enough to allow me eight men as night-guards to watch round my fire. In return, I discovered for him in the mountains large quantities of copper, and even gold, which delighted him.

The whole province of Saraburi was in motion to do honour to the white elephant; the King and all his court are coming here; the ministers are here already to watch over him. I decided, therefore, to apply to the Siamese, hoping to obtain more from them than from the Europeans; and yesterday hearing of the arrival of Khrom Luang, the King's brother, I hastened to address myself to him. He, however, had only passed through, and was gone to Prabat, to join the King. However, I found here the man I wanted, the mandarin who has most interest in Laos, and without a letter from whom it would have been difficult to proceed. I did not know him, but I went to him to ask about the Prince, and told him what I wanted. 'I am your man,' said he; 'the Prince can only give an order for me to write a letter, such as I will give you, if you like.' I accepted gladly, and promised him in return my double-barrelled gun, which I could easily replace, 'if

he would only furnish me with the means of travelling through Laos without expense, and would bring the Chaiapume mandarin to reason.' The poor governor of Saraburi was with us, and had to remain more than an hour amidst a number of others kneeling on the bare ground, while I was seated on the mat of the mandarin, by his side, eating sweetmeats and drinking tea, while he dictated a letter in which he called the governor of Chaiapume a fool, and threatened to deprive him of his office, and of this letter I was to be the bearer; and he promised me another general one on the morrow, in which he stated that if I did not receive efficient aid it might bring on a war; [HD: i.e. with France who was then occupying Cochinchina] and this he also repeated to all the chiefs present. My cause was gained, and I could plainly see that our affairs must be going on well in Cochin China; the echo of the cannon had its effect in Siam. However, I had pro-
[260] mised him my gun, and evidently he wished to have it before he gave me the letters. This morning, therefore, I took it to him all cleaned and furbished up. He was delighted with it, and gave me at once the letter for Korat and Chaiapume, and to-morrow I am to have one which will carry me all through Laos without any expense but a few ticals to the cornacs. [HD: i.e. elephant drivers] Without this, judging by what I had to pay for an elephant from Korat to Chaiapume, my purse would have been exhausted by the time I reached the north of Laos, and I should not have had the means of returning without

sending to Bangkok to ask for help, which would have been a work of difficulty, and, what is worse, I should have been exposed all along the route to the insolence of these arrogant mandarins. Now, they will all humble themselves before me, taking me for some important personage sent by the Emperor Napoleon or Queen Victoria to collect butterflies, insects, and birds for them. I shall no longer travel on foot, but on elephants, and shall want for nothing. Agree, then, with me, that out of evil comes good, or rather, that God does all for the best. When at Chaiapume I found myself obliged to retrace my steps, after so many fatigues, and so great a waste of money, I was only downcast for a few minutes; God almost immediately inspired me with the idea that all would turn to my advantage, and this persuasion never left me again. Unaccountably to myself, I was gayer on my return than I had been in coming, although then I was everywhere well received and kindly treated by the people. Even after my discourteous reception [HD: by the mandarin] at Chaiapume, all the inhabitants came to see me, to bring me little presents, and to express their regret that they could not aid me from fear of their chief. The head of the monastery took me to see some ruins similar to those in Cambodia, and gave me a tiger-skin; and all along the road I experienced the same kindness, and numbers came to me to ask for advice and various remedies."

68: Mouhot--276-277 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
Siam
116, 122, 174, 609, 631, 177.63
636.63

"Notwithstanding the small population of Korat, it is the chief town of a province, or rather an extensive state, containing eleven towns or boroughs, chief towns of districts, and a great number of villages, more or less populated. Fifteen days' [277] journey brings you from Korat to Bassac on the banks of the Mekon, and in the same latitude.

My intention was to proceed northwards, only stopping in the province of Louang Prabang, and then to descend the river as far as Cambodia. I hired elephants, and five days after, having passed through several villages inhabited by the descendants of ancient Siamese colonists who had taken refuge there in time of war, passing continually through forests of resin trees thinly scattered, I arrived at Ban Prang, a village where I discovered a ruined tower, and also the remains of an ancient temple. The next place I arrived at was Chaiapoune, the principal Laotian town in the north, and the chief town of the district. Here also I found ruins; but they were inconsiderable, and seemed more like a Laotian imitation than the work of Khmer Dôme. The inscriptions on the other temples in the province of Korat resemble those of Ongcor: here I found upon a block of broken slate-stone an inscription in Laotian characters, but which is unintelligible even to the inhabitants of the country. These, with some remains of idols and towers at the foot of a mountain in the district, were the only vestiges of that ancient

68: Mouhot--276-277 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 122, 174, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

civilization which I discovered in the north. Everything leads me to suppose that here also were the limits which separated the kingdom of Cambodia from that of Vieng Thiane, destroyed during the last war which the Siamese raised against the Western Laotians or white-bellies. It was in this district that I was stopped in my travels by the authorities of the country, who treated me with great rudeness, and who forbade the people to let me have any means of transport, even after seeing my passport. I was therefore obliged to retrace my steps, deploring the expense and loss of time in the best part of the year, and which will cause me serious inconvenience."

3: Robequain--5 S-5 (no date) 1944 Laotians
116, 175, 177.64 France
636.64

"Laos was the last great country to become part of French Indo-China. French influence there had spread gradually, coming first from Cambodia and then from Tonkin and Annam. This peaceful expansion is forever connected with the name of Pavie, the explorer who set out 'to conquer hearts.' Nevertheless, there were clashes with Siam which was eager to acquire all the countries where Thai dialects were spoken. The French protectorate over Laos was not established until the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, under which Siam renounced all claims to territory on the left bank of the Mekong."

7: Thompson--78-79 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 647, 177.64 France
636.64

"Laos offered a virgin field for Doumer's administrative experiments. In 1895, two years after its nominal occupation, Laos had been divided into two districts which corresponded to no geographic or economic reality. Moreover, the country was totally undeveloped, and Cochin-China, as usual, was called upon to subsidize the administrative expenses. In the final analysis, this country had administrators but no administration. It was rather vaguely hoped that the projected railroad system would eventually overcome Laos's [79] geographical barriers and arouse the country from its economic lethargy."

7: Thompson--368-369 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 647, 651, 177.64 France
~~636.64~~

"Though the year 1893 marked the nominal occupation of Laos, it was not until three years later that the country was organized administratively as Upper and Lower Laos. This division remained purely theoretical and it was modified in 1899, when both sections were united under a single Resident Superior and a single budget. The local organization was left as it was found, only the upper stratum of offices was changed. In this the French were inspired by their Siamese predecessors, who had respected native institutions, and also by budgetary considerations. Thirteen French Commissars, aided by native officials and the inevitable interpreters, exercised all powers with a tranquil disregard of Montesquieu's principles. A native guard was adequate to perform police service among such a placid people. Revenues came from the usual head tax paid by the male population in money and in kind, and the commutation of corvée duty, licences for foreign merchants, and an export tax. There was no land tax and only a local levy on the products of the soil. The indirect tax on opium was harder to collect because certain [369] tribes had always raised enough for their own needs. There was little increase in revenues despite the steady increase in population. The budget was poor and not properly drawn up, so it had to be regularly subsidized. Cochin-China, as usual, bore the brunt of this deficit."

7: Thompson--369 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 647, 652, 671, 177.64 France
636, 64

"Of the budget expenditures one per cent was allotted to road building, when paths were almost non-existent in Laos. Fifty per cent of the revenues was absorbed by the administration. A subsidy to the company that navigated the Mekong cost 350,000 francs: the total revenues were 600,000, and all for the occasional transportation of the hundred European residents and their mail. The Laotians were much too amiable and indolent to protest against this state of affairs. They were a charming people, who knew nothing of French civilization but the pleasure of paying taxes. They asked little and so they got little. If this were true of the Laotians it was even more so of the mountain peoples. The country was administered as if it were exclusively inhabited by Laotians. The codes, and the mandarins who applied them, were Laotian. The Provincial Council, long the sole representative organization, had no delegate from the mountaineers. Buddhists were given a monopoly of the education, though the Yaos were Confucianist and the Khas fetishists. The administration concentrated on the valley-bound Laotians and ignored the scattered mountain peoples, who differed radically in religion, language, and customs. The Meos's reaction to the Laotians was shown by the massacre of 1920."

7: Thompson--369-370 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians-
116, 647, 645, 653, 177.64 France
636.64

"The centralized administration of Laos was not only part of the French mania for simplification and uniformity, which for various [370] reasons had reached Laos later than elsewhere, but was primarily stimulated by the economic importance of Laos's mines and town building in the post-war period. The modernization of Vientiane was especially notable, for it had been buried under the jungle, 400 kilometres from the sea, and on an almost unnavigable river. When the potential wealth of the country became evident, the administration began to veer away from the Protectorate ideal to direct government, making tabula rasa of native institutions. Some Hanoi officials took it into their head to suppress the King of Luang-Prabang as an obstacle to transforming Laos into a bona-fide colony. Varenne had the good sense to recognize how much the Laotians venerated their king, and so he rescued his throne from the assimilationist peril. The Protectorate was saved, and to push Laos farther along the trail blazed by Annam and Cambodia, a native advisory assembly was given to the country in 1929, and a mixed Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, both of which recently sent delegates to the Grand Conseil. The process can only fully develop when the rail and road network is completed--that administrative pipe-dream linking Laos to the rest of the Union--which in 1936 looked perilously near fulfilment. An unfortunate corollary is that the forty-year tariff freedom of Laos, a miracle in French colonization, died in 1932 with the growth of the Siamese and Indo-Chinese railroad construction."

10: d'Orleans--298-299 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 208, 647, 651 177.64 France
636.64

"To revert to Luang Prabang, we have a Vice-Consul there, or rather an agent, for he has not got an exequatur. Assisted by twelve interpreters, he does wonders with the limited means at his disposal, but as he is generally short of money and is obliged to borrow from the Chinese to pay the staff, he cannot do much to uphold French interests. The most he can do is to keep up the few friends whom he has gained for us by his personal influence and winning ways. For his title of French agent weighs as nothing in the balance compared to his personal popularity, so that he is seconded but not feared, for it is known that he cannot speak out, that his threats will remain a dead letter, that he is not backed up, and that the Foreign Office seems indifferent to the Mekong question. Compare our mode of action to that of the English in Xieng Maï, a Laos State bordering on Burmah and similarly situated to Luang Prabang. At Xieng Maï there is a consul with an exequatur, that is to say duly recognized by the native Government and his own, well [299] paid and backed up by his superiors, having under his own orders several thousand British protégés and holding very much the same position as the Siamese Commissioner here, this latter being everything while we are nothing."

23: Franck--281-282 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 144, 644, 177.64 France
636.64

"The huge commissaire, now half invalid but still a great force in his province, and beloved apparently by all classes of its residents, was a survival of the earlier colonial days, when a man in his present position was virtually king [282] of all he surveyed. His half-dozen pure-blooded dogs all wore stout canvas pants to assure their offspring against mixture with the local mongrel breed. But some officials had not taken the same precautions with themselves, and had several brown-complexioned children at school in Hanoï, though they were bachelors."

23: Franck--303 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 175, 648, 177.64 France
636.64

"The same altruism and love of their fellow-man that has given the French the arduous task of protecting the rest of Indo-China led to their present position in the affairs of Laos. About the time the Chinese from Yünnan were pillaging Luang Prabang kingdom a Frenchman named Pavie was sent there on a mission. The father of the present king, born Tiao Kham Souk, who lived from 1837 until 1904 and reigned under the name of Ritthithamaronjsac--though he was more popularly known as King Zacharine, and probably not entirely on account of his sweet disposition--was an absolute despot, descended from a long direct line of similar rulers. For the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha has been a kingdom as far back as the memory of its people goes. Zacharine became a great friend of Pavie, at least according to such data as was available in the French government offices of Luang Prabang, and when the Siamese failed to protect him, as they had promised, against the Chinese, he went to Siam under Pavie's wing; and later, in a quarrel with the Siamese, who had burned and looted and carried off most of the people of Vientiane and Xieng Khuang, he made the mistake, like his royal neighbors of Annam and Cambodia, of calling in the French. By 1893 Siam had been compelled to give up all claim to this ancient kingdom and to the magnificent highlands of Tran-ninh, and all Laos became a European dependency under the protection of France."

73: Hammer--240 S-4 (no date) 1951 Laotians
116, 642, 648, 727, 177.64 France
636.64

"In Laos, as in Vietnam, the Chinese occupation had provided a protective screen behind which a nationalist regime had consolidated itself in power. A Free Laotian movement forced the abdication of King Sisavong Vong, set up its own more representative government, and then brought him back to the throne as the constitutional leader of an independent country. Only after the Chinese withdrew could the French return to Laos, and the Chinese troops were in no haste to leave. China did not withdraw the last of its troops from Indochina until midsummer of 1946. The French promised Laos, as they had Cambodia, to restore the areas taken by Thailand in 1941; (8) and in both countries they

8. On November 17, 1946 the French signed an agreement to this effect with Thailand in regard to both Laotian and Cambodian territory.

played upon the fear of Vietnamese and Thai aggression. On August 27, 1946 they signed an agreement with Laos (recognizing the union of the country under Sisavong Vong, formerly king only of Luang Prabang) much like that with Cambodia, by which they restored the prewar protectorate in modifiedbut not radically changed form."

6: Goudal--5 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-1-4
116, 101, 161, 141, 463, 177.65 France
636.65

"The Tai are of Mongolian race. They came from China and formed various groups, including the Laotians (and the Siamese) and the predominant ethnical group in Upper Tonking. Their numbers are assessed at a million. They are of less than average height (1.59 metres). As a people they are very gay and hospitable. Like the Cambodians, the Laotians are Buddhists, but their religious sense goes hand in hand with very great moral freedom. They are indifferent farmers but engage frequently in fishing and hunting and are excellent boatmen. As traders they possess remarkable qualities.

For a long time the Laotian was considered as an apathetic creature, hating all effort and anxious only to enjoy the present without worrying about the morrow or without trying to improve his moral well-being or his material existence by persevering labour. It cannot be denied that this people, whose country was repeatedly laid waste throughout the centuries by invasions from the north and the west, seemed at the time of our arrival in Indo-China to be doomed to decadence. . . At the present time the country has roads and tracks, and its doors are open to commercial and industrial undertakings which have already done much for the development of the land and its mineral wealth. The local authorities have no difficulty in securing the very active co-operation of the inhabitants in the contruction of roads and tracks. . . The legend

of the Laotian as an idle creature, exercising passive resistance to any attempt to make use of his intelligence or his physical labour, had disappeared. Far from taking no interest in public welfare as was long asserted, the Laotians on the contrary seem to take a lively interest in it, and in particular in the progress of the development of the country and of the schools and medical institutions that are being established. (2)

2. Léon Archimbaud: Rapport au nom de la Commission des finances sur le budget général des Colonies (1928), pp. 88-89. This point of view is confirmed by the following statement:

'It has been repeatedly alleged that the Laotian abhors work and does only what is strictly necessary to provide for his own needs and for those of his family. He is said to have two serious defects: a very idle mind and a hatred of effort. This view is mistaken. It is certainly true that there is a certain fundamental apathy and indolence about the Laotian but this can be quite naturally explained by his background and the circumstances

in which his material existence has so far been passed.

'Times have now changed, the country is entirely pacified and war and piracy are merely a memory. . . . Exports of raw materials which were practically non-existent a mere 15 years ago are now increasing rapidly and this is clearly proof that the Laotian worker is not, as has been said, indifferent to gain, but that he can collaborate effectively with the settlers.

'The whole question is one of making use of his services in a manner suited to his special mentality, customs, qualities and defects. It is essential to treat him fairly and kindly; his intelligence and his docility of character enable him to adapt himself gradually to modern working methods. The tin mines in the province of Cammon have for several years been employing Laotian workers who have proved completely satisfactory both for mining the ore and for its treatment.

'Similarly, in connection with road making, in Upper and Lower Laos groups of workers have been used for cutting down

trees and clearing away stumps and undergrowth in the heart of a mountainous country where conditions of work are difficult and resources are slight. Under the skilful direction of our administrators and engineers the use of Laotian labour has proved satisfactory in almost every case." (M. Bosc: Rapport d'ensemble sur le Laos. Conference on Native Communities held at the International Colonial Exhibition, Paris, 1931.) "

10: d'Orleans--268 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 166, 651, 177.65 Siam
636.65

"Fishing is one of the principal resources of the inhabitants of the valley of Nam Ou; they are forced to turn everything into money, for they are crushed by the taxes imposed upon them by Siam. The village, on the right bank, in which we spend the night, is inhabited by some people from Traniuh, who tell us that they left their homes three years ago on account of the cholera, they came to Luang Prabang in five nights, and from there they have come up here; but they do not appear to have gained any advantage from their change of place; they have fled from the frying-pan into the fire, for their new conquerors make each man pay eight rupees a year poll tax; they can remember a time before these heavy burdens were laid upon them, but now they can never satisfy the revenue collectors. A great many of them are forced to sell all their possessions."

10: d'Orleans--296-297 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 208, 647, 651 177.65 Siam
636.65

"We find that a people is being formed; if there is not a sentiment of nationality the governing power is becoming autocratic and an administrative centralization is being effected to its profit, under the control and the direction of the Siamese. The local rulers are in communication with Bangkok, even if they have not been on a visit there; they are learning to appreciate luxury, and they are upon the point of arming their troops with European weapons, of increasing their effective, and lending aid to the forces of the invaders. In order to obtain these charming results of what may be called 'the new civilisation,' much money is needed, but if the king's expenditure has increased it has not been so with the earnings of the people. The latter were not consulted when a tax was put upon opium 'for their good,' when the tchoum-tchoum was made a monopoly, or when a capitation tax of eight rupees for each man and six for each woman was imposed. The consequence is that they are discontented and unable to make any further payments, mandarins from all parts of the kingdom writing that the villagers are willing enough to come to the capital and take the oath, but empty-handed. Last year several had to sell what they possessed, and now they are endeavouring to borrow, and are murmuring [297] against those who have ruined them. The peasants bow the head in subjection because they see no liberator; but the first man who comes forward with some arms and a relatively small sum of money, in order to drive out the Siamese, may be assured of encountering an enthusiastic and almost unanimous welcome from the population."

7: Thompson--370 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 671, 177.67 France
636.67

"Justice has followed in the wake of the Laotian administration. At first it was left almost untouched, with Laotian codes and magistrates, even for the mountain peoples. In 1900 the Resident Superior, Tournier, made a first tentative translation of some Laotian laws, but he found them so incomplete and so poorly organized that the work was temporarily abandoned. In 1908 Sallé, a Saigon magistrate, took up the task. Beginning with the kingdom of Luang-Prabang he promulgated three codes of civil and criminal law and procedure. Then new texts were discovered, which necessitated more study from 1917 to 1922, when another code was promulgated. It was this time very complete, in fact too complete for the type of judge who applied it. Simplification was needed for their understanding as well as for the illiterate masses. A modified version was put out in 1928, but the following year it was again changed. As in Cambodia and Annam, the problem of discovering, understanding, translating, re-organizing, and harmonizing native law with some basic principles of Western legislation is so delicate that it requires an enormous amount of time and experimentation."

7: Thompson--371 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 563, 661, 671, 177.67 France
636.67

"Nowadays the code of Vientiane or of Luang-Prabang is applied to the Thai peoples and to certain Kha tribes; Burmese custom law to the Lus in Muong Sing; and their particular customs to the other ethnical groups--all under magistrates of their own people. The judgments of these courts are examined by the French authorities. This is not a useless precaution, as often the judges themselves are in a quandary about interpreting their laws and traditions. Moreover, the venality of these judges passes all understanding. If the native appears without offerings appropriate to his station and that of the judge, he is lost. Undoubtedly with time the specialization of magistrates, with guarantees in salary and promotion, will obviate the most flagrant of these evils."

7: Thompson--370-371 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 692, 177.69 France
636.69

"The Resident Superior is at the head of native justice, which is administered by native magistrates under the control of French ad-[371]ministrators. As yet there is no specialization of administrative and judicial powers, since magistrates are taken from the civil service. The general organization of the courts resembles that of the other countries of the Union. Unimportant cases are settled by the heads of the villages and cantons. Important suits are sent to the provincial courts, which are presided over by the administrative head of the province and native judges. A higher court judges appeals from the provincial courts and is placed under the Resident Superior, French, and native judges. Wholly French courts exist for European cases."

10: d'Orleans--265 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 177.70 Siam
~~636.70~~

"A Siamese lieutenant, in a yellow silk jacket, white cotton drawers, bare legs, and slippers, invites us to tea at his house. He inquires our names, and promises us some fresh pirogues for the continuation of our voyage. I take advantage of this visit to glance at the armoury of the post. It includes about a dozen rifles of all kinds for percussion caps, Remingtons, Thaï, Laotian, &c."

10: d'Orleans--258 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 712, 177.71 Siam
636.71

[LSS: at Sop Nao] "Accompanied by Takiate, I repair to the Siamese post, which is formed of a collection of huts rather larger than the others, surrounded by a palisade; there is no flag, but a great many women and dogs. The garrison consists of twelve men, in European clothes made of strong linen, and armed with Remingtons. The officer in charge invites me to sit down and take tea with him. He tells me that the boats are ready, and promises to give us a letter for the chief of Muong Ngoi."

10: d'Orleans--268 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 609, 727, 177.72 Siam
636.72

"At first they refuse to let us have any provisions, and as we are now without food I am reduced to extreme measures. The villagers assert that they have neither fowls nor eggs in the place.

'If you do not rear poultry,' I reply, 'we may consider that all we find are wild birds,' and I tell the interpreter to open a hen-house and take out two chickens, offering fifteen pence for them, which is, of course, accepted. When the owners have once examined the coins, sounded them and found them good, they regain confidence and bring us some eggs. Their distrust arises from the proceedings of the Siamese soldiers, who, as they travel, requisition everything they require without any payment; the villagers thought that we might do the same, but now they realize that we are honest people."

10: d'Orleans--292-294 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-4
116, 648, 721, 177.72 France
636.72

"Without seeking to undertake an historical work, which would carry us too far, we have only to glance over some of the old maps to find the justification for that phrase of Garnier's which should have been the groundwork of our policy in this region. 'What we had to do was to make the king of Luang Prabang feel that a day might come when we should take up the rights exercised over his principality by the Court of Hué, which has now become once more our vassal. Unfortunately, the Siamese, whose influence had extended, after 1838 (2) towards Luang Prabang, came and [293] established

2. According to Hallett (A Thousand Miles on an Elephant, p. 201), the Shan States of Vienchang and of Luang Prabang became tributary to Siam. The Siamese authority in the Shan States consisted in arranging their external affairs and sanctioning the nomination of their chiefs. In return for the protection of Siam against the foreign invaders, three States consented to send a triennial tribute, consisting of gold and silver boxes, chased cellarettes and salt-cellars, as well as gold and silver trees worth from fifteen to thirty-five pounds each. To these statements of Hallett as to the early date at which Luang Prabang bebecame tributary to Siam, I would rejoin that the chronicles of Luang Prabang, which have been consulted by M. Pavie, do not contain any

allusions to Siam at an earlier period than the last half-century. The Lai chronicle, to which I referred above when dealing with Deo Van Tri, only alluded to the state of dependency in which the King of Luang Prabang stood with regard to Annam.

M. Deschanel would seem to have anticipated the views suggested, if not openly expressed by Hallett, Colquhoun and Lord Lamington, when he wrote in 1885: 'The day that England seizes Burmah, our authority in the eastern part of the Indo-Chinese peninsula will receive a severe shock. If we do not take our precautions (in the Upper Laos) the English, once established at Xieng Mai (in Siamese Laos) will be masters, morally speaking, of the valley of the Mekong and the important position of Luang Prabang, which was tributary to Annam. Thus cut off from the great river, in danger of seeing England secure the protectorate of Siam, our situation in Indo-China will be very much weakened.'--Compare Garnier above,

themselves there for good a few years ago, when they learnt that the French were approaching from the direction of Tonquin. I have already related, when speaking of Deo Van Tri, the ambush set for his brothers, the Siamese officers being accompanied by an Englishman, one McCarthy, who, with another of his compatriots, had been appointed agent at Luang Prabang. I have also referred to the meeting of French and Siamese troops in the plain of Theng, and the retreat of the latter. We were not able to push on any further, for the aged king of Luang Prabang, who [294] had at one time hoped to be backed up by our arms, foresaw the policy of non-intervention and excessive prudence which would be impressed upon our officers. He recognised that the valiant champions of our colonial extension would have their hands tied and that it would be no use reckoning upon us. 'The Siamese are coming up,' he said to Dr. Neis; 'we are lost.'

As a matter of fact, while we were standing still, the Siamese were advancing, and it is easy to understand the political course followed by the Court of Bangkok; as long as it is left free, it is always marching forward, occupying advance posts, sometimes with only seven or eight militia men, but still making a reality of its occupation. But for Colonel Pennequin, Theng would have fared no better than all the important centres upon the Mekong as far as Cambodia and than several towns between the coast and the river; one can feel that these Siamese troops, when they are on the march, have behind them

10: d'Orleans--292-294 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-4
116, 648, 721, 177.72 France
636.72

the moral if not the effective support of intelligent and fearless persons, who are used to getting their way by firm speaking, the only obstacles which they are likely to encounter from European nations being idle diplomatic protests."

"The immediate cause of the extension of French influence over the Upper Laos was the invasion of Luang-Prabang by Siamese troops in 1855, at a time when the French were, with great difficulty, forcing their protectorate upon the realm of the Annamese ruler. It was not until 1893 that the French demanded the withdrawal of the Siamese troops. A French flotilla threatened Bangkok. The Siamese then abandoned all claims to Laotian lands on the left bank of the Mekong, and in 1907 evacuated the Luang-Prabang territories on the right bank. A series of quarrels, bickerings and pin-pricks [94] between British and French concerning the Burmese frontier was finally settled by the Anglo-French Convention of 1896.

The French owe their Laotian protectorate more to Auguste Pavie, a Breton, who landed as a marine N.C.O. at Saigon in 1869, than to any other one man. Pavie, a bright lad, qualified as a telegraph officer and travelled far and wide in Cambodia learning the language and getting to know the people. Le Myre de Vilars, the first civilian to govern Cochin-China for the French, sent Pavie up the Mekong on a mission of exploration, and in 1885 secured his nomination as consul at Luang-Prabang. Pavie gained the confidence of the Laotians, took sides in natives' disputes and induced the Luang-Prabang ruler to ask for French 'protection.' Later, as French representative at Bangkok, Pavie led the negotiations preceding the Franco-Siamese Convention. The

25; Brodrick--93-94 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-2
116, 177.72 France
636.72

ex-N.C.O. had made good and, of course, was quite forgotten by his fellow-countrymen when he died in 1895.

He had given his country a vast territory over one-third the size of France."

23: Franck--301 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 657, 779, 177.77 France
636.77

"But the French do not insist on imposing their religious beliefs on their wards and colonies. In Luang Prabang they go so far as to provide for the up-keep of the temples and monasteries in the annual governmental budget. In a way this is a means of supporting the educational system, for the priests act as schoolmasters to their novices. In great contrast to China, there is not a single Christian missionary in all the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha, not even a Catholic priest."

26: Brodrick--56 [2] S-3 (1939) 1944 Cambodians -1-2
116, 779, 871, 177.77 France
636.77

"The national faith of Cambodia is Little Vehicle Buddhism shared with Ceylon, Siam and Burma. The Church is, perhaps, stronger and more flourishing in the western lands than in Cambodia and the Laos but the French have done much to raise the educational--and, indeed, the moral--standard of the monks. (1) A school of Pali has

1. The French in Cambodia, as everywhere they rule, educate their subjects. Not only is instruction, both primary and secondary, given in French and Cambodian (we had no system of education in Burmese) but there is a School of Arts and a special School for Magistrates. Indeed, the whole judicial system has been overhauled of recent years. Registration of births, marriages and deaths, land-registration, new penal and civil codes have been introduced and in 1922 the judiciary was reformed on the French model.

been established so that Cambodians shall not have to seek learning in Siam. In every way the French have fostered the Faith and with fairly satisfactory results. While I was in Cambodia in 1939 the Venerable Narada, a Buddhist abbot from Ceylon, visited Cambodia and the Laos, bringing with him slips from the sacred bodhi tree at Anuradhapura.

26: Brodrick--56 [2] S-3 (1939) 1944 Cambodians-2
116, 779, 871, 177.77 France
636.77

He was received with honours by the sovereigns of Cambodia and the realm of Luang-Prabang."

25: Brodrick--104 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
France
116, 779, 177.79
636.79

"In the kingdom of Luang-Prabang there is no doubt that Little Vehicle is the state religion. We have seen how royally and respectfully. H. M. King Sisavang Vong received the Venerable Narada and his slip of the sacred Bodhi Tree. [HD: see category 116, p. 62-63] And the efforts of the French administration to purge the practice and reform the discipline of the monks was mildly successful in the Laos though not so obvious as in Cambodia. Still, the Laotians are difficult to coerce."

7: Thompson--376-377 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 814, 177.81 France
636.81

"The tempo of France's political and economic penetration of Laos has been so much slower than elsewhere in the peninsula that the intellectual counterpart inevitably lagged ever farther behind. Naturally, the [377] first work accomplished was of a practical nature. Massie, of the Pavie Mission, wrote a dictionary in 1890-91, that included some 1,300 words, designed to aid French officials and merchants adrift in Thai countries. He found the language very simple, unlike the complexities of Annamite, and estimated only a year's study necessary for a relative mastery of it."

7: Thompson--377 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 484, 815, 177.81 France
636.81

"Laos has offered a rich field to scientists. Henri Mouhot was its first scientific explorer, and he was followed by others, chiefly zoologists. The Lagrée Mission continued this work, as did Dr. Harmand, who made a great collection there on his 1872-78 series of explorations. Pierre's work on the forest flora of Laos has been perhaps the greatest single scientific achievement."

7: Thompson--377 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 871, 177.87 France
636.87

"Much too small a sum has been allotted to education in the Laotian budget. Even elementary instruction is confined to the chief towns of the country and to the inadequate pagoda schools. Following the success of utilizing the Khmer bonzes as intermediaries, the French tried a similar policy in Laos with much less good fortune. To begin with, it gave the monopoly of education to the bonzes in a country not by any means wholly Buddhistic. The result has been that the mountain peoples remain quite illiterate. The French, in their love of simplification and uniformity, enjoy giving to a formula, which happened to succeed under one set of circumstances, an unjustifiably universal significance. As elsewhere in Indo-China, Laos has suffered from the assimilationist tendency to train natives for menial government service, as clerks and interpreters, by means of a French programme of studies that uproots its Asiatic victims spiritually from their setting. Only in Laos, through negligence or indifference on the part of both French and Laotians, this occurred much later. In 1928, however, Pasquier, on a tour in Laos, was horrified to hear a teacher expounding to his youthful pupils such irrelevant material as the French Wars of Religion."

7: Thompson--378 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 872, 874, 177.87 France
636.87

"In 1931 the government reluctantly pulled itself together to remedy an admittedly bad situation. Certain provinces and certain bonzes were selected as fields for experimentation. An itinerant teacher was sent around to the pagoda schools to conduct model classes with a very simple programme, as a practical demonstration before the bonzes. Blackboards, textbooks, and chalk were doled out to these schools, which had heretofore lacked even such elementary equipment. Bonzes were asked to report semi-annually on the number and progress of their pupils. Slowly an examination was organized with a certificate, so as to set up some standard and to stimulate the sluggish Laotian zeal for knowledge. The problem of further training for bonzes is delicate. The idea of a small scale Normal School was again revived in 1932, and attempts were made to avoid some of the pitfalls which had doomed earlier experiments. The majority of bonzes still could not teach either reading or writing. They were less than half-hearted in falling in with the government's ideas, and would break training at the slightest provocation, thus automatically condemning their schools. The new courses are more modern in method, more prudent in application, and more successful in their results than the old, but it is too soon as yet to draw any conclusions about that elusive and infinitesimal effort known as Laotian education. Less than 300 schools teach fewer than 7,000 pupils in French Laos."

10: d'Orleans--308 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 183, 512, 641, 831

"It may be asked how do the Laotians spend their time if they are lazy and have scarcely any occupation? The answer is easy--the greater part of their days and nights being employed in paying court to the young ladies and in services at the pagoda.

Formerly there was a law dispensing the young men from military service and taxation upon the ground that their first duty was towards the young women and although this law is repealed de jure, it still serves as a rule of conduct and reveals the spirit of this people."

25: Brodrick--109 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 346, 527, 641

"The Moon City [HD: i.e. Vientane] was once a town of sanctuaries and held, they say, over eighty pagodas, but there are now only twenty-four, most of which are in ruins. The place was thoroughly sacked by the Siamese in 1827. The Sisaket pagoda has been more or less restored, and here take place twice a year the ceremonies of the Great and of the Little Oath, [HD: of allegiance] this time to the prevailing government in France and not to the Lord of the Elephants and the Umbrella. [HD: i.e. the king of Luang Prabang]"

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2. The Khas (2) or descendants of the prehistoric aborigines.

(2) In Laos the word Kha means slave, individual of inferior and scornful condition, or else one who lives as a savage. The name, which was applied by the last invaders of Laos to the races which had preceded them there, has the same meaning as Moï in Annamite, Stieng or Peunong in Cambodian and Orang Oulou in Malay.

They mixed with newcomers to form a large variety of secondary tribes which, despite their common origin, differ from one another in type, language, dialect or idiom, mores, customs, dress, etc.

[771 212] The Khas have no form of writing, except for the Khouènes and the Khmous who have been partly converted to Buddhism while their [127] fellows have clung to a crude fetishism in which belief in spirits (Phis) prevails.

[641] A few of these tribes have not yet submitted to our domination and do not pay any taxes.

The principal Kha tribes in Laos are the following:

a) In northern Laos. (The names below should be followed by the word Khas.)

1. PURE KHAS

Khouènes-Khao.	Koussoungs.	Bos.	Kouangs.
Khouènes-Dam.	Bits.	Sapouans.	Saks.
Lemets.	Phèng-Mis.	Kasèngs.	Mouçeus.
Leups.	Sos.	Tiols.	Khmous.
Lawas.	Siengs-Di.	Alous.	
Khos.	Giois.	Ouxas.	
Khouis.	Hock-Roï.	Panas.	

2. KHAS MIXED WITH LAOTIANS, THAIS, LUS AND YOUNS OR IN THE COURSE OF CHANGE

Oks.	Sos.	Phongs.	Phou-Thuongs.
Youngs.	Souès.	Laos-Niôs.	Phou-Oks.
Phou-Phays.	Sèks.	Phou-Thengs.	

779 pass from one generation to another and suffer partial suppressions
78 and numberless interpolations.

[198] The bonzes of our own day do not know the sacred language and are reduced to imitating the "hateful" monks of whom Rabelais speaks, "who neither till the soil nor work, but only mumble
792 a great stock of legends and psalms which they do not understand at all."

792 The bonzes are the ones who consecrate water and prepare with their prayers for the pronunciation of the oath of allegiance which
641 native officials take twice a year to their direct sovereign and, if necessary, to their suzerain both for themselves and for the whole
788 population. The oath consists in reciting the formula and in drinking lustral water in which the candles used for the ceremony have been extinguished and in which the arms of the sovereign have been dipped.

The following is the formula of the oath which is pronounced in Laos twice a year, in the capital of each province, in the presence of the government commissioner. This formula has been in use in the land for centuries and was left just as it was, except for substituting the title of President of the Republic for that of the king of Siam, Vien-Tiane or Luang-Prabang.

Formula of the oath: "I (there follow the names, titles and qualities of each of the mandarins present, each of whom repeats the formula, which is read aloud by one of them, generally the eldest), take an oath of allegiance and offer my life to the President of the French Republic. I give my word before God and before the angels present in heaven. May God and his angels deign to listen to my vows, because the President of the French Republic governs our land with wisdom and skill, follows the ancient customs and protects the bonzes, the authorities and the inhabitants.

"I place myself under his sacred feet, as well as the soldiers and inhabitants who live in my muong, and we all swear him allegiance.

[168] "I ask to serve the administration in the shadow of his sacred feet and to acknowledge his goodness by promising to be faithful and never to revolt in thought, word or body.

"If I show myself ungrateful to, or if I revolt against the President of the French Republic in thought, word or body; if I see or learn that peril threatens the President of the French Republic and remain silent instead of warning him immediately of the peril which I see or know; if I show myself ungrateful towards the President of the

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French Republic, whose happiness and wisdom only grow from day to day, may God and his angels who are present in the air and in heaven punish me, may they deprive me of all necessary things, may they kill me by the sky's lightning, may they strike me with all sorts of terrible maladies, may they cause me to die by the sword or the gun, may wild animals devour me, may I be entirely ruined, and may misfortune burden me everywhere I go or reside. May God and his angels cover my body with sores, and may diseases strike me, and may I die abandoned by all so as to serve as an example to the world; after my death may I be condemned for centuries to the flames of hell, and may nothing enable me to escape these exemplary punishments.

"If after (a thousand years) I am reborn to a new life in any part of the world whatsoever, may I not have an instant of happiness, may I lack everything, and may I never see God and his angels, who will never be able to cleanse me of the fault which I have committed by showing myself ungrateful and faithless towards the President of the French Republic.

"If, on the contrary, I am grateful and faithful to the President of the French Republic, if I never revolt in thought, word or body, if I never ally myself with foreigners to disturb his security and that of his people, may God and his angels who are present in the air and in heaven make me live long in this world, may I avoid all the dangers which threaten me, and may I be exempt from all human slavery; I drink the water of the oath; may peace and prosperity reign in my home.

"After my death, as a reward for my faithfulness, may my happiness continue in heaven in a place where joys and pleasures abound, and may I find myself with God in the midst of his angels. If later on (in a thousand years) I am reborn to a new life, may I be showered with riches, dignities, joys and pleasures, may I obtain all that I desire, may I be exempt from all human misery, and finally may I again find myself in the presence of God and his angels, as a reward for my fidelity and my gratitude, with the President of the French Republic.

"I drink the water of the oath" (1).

(1) After Captain Gosselin, op. cit. [Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900.]

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[169] The formula used in southern Laos is more concise and slightly different.

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The natives of Laos, whatever their race, have a great respect for any oath and stand in much dread of the consequences of perjury.

Oaths are widely used in courts of law in cases of disputes between individuals. When a judge has reached the end of his arguments and is confronted with a stubborn plaintiff he sends him to the pagoda before the sacred statues to deny the accusation or affirm his statements.

In this case, the above formula is modified in accordance with the needs of the case, as regards the object of the oath and the type of authority invoked as sanction. But the basis is always the same.

As a means of legal procedure, an oath is regarded as an argument of such force and of such grave consequences that it is used only as a last resort. In Laos it is the ultima ratio judicium.

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The Laotian calendar (1). The Laotian year is calculated on the

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(1) Since the bonzes establish the calendar we have thought it well to place this information in the chapter devoted to religion in Laos.

phases of the moon and includes twelve months which are divided into twenty-four half-moons. The months have thirty and twenty-nine days alternately, giving 354 days in the year or eleven days less than in the solar year.

In reality the Laotian calendar is luni-solar, for in order to bring the ordinary year into approximate harmony with the solar year an extra month is inserted every three years after the eighth month, and repeats the latter. It is called the "second eighth month" (Dueune pèt song). In chronological dating, the Laotian year begins about the middle of the fifth month (April).

Like the Siamese, the Laotians have adopted a system for co-ordinating and numbering their years which is based on a great cycle of sixty years and two other intermediate cycles of ten and twelve years each. The first of these intermediate cycles is decimal, and the second is zodiacal (duodecimal).

[170] Each year is designated first by the name of the great cycle, then by those of each of the intermediate cycles and by a chronological number.

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perfumed water in the hope of being cured of the ills from which they suffer. In the course of the day water is sprinkled now on the bonzes, who go forth in palanquins to pay each other visits, and now on the King, the great men and the native officials, who pass back and forth through the city for two days running, some on elephant back and the others in sedan chairs.

"Although the water used in sprinkling the bonzes and the King is generally clean and perfumed, the same cannot always be said of the water used to sprinkle the kingdom's great men and officials. Every day until four in the afternoon, the young girls try to douse the young men who pass by and to smear their faces black. The young men do not sprinkle the girls, but may try to smear them with black too.

"After four in the afternoon the people get flowers and use them to decorate the pagodas. In the evening, inside the pagodas which are empty of their Buddhas, young men and women meet around the altar and Ngan (celebrations) take place each day until such time as the statue of Buddha resumes its place in the sanctuary.

"On the morning of the fourth day all the officials of the Laotian administration who have been able to come to Luang-Prabang visit the King in ceremonial dress to offer him their best wishes for the new year. After an invocation the grand master of ceremonies presents the wishes of all those present, with candles lit and flowers which each person has brought all around. Again in the name of all those present, the grand master respectfully places the traditional cotton threads around the royal wrists. Then the members of the audience come up one after the other to kneel before the king, offer him their little bouquets flanked by wax candles and touch the outstretched hand of the monarch with their inclined foreheads. This is a most picturesque manner of hand-kissing and paying homage (1).

(1) The administration of the "little oath" or oath of the fifth month takes place during this celebration.

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"Holiday of the eighth month (July). This is the entry of the bonzes into retreat (this holiday corresponds to our meat days preceding Lent).

"Each year, from the eighth to the eleventh month, the bonzes are not allowed to sleep outside the pagoda to which they are

daughter, Princess Nang Yot Keo. At an indeterminate date which must come between 1340 and 1350, he was given the command of an army destined to reconquer the kingdom of his fathers. According to the Laotian chronicle, the victorious advance of this army enabled Fa Ngoum to declare himself king of Lan Xan. He immediately demanded the submission of all the Thai princes of Mekong. The center of resistance to Fa Ngoum was Phai Nam (spiny bamboos) because of the impenetrable vegetable belt which protected it like veritable ramparts. Fa Ngoum seized it by means of the classical trick of ornamenting missiles with gold and silver, then pretending to retreat and then pouncing on the enemy at the moment when they had scattered to gather the precious metal. In memory of this episode, the town was baptized Vieng Kham which means "circled with gold" and which later became Vientiane, "circled with sandalwood." Fa Ngoum organized his kingdom with force and reigned as a despot. Complaints were made and the king of Cambodia advised him to be moderate. Fa Ngoum then requested that a mission be sent him from Cambodia consisting of religious and lettered men, and of artisans. This mission introduced the orthodox books of Buddhism and a statue of the Buddha (Prabang) which had been presented in the eleventh century to the Khmer sovereign by the king of Ceylon. Prabang thus became the safeguard of the kingdom.

175 [723] 103 175 641 177 779

Up until recent years this tradition led one to believe that the introduction of Buddhism into Laos dated from Fa Ngoum. The discovery of a certain number of Buddhist sculptures of Khmer manufacture of the twelfth century A. D., has destroyed this theory (see below: Introduction of Buddhism to Laos).

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After a series of wars, Fa Ngoum died in 1373 at the age of fifty-eight. His successor Sam Sen Thai reigned from 1373 to 1416. He kept [16] peace in his kingdom and passed on to his successor a prosperous kingdom, well established and living in peace, and at the same time dreaded by its neighbors.

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The fifteenth century saw a succession of sovereigns about whom history has nothing in particular to tell. Let us mention, however, a war with the emperor of Annam. The first part of the sixteenth century passes under the reign of King Phothisarath (1506-1547), a pious Buddhist. One of his most famous actions is the edict against the cult of Phis. Setthathirath came into power in 1548 after a war with the Burmese. His death was followed by a troubled period. The beginning of the seventeenth century is particularly obscure, but in 1637 a great king called Souligna Vongsa (1637-1694) ascended

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Then the royal retinue proceeds to the That Luang where the king must spend the night in a sala. He is accompanied by his ministers and in principle may not leave until they come and fetch him.

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On the morning of the fifteenth day, the king, carried by his guards, goes to make his offerings to the bonzes, and the whole day is devoted to public rejoicing, of which one form deserves to be mentioned. It is the game of the Thi khi.

Its origin, so far as we know at present, remains obscure. The Pra Lak Pra Lam tells us that Indra and Rama played Thi Khi together, and that since that day it has been played at Vientiane.

Let us observe that the game was unknown at Luang Prabang. It was imported from the south. Tradition required that it be played on horseback, when it was played like polo.

At the present time it is played on foot with a stick with the end bent over like a crosier and a ball the size [47] of a child's head and is similar to hockey. There are two opposing sides, the office-holders and the people. The latter should in principle win two victories out of three games. The game has no rules, there is no umpire and no limit to the ground played on. Sometimes the ball goes off into the shrubbery, and all the players go and look for it. Only a hypothetical line indicates the limit of the enemy side. [641]

The feasts of Vat Inpeng and of Vat Ong Tu merely repeat those of Vat Simuong and That Luang.

[48] THE SECULAR CEREMONIES

The Sou Khouan can be considered as the transition between the purely religious ceremonies and the secular feasts. [527] [725]

Actually Sou Khouan means "call and reception of the soul." The Laotian has a profound belief in the transmigration of the soul. According to him, the human body is inhabited by thirty-two khouan (spirits) each of whom presides over the function of a member, an organ or an intellectual faculty.

When a human being dies, all of the thirty-two souls leave his body. According to the merits which have been acquired, they go either to the heaven of the gods, or to the province of the dead. Certain beings who have died in an abnormal manner, by suicide, drowning, etc., become wandering souls. They are to be feared, because they return to earth in order to torment the living, and one must make numerous sacrifices to them.

25: Brodrick--12 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
631, 642

"Constitutions were adopted in 1947 for both Cambodia and the Laos, but in the latter country the sovereign has rather more power than in the former. All the public acts of H. M. King Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia must be countersigned by the Prime Minister and another member of the Cabinet. Only one countersignature is required in the Laos where, moreover, when Parliament is not sitting the monarch may govern by decrees which, however, must be ratified later by the elected representatives of the people.

After the Japanese surrender the 'Free Laotians' (protected by the Chinese army of occupation) secured the abdication of King Sisavong Vong of Luang Prabang. A 'constitutional' government was then set up which restored the King as the ruler of an independent Laos comprising not only his former kingdom of Luang Prabang, but all the Laotian territories of Indo-China."

73: Hammer--240 S-4 (no date) 1951 Laotians
116, 642, 648, 727, 177.64 France
636.64

"In Laos, as in Vietnam, the Chinese occupation had provided a protective screen behind which a nationalist regime had consolidated itself in power. A Free Laotian movement forced the abdication of King Sisavong Vong, set up its own more representative government, and then brought him back to the throne as the constitutional leader of an independent country. Only after the Chinese withdrew could the French return to Laos, and the Chinese troops were in no haste to leave. China did not withdraw the last of its troops from Indochina until midsummer of 1946. The French promised Laos, as they had Cambodia, to restore the areas taken by Thailand in 1941; (8) and in both countries they

8. On November 17, 1946 the French signed an agreement to this effect with Thailand in regard to both Laotian and Cambodian territory.

played upon the fear of Vietnamese and Thai aggression. On August 27, 1946 they signed an agreement with Laos (recognizing the union of the country under Sisavong Vong, formerly king only of Luang Prabang) much like that with Cambodia, by which they restored the prewar protectorate in modifiedbut not radically changed form."

of Ayuthya. /45/ And even before it disappeared it had been 175*
supplanted by Vientiane, which was built some ten kilometers 633
upstream, unless the two cities formed a single immense one or 648*
unless the first one moved without changing its name at first 631

Capture of Phaï-Nam (Vientiane) Whatever the case may be, 643*
the center of resistance against Fa-Ngoun was then called "Phaï- 721
Nam" (thorny bamboos) because of the impenetrable vegetable 175*
belt which defended it like veritable ramparts. It resisted re- 725
peated assaults and Fa-Ngoun was able to get the better of it only 633
by using a ruse. He had gold and silver projectiles shot at the 631
bamboo enclosure and then simulated a retreat. The besieged army, seeing the royal troops fall back, thought that their delivery was at hand and came out to pick up the precious projectiles. Then the assailants suddenly returned to the charge and entered the city without difficulty (1). Phaya-Phao had to make his submission.

1. These tactics are celebrated in several Thaï legends to explain the capture of a stronghold.

He received his pardon and was kept on as governor of the principality.

In memory of this episode, the city was baptized /46/ "Vien-Kham" which signifies "gold enclosure." This was later corrupted to "Vientiane" (sandalwood enclosure) (1)

1. There is permanent confusion in the Laotian chronicles between the Vien-Kham on the banks of the Mékong and the Vien-Kham in Tran-Ninh.

Formation of the kingdom of Lan-Xang (1353). Fa-Ngoun, 643*
henceforth the uncontested master of a vast kingdom, gave it a 175*
strong organization and ruled over it as a despot. 642

He summoned an Oupahat or second king to him to assist him
in his political duties and instituted a Council of ministers chosen /646/
from the princes of royal blood and arranged in a hierarchy according to their respective ranks and attributions. But he would suffer no infringement on his own authority, neither at court or in the provinces. He took terrible reprisals against the vassals who did not obey his orders blindly, and replaced nearly all of them in succession with mere governors as the fancy took him.

643* Complaints against such tyranny, which had heretofore been un-
175* known in the region of Lan-Xang, reached his father-in-law the king
642 of Cambodia. The latter summoned his son-in-law to Angkor and in the name of the Buddhist precepts advised him to use /47/ moderation and "pity towards the weak" (1). Fa-Ngoun seemed to accept the

1. According to Auguste Pavie's translators, Fa-Ngoun was content merely to send an embassy to Angkor at the request of Queen Nang-Kéo.

lesson, was baptized in accordance with the rites of the Hinayana and himself urged that a Cambodian mission composed of clergymen, scholars and artisans be sent to Muong-Swa. Pha-Maha-Pasaman-Théla-Tiao, the head of the mission, brought the sacred books of orthodox Buddhism and a statue of Buddha which had been given to the Kmer sovereign by the king of Ceylon in the ninth century. This statue was the Prabang, which became the palladium of the kingdom of Lan-Xang (2).

2. When the mission passed through Vientiane the governor Phao is supposed to have requested and obtained the right to keep the statue in the city for three years. Many legends recount the voyage of the Prabang in diverse manners and disagree as to the route followed. Here again it may be a question of the Vien-Kham in Tran-Ninh.

346 The Prabang. When they reached their destination the Kmer
175* workers began the construction of a temple, the Vat-Gnot-Kéo, where
643* the Prabang was solemnly placed in 1358. But it was not until two
103 centuries later, when the seat of the capital was transferred to Vientiane by the king Setthathirat (1563), that the name of Luang-Prabang was given to the city.

643* /48/ When he returned to his States Fa-Ngoun proclaimed him-
175* self Supreme Chief of religion and resumed, with a severe hand al-
631 though never exceeding the bounds of firmness, the administration of the various territories which then made up the kingdom of Lan-Xang. These were, namely, Muong-Swa in the strict sense; Xieng-Khong in the north (present region of Houei-Sai); Vientiane, Hoi-Luang and Xieng-La (on the Mékong downstream from Vientiane), Muong-Kabang (Bassac) in the south; Kham-Keut (now the province of Cammon) and Muong-Van (Savannakhet) in the east.

439 after a ten year reign without leaving any sons." He thus explicitly
643* contradicts the native documents which recount the many competitions
175* for the throne which had divided the royal family, and according to which the "present king" succeeded his uncle (Visai).

He adds that the government of the country was divided, under the
175* high authority of the king, between three great officials:

642

645 1. The head of the army who was "governor of the province which produces benzoin" and commander of the city of Vientiane. He doubtless refers to the prime minister Tian-Thala, the son-in-law of Souligna whom he calls Tevinia-Assen;

2. The governor of Nakhone or viceroy, who commanded the whole southern part of the kingdom, including Attopeu, as far as the Cambodian frontier. This was the Nan-Tharath of the Annals, whom he calls Lachaen;

3. The minister of the Palace who is in charge of relations with ambassadors.

These three high officials "were given /110/ an audience only every two or three months, unless there were some necessity or the king had them summoned expressly."

/693/ Next to the king there was a "tribunal in charge of civil and criminal affairs" which was composed of five of his relatives who had daily access to the sovereign.

/651 Finally, Van Wusthof estimates the king's income at "two piculs"
643/* per year of gum lac, benzoin and gold (1).

1. Cf. Georges Maspero, op. cit. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./ A picul was equal to 61 kilograms.

175* The Account of Father Marini (1666). This evocation of the
114 Laotian kingdom in the seventeenth century does not differ appreciably, on the whole, from two travel accounts published in Italian at about the same time by the Jesuit fathers Martini (quoted p. 104, note 2) and Marini. A translation of the latter's accounts was placed on sale in Paris in 1666 (2). No matter how picturesque it may be in its

/127/ 2. Relation nouvelle et curieuse des royaumes de Tonquin et de Laos, traduite de l'italien du P. Marini Romain, par L.P.L.C.C. (F. Lecomte; cel.), a Paris, chez Gervais Clouzier, au Palais, sur les degres, en montant pour aller a

domains after the retreat of the Chinese plunderers who 643*
had driven them out. 648*
175*

who made common cause with them and raised an army of six thousand men in Muong-Hou and Muong-Thene, which he placed at their disposition.

The two brothers then returned to Luang-Prabang, attacked it 643*
and entered without any difficulty. Indeed Thao-Nong, not feel- 642
ing able to resist them, had abandoned the city and taken the 175*
Prabang to Vientiane. King-Kitsarath at once assumed the title of King of Luang-Prabang and notified Sai-Ong-Hue that he regarded himself henceforth as sole master of the Laotian provinces to the north of Xieng-Khane, leaving "the king of Vientiane" sovereignty over the southern provinces (1707).

Schism of Lan-Xang into two kingdoms: Luang-Prabang and Vientiane (1707).

We do not know how Sai-Ong-Hue received this ultimatum which cut off from his kingdom /134/ nearly half of the territory under his authority. Indeed, he was in no position to undertake another large-scale expedition, preoccupied as he doubtless was with strengthening his status in Vientiane itself first, where his Annamite army had perhaps not been received with any great enthusiasm by his new subjects. He therefore had to accept his cousin's ultimatum, and Laos was divided into two independent kingdoms.

In the north was that of Luang-Prabang, which had as its limits 642
Xieng-Khane, Pa-Kau-Dai (Kham-Phe-Khao), the Sip-Song-Chau- 631
Thai (the twelve cantons of the Black River) and six cantons of the Houa-Phans (Thousand Springs).

In the south was the kingdom of Vientiane, which stretched from Xieng-Khane to Sup-Mi, to the Khone waterfalls, Phou-Sang-Tang-Hoe and Ba-Tam-Tan-Kao.

This was the end of Lan-Xang, for this schism was to be a 643*
mortal one. 648*

From that time on the two principalities never ceased being 175*
jealous of one another, tearing at one another and increasing their servitude towards foreigners by calling the neighboring princes to their aid in order to recreate, each to his own profit, a Laotian unity which had become impossible by the terms of the old adage: "Every divided kingdom /135/ must perish." It was a fratricidal struggle in

175* easily drove back the Laotian detachments which were sent to
648* meet it and rejoined the main column in the vicinity of Vientiane
726 itself.

The siege of the city lasted four months, and when the Siamese entered the city Ong-Boun had fled with Chao-In, one of his sons (2).

2. According to Prince Damrong, Ong-Boun hid at Kham-Keut. According to His Royal Highness Phanuphanthavongswardja he took refuge in Annam. /Prince Damrong, Guerres siamo-birmanes, Bangkok, 1920. His Royal Highness Phanuphantuvongswardja, Repression de la revolte de Vientiane, Bangkok, 1926. /

Chulalok took possession of the territory in the name of his sovereign, left a military occupation force, gave its administration to a governor who settled in the royal palace, and then regained
/778/ Thanabury taking Ong-Boun's children with him and carrying off the Prabang and the Prakeo.

642 Interregnum (1778-1782). Four years passed during which
175* Vientiane lived /157/ in direct dependency on the Siamese government. At Bangkok, in the meantime, Phia-Tak was attracting attention by eccentricities which soon alienated the whole court. Finally this rude warrior went insane, disorders broke loose and General Chakkri, who was on duty in Cambodia, hastily returned to bring the rebels back into obedience. He strengthened the throne to his own profit, for he mounted it under the name of Phra-Phuti-Chao-Luong (June 1, 1782) (1).

1. This king, who is also called Rama the First, was the founder of the present dynasty. He transferred the seat of his government from the right bank of the Menam to the left bank, where he laid the first foundations of modem Bangkok.

648* Submission of Ong-Boun. Ong-Boun gained knowledge of these
175* events in his exile. He also learned that his sons had been kindly treated by the new sovereign, and he then decided to make his submission. The king of Siam displayed clemency, gave the aged prince permission to end his days in his old capital, and gave the government of the principality to his eldest son Chao-Nan.

to Chao-Noi to deliver the fugitive up to him as soon as he entered 648*
Chao-Noi's States. 175*

The only alternative was an unpleasant one for the king of Xieng-Khouang, who doubtless regretted, although somewhat tardily, that he had not given more support to his neighbor when there was perhaps still time. To give Anou up would be to expose himself to reprisals from their common suzerain the emperor of Annam, while to conceal his presence in his domain was surely to draw down the immediate wrath of Siam.

Captivity and death of Anou (1831-1835). Losing his head, he 727
met the most immediate threat by arresting Anou and holding him 643*
prisoner in /176/ Muong-Soui until the arrival of the Siamese en- 175*
voy, a Lu chieftain named Chao-Nan (1). The vanquished king

1. Up until the end of the eighteenth century the Lus formed /563/
an important group in the kingdom of Xieng-Kheng. Their /636/
chieftain, the Chao-Fa, who was then a tributary of Burma, had his residence at Muong-Sing. After Phia-Tak's victories over the Burmese, certain Lu families served the Siamese while others dispersed in the mountains of Luang-Prabang and Xieng-Mai and the Chao-Fa settled in Muong-You to remain under the protection of the king of Burma. See below, Chapter VIII, p. 331 (question of the Sip-Song-Panas), and 355.

was put in golden chains and sent on a richly caparisoned elephant to Bangkok, where he found a luxurious prison which had been prepared to receive him (1831). He remained there for four years and died in circumstances which have remained mysterious (2).

2. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique." Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./ Some accounts claim that he poisoned himself. Mgr. Pallegoix relates that he was placed in an iron cage and exposed to the insults of the populace, and that he succumbed to the bad treatment which he had to endure.

Destruction of the kingdom of Vientiane. Siam made an ordi- 727
nary Siamese province out of the old kingdom of Vientiane, a kind 175*
of military frontier land which it called "Lao Phoueun." It would /642/

727 be true to say that Phia-Bodin's soldiers left only "the land, the
175* water and the wild beasts of the forest." In accomplishing this
/642/ methodical devastation the Siamese had /177/ pursued a double goal: to repopulate their own territories which the Burmese had razed in the same way fifty years before, and to make sure that Annam would have no interest, in the future, in a region which had been emptied of its inhabitants (1). They completed the organiza-

1. Only a few remote muongs bordering on the mountains of Annam were spared, and their governors hastened to ask protection from the powerful neighboring emperor.

tion of their conquest by creating the hereditary fief of Bassac in the south and offering it to Chao-Houy as a reward for his treachery (2).

2. Chao-Houy reigned for thirteen years and died in 1840 at the age of sixty-three. (Annals of Bassac.)

648* The end of Chao-Noi (1832). Several of Anou's sons, however,
175* (whose names have come down to us: Chao-Phoui, Chao-Xang, Chao-Khi, Chao-Men and Chao-Nou) had been able to reach Hue where they had denounced Chao-Noi's conduct to Minh-Mang. The latter at once summoned the king of Xieng-Khouang to his court.

Chao-Noi realized that the painful hour of explanations had come. This made him all the more anxious to seek evasions, and in his place he sent the governor of Muong-Sen to whom he entrusted rich gifts in the hope of cozening his suzerain. All in vain. The emperor was furious. /178/ He had the delegate thrown into prison and sent a detachment of 1200 men under the command of a general to find Chao-Noi himself. The prince of Tran-Ninh had to resign himself to his departure with all his family, and he appeared before Minh-Mang who brought him to task most severely:

"How could you forget that King Anou was my vassal, and why did you give him up to Siam?"

Chao-Noi knew that his case had been judged in advance and that he was not risking anything, so he did not disguise his thoughts but replied rather insolently:

"I did not deliver up Chao-Anou. The Siamese army pursued him and took him prisoner. You are not ignorant of the fact that the king of Siam threatened anyone who should give support to Vientiane with his vengeance, and you yourself did not aid him.

648* on the left bank of the Mekong and to the islands in the river. A
175* neutral zone twenty-five kilometers wide was created on the right bank of the Mekong. Reparations were awarded us for the attacks on Tong-Xieng-Kham and Outene. And finally, all French subjects and nationals who were being held or had been transported to the right bank were to be returned to us or given permission to return to their homes. France was to occupy Chantaboun as a /315/ guaranty until all the provisions of the treaty had been fulfilled (1).

1. The occupation of Chantaboun was to last until January 12, 1905. Cf. below, p. 349.

It seemed that this act, which, generally speaking, satisfied all our requirements, would settle once and for all the question of the western frontiers of French Indo-China and finally put an end to our irritating difficulties with Siam. This was not at all the case, and it was clearly seen, on the contrary, shortly after its ratification, that its hasty redaction had made it a diplomatic instrument which was absolutely incapable of preventing all disputes in the future.

It first provoked the protests of the British, who were justifiably surprised at not having been consulted concerning the northern limits and who, in order to safeguard their preponderancy in the Sip-Song-Panas, incontinently demanded the creation of a buffer state between its Burmese territories along the Upper Mekong and those along the left bank which Siam had just ceded to us. Furthermore, the clause relative to the establishment on the right bank of a restricted strip twenty-five kilometers wide was too laconic and imprecise not to provoke further disputes, disputes which the uncertainty and weakness of our policies /316/ were to multiply. Finally and above all, for the kingdom of Luang-Prabang the treaty created the paradoxical situation of cutting it in two and making it a half French and half Siamese state. Under these conditions Siam cannot really be blamed for not having allowed any opportunity to escape, in what followed, which might have freed it from such poorly defined obligations, when we had had every latitude to impose our own conditions and all necessary elements for elaborating a definitive set of rules.

175* To make matters worse, the French government neglected to
648* complete so important (although so imperfect) a diplomatic action
642 by means of an agreement specifying its own relationship to the king of Luang-Prabang in accordance with a procedure analogous to the one previously adopted with respect to the other sovereigns who were

proteges of Indo-China. For despite the plentiful information 175*
which Pavie had been able to communicate to Paris regarding the 648*
political status of the Laotian territories, our diplomats had not 642
ceased to regard all these territories, from north to south without distinction, as simple "muongs" which were perpetually in dispute between Annam and Siam and to confuse the chief of a State who was the true legitimate descendant of a long line of kings with the "chaumuongs" of old /317/ principalities which had long since been dismembered (1).

1. This oversight still weighs heavily on the political life of all of Laos, the legal status of which still remains vague. Is it a direct administration or a protectorate? In fact, the representative of France directly administers the provinces whose leaders used to be ordinary chaumuongs, but in the case of Luang-Prabang he grants its king, among other monarchical prerogatives, the privilege of making laws and governing the internal affairs of his territory by means of ordinances. This de facto situation was explicitly recognized in 1917 by a treaty concluded between Governor General Albert Sarraut and King Sisavang-Vong. This treaty, however, coming as it does only from the head of the colony, merely constitutes an administrative act of a domestic Indo-Chinese type. It is to be desired that a diplomatic instrument should be forged -- no matter how tardily -- which on the one hand would sanction once and for all the privileges accorded to the sovereign of Luang-Prabang and, on the other hand, would specify the nature of our administration over the rest of Laos.

In any case, our immediate preoccupation had to be with carry- 648*
ing out the treaty, and with its consequences. Parleys were begun 175*
with Great Britain, and on November 25 resulted in a protocol creating an Anglo-French commission of delimitation. Pavie, while remaining the titular holder of the consulate general in Bangkok, was appointed to preside over this commission together with the Englishman Scott, and to determine our frontier with China from the Mekong to the Red River. Since it was equally urgent to take effective possession of the new territories, Pavie was also /318/ directed to proceed to their organization and was named commissioner general in Laos for this purpose. Finally, he was given the delicate

familiar and grateful greetings of all how much their hearts are 648*
beating in unison with mine, and what goodwill they wish me for 175*
my past labors! What a feeling of magic tranquillity the faces of the old king and queen expressed as they witnessed my return among them to guarantee the new conditions extended to their dear country! What eloquent marks of gratitude in the welcome full of respectful joy which the king their son and the second king made to France's representative and to the friend of the Laotians! How deeply I feel the inexpressible charm of the leader of the Wat-Mai bonzes! My companions experience my own satisfaction and enjoy my happiness!"

Fulfillment of the treaty. Installation of the French commissioner in Luang-Prabang (June 5, 1894). There he again saw Vice-consul Lugan, who had replaced the unfortunate Massie in Luang-Prabang some eighteen months previously, and his "old friend" Vacle who had entered the Indo-Chinese administrative force a little while ago and had recently arrived to take control of the country's internal affairs. Pavie hastened to install the latter officially /322/ as the /642/
government commissioner to the sovereign who was now our protege.

ZAKARINE, king of Luang-Prabang, 1841. KING 1894-1904.

Shortly after the last Siamese agent's departure, Kham-Souk, the 643*
eldest son of Oun-Kham whose health was declining and whose 648*
faculties were rapidly deteriorating (1), had officially assumed 175*

1. King Oun-Kham died on December 15, 1895, at the age of eighty-four.

power under the name of Zakarine, together with his cousin Boun-Khong, the son of Souvanna-Phouma, as Oupahat. He wielded his power "in a carefree yet conscientious fashion, and perhaps also with a certain skepticism which was quite excusable in a prince who had been subject to Siamese intervention for several years and who saw the French domination begin with the partition of his territory and his capital into two parts" (2).

2. Cf. Mission Pavie, "Geographie et Voyages," Vol. V, P. Lefevre-Pontalis, pp. 77-78.

643* Indeed King Zakarine, no matter what his attitude of detachment
648* towards power, was noteworthy for his simplicity, his good sense and
175* his ability to see /323/ the usefulness of certain reforms. For he was
/178/ very poorly seconded by the mandarins of the kingdom council (Senam),
/646/ who were "incompetent men and scoffers dominated by their immediate and individual interests" (1). On the whole, however, the

1. Cf. ibid., p. 78.

642 political and social organization which we found was a good one,
178 and we acted wisely in preserving all the mechanisms of the native administration and in respecting the traditions, customs and mores of the populations throughout all of Laos, insofar as they were compatible with our own institutions (2). This was all the more easy for

2. Thus we were led to suppress radically the slave traffic which was enriching a few Siamese, Cambodian, Laotian and Burmese mandarins. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos (Posthumous edition), Paris, 1911./, pp. 230 ff.

us in that all the Laotian muongs (whether or not they were dependencies of Luang-Prabang) had a similar organization which was a smaller model of that of the kingdom (except for the Senam) and
647 was an obvious vestige of the epic times of Fa-Ngoum and the great
642 State of Lan-Xang (3). Like the king, the governors of /324/
631

3. The following was, in outline, the political organization of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang in 1894:

/643/* At its head the king, the great master of existences (Somdet-Phra-Chao), and the second king, the great master responsible for the preservation of property (Chao-Maha-Oupahat).

Then came the minister princes: the Ratsavong or first prince and right-hand minister; the Ratsabout or second prince and left-hand minister; and the Komakhoune or third and fourth princes and ministers of the center and of the civil services.

The first three mandarins, who bore the title of Phaya,
/646/ were, in order of importance: 1) the Phaya Muong-Sen or
/693/ first right-hand mandarin, head of the Senam and head of of justice; 2) the Phaya Muong-Tiane or first left-hand

mandarin and head of the tribunal; 3) the Phaya Muong- 647
Khang or first mandarin of the center and head of the Serv- 642
ice of public works, transports, etc. 631

The Senam was composed of the Phaya Muong-Khoua or /646/
second right-hand mandarin, and of four councillors under the direction of the Phya Muong-Sen.

The judges or Kromakanes, who were under the Phaya /693/
Muong-Sen and the Phaya Muong-Tiane, numbered seven in all and included the Phaya Muong-Sai or second left-hand mandarin.

Last came the mandarins responsible for the collection of /653
taxes, the assembling of labor drafts and the transport of 644/
bamboo, rattan, thatch and pirogues for the king's service and the public services; then the pages and chamberlains or mahaleks, the military leaders, the functionaries responsible for petty tasks inside the palace, the treasurers, storekeepers, etc.

The reader will note the insignificant position reserved /701/
for the military mandarins in this hierarchy. Of Sam-Sene-Thai's powerful army (see above, p. 56), nothing at all remained.

provinces were aided by an Oupahat, a Ratsavong and a Ratsabout who, like the court dignitaries, gave their orders to the tassengs or canton heads who had authority over the village leaders (naibans). By establishing the different government commissions in Laos Pavie therefore strengthened the native authorities in their age-old prerogatives and the princes of Luang-Prabang in /325/ their dynastic rights and privileges. In order to mark their absolute attachment to France and to give more force to their vehement protests against awarding Siam the part of the kingdom situated on the right bank, the latter insisted on receiving, in solemn fashion and as soon as possible, the investiture of the government of the Republic from the commissioner general. After his return from Muong-Sing eight 643*
months later, Pavie drew up on parchment in Hanoi the titles of the old king Oun-Kham, of King Zakarine, of his brother and of the Oupahat Boun-Khong, and on April 19, 1895 proceeded to this important ceremony.

"All those who had a part in the control of affairs," he wrote as he finished the account of his mission, "were present. The entire populace was invited. In the name of the government of the

643* Republic and by delegation of the governor general of Indo-China, I confirmed the status of the princes in Laos, which had become a French possession. They piously accepted, from the man who loved their country so greatly, the responsibility of continuing under France's authority to lead it with wisdom and goodness" (1).

1. Mission Pavie, "Geographie et Voyages," Vol. II, p. 382.

/326/ Provisory administrative organization (July-August 1894).
642 Anxious to complete the provisional organization of the country and
631 to rejoin the Chinese and British missions of the Upper Mekong, he
647 left Luang-Prabang for the south on July 9, 1894, leaving his second-in-command Lefevre-Pontalis to establish in the north, together with Messrs. Macey and Garanger, the commercial agencies of Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen and the future commissions of Poukha and Muong-Ha-Hine (in the two Muong-Hou, while awaiting the imminent delimitation of the territory).

When he passed through Vientiane (July 14) he established M. Lugan in the new province which had been formed of the muongs of Tourakom, Borikane, Patchoum etc. and chose the site of the future commercial agency in Nongkhay. Then, continuing to go down-river, he made contact with the leaders of the left bank (including, among others, at the junction of the Nam-Nhiep, Chao-Kham-Ngon who was the last descendant of Chao-Noi and whom he had recognized as chaumuong of Xieng-Khouang).

In Middle Laos he took all necessary steps to establish the authority of the delegates of the superior resident in Annam over the old circumscriptions of Tran-Dinh, Cam-Lo and Quang-Dinh; to organize the regions of Hinboun /327/ /Page 327 is devoted to an illustration: "Bridge over the Nam-Khane at Luang-Prabang."--Translator/ /328/ (Faureville) and of Song-Khone (Savannakhet); and finally to make ready for the trips of the commercial agents destined for the posts on the right bank at Lakhone-Panom, Ban-Mouk and Kemmarat. Where the river joined the Sebanghien he was joined by the administrator Od'endhal who had just reached Song-Khone, and he agreed with him to extend the administration of this region as far as the muongs of Saravane and Attopeu.

In the south he visited the commercial agency which had been established ever since 1892 at Bassac, and greeted the latter's

phantom king (1) who had remained "under the guardianship of a 642
631

1. Chao-Kham-Souk, one of Chao-Houy's sons (see above 647
p. 168 and p. 177, note 2) who had been placed on the /175*/
throne by Bangkok in 1863. His fief had been dismembered by the treaty of 1893 and was in reality no longer anything but a Siamese province. He was to die in 1899.

Siamese agent of an inferior type." At Khong he met Commander Tournier, who had been placed in charge of the Legion troops stationed between Stung-Treng and the islands of Khone, and who was also invested with civil powers in the muongs of the left bank while awaiting the imminent arrival of administrators from Cochinchina (this latter country was to organize the southern Laotian provinces at the expense of its own budget). On August 9 he wit- 654
nessed the arrival of Lieutenant-commander Simon, the leader of 505
a hydrographic mission /329/ which had been planned the year before by M. Delcasse. This mission was to employ the sloops La Grandiere and Massie and to go on surveillance duty on the Middle and Upper Mekong. With this purpose it was to: 1) trans-ship its cargo at Khone; 2) cross the dangerous defiles of Kemmarat by every possible means; and 3) stop "only where it was materially and absolutely impossible to get through." At the cost of tremendous effort the mission was to reach Luang-Prabang on September 1 and Tang-Ho on October 25, 1895 at a distance of 2500 kilometers from the sea and an altitude of more than four hundred meters (1). On

1. The bold results of the Simon mission demonstrated the possibility of organizing a regular navigation service from Saigon to Luang-Prabang by using either steam sloops or pirogues, depending on the season. The service was later established.

August 13 Pavie reached Pnom-Penh and then went to Hatien where 648*
the gunboat Vipere was waiting for him. The latter took him to 175*
Bangkok on the 20th, and scarcely had he landed when he hastened to inform both the Quai d'Orsay and Prince Devawongse of the discoveries he had made all along the Mekong, namely that the treaty had not been made known to the populace and that the king of Siam's proclamation relative to the return of former inhabitants of the left bank of the river to their own country was still unknown

648* everywhere. In the restricted zone on the /330/ right bank troops
175* of soldiers were still circulating and Siamese functionaries had taken the place of the local authorities. In that part of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang which was situated on the right bank of the Mekong there was an obvious attempt -- and one clearly contrary to the treaty -- to transform the region into a Siamese province.

654 Without taking time to argue, he merely cited the fact that Chantaboun was our guaranty and that its evacuation could necessarily not be envisaged until complete satisfaction had been given to our innumerable claims. Then he embarked on September 3 for Tonkin, where he rapidly organized the important campaign which he was to undertake along the upper Black River and the Upper Mekong for the purpose of drawing up a map of the region on the very spot.

654 Delimitation of the frontier with China (December 1894). Ac-
648* companied by the Messrs. Lefevre-Pontalis, Caillat and Oum, by
175* Commander Tournier, Dr. Lefevre and several topographical officers, and wondrously aided by Deo-van-Tri who took great pride in providing, first in French territory and then in Chinese territory, for provisions at the various stops, for finding coolies and horses, for the chance repairs /331/ which the paths required, etc. (1), he reached

/186/ 1. "Never had our excellent assistant taken more pains to make us succeed. He thus manifested his gratitude not only for the past but also for the present, for he knew that the French government was determined not to cede China any of his territories, part of which the Chinese agents had had hopes of taking from him. He knew that he was indebted to us for having shed light on this question which was such a grave one for him and his people. He loved us all the more for it, and his people vied with their leader in their enthusiasm for us." Mission Pavie, Vol. II, p. 298.

Muong-Le in December where without any difficulty he established the frontier line in full agreement with the two Chinese commissioners. The latter, knowing the place he held in the cantons and the perseverance with which he had steadily aimed at their pacification, manifested a perfectly correct and conciliatory attitude (2).

/642/ 2. The agreement awarded the two Muong-Hou to France.

115: Le Boulanger--206 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(20th Cent.) Laotians AM8

"The story of Auguste Pavie should be placed in the hands of 000
our youth. It is a magnificent lesson in itself. To the ambitious
it shows how far a desire /338/ to learn combined with the passion
for action can lead; to patriots how one can serve one's country;
and to all how an ardent soul can ennoble the most humble tasks
and, springing from the humblest origins, can rise to the most
honored and most envied posts" (1).

1. Quoted by Colonel Friquegnon. Cf. Bulletin de l'Asie francaise, November-December 1925, No. 236, p. 356.

Final organization (1895-1899). The administrative organiza- 631
tion of the new possession had only been sketched out by Pavie dur- 642
ing his hasty descent of the Mekong. It was taken up and completed
by Superior Resident Boulloche, who was sent out on a mission in
May 1895. Laos was first divided into two territories or commands:

1. Upper Laos, with its capital at Luang-Prabang, including all the Muongs of the left bank situated between Yunnan, the British Shan States, Tonkin, Annam and Cammon exclusively, with the exception of the cantons of the Black River and a large part of the Houa-Phans; the first of these latter were attached to Tonkin and the second to the province of Thanh-Hoa (Annam);

2. Lower Laos, with its capital at Khong, formed of all the regions which had formerly been dependencies of the old /339/ kingdom of Vientiane and which were contained between the Annamitic Chain and the Mekong from Cammon to Cambodia.

A superior commandant was placed at the head of each of these 624
divisions, who was directly responsible to the governor general of 635
Indo-China. Each command was then subdivided into provinces or
"commissionerships" (six for Upper Laos, seven for Lower Laos),
each formed of a group of several muongs and headed by "govern-
ment commissioners" who were then given (except in Luang-Prabang)
the most varied duties and the most absolute initiative -- general
administration, police, taxes, public works, justice, public educa- /647/
tion and even, in most cases, medical help.

In 1899 the two circumscriptions were united under the authority 642
of a superior resident (1) with his seat in Savannakhet (shortly there-

1. Cf. decree of the governor general of February 6 and decree of the President of the Republic of April 19.

after in Vientiane), and unified Laos took its place in the Franco-

642 Indo-Chinese Federation.

The commercial agencies on the right bank, whose number had
439 reached ten, were fully functioning in 1895, but the duties of their
655 directors had been so ill defined /340/ /Page 340 is devoted to a map: "Laos in the Indo-Chinese Federation."--Translator/ /341/ that these posts did not render any real service. No one dared to suppress them officially, however, for fear that Bangkok's agents
/648/• might find an argument in such suppression for aggravating still further their maneuvers among the populace of the restricted zone. France was content merely with removing the directors and placing control of the agencies in the hands of the nearest government commissioners.

Further Franco-Siamese negotiations. Indeed, the Siamese governors did not cease to act in contravention of the provisions of the agreement appended to the treaty of 1893. They particularly endeavored, by intimidation, to prevent the former inhabitants of the left bank who had been transferred to or detained on the right bank from leaving the restricted zone and having recourse to the French agents for help. In Bangkok itself the trial of the Pra Yott had resulted in an acquittal, and an appeal by Attorney General Ducos (1), who was sent to Siam specially to draw up the indictment,

1. Attorney General in Hanoi. Later he was lieutenant-governor of Cochinchina (1896-1897) and superior resident in Cambodia (1897-1901).

and the formation of a mixed tribunal had been needed to obtain conviction of the guilty party. As for the incident /342/ of Tong-Xieng-Kham, criminal proceedings in the case were always suspended! Yet in the course of a voyage to Europe King Chulalongkorn had had a long conversation in Paris in 1897 about the consequences of the treaty with Foreign Minister Hanotaux, to whom he had given the most reassuring promises. In 1899 Governor General Doumer had returned this visit in Bangkok and, by the terms of the extremely cordial talks which he had with the chief officials, he had believed as he left Siam that a final agreement was imminent. All these courteous gestures, however, had not been followed by any change in the attitude of the Siamese agents on the Mekong, and Minister Defrance continued to formulate constant claims...

149: Reinach--1 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

[1] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER I

175 101 642 468

THE POLITICAL STATUS OF LAOS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO THE CAPTURE OF VIEN-TIANE IN 1827

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the territories situated in the basin of the Mékong River were designated by the name of Laos or Lao, and from the political point of view formed two autonomous States.

Their autonomy was much more apparent than real, and existed in fact only for the internal administration of the two kingdoms. As far as their foreign relations went, they were tributaries of the more powerful nations which surrounded them.

The kingdom of Luang-Prabang (or Lan-Xang--of the million elephants) was the northernmost of the two and bordered on Yunnan, Tonkin, Annam, Vien-Tiane (or Vieng-Chang), the Burmese States [2] (or Sib-Song-Pahn-Na) and the You-Ên States (or Lao-Xieng). It was supposed to provide China, Annam and Siam, either annually or every three years, with tribute consisting of certain valuable products and of precious metals, and called "Gold and silver flowers."

The other, or kingdom of Vien-Tiane, was the southernmost and was bordered on the north by Luang-Prabang, on the east by Annam, on the south by Cambodia and on the west by Siam. It was the tributary of Annam and Siam in the same right and under the same conditions as the first.

This state of affairs was profoundly modified in the beginning and middle of the nineteenth century by various events of capital importance.

175 648 726

At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth the Thai kingdom, or Siam, had often appealed to the Laotian princes for help in repulsing Burmese invasions or repressing the insurrections of Ngiéous, Shans and You-Êns which were frequent at this time. The princes' devotion was ill rewarded. Around 1825, in fact, when the kingdom of Vien-Tiane seemed to want to shake off Siamese suzerainty, it saw its territory invaded by Siamese armies. After two years of war the land had been dismembered, depopulated

631 Upper Laos contained six commissionerships and Lower Laos seven.
Each was directed by an official with the title of Government
175 Commissioner [Commissaire] (similar to the title of "commissioner" in British possessions). He was assisted by a clerk, scholars and a native interpreter.

Because of their many and varied duties, government commissioners must have extensive knowledge. In fact, these officials are responsible for general administration, police, collecting taxes and duties, selling opium, public works, justice, public education and, in centers without doctors, for the health service.

A further factor to complicate their task is that the circumscriptions are large and communications difficult.

Just as in physiology "the function creates the organ," so must our
847 agents become topographers, naturalists, geologists, engineers, architects, etc. all at the same time. Each of them devotes his talents to the task, striving to do his best and able to count only on himself. [275] [Illustration] [276] [Blank page] [277] Their task is facilitated, however, by the zeal and specialized knowledge of the clerks and leaders of the native guard, who are inspectors and chief guards, former officers or sub-officers of the army. Most of these agents have been on campaigns in Algeria or in the colonies and are used to shifting for themselves, to use an expression which is as apt as it is picturesque.

To this system of individual initiative Laos owes the fact of possessing comfortable, durable and healthy installations built of wood, brick or cobwork which certain other colonies, although better endowed from the point of view of the availability of many technical services, did not possess to so high a degree after they had been established for ten years.

631 Present organization. By decree of the Governor
General dated February 6, 1899, the two divisions of Laos were joined
642 and a united Laos was placed under the authority of a Superior Resident
(1) named by decree of the President of the Republic. This same ed[illegible]

(1) The enlightened choice of the Government fell on Lieutenant-colonel Tournier, former Superior Commandant in Lower Laos.

abolished the positions of Superior Commandants in Upper and Lower Laos.

Like Cochinchina, Laos is a direct dominion, but is administered according to the forms of a strict protectorate and therefore does not

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have any elected councils or parliamentary representation. Today it constitutes one of the five states in the Indo-Chinese union. 631

A consequence of the unification of Laos was its division into provinces and the incorporation of its officials, who had heretofore been a staff apart, in the ranks of the Indo-China Civil Service. 631

The government commissioners have therefore become civil service administrators.

Today each of the fourteen provinces of Laos is placed under the authority of an Administrator, and the latter is seconded by a civil service clerk. 635

Native guard. In Laos there are no detachments of the troops stationed in Indo-China, but only a native civil guard [278] composed partly of Annamites and partly of Laotians. It constitutes a police force which is distributed in detachments of varying size under the command of inspectors and chief guardsmen. It is entirely at the disposition of the administrators who are heads of provinces. This native guard numbers twenty-seven inspectors and chief guardsmen and 850 men, of which 320 are volunteer Annamite enlisted men recruited in Annam and Tonkin, and 530 are natives recruited from all the races of Laos. It may be called on to lend its support, if the need arise, to the native authorities who are responsible for maintaining order and security in their respective territories. Peace and order are so perfect in Laos, however, that one can go about freely without an escort. 701

The treasury service. The treasury service in Laos is headed by a bursar who holds the title of "Chief Bursar of the Treasury Service in Laos." He handles all matters dealing with receipts, expenditures and treasury operations in Laos in the same forms and according to the same rules as the other bursars who are heads of services in Indo-China. 652

He is assisted by a deputy bursar.

These two agents reside in Vien-Tiane.

Medical service. This service includes three colonial physicians on detachment in Laos who are in charge of the infirmaries at Luang-Prabang, Vien-Tiane (formerly at Pak-Hin-Boun) and Khong. They care for all sick persons, whether European or native, as has been noted above (1). 744

(1) See Chapter III, Health Service.

567 as early as March of 1898, in a report which we believe it will be of
426 value to reproduce in part, as well as a code of rules as ingenious as they were just governing slavery for debt (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVIII.

567 Finally, there is a kind of serfdom in Laos which is applied to
563 certain Kha tribes. Thus in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang, subsequent to revolts, entire tribes of Khas were reduced to a state of serfdom and placed under the patronage of the king, of princes, or of the principal members of the nobility. In 1894 our administration undertook to liberate these Khas, who are completely free today. In southern Laos most of these latter are still the clients of a few nobles or Laotian officials, but the guardianship is a gentle one which they can abandon and resume at will.

2. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

178 Under our control, as has been noted above, the political
642 organization of Laos has remained what it was before 1893. We have respected the customs and local traditions, and we govern through the native administration in which all the machinery has been retained.

643 [490] The following is a nearly complete list of all the officials in a large Muong such as the kingdom of Luang-Prabang or of Bassac (1)

(1) The kingdom of Luang-Prabang is situated on both banks of the Mekong, but the king resides on the left bank at Luang-Prabang and is consequently dependent on the French authorities. The kingdom of Bassac is today wholly on the right bank, and the king of Bassac falls under Siamese domination. The title of king is sometimes given also to the "Tiao-Fa" or head of the province of Muong-Sing. The head of a muong in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na may be a "Tso-boua," a "Phya-Hua" or a "Sen-Houi-Fa," depending on his importance.

At the head are the Kings, two in number:

Somdet-Phra-Tiao or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Louang, first king, great master of existences.

Tiao-Maha-Oupahat or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Vang-Na, second king,
644 great master responsible for conservation of property. [Illustration here]

10: d'Orleans--296 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 632, 643

"In this district, the king had perhaps formerly less authority ; the villages were subject to him by the ties of vassaldom, and, being impelled by a community of interests, formed a federation round the town as a common centre; and Luang Prabang provided a body of militia but did not find any forced labour."

10: d'Orleans--299 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 595, 643

"The native Government acts under the control of the Commissioner. [LSS: the Siamese Commissioner] At the head of it are two kings, one for peace and the other for war, who reign in concert. The royalty is hereditary, and, owing to the existence of polygamy, the royal family is a numerous one and is related to all the families in the city. The two reigning kings (1) bear the names of Chao Kham Souck and Chao

1. According to Hallett (p. 32), the kings of Luang Prabang, like those of Lahon, Lapoon, Peh, and Tern, have only the title of Chao Huang (great prince), while those of Xieng Maï and Nau are Chou Che Wit (lord of life). The former are only entitled to kill criminals by piercing their breasts with a lance, while the latter are said to have the right to behead them.

Boune Khong (now called by the Siamese Chao Ratchapha Khinaï). Their father Chao Boune Kham, after a reign of twenty years, abdicated, and he has now become, at the age of eighty-two, a sacred personage and more or less of a demi-god."

10: d'Orleans--337-338 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 516, 643

"Upon a sign from the king, tea and cigarettes are brought us, and the servants fan us. The other servants, who are dressed like the common people, remain in a crouching attitude, and if they move about the room do so on their hands and knees. It is humiliating to see men dragging themselves about like animals; but we do not witness the sight long as our visit is a brief one, and it is not until some time after this that we see the father, a fine old man of eighty-two, whose white hair is cropped close, and whose face is very intelligent, though owing to the loss of his teeth the chin is rather elevated.

His position as a semi-divinity enables him to speak his mind very freely, and he takes great interest in our journey, giving us some advice as to [338] our descent of the Mekong. He seems very grateful to M. Pavie, who once saved his life, and he makes even more favourable an impression upon us than his son, though both seem well disposed towards the Europeans--if they were free to act. But Siam plays the same part towards them that China does to Thibet, and one would hope that the era of liberty is at hand which, in delivering the two countries from the yoke which oppresses them, will open a valuable field of study to our science and fresh outlets to our commerce."

10: d'Orleans--370 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 353, 643, 177.35

"We gather information as to the route which we are to follow from the second King of Luang Prabang, who has just returned that way from Bangkok. He lives near us in an enormous room, which his baggage has transformed into a veritable bric-à-brac shop. There are glass-globes, imitation paper flowers under glass, European hats, cooking utensils, and cruets, indeed, a little of everything which has attracted the prince in the way of European civilisation. After living twenty-two months at Bangkok, he is returning to Luang Prabang slowly by easy stages. Elegantly turned out, he seems franker than his brother, and after exchanging visits he sends us a present of cocoanuts and bananas."

"Royal servants went to announce us, though word of our coming had been sent ahead, and while we waited I mentally reviewed the information I had gleaned from the Oriental Almanach de Gotha it had been my privilege to consult at French headquarters on the eve of my royal reception. I make no claim as to its exactness, and still less to that of my memory; but there is a probability that both of them are approximately correct. Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah, present king of Luang Prabang and a direct descendant of an endless line of its kings, was born in 1885, on July 14--no wonder he is a favorite of the French--and succeeded his father Zacharine in 1904. His mother was not his mother, so to speak. For Tiao Thong [305] Di, first wife of Zacharine, still known as the Queen Mother, and real ruler of the royal household, bossing even the king himself in domestic matters, according to reliable verbal information from a French and feminine source, had no male children. The second-rank wife, Tiao Thong Si, daughter of a high mandarin related to the royal family, gave birth to the present monarch; but in Laos as in China every child is officially the offspring of the first wife. His father Zacharine seems to have been a temperate person, considering his advantages, for the king has only three half-brothers and six half-sisters; though it is possible that Zacharine died with certain secrets buried in his bosom, Occidental

fashion. Half-sisters and half-brothers may marry in Luang Prabang, by the way, which is not without its effect on the reigning house. Also Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah has at least this much in common with his English colleague, that he had an older brother who died, leaving him unexpectedly heir to the throne.

The latest calculations were that the present king had fifteen wives and about forty children; on this second point he did not seem to be very exact himself, no doubt finding it difficult to keep strictly up to date in domestic events within his household. Yet he did not look either worn or dissipated, when presently he came in to shake hands and sit down with us, perhaps because the Queen Mother takes so many of the palace cares off his shoulders. Seven of his sons were studying at the Lycée in Hanoï, and the crown prince, Savang Vathama, then sixteen, was nearing his bachelor degree in a similar institution at Montpellier in France, with the avowed intention of studying law afterward. The king himself had a purely Laosian education under Buddhist priests until King Zacharine sent him to a French collège at Saïgon. Later he went to the Ecole [306] Coloniale in the Rue de l'Observatoire in Paris, where French youths prepare for a career in the colonies. He came home once when his father was ill, but upon his recovery was sent back to France to get together a printing establishment with Laosian characters and to learn how to run it, which makes him more or less related to the late kaiser, bookbinder.

The king was plump and pleasant, handsome for his race, by no means betraying his all but forty years. It was easy to imagine the girls of Luang Prabang, if not indeed of France, 'just crazy' about him, quite aside from his royal rank. He had a frail Oriental mustache and that beautiful bronze-brown complexion of his race. Unlike most European monarchs he is purely of the blood of those he reigns over. But his Majesty indulges in the chief minor vice of his people, and the only blot on his manly beauty, and not even that of course to the fair ones of his own land, was that his teeth, though they were not enameled, were discolored and his lips somewhat bloody with betel-juice. Even now he seemed to be nursing a quid, though with a regal finesse that it would have done our secret chewers of tobacco good to see."

23: Franck--306-308 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-3
116, 291, 643

"He [EJ: the king] wore a white cork helmet, a black bow-tie about a standing white collar on a stiff white shirt with the round cuffs of a decade or more ago, and a snow-white three button coat which, in so far as my meager knowledge in sartorial matters is trustworthy, was of the latest model. The fact that the middle buttonhole was attached to the upper button may have meant either a dreadful ignorance of Western ways or merely unseemly haste in leaving his harem; or it may have had no significance whatever. His feet were quite properly incased in low black shoes of faultless last and luster, but--let the spinster reader blushingly turn the page [307] here--he wore no trousers! His rank and calling, it seems, forbade him these final touches to an otherwise perfectly European costume. Instead, his thighs were inclosed in the pha or sampot, such as is worn by both sexes in Siam and adjoining countries under Siamese influence. It was a kind of short skirt, evidently of silk and of colors verging on the gaudy, drawn between the legs and tucked into the belt at the back, reaching to just below the knees in front and 'rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind.' Naturally a full-fledged king could not leave the hiatus uncovered and keep his self-respect. Therefore between sampot and shoes the royal legs were clad in silk stockings of which the most regal young lady of our own land might have been proud--except that in her case they would no doubt have been of a color to deceive the uninformed observer into thinking she wore no stockings whatever, whereas in backward barbarian Luang Prabang this would have

been bad form. These were jet-black and reached so far up the back as to suggest that they were held by a band about the waist. Indeed, it was immediately evident that the king had missed a splendid chance for extra decoration by not wearing a pair of red garters just below the knees.

A goodly proportion of the royal income must be spent on stockings. For I was assured, not merely by common rumor but by all the Frenchwomen in Luang Prabang--of whom there are three or four--that his Majesty will under no circumstances wear anything but silk about his shapely legs, and that a stocking with the slightest hole in it is immediately discarded. It would be easy to imagine his wives, of whom he fortunately has fifteen, scrambling for these discards of the royal wardrobe, and racing for their darning needles, were it not that in Laos even the wives of kings do not wear stockings. [308]

But do not for a moment gather from all this that Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah had the slightest hint of the barbarian in his appearance. Except for the sacred sampot in place of trousers, and the proof of a king's income between that and the shoes, his Majesty would have attracted no attention whatever in a Palm Beach crowd, unless it were by his athletic build and his agreeable undissipated smile, and, at close range, the light touch as of fresh blood on his lips beneath the thin well clipped moustache. In fact of all the kings with whom I have hobnobbed he was the most pleasing to look

upon, and to all outward appearances a gentleman not even given to bullying his wives. His lapel was adorned with the little red button of a French decoration--the Legion of Honor, I fancy, though I confess to a deplorable ignorance of these important matters--and a gold watch-chain hanging from this drew attention to what was evidently not the thinnest of watches in the outside breast-pocket. A signet-ring not unlike those of our West Point and Annapolis graduates encircled his wedding finger, and he wore a cord of what looked like ordinary string about each wrist."

"The king spoke a fair but throaty French, but was not exactly talkative in that tongue, whatever he may be in his own and in the intimacies of his harem. In fact, contrary as it may be to our movie and popular-novel conception of royalty, he was rather bashful, with a schoolboy dread of making a mistake in the foreign tongue he was using, and at the same time evidently fearful of doing or saying anything that might displease the French. His demeanor was a curious mixture of regal old-family pride, a pride reaching so far back that we mere moderns from a barbarian world were not worthy of knowing the secrets of life behind it, and of the anxiety of the star in a royal movie being filmed under the eye of the manager of the great Jewish corporation that is 'putting him across.' All of which did not remove the first impression that Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah would be a fine fellow to take along for a tramp or a swim, and that it would not be long before one could begin calling him 'Prah Old Top.'

All hands seemed a little ill at ease. Having exchanged the usual platitudes, we stood about doing nothing much, paused with admiring mien before a new bronze bust of the king, covered with medals and decorations, and a good likeness, though of no better color than his actual complexion, but showing neither the betel-red lips nor the cigarette that drips almost incessantly from them. His Majesty handed out atrocious French tobacco-monopoly cigars worthy of a Chinese tuchun, but wisely stuck to cigarettes himself, [310] smoking one after another in rapid succession. We chatted a little on general subjects, the impression growing that the king's French was good enough if only he could

have thrown off the feeling that it would be an intolerable disgrace for a king to make an error in speech."

"At a mere suggestion from my companion, and as if it were a relief from a tense situation, his Majesty graciously stepped to the main doorway of the palace, an excellent jet-black background for a blazing tropical sunshine that outdid anything Hollywood can devise in lighting-effects, and posed for his photograph. Another merest hint from the commissaire and Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah went off at once like a small boy to dress up for his picture, and came back in a surprisingly short time in his most regal robes, a radiant royal costume quite beyond my power to describe. All the medals on the breast of bronze near-by were now in place on the living model; he was again in women's silk stockings, quite evidently brand new, and this time held up by round-the-leg garters of brilliant hue. A green and saffron flowered-silk sampot--but how foolish for a man who cannot even describe a ball-dress well enough to give his wife any conception of it to attempt so impossible a job as this!

Never have I found a king more docile in meeting my [311] every suggestion. Barely a whisper from me and he ordered his throne-room decked out in its coronation best, had his royal attendants summoned. Cringing flunkies brought in swords of state, big golden bowls, a marvelous hat of half cowboy half women-of-the-plume-days style, studded with jewels, and with a Burmese-pagoda top. Ascending his throne, the king assumed his most regal aspect, his white gloves flashing like those of a traffic policeman during a Catholic procession. The master of ceremonies of the palace himself

brought tables and other regal paraphernalia to offset my lack of a tripod; two men in green, each holding a great sword, knelt fearfully at the foot of the throne, and--and I muffed the picture. No doubt the nervous tension of photographing kings on their thrones in their coronation-robes would be enough to cause an even calmer and more experienced photographer to misjudge tropical light conditions; at any rate I so under-exposed that strip of film that only those with keen eyesight can make out more than the general lay-out of the throne, and the king's white-gloved hands on his richly sampotted knees.

Lesser catastrophes have left broken hearts, but it did not so much matter about that throne-room picture after all, for, again at the merest suggestion of the commissaire and as promptly as a circus seal obeys its trainer, the king once more stepped to the spotlighted doorway of the palace, hat, robes, medals, and all, to give my camera another trial, finally posing with his French boss at his side. The commissaire was also in all his glory. Three great medals that proved he had done this, that, or some other brave deed--for he was not a man to have successfully bootlicked this, that, or the other high authority--blazed over his heart. His white uniform coat and black trousers had fancy neck, waist, wrist, and trouser-seam bands; he wore a sword, [312] with rich belt-tassels, and carried white gloves, though the white casque on his head

and the black shoes on the blistering pavement had nothing unusual about them. In short his dress was as out of keeping with his plebeian name of Mill--were names translated--as it was with the simple backwoods life about us. Finally his Majesty, of his own volition unless my eyes were momentarily off their guard, was graciously moved to insist that I also stand beside him in the doorway spotlight and let the camera again do its worst. In vain did I plead my unworthiness to be thus immortalized, like one of the boon companions of his Majesty, particularly in my vagabondish incongruities of rumpled semi-whites, once-tan shoes still half decided to be black, a necktie that insisted on the right to be temperamental in a tropical climate, a pocket bulging full of--how should I know what? The king, I long afterward noticed, wore quite a different face in these pictures in true royal garb than that of the genial boulevardier he presented in mufti, something like his own elder brother, with all the cares of state upon his shoulders."

23: Franck--316-317 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 231, 643

"The king of Luang Prabang keeps a number of royal elephants; and he is no nonentity as a business man either, by the way. Supplementing his salary, if the word suits a monarch,, of forty-six thousand piastres a year, and thereby offsetting his consumption of silk stockings, he has much private property, including great forests and sawmills, in [317] which many of his elephants work for him. For a time some of the royal elephants were assigned the task of dragging rollers used in the making of roads about the capital, but they are a tender beast, for all their size and reputed longevity, and even with only four or five hours of labor a day, at their two-mile-an-hour gait, with the privilege of resting every third day, two of them died from this unwonted exertion. The king, evidently no figurehead in his capacity as business manager of his personal estates and property, protested, and from four to six water-buffaloes to each roller now take the place of an elephant.

In theory the many wild elephants in the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha also belong to the king. When new recruits are needed in the royal stables, some of the wild beasts are caught by digging pits. Then a tame and a wild one are chained together, leaving the wild elephant to tug furiously at a collar with sharp iron points in it. The most bellicose are fastened to a tree by a lasso about a hind leg until they are worn out with struggle and hunger, when the two largest éléphants de chasse available take

the captive between them and shake and roll him until he decides, like the man who foresees the lawyer fees involved in an action for divorce, that after all he will be happier in the domestic state. Most of those captured do not wait for this third degree, but, suddenly resigned to their new fate, give in to the barbed collar and stroll homeward with their false brother, pulling up tufts of good grass as they go and calmly tapping each mouthful on a front foot to shake the earth off the roots before transferring it to their dainty mouths."

23: Franck--318-319 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 262, 643

"He was received like any other invited luncheon guest, though he was always addressed as Majesté by the commissaire and his well chosen wife, and the half-dozen French functionaries they had been able to scrape together in the kingdom. In lieu of a box of chocolates his Majesty had sent ahead some Laosian food that is served as dessert at the royal table. One dish was a kind of custard cooked in small cocoanuts, the base of the husk cut down to resemble the shank of a goblet, and preserving the cocoanut taste. Another was a kind of vermicelli covered with nut dust, not unlike a similar dish in China. The ordinary people do not indulge in such delicacies, which are reserved for the royal palace. Even there, according to my hostess, there are few changes of menu. The king was well versed in Western table manners, though he did not take a very active part in the conversation, which of course was in French. He showed up best as a sympathetic listener, and was easily amused. In so far as my own almost unknown country was concerned, he seemed to be particularly interested in the Mormons and in what the French call the régime sec. He laughed for some time in his merry yet kingly way when told that Brigham Young had forty wives and a correspond-[319]ing number of children, apparently without seeing any connection between this and his own fifteen and forty respectively. Or it may be that he was laughing at the plight of Brigham from the vantage-point of his own experience. The régime sec, in other words,

prohibition, he plainly did not understand at all, any more than does the average Frenchman, and there was nothing to be gained in trying to make clear the American point of view on the subject. He would of course have been horrified to learn that there are persons in that benighted wineless land from which I came who have never heard of his ancient kingdom; nor did I feel it quite safe to pad out the conversation by bringing up the question of silk stockings in its relation to our national economic problem, for one can never be sure just how sensitive kings may be on these very personal matters."

23: Franck--319-320 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 231, 643

"It became more and more evident however, that Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah was not born anybody's fool, even if circumstances and the foolishness of his father Zacharine had left him and his kingdom in an embarrassing position. There was something behind his Oriental-Gallic courtesy and his almost perpetual smile. Nor did he seem to take himself or his regality or his white elephants or any of the rest of his royal trappings too seriously. On this subject of white elephants, by the way, he mentioned that one was now supposed to be on its way to him, some Laotian merchants among his loyal subjects having captured or purchased such an animal that had been seen in a distant part of his kingdom. He thought Bangkok used to have one but that his Siamese peer was now forced to do without this adornment to their respective kinghoods. They were not white anyway, he went on, but rather a pinkish light-gray, like the albino water-buffalo; and his manner implied that whatever his royal cousin of Siam might think about it, a [320] white elephant to him would be merely an interesting addition to his menagerie. 'May you live as long as an elephant!' is a common form of greeting in some parts of the East; but quite aside from the doubtful kindness involved, it is based on one of those many mistaken beliefs of mankind, according to the king, corroborated by all the French present, who asserted that no elephant ever lives longer than have many men and women."

68: Mouhot--137-138 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 101, 361, 643, 651

"Were they not restrained by fear of the Siamese, and their horror of the jungles so prolific of death, this principality [HD: i.e. Luang Prabang] would soon fall into the hands of the Annamites, who now dare not advance nearer than seven days' journey off. A beautiful stream, 100 metres wide, unites [138] with the great river to the north-east of the town, and leads to some Laotian and savage villages bearing the name of Fie. These are no other than the tribes called Penoms by the Cambodians, Khu by the Siamese, and Moï by the Annamites,--all words simply signifying 'savages.'

The whole chain of mountains which extends from the north of Tonquin to the south of Cochin China, about 100 miles north of Saigon, is inhabited by this primitive people, divided into tribes speaking different dialects, but whose manners and customs are the same. All the villages in the immediate neighbourhood are tributary; those nearest to the town supply workmen for buildings erected for the king and princes, and these are heavily taxed. Others pay their tribute in rice.

Their habitations are in the thickest parts of the forests, where they only can find a path. Their cultivated grounds are to be seen on the tops and sides of the mountains; in fact, they employ the same means as wild animals to escape from their enemies, and to preserve that liberty and independence which are to them, as to all God's creatures, their supreme good.

68: Mouhot--137-138 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 101, 361, 643, 651

Yesterday, and the day previous, I was presented to the princes who govern this little state, and who bear the title of kings. I know not why, but they displayed for my benefit all they could devise of pomp and splendour."

68: Mouhot--265-266 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 609, 643, 648

"[HD: Excerpt from one of Mouhot's letters to his wife] During my journey through the forests I enjoyed in anticipation the pleasure I should enjoy on reaching Louang Prabang, the capital of the province of Laos, in writing you good long letters containing all details of my journey; but [266] I reckoned without my host, and it will be several weeks before I can enjoy any repose, or carry my wishes into execution.

In the villages through which I passed no great degree of curiosity was manifested; but here, where the population is greater, I am surrounded by a compact and curious crowd, which extends even to the walls of a pagoda adjoining the caravanserai where I am lodged by the favour of his Majesty the King. Besides, I, in my turn, see people of various nations and tribes who excite my curiosity. Judge, therefore, if it be easy to collect my ideas. However, I profit by the occasion of the king's departure for Bangkok in a few days to pay his tribute, [HD: to the King of Siam] and who has offered to take charge of any letters for me, to give some signs of life to you."

115: Le Boulanger

AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

643

[For kings, royal ceremonies, royal activities and royal succession in Laos throughout its history, see category 116, throughout.]

648* held the actual power of a native chieftain over the Thai
175* cantons (Cf. Mission Pavie, Vol. VII, p. 211). This situation, which threatened to destroy the negotiations which had been begun, was solved in 1891 by the Quan-Phong's reconciliation with Deo-van-Tri.

Restoration of the Thai cantons by Siam (December 1888). On December 13 he reached Theng where the Phya Surrissak was awaiting him in order to return, in behalf of his government, the Thai cantons which were henceforth acknowledged to be French. Whatever bitterness he may have felt, the Siamese leader presented himself with a good grace "together with his retinue in the great room of the citadel where the native chiefs were assembled." In simple terms he invited them to serve the French faithfully and expressed the wish that they might "enjoy repose after their misfortune" and "become prosperous as they deserved." Then he liberated the last of Lai's captives and left "on inspection" for the Houa-Phans. Regarding his "military" task as terminated, Pavie separated from Commander Pennequin after /285/ /Page 285 is devoted to an illustration: "A street in Luang-Prabang."--Translator/ /286/ turning over to him the administration of the virtually pacified territories, and left on December 26 for Luang-Prabang. He reached there on January 2, 1889 and returned to their families quite a few young women and children who had been carried off when the city was captured and whom he had been able to redeem. He found the capital happy once again under its luminous
/643/ winter sky. More than twelve hundred new houses had been built in the last eight months, and ten thousand Laotians had returned to rally round their old king, who had been solemnly reinstalled on his ancestors' throne the previous May 2. All these folk knew of Pavie's success in the north and understood that it would guarantee their tranquillity, and so they welcomed the new members of the mission with extreme favor and, with no constraint nor care for what the Siamese authorities might think, they feted its leader who once more became the guest, for six weeks, of the Satou of the Wat-Mai.

Pavie recovered fairly quickly from the attacks of paludism from which he had not been exempt in the course of his last expedition, and organized the forthcoming journey of Cupet, who was back from Tran-Ninh, to Muong-Son and the valley of the Song-Ca, as well as Garanger's journey to Xieng-Sen, Xieng-Toung and Mandalay. He also placed Massie under Nicolon in the /287/ administration of the consulate, whose large house was nearing completion on the right

115: Le Boulanger--215 : H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(20th Cent.) Laotians AM8

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Fig. 20. H. M. Sisavang-Vong, king of Luang-Prabang

/Facing p. 352/

149: Reinach--4b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 4 [p. 8] An audience of the former king of Luang-Prabang (May 1890).

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Fig. 5 /p. 9/ Imperial seal of Annam belonging to the king of Luang-Prabang.

149: Reinach--8a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Fig. 6 /p. 12/ The king of Bassac, who died in 1900.

764 some forty meters long folded across its width until it was the size of a man's hand (with thumb and little finger spread). The strip was unrolled ahead of the coffin and was held by the youngest of the dead person's sons, who led the mourning. Then the bonzes, relatives, officials and best friends of the deceased took positions on each side and held on to the strip with one hand, as we would hold on to pall-bearers' cords. Thus constituted, the procession set off ahead of the coffin, drawing it along in a manner of speaking.

Tom-toms, gongs, cymbals, clarinets and the Laotian organ were heard during the processional, as well as songs and improvisations. When it reached the funeral pyre the procession circled it three times and deposited the coffin on it.

The spectators then took up positions under sheltering bushes, in shady spots or even in full sunlight, depending on their rank. All was in readiness to light the fire, which was to be provided by the Governor of the province, a delegate of the king of Luang-Prabang who is the "master of life" (1), for the deceased was a high official.

[643] (1) The king of Luang-Prabang bears the title Tiao-Tsi-Vit, master of life.

[208] One important rite still remained to be performed: the last ablutions of water and brandy on the face, chest and hands of the body.

Then men climbed up on the pyre and removed the canopy of the catafalque, leaving the bamboo frame showing through the torn wrapping. They broke the lid of the coffin into splinters with great ax blows and thus exposed the body of the deceased, which exuded such a strong odor that all the spectators on the leeward side fell back.

The final toilet took place at this time. The men who do this work absorb such quantities of brandy to drive off miasmas and stimulate their own courage that their gestures and merriment, at such a time and place, would seem to us to be out of place. But here things 764 are not seen in the same light, and the gesticulations of all these folk 526 armed with axes and various containers and their grotesque attitudes around the open coffin merely stimulate the spectators' joy. The 527 songs and music had not ceased, and wrestling matches and animal combats were about to take place. The wrestlers took the measure of one another and came to grips with their hands flat open, while the

567 as early as March of 1896, in a report which we believe it will be of
426 value to reproduce in part, as well as a code of rules as ingenious as they were just governing slavery for debt (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVIII.

567 Finally, there is a kind of serfdom in Laos which is applied to
563 certain Kha tribes. Thus in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang, subsequent to revolts, entire tribes of Khas were reduced to a state of serfdom and placed under the patronage of the king, of princes, or of the principal members of the nobility. In 1894 our administration undertook to liberate these Khas, who are completely free today. In southern Laos most of these latter are still the clients of a few nobles or Laotian officials, but the guardianship is a gentle one which they can abandon and resume at will.

2. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

178 Under our control, as has been noted above, the political
642 organization of Laos has remained what it was before 1893. We have respected the customs and local traditions, and we govern through the native administration in which all the machinery has been retained.

643 [490] The following is a nearly complete list of all the officials in a large Muong such as the kingdom of Luang-Prabang or of Bassac (1)

(1) The kingdom of Luang-Prabang is situated on both banks of the Mekong, but the king resides on the left bank at Luang-Prabang and is consequently dependent on the French authorities. The kingdom of Bassac is today wholly on the right bank, and the king of Bassac falls under Siamese domination. The title of king is sometimes given also to the "Tiao-Fa" or head of the province of Muong-Sing. The head of a muong in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na may be a "Tso-boua," a "Phya-Hua" or a "Sen-Houi-Fa," depending on his importance.

At the head are the Kings, two in number:

Somdet-Phra-Tiao or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Louang, first king, great master of existences.

Tiao-Maha-Oupahat or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Vang-Na, second king,
644 great master responsible for conservation of property. [Illustration here]

644 The functionaries responsible for minor duties inside the palace, under the orders of their chief the Maha-Monti, are the:

Maha-Nosit, Lasa-Nosit, Lasa-Mat, Sanet, Sakame-Nane, Latsavat, Out-Thamonti, Sene-Thong-Niot, Sathipavot.

[652] [493] The treasurers, storekeepers and palace guards have the
647 titles of:

Phaya-Vi-Sai-Monthiene, Phone-Seuk-Khoua, Phone-Seuk-Sai.

697 Finally the jailers and scourgers (or executioners) under the command of the king or of the head of the justice department:

Phone-Tesak, Sa-Phakdi, Sa-Dab-Khame, Vong-Phouthone.

635 In the provinces, the head of a muong bears a title which is
631 personal to him, "Phaya" or "Phya," to which he adds that of "Tiao-Muong" and the name of the province, as Phaya-Si-Vorarat-Phrak-Di, Tiao-Muong-Vien-Tiane.

Under his command he has principal mandarins in the number of three, who bear the titles of "Oupahat," "Latsavong" and "Latsaboute." Each of them is generally responsible for the administration of one part of the muong, under the supervision of the "Tiao-Muong."

These high officials are seconded, depending on the importance of the muong, by a larger or smaller number of counselors or judges who bear the titles of "Sen," "Tiane," "Khang," etc.

Muongs are generally divided into cantons, and the heads of the [623] latter bear the title of "Taseng." Each canton includes several villages or "Bans," and each of these has at its head a mayor who is usually called "Pho-Ban" (the father of the village). The head of a village is aided by a kind of council or assembly of notables, the titles of whom are "Pia," "Luong," "Koun," "Sen," "Mune" or "Nai."

643 The four principal leaders of a muong, that is to say the "Tiao-
646 Muong," the "Oupahat," the "Latsavong" and the "Latsaboute" (1),

(1) In the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc, the heads of muongs bear the following titles: "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong), "Phya-Hua-Pahn" (Oupahat), "Phya-Balat" (Latsavong), "Phya-Kam" (Latsaboute). In accordance with custom, these offices are hereditary and sons succeed their fathers, except for the office of "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong) where the rule is not absolute.

are [494] elected either by the nobles or by commoners who possess certain aptitudes and sufficient intellectual culture. The whole population, nobles, officials and common people, are consulted. Then the

643 canton heads and heads of villages, who might be described as can-
646 tonal and municipal delegates, gather in the capital of the muong to vote on the names of candidates which are presented. The name of the one who obtains the most votes is then presented by the province administrator to the superior resident, who accepts or rejects him after studying his personal qualities, his aptitudes, his background, etc. In the case of a rejection the electors are consulted a second time. The superior resident names the four chiefs of muongs by delegation from the governor general. These latter may not begin office until they receive their commission, insignia and seal from the French government.

In general, the electors' choice falls on a son, brother or nephew of the high official who is to be replaced, unless he is unworthy or notoriously incapable.

635 Mandarins of lesser importance are named by the province head
647 with the approval of the persons under his administration and of the superior resident.

647 Officials receive a salary only in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang
652 and in the provinces of Vien-Tiane and Muong-Hou. Everywhere else they must be content with a fee equivalent to one-tenth of the sums they collect as taxes.

[693] In their capacity as judges, the muong authorities also collect legal costs and shares in the sums of certain fines, as is the custom of the land.

647 Such, in its general outline, is the organization of the Laotian
576 administration. It generally functions well, is sufficient to the needs of the natives and makes it possible for us, despite the vast extent of our possession, to keep only a few European officials there.

[192] The outer forms of respect towards great men, mandarins and anyone who holds a rank are dictated by Laotian etiquette, as in Siam. One does not speak to a king, a [495] [Illustration] [496] [Blank page] [497] prince or a leader as one would to an equal or an inferior. There are special expressions which are peculiar to the representatives of certain social classes or to the holders of dignities. But even while it conserves, at bottom, the ritual ceremonial forms, Laotian etiquette is paternal and much more spontaneous and genuinely respectful than elsewhere.

When they speak to the king, to princes, to great men, etc., inferiors prostrate themselves, with forehead on clasped hands, near the ground, or with their hands clasped above their head. Outside of this particular case, those present may remain squatting, smoke, talk, laugh and even disturb the audience somewhat. Moreover, no lack whatsoever of respect is to be seen in this liberty.

Kha

563 their prisoners among the Djarais. This state of affairs cannot go on
567 [106] indefinitely, and after settling the question of the Djarais which is more urgent, it will be necessary for Annam and Laos to pacify these tribes by a common agreement.

563 4. Rognao, Bahnar, Goelar and Habau Khas. These tribes, over
797 whom the missionaries exercise moral authority and many of whose villages are Catholic, can be regarded as pacified even though they do not pay any tribute. I have previously explained why it would not be politic, in my opinion, to require tribute in this region as of the present time.

These tribes, which are entirely located in Laotian territory, are quite tranquil but in continual dread of undertakings by their Djarai neighbors.

563 5. The great Djarai tribe, which is by far the most important and most numerous in the estimation of the missionaries. It is said to include nearly 150,000 inhabitants and is the finest racial type which I have seen in all the Kha region.

Many villages are subject to our authority and pay the head tax. Others, such as those which I found in the valley of the Psi and on the Sesane, obey our orders, keep the roads in repair, receive traders and travelers with perfect hospitality and will pay tribute whenever we wish.

563 But there are two groups which are absolutely rebellious to our
[619] penetration. These are: 1) the groups of villages of Pley-Qho and
[643] Pley-Denang immediately south of the mission; and 2), somewhat further to the south, the group of the Sadetes whose two chieftains,
579 the kings of water and fire, inhabit the points which are marked on the map as Pa-Tao-Ia and Pa-Tao-Ngo.

The first of these groups has continuously committed hostile
563 acts against us. They are the ones who attacked the convoy of M.
668 Navelle when this official came to visit the mission, who have constantly attacked convoys on the road from Ang-Ke to Kon-Toum,
726 who more recently robbed a Laotian hunter of merchandise valued at more than 1,000 piasters and pierced him with sword thrusts, and, finally, who attacked M. Lacouture and killed one of his guides. These villages are dreaded by all their neighbors. It was they against whom Meyréna (1) marched, but his success was not sufficiently

(1) Since I have been led to pronounce the name of the man who dreamed of creating a Cedang kingdom, I should say a few words regarding this adventure which seems to me to have been greatly exaggerated.

Kha

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I shall not dwell on all the personalities implicated in the matter, for I have neither the right nor the means to define the responsibilities incurred, but shall simply say that his authority has never been recognized by the Khas in any effective fashion. In a gathering held in the common house of Kon-Hoirin and at which the representatives of some twenty Cedang villages were present, he appeared in the guise of one who had come to lead them in their defense against attacks by their neighbors and to command them against the enemy Djarais (the tribes of Pley-Qho and Pley-Denang, to be exact). His proposal was naturally accepted, and was also given sanction by some semblance of an expedition against the Djarais. When the Cedangs did not take all the booty and especially all the prisoners that they had anticipated, they broke off relations with Meyréna. What is more, when Father Vialleton, the director of the Catholic mission of the Bahnars and a man of extremely subtle mind, subsequently realized what the situation was, he did not want to enter into open conflict with Meyréna but was content to set up a confederation of the Bahnar, Rognao and Goslar tribes, a confederation which had the Kha chieftain of the village of Kon-Toum at its head, but which was under the moral and actual leadership of Father Vialleton. This master stroke, the only purpose of which had been to prevent Meyréna's authority from prevailing over these tribes, dealt the death blow to the kingdom of which he had dreamed and he was obliged to leave the country.

Such, in all its simplicity, is the truth of this adventure when disengaged from all the little incidents of a more or less humorous nature which occurred at the time.

followed up. It is [107] now necessary that this den of bandits should disappear or surrender. The hatred which they have aroused against themselves is so great that during my inspection tour all the neighboring tribes, including the Cedangs, asked permission to join forces with me and march against them immediately. I had to promise that satisfaction would be given them.

When this group has disappeared or surrendered, all the hesitant factions of Djarais, Salangs and Halangs-Doang will make their submission once and for all.

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As for the second group, that of the Sadetes, the question is a ticklish one. The two Sadete kings are unquestionably the religious leaders of all the Kha tribes south of the Cedangs. According to the

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643 traditions and the annals which I have been able to consult, they are the descendants of the last kings of the land before the Cham invasion.
[648] The kings of Cambodia have had to appeal to them for help on one
175 or two critical occasions, and it was in return for services rendered that the king of Cambodia, up until recent times, used to send them
563 presents every year (annual tribute, according to them, payment of which stopped only five years ago).

[726] They have never been willing to recognize our authority. The king of Pa-Tao-Ia, who is situated on the Laotian side, twice attacked the Government Commissioners of Stung-Treng when the latter were making a tour of inspection in this region, first in December 1894 and a second time in January 1897. They were given a severe lesson this second time, for the village was entirely destroyed and they suffered many losses. The Sadete Loum (the Master of water) settled on the Annamite side alongside the Master of fire after the affair, and since that time has given no further orders to our faithful Djarais.

[108]

APPENDIX XIX
NOTE ON THE MEOS

563 The Meo has a savage and distrustful character. He does not
609 like the presence of foreigners, or even of people of his own race.

Clinging to the side of a mountain, and always as high up as possible, he asks only to be allowed to live in peace in his wild solitude and bodes no ill to anyone provided he is left alone and independe

He is a great hunter of wild beasts and large game. More in-
433 dustrious than the Thais, he makes all his farming implements him-
241 self (picks and shovels), as well as his wooden buckets and mills for grinding maize and paddy. He raises fine poultry, pigs, oxen, goats
231 and horses with particular care and success. If he stays in one place for any length of time he also produces, in addition to the maize and rice which form the basis of his food supply and the opium which he smokes, very fine eggplants, gourds, sweet potatoes and non-sweetened batatas very much like the common potato, sorrel, green beans and all the French vegetables whose seeds are given him. On his heights he cultivates the fruit trees which merely vegetate in the plains, such as the peach tree, and the peaches which he harvests can compete without any fear with those of our own country.

The Meo climbs like a cat. Over sheer paths, up ladders com-
516 posed of a single bamboo pole standing upright in which notches are
417 cut at regular intervals which are large enough for two toes, the Meo

149: Reinach--422 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[124]

APPENDIX XXI

NOTES ON GOLD-BEARING DEPOSITS

1. DEPOSITS OF NAM-BENG AND NAM-NGAO

(District of Pak-Ta--Luang-Prabang)

316 These deposits, which are situated in the principality of Luang-Prabang a hundred kilometers west of the capital, are made up of alluvial beds in the valleys formed by the left-bank tributaries of the Mekong (Nam-Beng, Nam-Ngao, Nam-Ta, etc.).

[643 556] Before our settlement in Laos, these deposits had long constituted part of the patrimony of the kings of Luang-Prabang. It was from here that they extracted all the gold needed not only to pay their tributes of vassaldom to the Chinese, Annamite and Siamese sovereigns, but also to make purchases in Bangkok and cast gold articles and massive pieces of jewelry for their family, as well as the insignia of officials.

Our own prospecting trips to these deposits in 1893 and 1894 yielded, merely by washing in a wash-trough and without amalgamation, "crude gold" which was clearly visible in the form of nuggets, grains and dust. Moreover, from natives who worked these deposits we acquired nuggets which were obtained by means of this same rudimentary process and which varied in weight from two to forty-five grams. We even saw nuggets of unrolled "or crespelé" weighing [301] 140 and 225 grams, which came from the same place. What is more, it is not unusual to meet children wearing nuggets hung around their neck like amulets--nuggets which vary in volume from the size of a hazelnut to that of a pressed fig.

The gentle slope and short length of the valleys where the deposits are found, and the proximity of the mountains from which the gold comes, are precious indications of the presence of outcropping lodes. Moreover, the appearance of the crespelé metal, as if it were spongy, [125] to which particles of quartz still adhere, is a confirmation of this hypothesis.

In 1895 a corporation called the "Mining and agricultural company of Laos" ["Société minière et agricole du Laos"], with a capital of 150,000 francs, was established in Paris through our efforts. It sent M. Isnard, a mining engineer, to the locality to study the deposits of gold and precious stones which we had prospected.

A corporation with a capital of several millions was later to take the place of the study group.

He[1] must never look at a woman. However a few old women are 792
seen in the pagoda. These are the devotees. They are dressed in 785
white, their heads are completely shaved, and they lead a life of
observance and asceticism which is as rigorous as that of the monks. 562
They render small services to the bonzes, decorate the altar, etc.,
but they live outside the enclosure of the pagoda.

Laotian Buddhism.

In a recent pamphlet, His Excellency Thao Nhouy Abhay, former 779
Minister of National Culture and Education, wrote: "In its intrinsic 795
substance Buddhism is deeply tolerant, but ours [26] has truly become
not austere enough." Therefore he proposes some necessary reforms
which would quickly raise the intellectual and moral level of the
bonzes in Laos. There are two sects in Laos: the Mahanikay and the [792]
Thammayut. The only difference between the two is the way in
which they consider that monastic rule should be observed. Nothing
distinguishes them in appearance except the color of the monastic
robe of the Mahanikay, which is brownish-ochre almost chestnut.
The king is the chief of the Buddhist clergy. As for the believer 643
who regularly observes his religious duties, he is satisfied with little [735]
and gives much in alms. Buddhist tales and particularly Laotian
texts, among them the Pannasajataka (Ha Sip Xat), quote all the
merits acquired for future lives by those who give alms and, above
all, feed the bonzes.

Religious Literature.

The basis of the religious literature of Laos is the Buddhist 779
Tripitaka. These "Three Baskets" contain the integral "word of the 538
Buddha."

The basket [corbeille] of Vinaya (Vinayapitaka) is the rule of monastic life. It consists of five sections: Patimokkha, Mahavagga, Coullavagga, Souttavibhanga and Parivara. The Patimokkha is meant to be read in public (particularly on the feasts of the eighth month), on the periodic days of confession. The Mahavagga and the Coullavagga give the list of daily obligations, illustrated by examples drawn from the life of the Buddha. The Souttavibhanga is really a commentary on the Patimokkha; finally the Parivara is both a revision and a catechism.

The Basket of the Soutta (Souttapitaka) contains an enormous amount of preaching and of edifying tales. Among others, the famous Dhammapada, a treasury of the sayings of the Buddha and the Jatakas are to be found in this basket.

[27] The third basket is that of Abhidharma and consists of seven

1 [i.e., a bonze --Analyst]

796 a hermit and said to them: "If you think of your mother, build little
773 illuminated boats and let them be carried away by the current on the fifteenth day of the eleventh month."

This rite is common to all the Asiatic countries of the monsoon. It is found in Lower Burma where it is said to celebrate the victory of the monk Oupagoutta over Mara. It is also practised in Cambodia, southern China at Amoy, in Borneo and in Japan.

Actually we are dealing with what Sir J. Frazer called the expulsion of the emissary he-goat. "These little rafts loaded with offerings attracted the evil genii who had been in contact with the living during the rains. They are driven away on board these frail skiffs." The expulsion of the emissary goat is often accompanied by licentious scenes similar to those of ancient Saturnalia and Bacchanalia.

[526] The race of the dugouts was originally intended to bring about the fall of the waters, but apparently it seems that in Vientiane, in spite of offerings made to the Nagas of the Nam Passak, the original idea has been lost, and the dugout race has become simply a sporting event.

The Feasts of the Twelfth Month.

796 When King Asoka had completed the 84,000 shrines which he
643 had built to contain the ashes of the Buddha, he made a great feast of the That on the fifteenth day of the crescent moon of the twelfth month. The feasts of the That Luang are celebrated in memory of this pious deed.

At Vientiane they are preceded by the feast of Vat Si Muong and conclude with those of the Vat Ong Tu [46] and Impeng (see appendix: Vientiane). They always involve the same ceremonial, circumambulation around the pagoda with small sticks of wax and incense, offerings to the bonzes, etc....

The day before the feast of That Luang, on the fourteenth day of the crescent moon, the Great Oath takes place. The king goes to the pagoda of Vat Ong Tu. All the high dignitaries and principal office-holders of the kingdom are present. The bonzes chant the ritual prayers. Two Kha guards in red tunics and green sampots, red berets with a pompon on their heads similar to the headdress worn by warriors represented at the Bayon of Angkor Thom, plunge the points of the sabres, guns and lances into four begging bowls containing lustral water. The master of ceremonies recites the oath written on palm leaves three times. Then the water in which the weapons have been dipped is distributed to the principal dignitaries who drink it.

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Then the royal retinue proceeds to the That Luang where the king must spend the night in a sala. He is accompanied by his ministers and in principle may not leave until they come and fetch him.

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On the morning of the fifteenth day, the king, carried by his guards, goes to make his offerings to the bonzes, and the whole day is devoted to public rejoicing, of which one form deserves to be mentioned. It is the game of the Thi khi.

Its origin, so far as we know at present, remains obscure. The Pra Lak Pra Lam tells us that Indra and Rama played Thi Khi together, and that since that day it has been played at Vientiane.

Let us observe that the game was unknown at Luang Prabang. It was imported from the south. Tradition required that it be played on horseback, when it was played like polo.

At the present time it is played on foot with a stick with the end bent over like a crosier and a ball the size [47] of a child's head and is similar to hockey. There are two opposing sides, the office-holders and the people. The latter should in principle win two victories out of three games. The game has no rules, there is no umpire and no limit to the ground played on. Sometimes the ball goes off into the shrubbery, and all the players go and look for it. Only a hypothetical line indicates the limit of the enemy side. [641]

The feasts of Vat Inpeng and of Vat Ong Tu merely repeat those of Vat Simuong and That Luang.

[48] THE SECULAR CEREMONIES

The Sou Khouan can be considered as the transition between the purely religious ceremonies and the secular feasts. [527 725]

Actually Sou Khouan means "call and reception of the soul." The Laotian has a profound belief in the transmigration of the soul. According to him, the human body is inhabited by thirty-two khouan (spirits) each of whom presides over the function of a member, an organ or an intellectual faculty.

When a human being dies, all of the thirty-two souls leave his body. According to the merits which have been acquired, they go either to the heaven of the gods, or to the province of the dead. Certain beings who have died in an abnormal manner, by suicide, drowning, etc., become wandering souls. They are to be feared, because they return to earth in order to torment the living, and one must make numerous sacrifices to them.

527 the course of the year for good or for bad. On the day of the New
805 Year, a bassi is offered to His Majesty the King by the ministers and high dignitaries. Then a delegation of bonzes is admitted to the palace where, after receiving the ritual offerings, they are sprinkled in a cabin by His Majesty the King and members of the royal family.

Outside in the town the aspersions continue more than ever during
[643] the whole week. During these feasts the King goes in a dugout to the grottoes of Xieng Men, opposite Luang Prabang, and to those of Pak Ou where he sprinkles the statues there. Then he comes to make the ritual aspersion of the Phra Bang, palladium of the kingdom, at the pagoda of Vat May.

527 During these feasts of the New Year, the dance of the Phou
773 Gneu Gna Gneu takes place. These are legendary individuals considered the ancestors of the Laotians, whose story is as follows:

When Phou Lan Xong had pierced the gourd, the king of heaven sent his son Khoum Bolom to organize the country. While he was performing the mission entrusted to him by his father, a vine was seen to rise from the earth. It grew rapidly and soon covered the whole world with its shadow. Men ceased to see the sky and were deprived of light and heat. The king ordered this monstrous vine to be cut down, but nobody dared to risk doing this. Finally an aged couple [deux vieux époux] Phou Thao Gneu and Me Ngam, armed with a hatchet and preceding the son of heaven, come down to earth, announced that they were willing to undertake this perilous task. But they stipulated that after their death they would receive offerings and would be invoked at the beginning of meals and other business. Everybody [67] agreed to this. Then they attacked the vine with blows of the hatchet. At the end of three months and three days, the vine fell and crushed them in its fall, but the sun shone again on the world.

The agreement has been kept. Since that day the dance of the Phou Gneu Gna Gneu is one of the principal elements of the Laotian feast of the New Year.

527 The two dancers wear enormous cardboard masks. They listen
805 on their knees to prayers read aloud to them, while alongside of them a lion waves its paws nonchalantly. This lion has rather a peculiar role. Apparently it is another survival of the legend of the cycle of animals. Not having any toys to give their children, the first ancestors had the idea of modeling one year a rat, another year an ox, then a tiger, a hare, a dragon, etc. The name of each animal designated the year during which it was used as a toy. Finally these little figures became alive and became the ancestors of the present day species. At

10: d'Orleans--301 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 644, 701, 177.70

"The Laos army is kept up at a very slight cost, there being only, apart from the Siam troops, a royal corps, dressed in European style and armed with rapid-firing rifles. The rest of the men are supplied in the event of war, by the villages with their own form of weapon, and they are not likely to be dangerous opponents for a long time to come, as shown by the way in which they fled before the soldiers of Deo Van Tri."

10: d'Orleans--322 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 644

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "We receive visits from the brothers of the kings who send to say that they will be very pleased to see us, and, in order to reach their residence, we have to cross the river."

10: d'Orleans--334-337 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 644

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "To the left of the market there is a small plain, with a few pools and the remains of an unfinished pagoda, while nearer the Mekong is the Ouate Sieng Muong and then the royal palace, fenced in by a rectangular palisade of bamboo. The guard is formed of about forty Laotians dressed in yellow canvas and armed with European weapons, and their guard-house, with sentinel boxes on each side of the gates, is about in the centre. The palace consists of three buildings; that in the centre, which is of brick, and will, when finished, have two storeys, being the new palace, while to the right a white house with green blinds is the residence of the old king, his son, who now holds the reins of government, living to the left in what looks very much like a Swiss chalet of yellow wood. We commence our visit by the last named, the Siamese Colonel coming to meet us on the steps, (1) while the king is waiting [pages 335 and 336 contain

1. It is worthy of note that at Xieng Maï the native prince receives the English direct, without the intermediary of the Siamese authorities.

illustration] [337] behind him. The latter attired in a short blue tunic, with a langouti of rose-coloured silk, wears shoes and stockings and has his hair cut very short. Although of intelligent bearing, he seems embarrassed by the presence of the colonel, to whom he turns every time he speaks, as much as to ask his leave to open his mouth. In

fact, I do not think that I should be doing him an injustice if I said that he gave me the impression of a pupil with his tutor.

Having taken our seats in a circle round a table, upon which stood gold cups containing cigarettes, we have leisure to notice that the room is draped with bamboo mats and lighted by petroleum lamps, while in the recess is a throne in blue and red, shaped very much like a bed and surmounted by a white dais trimmed with lace. From the wall behind hangs a portrait of his father done at Bangkok."

10: d'Orleans--338 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 326, 402, 644

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "There are several artisans in this quarter, and we were taken to see a goldsmith, the bellows of whose forge consisted of the trunk of a hollow tree with a piston inside, and he tells us that he had left the king's service because he was so irregularly paid."

10: d'Orleans--352-353 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 535, 644, 782

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"The 15th [LSS: of April] is a more interesting day for us, as the king is to make a progress through the streets, the event being announced early in the morning by two of the four guns which the Siamese have mounted here.

When we arrive at the pagoda of Ouate Uisonne, we find that the crowd is already very great, and that women are bringing to the pagoda flowers and meats placed in large dishes. From the street to the entrance of the temple the path is covered with bamboo mats; the peristyle is draped with yellow [353] silk, beneath which the king is seated and is taking tea, while the bonzes are reciting prayers inside. The same dances described above are again performed, with the addition this time of a third figure, viz., that of a dragon with a golden head and jaws like a crocodile, the body being formed of material which has a blue stripe down the middle of the back. There are two men inside, and the monster, which goes through the most extraordinary contortions, is called Tsinng (the lion)."

10: d'Orleans--353 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 411, 531, 644

"Men of the king's household bear swords, the sheath of which is of chased gold, while the handle is of horn studded with precious stones. These swords are over 200 years old, and very fine, but the blade is common. Others carry lances with wooden shafts and silver bands at the top, the iron of the lance being encased in a red sheath. I also notice a javelin, the iron of which is crescent shaped with a notch at the lower end."

10: d'Orleans--353-354 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 644, 783, 823

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"The king comes and greets us after he has taken his tea; he seems to be amiable and intelligent, but, as at all our other interviews, timid and ill at ease, especially with the Siamese Colonel upon the one side and us upon the other. As soon as our audience is over, he ascends the small wooden construction over which the water conduit is placed, and his servitors bring him one after the other several jugs of water which he pours into it and which trickle down, drop by drop, upon a Buddha placed on [354] a gilt chair in an adjoining building."

10: d'Orleans--354 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 177, 565, 644

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"After a few more prayers in the pagoda, he [LSS: the king] returns home, preceded by his courtiers who are dressed in the Laos fashion, like the rest of the people, without any distinguishing sign, and who carry cups, boxes, a teapot, and other articles all of wrought gold, and most of them given by the King of Siam. It is surprising to notice side by side with these a small yellow tin box containing clothes, a French deal box, painted to represent carriages and horses, a phial containing scent, and a crystal bottle such as one may see in a hairdresser's shop. All this is indicative of what must happen in a country which is overrun, as this one will be, by the bad taste of what I may call a cheap and nasty civilisation. [sic] "

10: d'Orleans--354 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 292, 492, 493, 644

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"Every one kneels in the dust as the monarch passes by, behind him being four bearers of parasols, two white and two green. The cortége is a lengthy one, being headed by a group of horsemen, bare legged, and with their toes resting upon the edge of very broad stirrups; their dress consisting of a small white jacket and a broad brimmed felt hat. Then comes a mandarin in a wooden palanquin, upon each side of him being a man who carries a bamboo mat to protect him from the mud which the young girls endeavour to throw at him. A troop of children who come along clapping their hands are succeeded by two broad-wheeled waggons,[sic] one of which is drawn by a horse, and the other by men, and by three elephants conveying in a howdah, made of osier to protect them from the sun, officers of a lower grade."

10: d'Orleans--354-355 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 292, 534, 644

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"With the Laos soldiers, preceded by six trumpeters, comes the guard dressed in yellow tick and wearing round caps, striped blue and white. The [355] standard of Luang Prabang is white, with a particoloured dragon like that of China, while a second white flag with a red border, upon which can be traced the outlines of an elephant, must be Siamese.

The soldiers are followed by the musicians and certain instruments, such as the drums and the cymbals, are placed upon a wooden square which is suspended by ropes from the shoulders of several bearers, the player marching in the centre. Then come more soldiers, naked to the waist, sword-bearers, lance-bearers, and cane-bearers, the canes being tied up with some red material in bundles.

Last of all comes the king, seated upon a very small gilt throne with no dome to it and borne by eight men, facing the king being two children on their knees. He is wearing a small white jacket, a silken langoutî and a rather dirty old gray helmet, with an European sunshade in his hand; the rear guard is formed by young Laotians, intoxicated with tchoum-tchoum, many of them bearing upon their faces marks of the mud thrown by the young girls."

10: d'Orleans--356 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 644

"Upon the right bank of the Nam Kane is a hill of chalk, with large blocks covering the slopes, and the tradition is that they are not there by chance but were placed there by order of former sovereigns as a hiding-place for their treasures."

23: Franck--281-282 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 144, 644, 177.64 France
636.64

"The huge commissaire, now half invalid but still a great force in his province, and beloved apparently by all classes of its residents, was a survival of the earlier colonial days, when a man in his present position was virtually king [282] of all he surveyed. His half-dozen pure-blooded dogs all wore stout canvas pants to assure their offspring against mixture with the local mongrel breed. But some officials had not taken the same precautions with themselves, and had several brown-complexioned children at school in Hanoi, though they were bachelors."

23: Franck--299 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 293, 301, 644

"The king's wives, and the girls of the royal family and of the wealthier class, wear a kind of swimming-vest, usually white, in addition to the brilliant scarf. Perhaps his Majesty does not wish charms meant for his own eyes alone to become even visually common property. Yet the royal wives themselves on the way to market had about them a hint of coquetry, even toward a foreigner, which seemed to be totally lacking among their sisters of the bush. Many of the girls of Luang Prabang wear enormous silver or pewter anklets, some of them weighing twenty piastres or more. Others wore chains of ten-cent pieces. So many French silver piastres have been turned into these anklets, bracelets, the metal collars of the Miao, and other forms of adornment that it is little wonder Indo-China now uses almost exclusively paper money."

"There are ceremonial occasions when the king comes to the home of the commissaire, not by Ford but on an elephant, and is carried up the steps seated on his throne, white parasols over him and a great retinue about him. The French residents condoled with me particularly because I had not reached Luang Prabang quinze jours--a fortnight--earlier. For in the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha New Year's [322] had fallen on April 12 that year, and with it comes the ceremony of the petit serment, as distinguished from the grand serment in November; that is, the swearing of fealty to the French and to the king--please note the order. Then the king rides on several elephants, I gathered, though probably only one at the time, and is carried through the town on his throne, followed by long processions of notables and mandarins in white jackets and sampots of every color of the rainbow, if not indeed several which it lacks. The common people, all the inhabitants of the capital except the Annamese and the French, kneel and bow their heads to the earth, for then they must not look upon their king, though it is said a few of the least reverent sometimes do get a glimpse à la dérobée. To judge by the pictures French residents had taken of the recent ceremony it was a sight worth coming two weeks earlier to see. In them all the inevitable cigarette was dangling from the king's lips; no ceremony is so solemn, no place so sacred, that Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah will go without his smoke. As many a photograph of the few remaining

23: Franck--321-322 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-2
116, 644, 527, 796

European monarchs and their possible successors shows, he has good precedent for thus openly indulging. Perhaps it is a sign of increasing democracy, or such informal and plebeian habits may always have been shared by kings, though our expurgated histories do not mention them. Cigarette or Ford, however, the people of Luang Prabang take their king very seriously, more seriously than he does himself. The native doctor at the government hospital, educated in Hanoï and outwardly entirely French except in complexion, kneels and touches his forehead to the floor before he gives medicine to one of the king's sons in the palace nursery."

23: Franck--337-338 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 177, 291, 304, 644 Ethnic subgroup

"The prince had only to order the village chief, or the inhabitants themselves, to furnish new carriers, however, and they were soon there, though from then on we changed as often as we came to a village, sometimes two or three times a day. The coolies still seemed to be Kha, but they were men who had come into more contact with the outside world than those who had been with me all that strenuous Sunday, and they had lost some of the ornaments, simplicity, and politeness. Perhaps they were [338] not Kha at all, for they had all sorts of tattooing, and some of them had raised welts, like the bush negroes of Dutch Guiana. Each man according to his fancy wore a kind of kilt that was really a mere strip of cloth wound about him from waist to knees. Now and then we passed a woman on a journey, in a costume in which she would not have been unnoticed on Broadway, wearing earrings, neck-rings, two bracelets on each arm, and a barrel-shaped strip of cloth from nipples to knees, and carrying her bed and belongings, consisting of a sack hanging down from her forehead and on her back a rolled-up grass or reed mat on which to spend her virtuous nights."

68: Mouhot--272-273 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 644, 556, 609

"[HD: Excerpt from a letter written by Mouhot in Luang Prabang to his brother] After waiting for ten days I have at length been presented to the king with great pomp. The reception room was a shed such as they build in our villages on fête-days , but larger and hung with every possible colour. His Majesty was enthroned at one end of the hall, lazily reclining on a divan, having on his right hand four guards squatting down, and each holding a sabre: behind were the princes all prostrated, and farther off the [273] senators, with their backs to the public and their faces in the dust; then in front of his Majesty was your poor brother, dressed all in white, and seated on a carpet, with teacups, basins, and spittoons in silver placed by his side, contemplating this grotesque scene, and having some trouble to preserve his gravity as he smoked his pipe. The visit cost me a gun for the king and various small presents for the princes, for one cannot travel here without being well furnished with presents for the kings, princes, and mandarins. Luckily it is not here as in Siam; the natives are willing to help me, and for a few inches of brass wire I get a beautiful longicorn or some other insect, and these are brought to me on all sides: thus I have succeeded in largely increasing my collection, but five pieces of red cloth [HD: brought as a trade item] have disappeared already.

The day after my first audience I had another from the second king, who wished also for a present. I sought among my stock, which anywhere else would cause me to be

68: Mouhot--272-273 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 644, 556, 609

taken for a dealer in old stores, and found a magnifying glass and a pair of old-fashioned spectacles with round glasses, which make him look like a gorilla without hair, a little cake of soap (he had great need of it), a bottle of eau-de-cologne, and a bottle of brandy. This last was opened on the spot and duly appreciated. You see all this is expensive, but I am obliged to pay these good people, and the king has been kind to me, and is going to carry my letters for me." [HD: on his trip to Bangkok to pay tribute to the King of Siam]

mandarin and head of the tribunal; 3) the Phaya Muong- 647
Khang or first mandarin of the center and head of the Serv- 642
ice of public works, transports, etc. 631

The Senam was composed of the Phaya Muong-Khoua or /646/
second right-hand mandarin, and of four councillors under the direction of the Phya Muong-Sen.

The judges or Kromakanes, who were under the Phaya /693/
Muong-Sen and the Phaya Muong-Tiane, numbered seven in all and included the Phaya Muong-Sai or second left-hand mandarin.

Last came the mandarins responsible for the collection of /653
taxes, the assembling of labor drafts and the transport of 644/
bamboo, rattan, thatch and pirogues for the king's service and the public services; then the pages and chamberlains or mahaleks, the military leaders, the functionaries responsible for petty tasks inside the palace, the treasurers, storekeepers, etc.

The reader will note the insignificant position reserved /701/
for the military mandarins in this hierarchy. Of Sam-Sene-Thai's powerful army (see above, p. 56), nothing at all remained.

provinces were aided by an Oupahat, a Ratsavong and a Ratsabout who, like the court dignitaries, gave their orders to the tassengs or canton heads who had authority over the village leaders (naibans). By establishing the different government commissions in Laos Pavie therefore strengthened the native authorities in their age-old prerogatives and the princes of Luang-Prabang in /325/ their dynastic rights and privileges. In order to mark their absolute attachment to France and to give more force to their vehement protests against awarding Siam the part of the kingdom situated on the right bank, the latter insisted on receiving, in solemn fashion and as soon as possible, the investiture of the government of the Republic from the commissioner general. After his return from Muong-Sing eight 643*
months later, Pavie drew up on parchment in Hanoi the titles of the old king Oun-Kham, of King Zakarine, of his brother and of the Oupahat Boun-Khong, and on April 19, 1895 proceeded to this important ceremony.

"All those who had a part in the control of affairs," he wrote as he finished the account of his mission, "were present. The entire populace was invited. In the name of the government of the

567 as early as March of 1896, in a report which we believe it will be of
426 value to reproduce in part, as well as a code of rules as ingenious as they were just governing slavery for debt (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVIII.

567 Finally, there is a kind of serfdom in Laos which is applied to
563 certain Kha tribes. Thus in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang, subsequent to revolts, entire tribes of Khas were reduced to a state of serfdom and placed under the patronage of the king, of princes, or of the principal members of the nobility. In 1894 our administration undertook to liberate these Khas, who are completely free today. In southern Laos most of these latter are still the clients of a few nobles or Laotian officials, but the guardianship is a gentle one which they can abandon and resume at will.

2. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

178 Under our control, as has been noted above, the political
642 organization of Laos has remained what it was before 1893. We have respected the customs and local traditions, and we govern through the native administration in which all the machinery has been retained.

643 [490] The following is a nearly complete list of all the officials in a large Muong such as the kingdom of Luang-Prabang or of Bassac (1)

(1) The kingdom of Luang-Prabang is situated on both banks of the Mekong, but the king resides on the left bank at Luang-Prabang and is consequently dependent on the French authorities. The kingdom of Bassac is today wholly on the right bank, and the king of Bassac falls under Siamese domination. The title of king is sometimes given also to the "Tiao-Fa" or head of the province of Muong-Sing. The head of a muong in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na may be a "Tso-boua," a "Phya-Hua" or a "Sen-Houi-Fa," depending on his importance.

At the head are the Kings, two in number:

Somdet-Phra-Tiao or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Louang, first king, great master of existences.

Tiao-Maha-Oupahat or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Vang-Na, second king,
644 great master responsible for conservation of property. [Illustration here]

644

Then come the minister princes:
Latsavong, first prince, minister of the right.
Latsaboute, second prince, minister of the left.
Komakhoume, third prince, minister of the middle.
Komamoune, fourth prince, minister of the civil services.

All these high dignitaries are princes of royal blood and bear the hereditary title of "Tiao" (noble).

[491] The members of the royal family employed in the service of the government (Latsakane) under the orders of the minister princes are the:

Tiao-Southisane, Tiao-Soulignak, Tiao-Kattignak, Koune-Laboute, Si-Koune-Laboute, Tiao-Sisoulate, Tiao-Pho-Tisane, Tiao-Inthisane, Tiao-Tham-Makat-Tika, Tiao-Inthitiak.

645

The three first mandarins bear the title of "Phaya" or "Phania" depending on the region. They are, in order of importance:

1. The Phaya-Muong-Sen, first mandarin of the right, head of the Senam (1) and head of the justice department.

(1) In Siamese "Sena" designates the "Great Mandarins."

2. The Phaya-Muong-Tiane, first mandarin of the right and head of the courts.

3. The Phaya-Muong-Khang, first mandarin of the middle and head of the service of public works, of transports, etc.

The council of the kingdom or "Senam" is composed of high officials who hold the rank of "Phaya" or "Phya" (2) and who are

(2) "Phaya" is the highest grade of the administrative hierarchy. In Upper Laos anyone may attain it, while in Lower Laos it is accessible only to noblemen. The grade just below it is that of "Phya." Mandarins of lesser importance bear the title of "Luong," "Koune" or "Nai."

the:

Phaya-Muong-Khoua, second mandarin of the right.
Phya-Sieng-Neua (or Maha-Sena) } Councilors of the King,
Phya-Sieng-Sa } members of the Senam,
Phya-Phoumma } under the orders of the
Phya-Si-Song-Muong } Phaya-Muong-Sen.

693 Judges, or "Kromakanes" in Laotian, are responsible to the Phaya-Muong-Sen and the Phaya-Muong-Tiane, and are the:

Phaya-Muong-Sai, second mandarin of the left.
Phya-Sieng-Tai.
Phya-Muong-Pak.
Phya-Sak-Kha.
Phya-Muong-Khouk (particularly responsible for supervision of prisons).
Phya-Phane-Nong.
Mune-Vi-Sai.

647 [492] The mandarins responsible for the collection of taxes, the assemblage of statute laborers, and the transport of bamboo,
651 rattan, thatch straw and pirogues for the king's service and the public service are the:

Phaya-Soune, mandarin of the middle.

Pha-Jotha.
Sanone.
Si-Phat-Thamane.
Si-Samoute.
Si-Sounone.
Sene-Tiane.
} Under the orders of the Phaya-Muong-Khang and the Phaya-Soune.

The pages of the king bear the honorary title of "Mahatlek." They are the:

644
1. Phaya-Nak-Phoumine
Phaya-Kham-Soune-Phou
} Chief pages and chamberlains.

2. Phya-Na-Heua.
Phya-Mune-Na.
Phya-Natai.
Phya-Muong-Phene.
} Principal pages attached to the king's person, who bear his arms and insignia in ceremonies.

3. Phout-Thavong-Mahakhote
Mune-Vong-Sai.
Akhasa.
} Chamber pages, guardians of the king's property, of his parasol, etc.

701 The military leaders are the:

Phaya-Soupho.
Phaya-Kham-Mone.
Phya-Vieng-Ke.
Phya-Vieng-Khame.
Oupasa.
Mune-Sanone-Tiai.
} Responsible for various military duties.

644 The functionaries responsible for minor duties inside the palace, under the orders of their chief the Maha-Monti, are the:

Maha-Nosit, Lasa-Nosit, Lasa-Mat, Sanet, Sakame-Nane, Latsavat, Out-Thamonti, Sene-Thong-Niot, Sathipavot.

[652] [493] The treasurers, storekeepers and palace guards have the
647 titles of:

Phaya-Vi-Sai-Monthiene, Phone-Seuk-Khoua, Phone-Seuk-Sai.

697 Finally the jailers and scourgers (or executioners) under the command of the king or of the head of the justice department:

Phone-Tesak, Sa-Phakdi, Sa-Dab-Khame, Vong-Phouthone.

635 In the provinces, the head of a muong bears a title which is
631 personal to him, "Phaya" or "Phya," to which he adds that of "Tiao-Muong" and the name of the province, as Phaya-Si-Vorarat-Phrak-Di, Tiao-Muong-Vien-Tiane.

Under his command he has principal mandarins in the number of three, who bear the titles of "Oupahat," "Latsavong" and "Latsaboute." Each of them is generally responsible for the administration of one part of the muong, under the supervision of the "Tiao-Muong."

These high officials are seconded, depending on the importance of the muong, by a larger or smaller number of counselors or judges who bear the titles of "Sen," "Tiane," "Khang," etc.

Muongs are generally divided into cantons, and the heads of the
[623] latter bear the title of "Taseng." Each canton includes several villages or "Bans," and each of these has at its head a mayor who is usually called "Pho-Ban" (the father of the village). The head of a village is aided by a kind of council or assembly of notables, the titles of whom are "Pia," "Luong," "Koun," "Sen," "Mune" or "Nai."

643 The four principal leaders of a muong, that is to say the "Tiao-
646 Muong," the "Oupahat," the "Latsavong" and the "Latsaboute" (1),

(1) In the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc, the heads of muongs bear the following titles: "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong), "Phya-Hua-Pahn" (Oupahat), "Phya-Balat" (Latsavong), "Phya-Kam" (Latsaboute). In accordance with custom, these offices are hereditary and sons succeed their fathers, except for the office of "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong) where the rule is not absolute.

are [494] elected either by the nobles or by commoners who possess certain aptitudes and sufficient intellectual culture. The whole population, nobles, officials and common people, are consulted. Then the

536 There is no scenery. The costumes and headdresses vary according to the characters represented. The masks of colored lacquer worn by the actors, their accessories (weapons, scarves, etc.) being traditional and invariable enable the fictitious characters on the stage to be identified.

[178 The theatre of animated shadows, similar to the shadow theatre
101] of China and Java, tends to disappear little by little.

Laotian Decoration.

Laotian decoration is characterized by a somewhat mannered
531 elegance which can be noticed in the motifs of the pagoda doors and
178 windows. The Laotian artisan is, however, endowed with an extremely well developed artistic sense, but the present day demands do not enable him any longer to live by his handiwork, and the importation of manufactured articles tends to make the artist disappear. /89/ He can only survive by royal patronage. The royal palace for this reason shelters sculptors on wood and ivory as well as goldsmiths, but
[644] their produce is not sold and the tourist will hardly be able to bring back with him typical Laotian objects.

However, the weaving of silk materials of divers shades, often laminated with gold or silver, is still done on a sufficient scale to
[236] satisfy the passing tourist.

The Sin

This is a skirt reaching from the hips to the ankles. It is of a
291 rather somber color with a design of vertical stripes very close together and not very evident. This skirt is decorated on its lower edge with a flat trimming of two or three rows of gold or silver braid. At the top of the skirt a belt of red cloth, more or less embroidered, relieves the rather dark tone. This garment is a regular cylinder having the same width on its entire length. When the woman emerges from her bath she lifts her skirt, gathered into the shape of a crown, above her head and lets it slide down the length of her body. She fixes it without hooks or fasteners to her belt by means of a turned in pleat tied in front leaving most of her belly exposed. A bright colored scarf of cotton or silk thrown over one shoulder and completely covering the breasts completes the costume. The most beautiful scarves come from Samneua, Luang Prabang and Khong. The jewelry most frequently seen consists of
301 silver bracelets, necklaces and buttons, rings, long crossed over chains /chaînes-sautoirs/, flat clasps, and belts usually of silver but sometimes of gold.

/Pages 90 to 135 not translated/ /136 blank/

7: Thompson--369-370 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians-
116, 647, 645, 653, 177.64 France
636.64

"The centralized administration of Laos was not only part of the French mania for simplification and uniformity, which for various [370] reasons had reached Laos later than elsewhere, but was primarily stimulated by the economic importance of Laos's mines and town building in the post-war period. The modernization of Vientiane was especially notable, for it had been buried under the jungle, 400 kilometres from the sea, and on an almost unnavigable river. When the potential wealth of the country became evident, the administration began to veer away from the Protectorate ideal to direct government, making tabula rasa of native institutions. Some Hanoi officials took it into their head to suppress the King of Luang-Prabang as an obstacle to transforming Laos into a bona-fide colony. Varenne had the good sense to recognize how much the Laotians venerated their king, and so he rescued his throne from the assimilationist peril. The Protectorate was saved, and to push Laos farther along the trail blazed by Annam and Cambodia, a native advisory assembly was given to the country in 1929, and a mixed Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, both of which recently sent delegates to the Grand Conseil. The process can only fully develop when the rail and road network is completed--that administrative pipe-dream linking Laos to the rest of the Union--which in 1936 looked perilously near fulfilment. An unfortunate corollary is that the forty-year tariff freedom of Laos, a miracle in French colonization, died in 1932 with the growth of the Siamese and Indo-Chinese railroad construction."

10: d'Orleans--299 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 645

"Below the throne are five ministers.

First Minister . . . . Phya Muong Sène.
Second Minister . . . Phya Muong Chane.
Third Minister. . . . Phya Maha Sena.
Fourth Minister. . . Phya Muong Koua.
Fifth Minister . . . . Phya Muong Sal.

They are appointed by the kings."

victorious (1), and this expedition, which would seem to have 648*
643*

1. With the help of Trân-Ninh. 728
175*

been imposed on him, is the only campaign which is related during his long forty-three year reign.

According to the Annals he strictly observed the Buddhist teach- 643*
ing and followed, in a more docile manner than his father had 175*
done, the pious counsels of Pha-Maha-Pasaman-Thala-Tiao, his /645
spiritual director, "and so his kingdom knew a long period of 792/
peace and prosperity." He was a great builder of temples, and erected the pagodas of Manorom, Ouposot (with a library which was given the manuscripts which had been brought from Angkor), and Xieng-Kang which was built in memory of his daughter, the young princess Sivayaka, who died of smallpox at the age of twelve.

The Three Hundred Thousand Thaïs. In 1376 he gave orders 161
for a general census of the inhabitants of Lang-Xang. The results 175*
gave 300,000 "registered" Thaïs, not counting women, children, 654
bonzes, foreigners, slaves and Khas (2), and Oun-Hueun took /53/

2. The number of registered non-Thaïs was about 400,000.

/C. A. M. Translator's note. Page 53 is devoted to a map: "Lan-Xang and surrounding regions at the death of Fa-Ngoun (1374)". /
as his reigning name Phaya-Sam-Sène-Thaï, the King of the Three Hundred Thousand Thaïs.

Social Organization. These folk then constituted a society 631
grouped by families and divided into Nobles and Commoners. The 565
Nobles were given certain privileges and helped to administer the 175*
kingdom, from the dignitaries who were princes of royal blood down to the simple officials who were responsible for collecting taxes, for assembling labor drafts, for transporting goods, etc.

In the provinces the heads of circumscriptions (Muongs) were elected either from the Nobles or from the Commoners, but the choice of the electors generally fell on the son or some relative of the person who was to be replaced, unless there were some unworthiness or notorious incapability.

he fled secretly by way of the Mékong, but Nang-Keo-Phimpha 643*
learned of his flight and had him pursued and massacred on his 175*
raft a little way downstream from the capital. 662

We can only conjecture as to the motives which impelled this princess, fiercer even than a Frédégonde or a Marguerite de Bourgogne, to make such a hecatomb of kings. Was she a bloodthirsty despot, or simply a royal Lampito with an exasperated temperament? (1) /62/ We do not know, but it is certain that she /582/

1. Marriages between brothers and sisters were always permitted in the royal family of Lan-Xang. They were forbidden, on the other hand, among the common people.

finally inspired such terror in the court that there was no one left to intrigue for the throne, the last two sons of Lane-Kham-Dèng being too young.

Kam-Kheut, king 1435-1438.

It was then that Nang-Keo-Phimpha discovered the son of a palace slave girl who had once been singled out by King Sam-Sène-Thaï for her beauty. The young man, Xieng-Ma by name, conquered the Gorgon by his keen intelligence and a perfect knowledge of the events of the great reign of Oun-Hueun. She had no doubt but that he was her brother, and forced him on the court as sovereign under the name of Kham-Keut (golden birth). Whether the latter was a docile tool in the hands of the princess, or whether Nang-Keo-Phimpha became genuinely and profoundly attached to her creature, calm seemed permanently restored to the palace when Kham-Keut fell sick and died of dropsy after a three years' reign.

Death of Nang-Keo-Phimpha (1438). Then there was an ex- 669
plosion of hatred against Nang-Keo-Phimpha. This death was 643*
seen as a /63/ punishment inflicted on the kingdom by Heaven for 175*
having accepted a usurper. Anger got the better of fear, and the ministers arrested the princess, tied her to the rock of Pha-Dieou and had her shot. "Her body was abandoned to the crows and vultures."

SAI-TIAKAPHAT (1415), KING 1438-1479. 645

The Council of Ministers at once set out to choose a new king 175*
643*

645 who should be in the dynastic tradition. After a long deliberation
175* which was made laborious by the fact that Lane-Kham-Dèng's children
643* were minors, it offered the crown to Thao-Lu-Sai, the governor of Muong-Sai-Muoi and last legitimate son of Sam-Sène-Thaï. Thao-Lu-Sai accepted and mounted the throne under the name of Phaya-Sai-Tiakaphat.

643* Twenty-three years old, he assumed power under difficult condi-
175* tions. The excesses of Nang-Keo-Phimpha had indeed weakened royal authority within the country and aroused the attention of the neighboring princes who, whether tributaries or not, were more or
/668/ less jealous of the power of the king of Lan-Xang. The rich province of Vientiane had always retained an inclination /64/ towards independence, and its governor, Sai-Moni, thought that the moment had come to shake off the yoke, but he was assassinated before he even had time to set out on the march (1). The failure of this movement

/346/ 1. The temple of Wat-Thai is supposed to have been erected in his memory by the inhabitants of Vientiane.

which was crushed "in the egg" doubtless gave cause for reflection to the vassals, who lay quiet and congratulated themselves on their reserve when they realized that Tiakaphat was a wise, steadfast and prudent sovereign who was quite determined to maintain the integrity of his States. He governed peaceably for forty years, intelligently seconded in the last years of his reign by his eldest son Thao-Kone-Kèo, who rapidly acquired an enlightened knowledge of the kingdom's affairs and an unquestioned authority in the Council of Ministers. The king created the unprecedented title of Sene-Muong for him, named him prince of Xieng-Lo and gave him the position of Oupahat.

721 The Annamite Invasion (1478-1479). Meanwhile the Annamites
643* were only waiting for an opportunity to extract vengeance for the
175* affront which Lê-Loi had once suffered and also to consolidate their western frontier which lay open on the Black River. /65/ If they had not done so before it was only because they had been prevented by the incessant incursions of the Chams on their southern frontiers, but in 1471 the king Lê-Thanh-Tôn occupied the land of Qui-Nhon and succeeded in destroying the kingdom of Champa once and for all, and in 1478 he used a futile incident as a pretext for invading Lan-Xang. If we are to believe the legend, Tiakaphat had refused

439 after a ten year reign without leaving any sons." He thus explicitly
643* contradicts the native documents which recount the many competitions
175* for the throne which had divided the royal family, and according to which the "present king" succeeded his uncle (Visai).

He adds that the government of the country was divided, under the
175* high authority of the king, between three great officials:
642
645 1. The head of the army who was "governor of the province which produces benzoin" and commander of the city of Vientiane. He doubtless refers to the prime minister Tian-Thala, the son-in-law of Souligna whom he calls Tevinia-Assen;

2. The governor of Nakhone or viceroy, who commanded the whole southern part of the kingdom, including Attopeu, as far as the Cambodian frontier. This was the Nan-Tharath of the Annals, whom he calls Lachaen;

3. The minister of the Palace who is in charge of relations with ambassadors.

These three high officials "were given /110/ an audience only every two or three months, unless there were some necessity or the king had them summoned expressly."

/693/ Next to the king there was a "tribunal in charge of civil and criminal affairs" which was composed of five of his relatives who had daily access to the sovereign.

/651 Finally, Van Wusthof estimates the king's income at "two piculs"
643/* per year of gum lac, benzoin and gold (1).

1. Cf. Georges Maspero, op. cit. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./ A picul was equal to 61 kilograms.

175* The Account of Father Marini (1666). This evocation of the
114 Laotian kingdom in the seventeenth century does not differ appreciably, on the whole, from two travel accounts published in Italian at about the same time by the Jesuit fathers Martini (quoted p. 104, note 2) and Marini. A translation of the latter's accounts was placed on sale in Paris in 1666 (2). No matter how picturesque it may be in its

/127/ 2. Relation nouvelle et curieuse des royaumes de Tonquin et de Laos, traduite de l'italien du P. Marini Romain, par L.P.L.C.C. (F. Lecomte; cel.), a Paris, chez Gervais Clouzier, au Palais, sur les degres, en montant pour aller a

727 ruins, for the city had been given over to fire and bloodshed. The
175* Siamese had deported six thousand families to the right bank of the Mekong, had taken all the elephants and removed four hundred warhorses. They had not, however, been able to lay hands on /174/ the royal treasures, which had been carefully hidden. Phia-Bodin had then left for Bangkok leaving matters in the hands of Phia-Papha and driving towards the Menam terrified throngs of men, women and children who were followed by long files of carts filled with plunder and statues taken from the overturned temples (1).

1. Including the Prabang, carried off for the second time.

645 Since Phia-Papha had only a small force at his disposal, he left
175* Vientiane, crossed the river, dispatched a messenger to his master and settled in Thabo to await the turn of events.

721 Battle of Makheng. According to a Siamese version, the Annamite
175* "commissioners" accompanying Anou interceded in his behalf and obtained his pardon. In this version, the king of Vientiane was given permission to settle in the city again, but then had all the Siamese who were there massacred by surprise, immediately sent out his troops in pursuit of Phia-Papha and was again defeated in the vicinity of Makheng (2).

2. Cf. Phanuphanthuvongswardja, op. cit. /Repression de la revolte de Vientiane, Bangkok, 1926. /

726 In the meantime the king of Siam, at the news of the rebel's re-
643* turn, had sent out a new army 20,000 men strong which reached
175* /175/ the banks of the river in forced marches. Then Anou realized that struggle was impossible, and so as not to bring down further misfortunes on his subjects he resolved to go to China. He left by the valley of the Nam-Song with only one of his wives and 120 devoted partisans (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique." Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896. /

648* Chao-Noi delivers up Anou (1831). The Siamese general sus-
175* pected that he had made his way towards Tran-Ninh and sent orders

644

Then come the minister princes:
Latsavong, first prince, minister of the right.
Latsaboute, second prince, minister of the left.
Komakhoune, third prince, minister of the middle.
Komamoune, fourth prince, minister of the civil services.

All these high dignitaries are princes of royal blood and bear the hereditary title of "Tiao" (noble).

[491] The members of the royal family employed in the service of the government (Latsakane) under the orders of the minister princes are the:

Tiao-Southisane, Tiao-Soulignak, Tiao-Kattignak, Koune-Laboute, Si-Koune-Laboute, Tiao-Sisoulate, Tiao-Pho-Tisane, Tiao-Inthisane, Tiao-Tham-Makat-Tika, Tiao-Inthitiak.

645

The three first mandarins bear the title of "Phaya" or "Phania" depending on the region. They are, in order of importance:

1. The Phaya-Muong-Sen, first mandarin of the right, head of the Senam (1) and head of the justice department.

(1) In Siamese "Sena" designates the "Great Mandarins."

2. The Phaya-Muong-Tiane, first mandarin of the right and head of the courts.

3. The Phaya-Muong-Khang, first mandarin of the middle and head of the service of public works, of transports, etc.

The council of the kingdom or "Senam" is composed of high officials who hold the rank of "Phaya" or "Phya" (2) and who are

(2) "Phaya" is the highest grade of the administrative hierarchy. In Upper Laos anyone may attain it, while in Lower Laos it is accessible only to noblemen. The grade just below it is that of "Phya." Mandarins of lesser importance bear the title of "Luong," "Koune" or "Nai."

the:

Phaya-Muong-Khoua, second mandarin of the right.

Phya-Sieng-Neua (or Maha-Sena)	Councilors of the King,
Phya-Sieng-Sa	members of the Senam,
Phya-Phoumma	under the orders of the
Phya-Si-Song-Muong	Phaya-Muong-Sen.

10: d'Orleans--299-300 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 565, 646

"There is an hereditary assembly called the Sena, to which the members of certain families belong. The king can create new members, but cannot remove any, and the [300] Sena is a sort of House of Peers possessing the right of remonstrance. In fact, the Governmental acts bear the preamble, 'The Sena and the King,' the former being given precedence."

68: Mouhot--268-269 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 123, 576, 609, 646

"No event could have caused more sensation here [HD: in Luang Prabang] than the arrival of 'the long-bearded stranger.' From the humblest to the greatest--for even here are distinctions of rank--every one [269] looks on a 'white' as a natural curiosity, and they are not yet satisfied with looking--nothing is talked of but the stranger. When I pass through the town in my white dress, to go to the market or to visit the pagodas or other interesting places, the people crowd round me, and look after me as long as they can catch a glimpse of me. Everywhere I go complete silence reigns, and I am treated as though I were a sovereign or prince, and the council, by order of the king, have given to me as to them power of life or death over his subjects. Poor people! why can I not raise you from the abasement into which you have fallen?"

of Ayuthya. /45/ And even before it disappeared it had been 175*
supplanted by Vientiane, which was built some ten kilometers 633
upstream, unless the two cities formed a single immense one or 648*
unless the first one moved without changing its name at first 631

Capture of Phaï-Nam (Vientiane) Whatever the case may be, 643*
the center of resistance against Fa-Ngoun was then called "Phaï- 721
Nam" (thorny bamboos) because of the impenetrable vegetable 175*
belt which defended it like veritable ramparts. It resisted re- 725
peated assaults and Fa-Ngoun was able to get the better of it only 633
by using a ruse. He had gold and silver projectiles shot at the 631
bamboo enclosure and then simulated a retreat. The besieged
army, seeing the royal troops fall back, thought that their delivery
was at hand and came out to pick up the precious projectiles. Then
the assailants suddenly returned to the charge and entered the city
without difficulty (1). Phaya-Phao had to make his submission.

1. These tactics are celebrated in several Thaï legends to explain the capture of a stronghold.

He received his pardon and was kept on as governor of the principality.

In memory of this episode, the city was baptized /46/ "Vien-Kham" which signifies "gold enclosure." This was later corrupted to "Vientiane" (sandalwood enclosure) (1)

1. There is permanent confusion in the Laotian chronicles between the Vien-Kham on the banks of the Mékong and the Vien-Kham in Tran-Ninh.

Formation of the kingdom of Lan-Xang (1353). Fa-Ngoun, 643*
henceforth the uncontested master of a vast kingdom, gave it a 175*
strong organization and ruled over it as a despot. 642

He summoned an Oupahat or second king to him to assist him
in his political duties and instituted a Council of ministers chosen /646/
from the princes of royal blood and arranged in a hierarchy according to their respective ranks and attributions. But he would
suffer no infringement on his own authority, neither at court or
in the provinces. He took terrible reprisals against the vassals
who did not obey his orders blindly, and replaced nearly all of
them in succession with mere governors as the fancy took him.

643* Indeed King Zakarine, no matter what his attitude of detachment
648* towards power, was noteworthy for his simplicity, his good sense and
175* his ability to see /323/ the usefulness of certain reforms. For he was
/178/ very poorly seconded by the mandarins of the kingdom council (Senam),
/646/ who were "incompetent men and scoffers dominated by their immediate and individual interests" (1). On the whole, however, the

1. Cf. ibid., p. 78.

642 political and social organization which we found was a good one,
178 and we acted wisely in preserving all the mechanisms of the native administration and in respecting the traditions, customs and mores of the populations throughout all of Laos, insofar as they were compatible with our own institutions (2). This was all the more easy for

2. Thus we were led to suppress radically the slave traffic which was enriching a few Siamese, Cambodian, Laotian and Burmese mandarins. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos (Posthumous edition), Paris, 1911./, pp. 230 ff.

us in that all the Laotian muongs (whether or not they were dependencies of Luang-Prabang) had a similar organization which was a smaller model of that of the kingdom (except for the Senam) and
647 was an obvious vestige of the epic times of Fa-Ngoum and the great
642 State of Lan-Xang (3). Like the king, the governors of /324/
631

3. The following was, in outline, the political organization of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang in 1894:

/643/* At its head the king, the great master of existences (Somdet-Phra-Chao), and the second king, the great master responsible for the preservation of property (Chao-Maha-Oupahat).

Then came the minister princes: the Ratsavong or first prince and right-hand minister; the Ratsabout or second prince and left-hand minister; and the Komakhoune or third and fourth princes and ministers of the center and of the civil services.

The first three mandarins, who bore the title of Phaya,
/646/ were, in order of importance: 1) the Phaya Muong-Sen or
/693/ first right-hand mandarin, head of the Senam and head of of justice; 2) the Phaya Muong-Tiane or first left-hand

mandarin and head of the tribunal; 3) the Phaya Muong- 647
Khang or first mandarin of the center and head of the Serv- 642
ice of public works, transports, etc. 631

The Senam was composed of the Phaya Muong-Khoua or /646/
second right-hand mandarin, and of four councillors under the direction of the Phya Muong-Sen.

The judges or Kromakanes, who were under the Phaya /693/
Muong-Sen and the Phaya Muong-Tiane, numbered seven in all and included the Phaya Muong-Sai or second left-hand mandarin.

Last came the mandarins responsible for the collection of /653
taxes, the assembling of labor drafts and the transport of 644/
bamboo, rattan, thatch and pirogues for the king's service and the public services; then the pages and chamberlains or mahaleks, the military leaders, the functionaries responsible for petty tasks inside the palace, the treasurers, storekeepers, etc.

The reader will note the insignificant position reserved /701/
for the military mandarins in this hierarchy. Of Sam-Sene-Thai's powerful army (see above, p. 56), nothing at all remained.

provinces were aided by an Oupahat, a Ratsavong and a Ratsabout who, like the court dignitaries, gave their orders to the tassengs or canton heads who had authority over the village leaders (naibans). By establishing the different government commissions in Laos Pavie therefore strengthened the native authorities in their age-old prerogatives and the princes of Luang-Prabang in /325/ their dynastic rights and privileges. In order to mark their absolute attachment to France and to give more force to their vehement protests against awarding Siam the part of the kingdom situated on the right bank, the latter insisted on receiving, in solemn fashion and as soon as possible, the investiture of the government of the Republic from the commissioner general. After his return from Muong-Sing eight 643*
months later, Pavie drew up on parchment in Hanoi the titles of the old king Oun-Kham, of King Zakarine, of his brother and of the Oupahat Boun-Khong, and on April 19, 1895 proceeded to this important ceremony.

"All those who had a part in the control of affairs," he wrote as he finished the account of his mission, "were present. The entire populace was invited. In the name of the government of the

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are [494] elected either by the nobles or by commoners who possess certain aptitudes and sufficient intellectual culture. The whole population, nobles, officials and common people, are consulted. Then the

643 canton heads and heads of villages, who might be described as can-
646 tonal and municipal delegates, gather in the capital of the muong to vote on the names of candidates which are presented. The name of the one who obtains the most votes is then presented by the province administrator to the superior resident, who accepts or rejects him after studying his personal qualities, his aptitudes, his background, etc. In the case of a rejection the electors are consulted a second time. The superior resident names the four chiefs of muongs by delegation from the governor general. These latter may not begin office until they receive their commission, insignia and seal from the French government.

In general, the electors' choice falls on a son, brother or nephew of the high official who is to be replaced, unless he is unworthy or notoriously incapable.

635 Mandarins of lesser importance are named by the province head
847 with the approval of the persons under his administration and of the superior resident.

647 Officials receive a salary only in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang
652 and in the provinces of Vien-Tiane and Muong-Hou. Everywhere else they must be content with a fee equivalent to one-tenth of the sums they collect as taxes.

[693] In their capacity as judges, the muong authorities also collect legal costs and shares in the sums of certain fines, as is the custom of the land.

647 Such, in its general outline, is the organization of the Laotian
576 administration. It generally functions well, is sufficient to the needs of the natives and makes it possible for us, despite the vast extent of our possession, to keep only a few European officials there.

[192] The outer forms of respect towards great men, mandarins and anyone who holds a rank are dictated by Laotian etiquette, as in Siam. One does not speak to a king, a [495] [Illustration] [496] [Blank page] [497] prince or a leader as one would to an equal or an inferior. There are special expressions which are peculiar to the representatives of certain social classes or to the holders of dignities. But even while it conserves, at bottom, the ritual ceremonial forms, Laotian etiquette is paternal and much more spontaneous and genuinely respectful than elsewhere.

When they speak to the king, to princes, to great men, etc., inferiors prostrate themselves, with forehead on clasped hands, near the ground, or with their hands clasped above their head. Outside of this particular case, those present may remain squatting, smoke, talk, laugh and even disturb the audience somewhat. Moreover, no lack whatsoever of respect is to be seen in this liberty.

6: Goudal--166 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians
116, 466, 647, 177.46 France
636.46

"In Laos, no local labour inspectorate has so far been established. An Order of 22 December 1932 required the inspector of political and administrative affairs to carry out the duties of local labour inspector in addition to his own work. Subsequently, as the first-class administrator of the civil services who carried out these double duties was not replaced, the chief administrative officer of the Cammon province was entrusted with the duties of labour supervisor for all mining undertakings situated in his area.

It would seem that the cuts in the estimates, which led to a reduction in the staff of the various local inspectorates, have resulted in an unfortunate decline in the activity of these services. (1)

1. We read, for example, in the Annual Report of the Tonking Labour Inspectorate for the period 1 July 1933-30 June 1934: 'The attachment of the labour inspectorate to the Fifth Bureau has resulted in greatly reducing the sphere of activity of the labour inspector, whose time is mainly taken up by his duties as chief of the Bureau of Economic Affairs; his tours of inspection have thus been reduced to those which are strictly necessary'. "

7: Thompson--78-79 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 647, 177.64 France
636.64

"Laos offered a virgin field for Doumer's administrative experiments. In 1895, two years after its nominal occupation, Laos had been divided into two districts which corresponded to no geographic or economic reality. Moreover, the country was totally undeveloped, and Cochin-China, as usual, was called upon to subsidize the administrative expenses. In the final analysis, this country had administrators but no administration. It was rather vaguely hoped that the projected railroad system would eventually overcome Laos's [79] geographical barriers and arouse the country from its economic lethargy."

7: Thompson--368-369 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 647, 651, 177.64 France
636.64

"Though the year 1893 marked the nominal occupation of Laos, it was not until three years later that the country was organized administratively as Upper and Lower Laos. This division remained purely theoretical and it was modified in 1899, when both sections were united under a single Resident Superior and a single budget. The local organization was left as it was found, only the upper stratum of offices was changed. In this the French were inspired by their Siamese predecessors, who had respected native institutions, and also by budgetary considerations. Thirteen French Commissars, aided by native officials and the inevitable interpreters, exercised all powers with a tranquil disregard of Montesquieu's principles. A native guard was adequate to perform police service among such a placid people. Revenues came from the usual head tax paid by the male population in money and in kind, and the commutation of corvée duty, licences for foreign merchants, and an export tax. There was no land tax and only a local levy on the products of the soil. The indirect tax on opium was harder to collect because certain [369] tribes had always raised enough for their own needs. There was little increase in revenues despite the steady increase in population. The budget was poor and not properly drawn up, so it had to be regularly subsidized. Cochin-China, as usual, bore the brunt of this deficit."

7: Thompson--369-370 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians-
116, 647, 645, 653, 177.64 France
636.64

"The centralized administration of Laos was not only part of the French mania for simplification and uniformity, which for various [370] reasons had reached Laos later than elsewhere, but was primarily stimulated by the economic importance of Laos's mines and town building in the post-war period. The modernization of Vientiane was especially notable, for it had been buried under the jungle, 400 kilometres from the sea, and on an almost unnavigable river. When the potential wealth of the country became evident, the administration began to veer away from the Protectorate ideal to direct government, making tabula rasa of native institutions. Some Hanoi officials took it into their head to suppress the King of Luang-Prabang as an obstacle to transforming Laos into a bona-fide colony. Varenne had the good sense to recognize how much the Laotians venerated their king, and so he rescued his throne from the assimilationist peril. The Protectorate was saved, and to push Laos farther along the trail blazed by Annam and Cambodia, a native advisory assembly was given to the country in 1929, and a mixed Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, both of which recently sent delegates to the Grand Conseil. The process can only fully develop when the rail and road network is completed--that administrative pipe-dream linking Laos to the rest of the Union--which in 1936 looked perilously near fulfilment. An unfortunate corollary is that the forty-year tariff freedom of Laos, a miracle in French colonization, died in 1932 with the growth of the Siamese and Indo-Chinese railroad construction."

7: Thompson--369 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 621, 647

"As in Cambodia, the Laotian Protectorate was an immense success because it floated gently on top of the old native administration, giving an appearance of modernization to what had always existed and with which it did not interfere. The identical organization of all the muongs was a great help to the French. If the government of the Annamite countries erred on the side of over-direct administration, that of the Indianized countries was criticized as too superficial. Laos, it was said, had administrators but no administration. They collected taxes which had no accurate basis of assessment, received the semi-annual oath of functionary fidelity, and requisitioned labour and provisions. The native chieftains remained the real administrators, but no effort was made to select, train, and supervise the most able among them, or to give them regular salaries, and no longer let them take a percentage of the taxes and fines. Little was done, and that little was for the benefit of the few Europeans in the country."

7: Thompson--369 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 647, 652, 671, 177.64 France
636.64

"Of the budget expenditures one per cent was allotted to road building, when paths were almost non-existent in Laos. Fifty per cent of the revenues was absorbed by the administration. A subsidy to the company that navigated the Mekong cost 350,000 francs: the total revenues were 600,000, and all for the occasional transportation of the hundred European residents and their mail. The Laotians were much too amiable and indolent to protest against this state of affairs. They were a charming people, who knew nothing of French civilization but the pleasure of paying taxes. They asked little and so they got little. If this were true of the Laotians it was even more so of the mountain peoples. The country was administered as if it were exclusively inhabited by Laotians. The codes, and the mandarins who applied them, were Laotian. The Provincial Council, long the sole representative organization, had no delegate from the mountaineers. Buddhists were given a monopoly of the education, though the Yaos were Confucianist and the Khas fetishists. The administration concentrated on the valley-bound Laotians and ignored the scattered mountain peoples, who differed radically in religion, language, and customs. The Meos's reaction to the Laotians was shown by the massacre of 1920."

10: d'Orleans--296-297 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 208, 647, 651 177.65 Siam
636.65

"We find that a people is being formed; if there is not a sentiment of nationality the governing power is becoming autocratic and an administrative centralization is being effected to its profit, under the control and the direction of the Siamese. The local rulers are in communication with Bangkok, even if they have not been on a visit there; they are learning to appreciate luxury, and they are upon the point of arming their troops with European weapons, of increasing their effective, and lending aid to the forces of the invaders. In order to obtain these charming results of what may be called 'the new civilisation,' much money is needed, but if the king's expenditure has increased it has not been so with the earnings of the people. The latter were not consulted when a tax was put upon opium 'for their good,' when the tchoum-tchoum was made a monopoly, or when a capitation tax of eight rupees for each man and six for each woman was imposed. The consequence is that they are discontented and unable to make any further payments, mandarins from all parts of the kingdom writing that the villagers are willing enough to come to the capital and take the oath, but empty-handed. Last year several had to sell what they possessed, and now they are endeavouring to borrow, and are murmuring [297] against those who have ruined them. The peasants bow the head in subjection because they see no liberator; but the first man who comes forward with some arms and a relatively small sum of money, in order to drive out the Siamese, may be assured of encountering an enthusiastic and almost unanimous welcome from the population."

10: d'Orleans--298-299 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 208, 647, 651 177.64 France
636.64

"To revert to Luang Prabang, we have a Vice-Consul there, or rather an agent, for he has not got an exequatur. Assisted by twelve interpreters, he does wonders with the limited means at his disposal, but as he is generally short of money and is obliged to borrow from the Chinese to pay the staff, he cannot do much to uphold French interests. The most he can do is to keep up the few friends whom he has gained for us by his personal influence and winning ways. For his title of French agent weighs as nothing in the balance compared to his personal popularity, so that he is seconded but not feared, for it is known that he cannot speak out, that his threats will remain a dead letter, that he is not backed up, and that the Foreign Office seems indifferent to the Mekong question. Compare our mode of action to that of the English in Xieng Maï, a Laos State bordering on Burmah and similarly situated to Luang Prabang. At Xieng Maï there is a consul with an exequatur, that is to say duly recognized by the native Government and his own, well [299] paid and backed up by his superiors, having under his own orders several thousand British protégés and holding very much the same position as the Siamese Commissioner here, this latter being everything while we are nothing."

10: d'Orleans--300 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 647, 662, 681, 695

"The administrative functionaries and the judges are appointed by the king, subject to the approval of the Siamese Commissioner. Justice is administered according to the traditions of what was known in the early ages as 'the judgments of God.' That is to say the oath is taken upon a silver cup or a sword, and holy water is given the accused to drink, and if the accused person has wrongly declared himself innocent the water will poison him or the sword will be thrust through him by a spirit, at night. It need hardly be said that the judges are not satisfied with this test, that is to say, they take care to inform themselves before the trial as to the fortune of the prisoner, and it is said that they are easily influenced by bribes.

The punishments comprise fines, the bastonade, penal servitude, and being put in chains, but torture is not practised."

114 War was placed in charge of the station at Kampot, a small Cam-
175* bodian port on the Gulf of Siam. He soon learned how to gain the
654 confidence of the natives and became passionately interested in studying the glorious past of the ancient Kmers. His enthusiasm determined /255/ Governor Le Myre de Vilers in 1880 to place him in charge of a mission for study and for the construction of a tele-
/647 graph line between Pnom-Penh and Bangkok. For five years he explored Cambodia in all directions, brought back abundant documentation from his voyages and the beginnings of the first map of the land which he had crossed, then returned to France with thirteen young Cambodians for whom the future Colonial School /Ecole coloniale/ was created in Paris.

175* His ardent desire, expressed many times to his superiors, to com-
654 plete his first labors by means of methodical exploration of the Laotian regions and to go "in the direction of those northern peoples who had previously attracted Mouhot, Francis Garnier and de Carne" and more recently Drs. Harmand and Neis (1), gained him an

1. Upon his return from the Tonkin expedition in 1874 Dr. Harmand had been placed in charge of a scientific expedition to Indo-China. It was in the course of this mission, the account of which appeared in the Tour du Monde ("Le Laos et les populations sauvages de l'Indochine") that he explored, in 1877, Lower and Middle Laos from Bassac to Lakhone and from Lakhone to Hue, crossing the Kemmarat, exploring the Se-Bang-Hien and gaining Hue by way of the Se-Tchepone. He thus proved for the first time that it was possible to go from the banks of the Mekong to the shore of Annam.

P. Neis, a naval doctor who was also given a scientific mission in Lower Laos by the Ministry of Education in 1882, had been told by M. Le Myre de Vilers as he passed through Singapore of the more immediate interest which the exploration of the regions situated between Luang-Prabang and Tonkin would hold. Given further information by Dr. Harmand, who was then consul in Bangkok, he went up the Mekong and reached the plateau of Tran-Ninh, but the Ho incursions forced him back to Luang-Prabang where he stayed for eight months (1883) without being able to resume his eastward march. He had to content himself with returning to Bangkok by way of Xieng-Sen and Xieng-Mai.

643* Indeed King Zakarine, no matter what his attitude of detachment
648* towards power, was noteworthy for his simplicity, his good sense and
175* his ability to see /323/ the usefulness of certain reforms. For he was
/178/ very poorly seconded by the mandarins of the kingdom council (Senam),
/646/ who were "incompetent men and scoffers dominated by their immediate and individual interests" (1). On the whole, however, the

1. Cf. ibid., p. 78.

642 political and social organization which we found was a good one,
178 and we acted wisely in preserving all the mechanisms of the native administration and in respecting the traditions, customs and mores of the populations throughout all of Laos, insofar as they were compatible with our own institutions (2). This was all the more easy for

2. Thus we were led to suppress radically the slave traffic which was enriching a few Siamese, Cambodian, Laotian and Burmese mandarins. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos (Posthumous edition), Paris, 1911./, pp. 230 ff.

us in that all the Laotian muongs (whether or not they were dependencies of Luang-Prabang) had a similar organization which was a smaller model of that of the kingdom (except for the Senam) and
647 was an obvious vestige of the epic times of Fa-Ngoum and the great
642 State of Lan-Xang (3). Like the king, the governors of /324/
631

3. The following was, in outline, the political organization of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang in 1894:

/643/* At its head the king, the great master of existences (Somdet-Phra-Chao), and the second king, the great master responsible for the preservation of property (Chao-Maha-Oupahat).

Then came the minister princes: the Ratsavong or first prince and right-hand minister; the Ratsabout or second prince and left-hand minister; and the Komakhoune or third and fourth princes and ministers of the center and of the civil services.

The first three mandarins, who bore the title of Phaya,
/646/ were, in order of importance: 1) the Phaya Muong-Sen or
/693/ first right-hand mandarin, head of the Senam and head of of justice; 2) the Phaya Muong-Tiane or first left-hand

mandarin and head of the tribunal; 3) the Phaya Muong- 647
Khang or first mandarin of the center and head of the Serv- 642
ice of public works, transports, etc. 631

The Senam was composed of the Phaya Muong-Khoua or /646/
second right-hand mandarin, and of four councillors under
the direction of the Phya Muong-Sen.

The judges or Kromakanes, who were under the Phaya /693/
Muong-Sen and the Phaya Muong-Tiane, numbered seven
in all and included the Phaya Muong-Sai or second left-
hand mandarin.

Last came the mandarins responsible for the collection of /653
taxes, the assembling of labor drafts and the transport of 644/
bamboo, rattan, thatch and pirogues for the king's service
and the public services; then the pages and chamberlains
or mahaleks, the military leaders, the functionaries re-
sponsible for petty tasks inside the palace, the treasurers,
storekeepers, etc.

The reader will note the insignificant position reserved /701/
for the military mandarins in this hierarchy. Of Sam-Sene-
Thai's powerful army (see above, p. 56), nothing at all re-
mained.

provinces were aided by an Oupahat, a Ratsavong and a Ratsabout who, like the court dignitaries, gave their orders to the tassengs or canton heads who had authority over the village leaders (naibans). By establishing the different government commissions in Laos Pavie therefore strengthened the native authorities in their age-old prerogatives and the princes of Luang-Prabang in /325/ their dynastic rights and privileges. In order to mark their absolute attachment to France and to give more force to their vehement protests against awarding Siam the part of the kingdom situated on the right bank, the latter insisted on receiving, in solemn fashion and as soon as possible, the investiture of the government of the Republic from the commissioner general. After his return from Muong-Sing eight 643*
months later, Pavie drew up on parchment in Hanoi the titles of the old king Oun-Kham, of King Zakarine, of his brother and of the Oupahat Boun-Khong, and on April 19, 1895 proceeded to this important ceremony.

"All those who had a part in the control of affairs," he wrote as he finished the account of his mission, "were present. The entire populace was invited. In the name of the government of the

643* Republic and by delegation of the governor general of Indo-China, I confirmed the status of the princes in Laos, which had become a French possession. They piously accepted, from the man who loved their country so greatly, the responsibility of continuing under France's authority to lead it with wisdom and goodness" (1).

1. Mission Pavie, "Geographie et Voyages," Vol. II, p. 382.

/326/ Provisory administrative organization (July-August 1894).
642 Anxious to complete the provisional organization of the country and
631 to rejoin the Chinese and British missions of the Upper Mekong, he
647 left Luang-Prabang for the south on July 9, 1894, leaving his second-in-command Lefevre-Pontalis to establish in the north, together with Messrs. Macey and Garanger, the commercial agencies of Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen and the future commissions of Poukha and Muong-Ha-Hine (in the two Muong-Hou, while awaiting the imminent delimitation of the territory).

When he passed through Vientiane (July 14) he established M. Lugan in the new province which had been formed of the muongs of Tourakom, Borikane, Patchoum etc. and chose the site of the future commercial agency in Nongkhay. Then, continuing to go down-river, he made contact with the leaders of the left bank (including, among others, at the junction of the Nam-Nhiep, Chao-Kham-Ngon who was the last descendant of Chao-Noi and whom he had recognized as chaumuong of Xieng-Khouang).

In Middle Laos he took all necessary steps to establish the authority of the delegates of the superior resident in Annam over the old circumscriptions of Tran-Dinh, Cam-Lo and Quang-Dinh; to organize the regions of Hinboun /327/ /Page 327 is devoted to an illustration: "Bridge over the Nam-Khane at Luang-Prabang."-/ Translator/ /328/ (Faureville) and of Song-Khone (Savannakhet); and finally to make ready for the trips of the commercial agents destined for the posts on the right bank at Lakhone-Panom, Ban-Mouk and Kemmarat. Where the river joined the Sebanghien he was joined by the administrator Od'endhal who had just reached Song-Khone, and he agreed with him to extend the administration of this region as far as the muongs of Saravane and Attopeu.

In the south he visited the commercial agency which had been established ever since 1892 at Bassac, and greeted the latter's

phantom king (1) who had remained "under the guardianship of a 642
631

1. Chao-Kham-Souk, one of Chao-Houy's sons (see above 647
p. 168 and p. 177, note 2) who had been placed on the /175*/
throne by Bangkok in 1863. His fief had been dismembered by the treaty of 1893 and was in reality no longer anything but a Siamese province. He was to die in 1899.

Siamese agent of an inferior type." At Khong he met Commander Tournier, who had been placed in charge of the Legion troops stationed between Stung-Treng and the islands of Khone, and who was also invested with civil powers in the muongs of the left bank while awaiting the imminent arrival of administrators from Cochinchina (this latter country was to organize the southern Laotian provinces at the expense of its own budget). On August 9 he wit- 654
nessed the arrival of Lieutenant-commander Simon, the leader of 505
a hydrographic mission /329/ which had been planned the year before by M. Delcasse. This mission was to employ the sloops La Grandiere and Massie and to go on surveillance duty on the Middle and Upper Mekong. With this purpose it was to: 1) trans-ship its cargo at Khone; 2) cross the dangerous defiles of Kemmarat by every possible means; and 3) stop "only where it was materially and absolutely impossible to get through." At the cost of tremendous effort the mission was to reach Luang-Prabang on September 1 and Tang-Ho on October 25, 1895 at a distance of 2500 kilometers from the sea and an altitude of more than four hundred meters (1). On

1. The bold results of the Simon mission demonstrated the possibility of organizing a regular navigation service from Saigon to Luang-Prabang by using either steam sloops or pirogues, depending on the season. The service was later established.

August 13 Pavie reached Phom-Penh and then went to Hatien where 648*
the gunboat Vipere was waiting for him. The latter took him to 175*
Bangkok on the 20th, and scarcely had he landed when he hastened to inform both the Quai d'Orsay and Prince Devawongse of the discoveries he had made all along the Mekong, namely that the treaty had not been made known to the populace and that the king of Siam's proclamation relative to the return of former inhabitants of the left bank of the river to their own country was still unknown

"The story of Auguste Pavie should be placed in the hands of 000
our youth. It is a magnificent lesson in itself. To the ambitious
it shows how far a desire /338/ to learn combined with the passion
for action can lead; to patriots how one can serve one's country;
and to all how an ardent soul can ennoble the most humble tasks
and, springing from the humblest origins, can rise to the most
honored and most envied posts" (1).

1. Quoted by Colonel Friquegnon. Cf. Bulletin de l'Asie
française, November-December 1925, No. 236, p. 356.

Final organization (1895-1899). The administrative organiza- 631
tion of the new possession had only been sketched out by Pavie dur- 642
ing his hasty descent of the Mekong. It was taken up and completed
by Superior Resident Boulloche, who was sent out on a mission in
May 1895. Laos was first divided into two territories or commands:

1. Upper Laos, with its capital at Luang-Prabang, including all
the Muongs of the left bank situated between Yunnan, the British
Shan States, Tonkin, Annam and Cammon exclusively, with the
exception of the cantons of the Black River and a large part of the
Houa-Phans; the first of these latter were attached to Tonkin and the
second to the province of Thanh-Hoa (Annam);

2. Lower Laos, with its capital at Khong, formed of all the
regions which had formerly been dependencies of the old /339/
kingdom of Vientiane and which were contained between the
Annamitic Chain and the Mekong from Cammon to Cambodia.

A superior commandant was placed at the head of each of these 624
divisions, who was directly responsible to the governor general of 635
Indo-China. Each command was then subdivided into provinces or
"commissionerships" (six for Upper Laos, seven for Lower Laos),
each formed of a group of several muongs and headed by "govern-
ment commissioners" who were then given (except in Luang-Prabang)
the most varied duties and the most absolute initiative -- general
administration, police, taxes, public works, justice, public educa- /647/
tion and even, in most cases, medical help.

In 1899 the two circumscriptions were united under the authority 642
of a superior resident (1) with his seat in Savannakhet (shortly there-

1. Cf. decree of the governor general of February 6 and de-
cree of the President of the Republic of April 19.

after in Vientiane), and unified Laos took its place in the Franco-

631 Upper Laos contained six commissionerships and Lower Laos seven.
Each was directed by an official with the title of Government
175 Commissioner [Commissaire] (similar to the title of "commissioner" in British possessions). He was assisted by a clerk, scholars and a native interpreter.

Because of their many and varied duties, government commissioners must have extensive knowledge. In fact, these officials are responsible for general administration, police, collecting taxes and duties, selling opium, public works, justice, public education and, in centers without doctors, for the health service.

A further factor to complicate their task is that the circumscriptions are large and communications difficult.

347 Just as in physiology "the function creates the organ," so must our agents become topographers, naturalists, geologists, engineers, architects, etc. all at the same time. Each of them devotes his talents to the task, striving to do his best and able to count only on himself. [275] [Illustration] [276] [Blank page] [277] Their task is facilitated, however, by the zeal and specialized knowledge of the clerks and leaders of the native guard, who are inspectors and chief guards, former officers or sub-officers of the army. Most of these agents have been on campaigns in Algeria or in the colonies and are used to shifting for themselves, to use an expression which is as apt as it is picturesque.

To this system of individual initiative Laos owes the fact of possessing comfortable, durable and healthy installations built of wood, brick or cobwork which certain other colonies, although better endowed from the point of view of the availability of many technical services, did not possess to so high a degree after they had been established for ten years.

631 Present organization. By decree of the Governor
General dated February 6, 1899, the two divisions of Laos were joined
642 and a united Laos was placed under the authority of a Superior Resident (1) named by decree of the President of the Republic. This same edict

(1) The enlightened choice of the Government fell on Lieutenant-colonel Tournier, former Superior Commandant in Lower Laos.

abolished the positions of Superior Commandants in Upper and Lower Laos.

Like Cochinchina, Laos is a direct dominion, but is administered according to the forms of a strict protectorate and therefore does not

Hill Tribes

these centers, the spiritual authority of the fathers extends over fifty-four other villages located among the Bahnars, the Goclars and the Rognaos, and even over a few Cedang and Djarai villages. 797

"Although the total number of conversions is not more than 3,000, the moral influence of the missionaries is considerable throughout all this region which is inhabited by Khas of rather a warlike spirit.

"After the last famines in Annam the missionaries took in 1,200 Annamites, both Catholic and non-Catholic, and organized them in three villages on the plateau of Kon-Toum. The village at Ro-Hay numbered 500 inhabitants. But the mortality rate is high among these newcomers and for the moment, at least, it does not seem that the experiment will be successful.

"The Khas in the midst of whom they live regard the reverend fathers rather as officials of the protective government than as apostles of a religion. These primitive folk cannot recognize the difference between spiritual authority and temporal authority. Thus they always address themselves to the missionaries and it is through the latter that our administration acts on these peoples.

"Up to the present time this system has presented nothing but advantages, and it will probably not be modified for a considerable length of time, at least not as long as the present state of affairs prevails and we only have reason to congratulate ourselves on the devoted cooperation which the reverend fathers give us.

"The Protestant missionaries, who are established in Siam and belong to a North American society, have made a few very discreet attempts to evangelize certain of our subjects. So far, however, they have not founded any establishments on our territory" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

The Laos which we acquired at very little cost and for a sum which is insignificant in comparison to what other colonies have cost, is that one of our possessions which has the smallest number of officials. We have noted elsewhere that its area is equal to half that of France, or very nearly equal to that of Italy. Yet seventy-two agents are sufficient for the administration and general police, including twenty-seven for the European units of the native guard, 647

847 or one official or agent of the public force for every 6,528 inhabitants (2). The cost for salaries and accessory items for the same personnel

(2) In Cochinchina there is one official for every 1,659 inhabitants.

force is 609,000 francs.

[286] 2. ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

635 Laos contains fourteen circumscriptions, to wit:

The province of	Muong-Hou,	capital at	Muong-Hou-Neua.
" "	" Vien-Poukha (1),	" "	Muong-Sing

(1) This province is sometimes called "Western Upper Laos."

" "	" Hua-Pahn,	" "	Muong-Son.
" "	" Luang-Prabang,	" "	Luang-Prabang.
" "	" Tran-Ninh,	" "	Xieng-Khouang.
" "	" Vien-Tiane,	" "	Vien-Tiane (seat of the Superior Residency, capital of French Laos).
" "	" Cammon,	" "	Pak-Hin-Boun.
" "	" Song-Khone,	" "	Savannakhet.
" "	" Saravane,	" "	Saravane.
" "	" Ban-Mouang,	" "	Ban-Mouang.
" "	" Attopeu,	" "	Attopeu.
" "	" Khong,	" "	Khong.
" "	" Stung-Treng,	" "	Stung-Treng.
" "	" Darlac,	" "	Darlac.

The following tables give useful information on each of these provinces.

693 Judges, or "Kromakanes" in Laotian, are responsible to the Phaya-Muong-Sen and the Phaya-Muong-Tiane, and are the:

Phaya-Muong-Sai, second mandarin of the left.
Phya-Sieng-Tai.
Phya-Muong-Pak.
Phya-Sak-Kha.
Phya-Muong-Khouk (particularly responsible for supervision of prisons).
Phya-Phane-Nong.
Mune-Vi-Sai.

647 [492] The mandarins responsible for the collection of taxes, the assemblage of statute laborers, and the transport of bamboo, rattan, thatch straw and pirogues for the king's service and the public service are the:
651

Phaya-Soune, mandarin of the middle.

Pha-Jotha.
Sanone.
Si-Phat-Thamane.
Si-Samoute.
Si-Sounone.
Sene-Tiane.
} Under the orders of the Phaya-Muong-Khang and the Phaya-Soune.

The pages of the king bear the honorary title of "Mahatlek." They are the:

644
1. Phaya-Nak-Phoumine
   Phaya-Kham-Soune-Phou } Chief pages and chamberlains.
2. Phya-Na-Heua.
   Phya-Mune-Na.
   Phya-Natai.
   Phya-Muong-Phene. } Principal pages attached to the king's person, who bear his arms and insignia in ceremonies.
3. Phout-Thavong-Mahakhote
   Mune-Vong-Sai.
   Akhasa. } Chamber pages, guardians of the king's property, of his parasol, etc.

701 The military leaders are the:

Phaya-Soupho.
Phaya-Kham-Mone.
Phya-Vieng-Ke.
Phya-Vieng-Khame.
Oupasa.
Mune-Sanone-Tiai.
} Responsible for various military duties.

644 The functionaries responsible for minor duties inside the palace, under the orders of their chief the Maha-Monti, are the:

Maha-Nosit, Lasa-Nosit, Lasa-Mat, Sanet, Sakame-Nane, Latsavat, Out-Thamonti, Sene-Thong-Niot, Sathipavot.

[652] [493] The treasurers, storekeepers and palace guards have the
647 titles of:

Phaya-Vi-Sai-Monthiene, Phone-Seuk-Khoua, Phone-Seuk-Sai.

697 Finally the jailers and scourgers (or executioners) under the command of the king or of the head of the justice department:

Phone-Tesak, Sa-Phakdi, Sa-Dab-Khame, Vong-Phouthone.

635 In the provinces, the head of a muong bears a title which is
631 personal to him, "Phaya" or "Phya," to which he adds that of "Tiao-Muong" and the name of the province, as Phaya-Si-Vorarat-Phrak-Di, Tiao-Muong-Vien-Tiane.

Under his command he has principal mandarins in the number of three, who bear the titles of "Oupahat," "Latsavong" and "Latsaboute." Each of them is generally responsible for the administration of one part of the muong, under the supervision of the "Tiao-Muong."

These high officials are seconded, depending on the importance of the muong, by a larger or smaller number of counselors or judges who bear the titles of "Sen," "Tiane," "Khang," etc.

Muongs are generally divided into cantons, and the heads of the
[623] latter bear the title of "Taseng." Each canton includes several villages or "Bans," and each of these has at its head a mayor who is usually called "Pho-Ban" (the father of the village). The head of a village is aided by a kind of council or assembly of notables, the titles of whom are "Pia," "Luong," "Koun," "Sen," "Mune" or "Nai."

643 The four principal leaders of a muong, that is to say the "Tiao-
646 Muong," the "Oupahat," the "Latsavong" and the "Latsaboute" (1),

(1) In the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc, the heads of muongs bear the following titles: "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong), "Phya-Hua-Pahn" (Oupahat), "Phya-Balat" (Latsavong), "Phya-Kam" (Latsaboute). In accordance with custom, these offices are hereditary and sons succeed their fathers, except for the office of "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong) where the rule is not absolute.

are [494] elected either by the nobles or by commoners who possess certain aptitudes and sufficient intellectual culture. The whole population, nobles, officials and common people, are consulted. Then the

643 canton heads and heads of villages, who might be described as can-
646 tonal and municipal delegates, gather in the capital of the muong to vote on the names of candidates which are presented. The name of the one who obtains the most votes is then presented by the province administrator to the superior resident, who accepts or rejects him after studying his personal qualities, his aptitudes, his background, etc. In the case of a rejection the electors are consulted a second time. The superior resident names the four chiefs of muongs by delegation from the governor general. These latter may not begin office until they receive their commission, insignia and seal from the French government.

In general, the electors' choice falls on a son, brother or nephew of the high official who is to be replaced, unless he is unworthy or notoriously incapable.

635 Mandarins of lesser importance are named by the province head
647 with the approval of the persons under his administration and of the superior resident.

647 Officials receive a salary only in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang
652 and in the provinces of Vien-Tiane and Muong-Hou. Everywhere else they must be content with a fee equivalent to one-tenth of the sums they collect as taxes.

[693] In their capacity as judges, the muong authorities also collect legal costs and shares in the sums of certain fines, as is the custom of the land.

647 Such, in its general outline, is the organization of the Laotian
576 administration. It generally functions well, is sufficient to the needs of the natives and makes it possible for us, despite the vast extent of our possession, to keep only a few European officials there.

[192] The outer forms of respect towards great men, mandarins and anyone who holds a rank are dictated by Laotian etiquette, as in Siam. One does not speak to a king, a [495] [Illustration] [496] [Blank page] [497] prince or a leader as one would to an equal or an inferior. There are special expressions which are peculiar to the representatives of certain social classes or to the holders of dignities. But even while it conserves, at bottom, the ritual ceremonial forms, Laotian etiquette is paternal and much more spontaneous and genuinely respectful than elsewhere.

When they speak to the king, to princes, to great men, etc., inferiors prostrate themselves, with forehead on clasped hands, near the ground, or with their hands clasped above their head. Outside of this particular case, those present may remain squatting, smoke, talk, laugh and even disturb the audience somewhat. Moreover, no lack whatsoever of respect is to be seen in this liberty.

000 indispensable for us to be acquainted with customs of our French friends. This is to prevent that in the course of a French-Laotian gathering we should be embarrassed in our actions and gestures. The French on their side should not be ignorant of our customs; a gesture of Laotian politeness might well be misinterpreted by those who are unacquainted with our customs, and that would be a regrettable misunderstanding.

How a Laotian Mandarin Should Behave.

647 576 A high Laotian functionary, in order to be worthy of his rank, must have a different bearing depending on whether he finds himself in the exercise /977/ of his functions, among his family, or at private gatherings.

577 647 In the office. --In his office the mandarin behaves in an irreproachable fashion in order to show himself worthy of the functions that he holds. In this way he sets a good example to the officials who are under his authority. Before he reprimands one of his subordinates, he must have thought the matter over to get a clear idea of the effects that his reprimand may have. The man who has received the reprimand will not fail to answer, in effect, any unfounded criticism. If the head of a department hands out reprimands on every possible occasion, even for minimal matters, his staff will end up by being used to his unnecessary harangues. By this process one scarcely makes oneself obeyed and respected. In short, the mandarin should "turn his tongue seven times in his mouth" before speaking; he has a correct appearance and is concerned about his reputation and his honor.

593 647 665 In the family. --The mandarin must be a good father of his family in the company of his wife and of his children. He facilitates the household work entrusted to his wife, in place of picking quarrels with her from vain motives. Crude forms of expression may give rise to arguments. It is up to you, mandarin, to avoid them. It is possible that your wife may throw you into a fit of anger. In that case it is up to you to control yourself and at the same time to try and appease your companion by consoling words. If one of the partners in a marriage is "fire," so goes a Laotian adage, the other must

naturally be "water." These two elements, opposed though they are 593
to one another, nonetheless go together. If you should happen to 647
raise your voice, see to it that it does not reach the ears of your 565
neighbors who will be sure to laugh at your domestic misunderstanding.
There is a good way to appease your anger: that is to go out and get
some fresh air. A moment of distraction will calm your irritation.
This precious and effective remedy is called, according to a Laotian
expression, "to caress one's heart with a hand drenched with fresh
water."

On a walk and on a visit.--Formerly it used to be considered 574
a disgrace for a mandarin to go for a walk by himself or to visit minor 647
functionaries. Nowadays this is no longer the case. A Laotian 565
Minister goes out alone without being accompanied by the traditional 178
retinue. He visits all classes of society without being criticized for
it by anyone at all.

At a private gathering.--In contrast to the customs of former
times, present-day mandarins accept the invitation of a simple
citizen. The host very often organizes various diversions: dances, /533/
lamvong, orchestras, songs etc. The Ministers willingly participate /535/
in these; they sing, dance, and pay their respects to the phousaos
while they mingle with the crowd. Certain Laotians whom I consider
backward criticize the liberal manner on the part of our Ministers.
Our great mandarins are their own masters. Let them turn a deaf
ear to these carpings. /978/

Honor Laotian Women

Some people consider the Laotian woman as an inferior 562
creature.

Certain women, it appears, are not permitted to eat with
their husband. Miserable husbands! You consider then that your
better half is like an animal?

Certainly, tradition says: "The woman must sleep with her /513/
head lower than her husband's. She must go to bed after him and
she must get up before him. The husband must have eaten three /264/
mouthfuls of rice before the wife can begin to eat in her turn."

These counsels of our fathers are valuable, but they are far
from indicating that the woman is inferior to the man. They recommend,

7: Thompson--363 [3] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175, 648

"One able Thai, Phya Ngam, succeeded in carving a kingdom for himself out of the Laotian principalities, whose capital he established at Luang-Prabang. This remained the capital until the middle of the sixteenth century when it was abandoned for Vientiane. The Thai invasions finally succeeded in dispersing the Khas into small isolated groups.

Phya Ngam was related by marriage to the Khmer kings, and his reign marked the beginning of close relations between Cambodia and Laos. At Ngam's request Buddhist missionaries were sent to the kingdom and with them came Khmer workmen and scholars. The eastward expansion of this bellicose monarch brought him into contact with the Emperor of Annam, who made a boundary treaty with him, as did the King of Siam on the Western frontier. The peaceful period that followed was duly interrupted in 1478 by an invasion from Annam, now freed from Cham warfare. This war-like interlude was a strange lapse on the part of the gentle and amiable Laotians, whose pacific nature soon re-asserted itself by re-knitting friendly relations with their Eastern neighbours. The only shadow cast over this period was the slight religious intolerance of a pious Buddhist monarch who tried unsuccessfully to forbid the cult of Brahmanism in his domain."

7: Thompson--363-364 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175, 648

"The rise of Vientiane in the sixteenth century was due to its greater [364] proximity to Cambodia and Siam, and to its commercial prosperity. Cordial relations were maintained by the Prince of Vientiane with the now decadent Khmers, and with the King of Siam against Luang-Prabang and Burma. This alliance provoked three successive invasions on the part of the Burmese, who, though invariably victorious, were defeated by the country itself and forced eventually by famine and sickness to withdraw. The seventeenth century brought a period of needed peace both foreign and domestic. European travellers of the time have left accounts of the brilliance of contemporary Vientiane. The best narrative is by a Dutchman, Van Wusthoff, in 1641, who came to establish trade relations between Vientiane and Batavia, and it is corroborated by the accounts of two Jesuits, Martini and Marini."

7: Thompson--364 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175, 648

"Early in the eighteenth century a series of civil wars over succession to the throne brought this peaceful period to a bloody close. Annamite support of one candidate provoked a fatal rift between Vientiane and Luang-Prabang. These now mutually jealous principalities called in foreign support, to the inevitable annihilation of Laotian independence. Vientiane was totally eclipsed as a result and Luang-Prabang fell under the double tutelage of Annam and Siam."

7: Thompson--366-367 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians-1-2
116, 175, 648

"France's 1883 treaty with Hué, and her pre-occupation with Tonkin, did not escape the notice of Siam. Backed by England, who saw in Laos a safe outlet for Siamese ambitions, Bangkok redoubled its efforts to get control of the lands belonging to the senile and insouciant king of Luang-Prabang. The Siamese expedition was prepared with such secrecy that De Kergaradec, the French envoy at Bangkok, only knew of it after the troops' departure. The Court of Hué, though feeling none too cordially towards the French, was not slow in pointing out this breach in Annam's sovereign rights in Laos, for which France was now [367] responsible. A protest to Bangkok was necessarily vague because of the ill-defined rights of both Siam and Annam in the North, but it eventuated in the signing of a seven-years agreement between Siam and France on May 7, 1886. France profited by this arrangement to the extent of having a consul at Luang-Prabang and certain extra-territorial rights in Siam. The ratification of this treaty for the first time raised definitely the problem of Annamite-Siamese-Laotian frontiers. Pavie was dispatched again to gather the information necessary to drawing boundary lines in Upper Laos. He returned not only with the technical knowledge required, but with the conviction that the oppressed people of Luang-Prabang would relish a French Protectorate as a defence against Siamese encroachments and Hos invasions. His efforts led to the conclusion of an agreement on March 27, 1889, by which the Siamese were to stop the eastward march of their troops, evacuate the region of Cammon, where however, a Siamese khaluong had a right to provisional residence, and the French to a

military post at Napé.

As time went on the French claimed that the Siamese had fulfilled none of these conditions and were pushing steadily ahead in Laos. In proportion as these grievances piled up, the Metropolitan government was unwilling to take any action against Siam, especially as Tonkin was giving them quite enough trouble as it was. The English were simultaneously expanding in Upper Burma and in the Shan States, and getting ever nearer to Upper Laos."

10: d'Orleans--292-294 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-4
116. 648, 721, 177.72 France
636.72

"Without seeking to undertake an historical work, which would carry us too far, we have only to glance over some of the old maps to find the justification for that phrase of Garnier's which should have been the groundwork of our policy in this region. 'What we had to do was to make the king of Luang Prabang feel that a day might come when we should take up the rights exercised over his principality by the Court of Hué, which has now become once more our vassal. Unfortunately, the Siamese, whose influence had extended, after 1838 (2) towards Luang Prabang, came and [293] established

2. According to Hallett (A Thousand Miles on an Elephant, p. 201), the Shan States of Vienchang and of Luang Prabang became tributary to Siam. The Siamese authority in the Shan States consisted in arranging their external affairs and sanctioning the nomination of their chiefs. In return for the protection of Siam against the foreign invaders, three States consented to send a triennial tribute, consisting of gold and silver boxes, chased cellarettes and salt-cellars, as well as gold and silver trees worth from fifteen to thirty-five pounds each. To these statements of Hallett as to the early date at which Luang Prabang bebecame tributary to Siam, I would rejoin that the chronicles of Luang Prabang, which have been consulted by M. Pavie, do not contain any

allusions to Siam at an earlier period than the last half-century. The Lai' chronicle, to which I referred above when dealing with Deo Van Tri, only alluded to the state of dependency in which the King of Luang Prabang stood with regard to Annam.

M. Deschanel would seem to have anticipated the views suggested, if not openly expressed by Hallett, Colquhoun and Lord Lamington, when he wrote in 1885: 'The day that England seizes Burmah, our authority in the eastern part of the Indo-Chinese peninsula will receive a severe shock. If we do not take our precautions (in the Upper Laos) the English, once established at Xieng Mai' (in Siamese Laos) will be masters, morally speaking, of the valley of the Mekong and the important position of Luang Prabang, which was tributary to Annam. Thus cut off from the great river, in danger of seeing England secure the protectorate of Siam, our situation in Indo-China will be very much weakened.'--Compare Garnier above,

themselves there for good a few years ago, when they learnt that the French were approaching from the direction of Tonquin. I have already related, when speaking of Deo Van Tri, the ambush set for his brothers, the Siamese officers being accompanied by an Englishman, one McCarthy, who, with another of his compatriots, had been appointed agent at Luang Prabang. I have also referred to the meeting of French and Siamese troops in the plain of Theng, and the retreat of the latter. We were not able to push on any further, for the aged king of Luang Prabang, who [294] had at one time hoped to be backed up by our arms, foresaw the policy of non-intervention and excessive prudence which would be impressed upon our officers. He recognised that the valiant champions of our colonial extension would have their hands tied and that it would be no use reckoning upon us. 'The Siamese are coming up,' he said to Dr. Neis; 'we are lost.'

As a matter of fact, while we were standing still, the Siamese were advancing, and it is easy to understand the political course followed by the Court of Bangkok; as long as it is left free, it is always marching forward, occupying advance posts, sometimes with only seven or eight militia men, but still making a reality of its occupation. But for Colonel Pennequin, Theng would have fared no better than all the important centres upon the Mekong as far as Cambodia and than several towns between the coast and the river; one can feel that these Siamese troops, when they are on the march, have behind them

10: d'Orleans--292-294 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-4
116, 648, 721, 177.72 France
636.72

the moral if not the effective support of intelligent and fearless persons, who are used to getting their way by firm speaking, the only obstacles which they are likely to encounter from European nations being idle diplomatic protests."

10: d'Orleans--294-295 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 648, 727

"As soon as they have established themselves anywhere, the Siamese at once endeavour to combat rival influences, winning over allies underhand and terrorizing those who, seeing no other chance of succour, are compelled to accept their friendship. In 1872 they entered upon the district of Traninh and depopulated part of it, while from Luang Prabang they sent agents on to our territory in the region of [295] Son La. They also took natives who were under our protection from Song Ma and made them march thirty days to drink in secret 'the water of the oath' at a pagoda outside the town, and they are now eager to seize the rich table-lands of the Ponôn. Thus in 1891 ten Annamite chiefs who had been sent into this region by the French Resident at Vinh, with interpreters in our service, were, against the faith of treaties, arrested and sent to Bangkok by order of the Siamese colonel commanding at Luang Prabang, the interpreters beaten, and our flag torn to rags. Only a few days ago an officer put up a proclamation in the town threatening with death all friends of the French, and, in order to obtain reparation for this insult M. Massie was obliged to make a personal business of it and talk of calling the colonel out. So much for the influence possessed by our agents!

The young chiefs, powerless to maintain their autonomy, prefer making a complete surrender to their new masters; and I recently learned that the king had sent for Thais from Theng, that is to say our subjects, who had been transported to the confines of Luang Prabang, and had promised to pay them for cultivating the soil, if they would

10: d'Orleans--294-295 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-2
116, 648, 727

undertake not to quit his kingdom; because Siam may succeed in extending its power and spoliating its neighbours, we must not conclude that it is in good odour with its neighbours--very much the contrary."

23: Franck--303 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 175, 648, 177.64 France
636.64

"The same altruism and love of their fellow-man that has given the French the arduous task of protecting the rest of Indo-China led to their present position in the affairs of Laos. About the time the Chinese from Yünnan were pillaging Luang Prabang kingdom a Frenchman named Pavie was sent there on a mission. The father of the present king, born Tiao Kham Souk, who lived from 1837 until 1904 and reigned under the name of Ritthithamaronjsac--though he was more popularly known as King Zacharine, and probably not entirely on account of his sweet disposition--was an absolute despot, descended from a long direct line of similar rulers. For the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha has been a kingdom as far back as the memory of its people goes. Zacharine became a great friend of Pavie, at least according to such data as was available in the French government offices of Luang Prabang, and when the Siamese failed to protect him, as they had promised, against the Chinese, he went to Siam under Pavie's wing; and later, in a quarrel with the Siamese, who had burned and looted and carried off most of the people of Vientiane and Xieng Khuang, he made the mistake, like his royal neighbors of Annam and Cambodia, of calling in the French. By 1893 Siam had been compelled to give up all claim to this ancient kingdom and to the magnificent highlands of Tran-ninh, and all Laos became a European dependency under the protection of France."

68: Mouhot--265-266 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 609, 643, 648

"[HD: Excerpt from one of Mouhot's letters to his wife] During my journey through the forests I enjoyed in anticipation the pleasure I should enjoy on reaching Louang Prabang, the capital of the province of Laos, in writing you good long letters containing all details of my journey; but [266] I reckoned without my host, and it will be several weeks before I can enjoy any repose, or carry my wishes into execution.

In the villages through which I passed no great degree of curiosity was manifested; but here, where the population is greater, I am surrounded by a compact and curious crowd, which extends even to the walls of a pagoda adjoining the caravanserai where I am lodged by the favour of his Majesty the King. Besides, I, in my turn, see people of various nations and tribes who excite my curiosity. Judge, therefore, if it be easy to collect my ideas. However, I profit by the occasion of the king's departure for Bangkok in a few days to pay his tribute, [HD: to the King of Siam] and who has offered to take charge of any letters for me, to give some signs of life to you."

73: Hammer--240 S-4 (no date) 1951 Laotians
116, 642, 648, 727, 177.64 France
636.64

"In Laos, as in Vietnam, the Chinese occupation had provided a protective screen behind which a nationalist regime had consolidated itself in power. A Free Laotian movement forced the abdication of King Sisavong Vong, set up its own more representative government, and then brought him back to the throne as the constitutional leader of an independent country. Only after the Chinese withdrew could the French return to Laos, and the Chinese troops were in no haste to leave. China did not withdraw the last of its troops from Indochina until midsummer of 1946. The French promised Laos, as they had Cambodia, to restore the areas taken by Thailand in 1941; (8) and in both countries they

8. On November 17, 1946 the French signed an agreement to this effect with Thailand in regard to both Laotian and Cambodian territory.

played upon the fear of Vietnamese and Thai aggression. On August 27, 1946 they signed an agreement with Laos (recognizing the union of the country under Sisavong Vong, formerly king only of Luang Prabang) much like that with Cambodia, by which they restored the prewar protectorate in modifiedbut not radically changed form."

115: Le Boulanger

648

AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

[For the history of the foreign relations of the various Laotian states, amongst themselves, with other Southeast Asian states, other Indochinese states, and the French, see category 116, throughout.]

"But in regard to the kingdom's laws, it is a certain fact that 671
there are very few of them, because, in my opinion, there is no 571
great need of any in order to live in accordance with the customs 626
of the land. The people are brought up to work, to have very little
to do with foreigners, not to undertake anything which might dis-
turb them and to live an idle and /115/ listless life although not
lacking any of the things necessary to preserve it. The king's will,
which does not greatly interfere with his people, takes the place
of a great many laws for them. . . . The manner in which the in-
habitants of the land live with one another is highly civil and
obliging. Unfriendliness and quarrels are banished. . . they all have
enough to live on and get along on, so that one does not hear of
thieves except as a thing quite out of the ordinary. . . . But the /565/
mandarins do not behave in the same way. Indeed, their insolence
and their insulting and criminal conduct dim the praise which the
common people merit on this account, because they abuse the
power which they have in the kingdom, and when they see some-
thing which pleases them. . . they act in such wise as to find means
for taking possession of it.

"But if we should now pass to the person of the king in order to 643*
describe him, there is no monarch, no matter how powerful, whom 174
he does not regard as beneath him, and it would indeed seem that 648
he affects not to yield in any particular to the emperors of China. . .
Only rarely does he appear in public. . . preferring to be worshiped
by his people as a hidden God rather than as a man like themselves
and of the same nature. . . He allows himself to be seen only twice
/116/ a year, for a period of three days, by his people, who re-
ceive this grace from their prince with such gratitude and joyous
sentiments that he forgets nothing on these occasions which might
contribute to their amusement. For this purpose there are several /527/
elephants which are trained to do a thousand little tricks and several wild
animals which are kept chained and made to fight. . . finally there
are wrestlers and gladiators and others, with their skirmishes which
last until last until evening and terminate all this rejoicing. . .

"Of all the prerogatives which he (the king) has, and which are 643*
a further mark of the extent of his power, that of having several 576
petty tributary kings in his dependency who come to his court to do
him homage and acknowledge him as their sovereign and who give
him superb presents, is by no means the least. He receives these
ambassadors in a great parlor seated on an extremely high throne
and garbed in his ceremonial robes, and replies to their civilities

643* British fleet was going to threaten Bangkok (2), he suddenly cast
648*
175*

2. In fact, Captain Burney's mission was to obtain, by peaceful means, a trade treaty which would open the port of Bangkok to the British.

off his mask and declared war.

648* Opening of hostilities against Siam (1826). The pretext invoked
175* has remained rather obscure and the Siamese accounts pass over the
721 matter in silence, merely accusing Anou of ingratitude and ambition (3). According to a Laotian version, Anou /167/ had sent a

3. Cf. H.R.H. Phanuphanthuvongswardja, op. cit. /Repression de la revolte de Vientiane, Bangkok, 1926./

number of his subjects to the Bangkok government to work at building roads. The labor draft had been judged too small, his delegate had replied arrogantly to the observations of the Siamese, and when the king of Vientiane was informed of the incident he deliberately opened hostilities.

648 March on Korat and Bangkok. Whatever the case may be, the
175* first operations were unleashed with lightning-like rapidity. Three
726 armies were sent against Bangkok, one leaving from Oubone and led by Chao-Ngo, the second concentrated at Roi-Et and led by the Oupahat Tissa, and the third under the command of Anou himself, seconded by his sons Chao-Po and Chao-Ngao, and with Khorat as its objective.

These troops encountered but insignificant resistance (1) and

1. Anou is said to have safeguarded his rapid march by telling the population that he was hastening to the aid of the king of Siam, who was being attacked by the British. Cf. ibid.

news of the invasion had scarcely reached Bangkok when Anou, already established in Khorat, sent his advance guard to threaten Sraboury, which was three days' march from the capital.

/168/ Great was the disturbance among the Siamese, who dug trenches in all haste to protect their city. A first contingent was levied, and in a lucky sortie on "the Saturday of the fourth month of the waning moon" it succeeded in throwing the Laotian advance

guard back to Khorat. This success gave king Phra-Chao-Prasat- 648
Thong time to raise and equip a large army which he placed under 175*
the command of General Phia-Bodin. The latter advanced to- 726
wards Khorat with the greater part of his troops and was preparing to enter into battle when he learned that Anou was beating a retreat.

Failure at Samrit. Indeed, Anou had just suffered a failure in the plain of Samrit where one of his detachments escorting captives had been surprised, encircled and destroyed by a small Siamese force. Greatly impressed -- whether rightly or wrongly -- by this setback, he decided to fall back towards the north. Then Phia-Bodin organized the repression of the revolt systematically. While his lieutenants stormed the entrenched camp of Oubone and captured Chao-Ngo, who had been betrayed by his cousin Chao-Houy, in Bassac, he himself placed the various Muongs of the northeast under military occupation and prudently marched in the direction of Vientiane /169/ (sixth month of the waxing moon of the year 1827) (1).

1. Chronique siamoise, op. cit.

Battle of Nong-Boua-Lamphou (1827). Anou fell back almost to the Mekong and covered his capital with all his forces, which he massed on the right bank of the river. The Siamese army caught up with him at Nong-Boua-Lamphou where his troops were soon swamped and could not prevent Phia-Bodin from establishing himself in Thong-Sompoi and preparing to cross the Mekong. There the Laotians fought desperately and prevented the crossing for seven days, but they finally had to yield to the thrust of Phia-Bodin who was receiving new reinforcements constantly. Disaster was the result.

Flight of Anou. Demoralized, Anou waited only until the enemy had crossed the water. He fled with his family and a few followers, delivering up his city to the fury of the Siamese general who had boasted that he would destroy Vientiane from top to bottom in accordance with his king's orders.

He wandered haphazardly for several days in the impenetrable forests which covered /170/ his land. His companions were the first to recover and worked to revive his courage. They assembled

Embassy to Hue (1831). It was perhaps in an effort to counter- 648*
act this increased weight of the Siamese yoke that he decided in 175*
1831 to send an embassy to the emperor of Annam offering him the "flowers of gold and silver" just as if it had been a traditional homage (1). Times had changed greatly since the period when his

1. A note supplied in 1889 by Captain Luce, founded on the archives of the Ministry of Rites at Hue, in support of Annam's claims to the territories of the left bank of the Mekong. A further and last embassy is said to have been received in Hue in 1833.

grandfather brutally refused tribute to the Annamite general Chiam-Thiem (2), and the successes of the kings of Bangkok in Laos were

2. See above, p. 193.

henceforth a threat to the very existence of the fragile principality.

Recovery of the Houa-Phan. Did his advances to Minh-Mang 643*
give rise to reflection in the Siamese court? The fact remains that 648 ●
after the annexation /204/ of Vientiane the latter seemed to de- 175*
part from its rigor and that Luang-Prabang was to regain the Houa-Phan. Mantha-Tourath reigned six years longer (1) and died on

1. E. Picanon relates that "in 1829 he repulsed Maha-Vong, king of Xieng-Houng." This laconic statement is not confirmed by any known document.

Tuesday, "the first day of the waxing moon of the eighth month at six o'clock in the evening of the year 1198" (1836). He left five sons and four daughters (2).

2. Tiao-Soukaseum, who succeeded his father; Tiao-Tiantha-Koumane, who was also destined to reign; Tiao-Pho, who went insane and killed his mother in an access of rage; Tiao-Oun-Kham who became king in 1870; Tiao-Kham-Boua; Nang-Souphanta-Boutsady; Tiao-Ngot-Kham; Tiao-Kham-Phong and Nang-Thong-Thip.

643* On the occasion of his cremation the king of Siam sent the
648 mandarin Tiao-Khoun-Tholama with numerous ritual gifts (3)
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3. 240 ticals, three hundred parasols, thirty bonzes' costumes, silk and calico goods, etc. (Annals).

in order to confirm both his sentiments of friendship and his rights of suzerainty over the principality which from then on was to constitute the last vestige of the great kingdom of Lan-Xang.

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CHAPTER VI

THE SIAMESE EXPANSION IN THE MEKONG BASIN DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1836-1885)

175* It was after the downfall of Vientiane that Siam's star rose and that its leaders' ambitions were revealed in all their completeness. With Cambodia in complete decline, the Burmese thrown back and the Laotian principalities either destroyed or tamed, the reconstruction of a great Thai empire to the profit of Bangkok must naturally have haunted the minds of its kings. But in order to achieve this dream they still had to consolidate their recent conquests from the lands of the left bank of the Mekong and to extend them from north to south towards natural frontiers, and then finally to gain recognition of this hegemony by the neighboring States. In the accomplishment of so great a task they were to come up against a formidable adversary with whom they were already well acquainted for having encountered him along the way. This was the sovereign of Annam.

648* /206/ Siamo-Annamite rivalry in Cambodia. As a matter of
175* fact, the first contacts between the Siamese princes and the lords of Hue did not go back much beyond the end of the seventeenth century. Before this they had been separated not only by the great mountainous barrier to the east, but also by Champa and Lan-Xang. The destruction of the first and division of the second had favored the Annamite overflow towards the Mekong, and the total ruin of the Kmer kingdom (1) had accelerated the latters' gradual advance

1. On four occasions, in 1357, 1394, 1420 and 1460, the Siamese had sacked Angkor. In 1587 they had occupied the provinces of Tonle-Sap. At the beginning of the eighteenth

was also rising against Minh-Mang's authority, is supposed to have 175*
ravaged the provinces of Thai-Nguyen, Cao-Bang and Lang-Son in
1836 or 1837. "He was conquered and is supposed to have been
burned alive in the woods where he had hidden" (1).

1. Schreiner, op. cit. /Abrege de l'Histoire d'Annam.
Saigon, 1906/, pp. 121-122.

Critical position of the principality. It would seem, on the 643*
contrary, that the first concern of the new Laotian king was to play 648*
up to the emperor of Annam, whose protection his father had 175*
spontaneously and discreetly solicited a few years previously.
Souka-Seum, whom the Annals represent as an "energetic and intelligent" prince, had been able during his long exile to evaluate the distance which Siam had covered in half a century and to meditate on the precarious destinies of his own country -- who can ever know the real reasons why he waited three years for permission to succeed King Manta? -- nor was he ignorant of the concern which his suzerain felt both at British ambitions in the Irawaddy basin and at Annam's double seizure /211/ of Tran-Ninh and Cambodia in a "pincers movement."

So many latent rivalries and so much undisguised competition might perhaps afford a supreme opportunity to the principality, blockaded as it was on all sides. But its chief would have to follow a policy of prudence and circumspection with regard to its powerful neighbors, avoiding both the haste which had been fatal for his cousin Anou and the indecision of his father Mantha, who had been severely punished by Siam.

For the moment the attention of Bangkok was entirely concen- 648
trated on events in Cambodia, which General Bodin had not evacu- 175*
ated without clinging to a hope of revenge. In 1841 when the emperor Thieu-Tri, Minh-Mang's son and successor, committed the error of withdrawing his occupation troops the Siamese reoccupied the country immediately, and on the pretext of supporting An-Duong, one of the former king's brothers, they began a stubborn struggle which lasted for six years. After various ups and downs of fortune they managed to make the emperor of Annam sign a peace treaty by the terms of which their protege was proclaimed king of Cambodia, acknowledged himself to be the vassal of both sovereigns, and ceded Battambang, /212/ Angkor and "southern Laos" to Siam (1847).

648 175* In the meantime the carefree populace of Luang-Prabang lived happy and at peace. This is at least the opinion of its annalists who, in confirmation of the adage which states that happy peoples have no history, begin and end their account of Souka-Seum's reign with this categorical assertion.

175* 563 167 The Meo Migration. It was about this time that the first migration of "Meos" occurred in the principality. The chroniclers make no mention of it, doubtless because it was peaceful on the whole and did not affect the tranquillity of the Laotian peoples. Indeed, the newcomers settled on the highest summits of Tran-Ninh and Luang-Prabang, in completely uninhabited regions where even the Khas had never ventured and which were outside the scope of the natives and their leaders.

Farmers and caravaneers, the Meos were above all among the worst denuders of the forests. They must have been driven south out of Se-Tchouen and Yunnan by the need to find new territories which were rich in forests, and also by their undisciplined temperament which could not endure /213/ the authority of the Chinese mandarins. They settled first on the wooded peaks of the Houa-Phan and of Tonkin, then on those of Upper Laos where they found the same kind of habitat as in the cold lands which they had fled. Without religion, without priests, without writing and obedient only to sorcerers who held absolute sway over their essentially vain and credulous character, they lived there in small independent groups, laying waste to the forest in order to grow poppies and maintaining with the neighboring groups only those relations which were strictly indispensable to marketing their opium (1).

/113/ 1. Settlement by the Meos encountered more resistance in Tonkin. "I recall," writes Deo-van-Tri in his Memoires, "having seen my country (Lai-Chau) invaded by the Meos who were called 'White Flags' about 1848. They disturbed the tranquillity of the land, but my honorable father Cam-Sinh finally came to an agreement with them and put them at liberty to settle wherever they wanted on the high plateaus of the region." In the following year, in order to spare his sons from violent family dissensions, Cam-Sinh entrusted Deo-van-Tri and his brother Cam-Heune to the king of Luang-Prabang, who placed them in a pagoda with his own children (Revue indochinoise, August 31, 1904.)

648 an administrator. "Whence did this gigantic river come? What
175* regions did it water? To what peoples did it give access?... France
654 owed it to science and to its own interest to try in its turn to pierce the thick veil which had stretched over Indo-China for so long a time" (3).

3. Cf. P. Legendre, Nos gloires coloniales.

In 1866 Admiral de La Grandiere decided "to send out a mission to explore the course of the Mekong over as long a distance as possible /232/ from its mouth." It was placed under the command of Doudart de Lagree, who chose as his companions Francis Garnier, Ensign de Laporte, the naval doctors Thorel and Joubert and the young embassy attache de Carne.

The expedition left Saigon on June 5, 1866 on gunboats Nos. 32 and 37, visited the ruins of Angkor, went upriver as far as Kratie and then continued in pirogues. On September 10 it reached Bassac and after a thousand and one difficulties in the rapids of Kemmarat passed by Nong-Khay (1), an important trading center

1. Nong-Khay, built on the right bank some forty kilometers
/439/ (by the river) downstream from Vientiane, controlled the greater part of the traffic from Upper Laos -- benzoin, cardamom, salt, tobacco, pelts and lac. It is still an active market today, and is joined to Vientiane by a highway frequented by numerous trucks.

created by the Siamese to replace Vientiane, the impressive ruins of which the expedition saw, swallowed up as they were by the vegetation. It finally reached Luang-Prabang on April 20, 1867.

The explorers did not remain there for any length of time. After erecting Mouhot's mausoleum and exploring the region they decided to entrust all the instruments which were no longer absolutely indispensable to them, as well as their maps and their botanical and geological collections, to /233/ King Tiantha-Koumane who sent them to Saigon "with scrupulous fidelity." Then they set out again, "escorted by a throng of functionaries and of young women who cried for some kind of souvenir of their guests. Uniform buttons and the smallest galloons were given to them" (1).

1. Cf. P. Legendre, op. cit. /Nos gloires coloniales/

149: Reinach--1 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
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[1] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER I

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THE POLITICAL STATUS OF LAOS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO THE CAPTURE OF VIEN-TIANE IN 1827

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the territories situated in the basin of the Mékong River were designated by the name of Laos or Lao, and from the political point of view formed two autonomous States.

Their autonomy was much more apparent than real, and existed in fact only for the internal administration of the two kingdoms. As far as their foreign relations went, they were tributaries of the more powerful nations which surrounded them.

The kingdom of Luang-Prabang (or Lan-Xang--of the million elephants) was the northernmost of the two and bordered on Yunnan, Tonkin, Annam, Vien-Tiane (or Vieng-Chang), the Burmese States [2] (or Sib-Song-Pahn-Na) and the You-Eûn States (or Lao-Xieng). It was supposed to provide China, Annam and Siam, either annually or every three years, with tribute consisting of certain valuable products and of precious metals, and called "Gold and silver flowers."

The other, or kingdom of Vien-Tiane, was the southernmost and was bordered on the north by Luang-Prabang, on the east by Annam, on the south by Cambodia and on the west by Siam. It was the tributary of Annam and Siam in the same right and under the same conditions as the first.

This state of affairs was profoundly modified in the beginning and middle of the nineteenth century by various events of capital importance.

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At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth the Thai kingdom, or Siam, had often appealed to the Laotian princes for help in repulsing Burmese invasions or repressing the insurrections of Ngiéous, Shans and You-Eûns which were frequent at this time. The princes' devotion was ill rewarded. Around 1825, in fact, when the kingdom of Vien-Tiane seemed to want to shake off Siamese suzerainty, it saw its territory invaded by Siamese armies. After two years of war the land had been dismembered, depopulated

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and stripped of its livestock and elephants, which were taken to the Ménam valley, and had been fully conquered by the Thai sovereign.

Siam then created the hereditary fief of Tiama-Sak (Bassac) in the southeast of the former kingdom and placed a cousin of the king of Vien-Tiane over it in order to reward him for his double treachery towards the king and towards his brother, the prince of Oubone, both of whom he had delivered up to the Siamese general Phiéa-Le-Bô-Dyn, vanquisher of the Laotians.

Of the former kingdom of Vien-Tiane Siam made a Siamese province bearing the name Lao-Pou-Eûn and, completely ignoring Annam's rights, it had its troops occupy the basin of the Sé-Bang-Hien in the Phu of Kam-Lô, which was situated on the left bank of the Mékong.

[3] SIAM'S ENCROACHMENTS TO THE EAST
GROUNDS FOR FRENCH INTERVENTION IN THE MÉKONG BASIN
ARRANGEMENT OF MARCH 27, 1889

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Siamese expansion was not limited to these conquests. Thanks to a skilful policy, it was awarded the provinces of Mélou-Prey and Tonlé-Répou, located on both banks of the Mékong, by Cambodia about 1840. Following their annexation Siam reigned as master over the whole basin of the river from the province of Outhaï-Thani-Si-Pak-Lay (Luang-Prabang) to Siemboc, that is to say, from the eighteenth to the thirteenth parallel.

But the establishment of the French in Cochinchina placed an obstacle in the way of Siamese ambitions and of any plans for conquest which they may have nurtured. Since Cambodia was the hinterland of our new possession we were led to intervene in its foreign relations and finally guarantee it a stable political situation. Here a word of praise may well be said for Admiral de La Grandière who, by his diplomatic skill and his steadfastness, was able in 1863 to impose a treaty on King Norodom which counterbalanced another Siamo-Kmer agreement of the same year and placed the kingdom of Cambodia under a French protectorate. (1)

(1) See Appendix I.

This accord was far from being satisfactory to Siam, for the introduction of a great European nation in the Far East, on the banks

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of the Mékong, with effective dominance over several millions of individuals, meant the ruin of its secret hopes. What is more, its plans for territorial expansion up to the Annamitic Chain found in us adversaries to be reckoned with. It also feared that Cambodia, which was already our ally and strong by virtue of its new status, might claim the territories of which it had been despoiled.

Since it could not enter into open struggle against us, Siam stealthily sowed discords in the Kmer kingdom and, [4] in co-operation with the British agents in Bangkok, schemed to create palace revolutions and thereby try to induce the versatile Norodom to abandon our protection for a Siamese vassaldom which would be stricter than before but disguised under the appearance of great honor.

So as not to lose all the fruits of our action, and to bring an end to the ambiguous status of a double protectorate--French and Siamese--in Cambodia, our government had to take strong action. It was then that the Franco-Siamese treaty of July 15, 1867, was concluded(1).

(1) See Appendix II.

Despite many irreparable errors, this treaty sanctioned Siam's recognition of the French protectorate over Cambodia, annulled the Siamo-Kmer agreement of 1863, established the status quo as a policy, granted to nationals of both countries reciprocal facilities for trade, residence, property, travel, navigation and passports, set up rules governing jurisprudence, etc.

Unfortunately it gave Siam the rich provinces of Battambang and Angkor (2), with vague provisions for later delimitation of

(2) At the beginning of the nineteenth century Siam had purely and simply annexed these provinces, without any treaty having sanctioned the coup.

these territories. The comparative calm of this period made it possible to settle various matters for good and all which had theretofore been left hanging.

149: Reinach--4 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8 175

Colonial

Thus the agreement of July 14, 1870, regulated fishing conditions 648
on the Great Lake [Grand Lac] (3). In 1882 it was decided to set up [206]

(3) See Appendix III.

a telegraph line between Bangkok and Pnom-Penh (4). And finally, [439]

(4) See Appendix IV.

on May 23, 1883, an agreement was reached which regulated the commerce and sale of French wines and spirits in Siam (5).

(5) See Appendix V.

This fine state of affairs soon took a turn for the worse at the time of the Tonkin expedition.

The agents of Great Britain in Siam were afraid that our penetration into the valley of the Red River and into Upper Laos [5] [Illustration] [6] [Blank page] [7] would hinder British plans for commercial establishments in Yunnan and would prevent British predominance in the two Kouang. Since they were bent on preserving their influence in this region, they induced the Siamese sovereign to act first on the Chinese frontiers, where he was to bar our progress, and then in Laos with Annam as the objective, in the hope that he might create difficulties for us and perhaps succeed in concluding some form of alliance against us.

The king's pride was flattered by his foreign advisers. Feeling that he was to play the part of the sovereign of a "great nation," he abandoned his prudent reserve, no longer kept the balance equal between the rival nations, and began his adventurous course. These were his first steps towards great disappointments, and also towards territorial losses such as those resulting from the treaty of 1893 and the London convention of 1896.

Circumstances at the time, moreover, seemed to favor Siam's action and even to excuse its behavior in some measure.

The invasion of Laos by the Hôs (1) enabled the sovereign of 648

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(1) Chinese bandits from Yunnan.

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Colonial

Siam to preserve an appearance of neutrality, and even of cordiality, towards us.

It gave him the opportunity to pose as the defender of Annam's vassals and of the subjects of his most honorable vassal the king of Luang-Prabang. When the time came King Chulahlong-Khorn would thus be able to profit skilfully, and according to the circumstances, from the advantages which he had gained in order to transform an ill-founded vassaldom over Luang-Prabang into an absolute possession and, thanks to our difficulties, to impose the law of greater might all the way to the Annamitic Chain.

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The Hô invasion, which extended all the way to Nong-Khay across the Sib-Song-Chau-Thaï, the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc, Tran-Ninh and Vien-Tiane, was never seriously opposed by the Siamese no matter what they may say. Their pretended action did, however, enable the king to keep Vien-Tiane and to drive the Chinese bandits out of Laotian territory.

[8] The whole affair may have created some momentary illusion, but the actual fact was that Chulahlong-Khorn's troops, except for a few rare and unimportant skirmishes, merely followed the Hôs as they returned towards Yunnan and abandoned the territories which they had invaded after they had sacked them.

Profiting by inattention on the part of France and Annam, which were occupied [Illustration here] elsewhere, and on the fallacious pretext that it was protecting the provinces which had been devastated by the Hôs and was preventing them from returning in the future, Siam covertly established itself as master in the land.

In the meantime the Chinese bandits, after leaving Vien-Tiane and Tran-Ninh, invaded the kingdom of Luang-Prabang. The latter still paid tribute to Siam, in the form of "Gold and silver flowers," yet it had remained free of direct domination and enjoyed an autonomy comparable to [Map, unpaged, inserted between pp. 8 and 9] [9] that of Vien-Tiane before its conquest, and paid an honorary bounty to China and Annam.

Still on the pretext of driving out the Hôs, the Siamese troops entered the territory of Luang-Prabang and established themselves there as in a conquered land. Their general was given the title of royal commissioner. He administered the country, recruited troops, levied [Illustration here] taxes and behaved exactly as if the country belonged to him (1885).

149: Reinach--6 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
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Colonial 648 175

Such overt acts were the certain prelude to a more complete annexation, and finally shook off our torpor and quickened our vigilance.

Since the king of Annam, our new protégé, had rights over this region which were equal and in several cases superior to those of Siam, our intervention became necessary. It resulted in the treaty of May 7, 1886 (1).

(1) See Appendix VI.

[10] So that the treaty should not remain mere words, the Government of the French Republic sent M. Pavie (1) on a geographical and 175 127 654

(1) Now minister plenipotentiary.

political mission in Upper Laos and named him consul in Luang-Prabang, but without Siam's exequatur.

The work of this first mission provided precious information on all the regions invaded by the Hôs and later occupied by the Siamese.

With the help of Commander Pennequin (2), our valiant consul

(2) Now brigadier general; former interim governor general of Madagascar.

succeeded in driving the last bandits back to China and made the advance outposts which had been established by the Siamese withdraw to the far limits of the Mékong basin. Turning this situation to their profit, and now strong in the knowledge which they had acquired, our diplomats concluded with the court of Bangkok, so as to be able to face any difficult eventuality in the future, as well as to give us time for reflection, the arrangement of March 27, 1889, by the terms of which Siam agreed to respect the status quo (3).

(3) "By the terms of this agreement the Siamese troops were to halt their eastward march, and then evacuate the region of Cammon. A Siamese 'Kha-luong' was allowed to remain in this province for the time being, and we obtained the right to construct a military post at Napé." E. Picanon, 1900. Le Laos français. [648]

149: Reinach--7 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
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Colonial

SIAM'S VIOLATION OF THE 1889 ARRANGEMENT
VARIOUS INCIDENTS
OCCUPATION OF LOWER LAOS--NAVAL DEMONSTRATION AT PAK-NAM
ULTIMATUM AND TREATY OF OCTOBER 3, 1893

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The arrangement of 1889 was unfortunately much too lenient. Even several years after the fall of the great and clairvoyant patriot Jules Ferry, however, and as a consequence of the profound discredit into which the whole colonial idea and cause had fallen among us, our political situation made it impossible for us to take more effective measures and to assert the rights of our protégé, the emperor of Annam, in a more pressing way. [11] Nor could we give full satisfaction to the completely legitimate requests for protection which were made by the king of Luang-Prabang.

Our political difficulties were perfectly well-known to the Siamese government. Emboldened by our hesitation, it consented, in agreement with Great Britain, to arrangements and delimitations of frontiers in the Shan States which annihilated the plan conceived by Jules Ferry in 1883 and canceled all the results of the Deloncle treaty concluded in 1884 (1) with Upper Burma, which was then

(1) See Appendices VII and VIII.

independent. This treaty, in effect, recognized as limits of "French Tonkin the Mékong River, from the point where it leaves China as far as Xieng-Sèn," including the Pahn-Na on the left bank, the principality of Muong-Sing and the States of Pou-Kha, Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sèn to the west of Nam-Hou.

In exchange for this territory--a gracious gift which cost it all the less in that it did not belong to it--Great Britain obtained Karennée (or Karèng) from Siam. The latter territory was situated in the valley of the Salouen, and had been under Siamese domination for centuries.

The delimitation of the Anglo-Siamese frontiers, including those of the Shan States of Xieng-Mai, Lam-Poun and Muong-Haut, was completed only in 1892.

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In 1889 M. Pavie was sent on another mission and was accompanied by many civil and military assistants whose particular province was to be topography and the natural sciences. A

Colonial

commercial and industrial mission was attached to the former, and it was to study the question of means of communication by land and river, to create trading posts, to collect samples, to examine the commercial methods in use and to determine the nature and value of the products of the Mékong basin. Funds for this mission, which left France with an initial stock of fifteen tons of various kinds of merchandise, were provided by a syndicate which had just been formed, with an initial capital of 100,000 francs, under the name of French Syndicate [12] of Upper Laos. It included representatives of Parisian trade and industry who had united for the experiment thanks to the initiative of M. Léon Tharel, the president of the group. 175 654 433 [439]

All throughout 1890 and 1891 the missions fulfilled their tasks with ardor, not without constant struggle against the implicit hostility of the Siamese, which although occasionally concealed under an [Illustration here] affable outward mask nonetheless continued to manifest itself and created obstacles everywhere in the hope of discouraging the valiant explorers and causing their work to fail.

In spite of the difficulties which they encountered, the two missions were successful in their delicate enterprise and the results of the latter were most significant. From that point on we were in possession of precise information concerning the whole region extending from Yunnan to Cambodia.

What was more, by continuing the tradition begun by Mouhot, the [13] Lagrée mission, Harmand, Néis, etc. we had made contact with the Laotian people and made them know and love the French name. In us they saluted their future liberators and the ones who would come to free them from the brutal and detested Siamese yoke. 175 609 654

Finally--a fact of no less importance--thanks to the activities of the commercial mission, to the trading posts which it had established and to the contacts and arrangements which it had prepared, we were in possession from that time on of private commercial interests in the Mékong basin. Thus greater force was given to the rights which we already had to intervene in Laos against Siamese intrigues in the name of our protégés, the emperor of Annam and the king of Cambodia.

Frightened and surprised by the results which France had achieved in so short a time in the Mékong valley, despite the ambushes which it had laid on all sides and the hostile maneuvers which it had supported, Siam began to fear that France might invade its Laotian territories. It then invoked the friendship of Great Britain and 648 175

648 surrounded itself with official advisers from that nations.

175 In a short time, and with remarkable rapidity, it organized an army and navy which were trained and commanded by European officers. It reinforced all its detachments in Laos, levied additional troops, and after providing supplies of arms and munitions it constructed forts. In a word, it prepared for war. It announced to the people that all these steps had been taken in order to "drive out the French and extend the Thai kingdom into Annam."

726 The 1889 arrangement establishing a status quo was then violated
175 Siamese troops and commissioners advanced towards the Annamitic Chain and crossed it at several points, particularly at Hatraf and Al-Lao, and thus reached a point only forty kilometers from Hué. In the course of their forward march various incidents occurred which obliged the French Government to abandon the reserve which it had heretofore maintained when confronted with the intrigues of the court of Bangkok. At last it made ready to act vigorously.

175 In January 1892 the greater number of the members of [14] the Pavie mission had returned to France. Only three of them had
648 remained in Laos, two in Luang-Prabang and one in Stung-Treng.

439 It was at this time that the French Syndicate of Upper Laos, which had become the French Syndicate of Laos and had doubled its capital, sent out a new six-man mission as well as a large stock of merchandise. Its purpose was to reoccupy the old trading posts in Luang-Prabang and Nong-Khay and to found new ones at Bassac, Outhène and Xieng-Hong in a line along the Mékong. Its activity would thus extend from Cambodia to Yunnan. The Syndicate's new mission was to support and strengthen the commercial interests already in existence in the Mékong basin. It also placed vigilant agents in all the posts who would be able to keep an eye on the maneuvers of the Siamese and instil confidence in the people by showing them that in spite of Siam's threats and warlike preparations we should not abandon them. The Laotians were thus conscious of our support at a time when their invaders were becoming harsher and more arrogant and were threatening to extract reprisals from them as a punishment for having placed their trust in us and solicited our protection.

In these critical circumstances the Government decided to place a consul general in Bangkok so as to render France's political action in Siam more effective. It chose M. Pavie to occupy this high post,

Colonial

both for his special knowledge of the country and the questions at issue and as a reward for the exceptional service which he had rendered to France in the course of his previous missions. Shortly thereafter, so as to place our chief agent in Siam on the same level as those of other nations, the title of Resident Minister of France was conferred on him. 175 648 439

At the same time, in order to extend our activity in the Mékong basin, the Government discontinued the vice-consulate in Luang-prabang, which had always remained without Siam's "exequatur", and replaced it with a commercial agency. Three other agencies of the same type were established in Outhène, Bassac and Stung-Treng.

The first three of these posts were managed by the agents, [15] [Illustration] [16] [Blank page] [Unpaged map inserted between pp. 16 and 17] [17] who were heads of trading posts in the French Syndicate, and the last was managed by a chief clerk in the Posts and Telegraphs. They were given the title of commercial agents of the Government and, even while they continued to carry on commercial operations, they received salaries from the Colonies budget. They corresponded directly with the Governor General of Indo-China and the Resident Minister in Bangkok, to whom they sent telegrams and official reports.

Meanwhile the Siamese, thinking that they were to be permitted to do anything and secretly impelled by the British agents, continued to advance eastward terrorizing the people and mistreating our subjects, protégés and nationals in Siam as well as in Laos and in Cambodia, in the region of Great Lake [Grand Lac]. 648 175

Their audacity reached its climax in a serious offense to our flag in Tong-Kieng-Kham, and the accumulation of all these grievances drove the French Government to vigorous action. Following an interruption and a patriotic speech by M. Deloncle, a deputy, the Chamber decided to safeguard the rights of our protégés and to recall Siam to respect for the treaties and arrangements which had been agreed on. The following are the terms in which M. Deloncle placed the question before Parliament on February 4, 1893. [C.A.M. Translator's note. The following speech (through p. 17, line 5 in this translation) is presumably taken from French legislative records. It is set in small, contrasting type in the source.]

648
175

President.--M. Deloncle has the floor.

M. François Deloncle.--Gentlemen, after the brilliant speeches which you have just heard I believe that the Chamber is in some haste to close the general discussion. I have therefore come simply to ask the Government a few questions.

The first of these questions supplements the observations which my honorable colleagues and friends the Messrs. Martineau and Le Roy have addressed to the tribune concerning the encroachments of the Siamese on our Indo-Chinese empire.

The Siamese are ignorant or pretend to be ignorant of Annam's rights over its old vassal, the principality of Luang-Prabang. The Siamese are ignorant or pretend to be ignorant of Annam's rights over the small Laotian States to the north of old Cambodia on the right bank of the Mékong, some of which used to send, up until the last few years, tribute to Hué. The Siamese are ignorant or wish to be ignorant of Annam's absolute rights over all the territory situated between the sea and the left bank of the Mékong, that is to say the lands of Attopeu and Saravane, the phus of Cam-lô, Lac-bien and Tran-tinh, Tran-dinh, Tran-ninh, Tran-bien, Muong-lu, etc., which from time immemorial have been a part of [18] the Annamite empire and must be purely and simply attached to the direct administration of our residences. Finally, the Siamese are ignorant or pretend to be ignorant of Cambodia's rights over the old provinces of the Cambodian kingdom which Siam holds illegally and in spite of the treaty of 1867, which provides for a delimitation of frontiers which the court of Bangkok has always refused to consider.

It is in this way that, patiently and noiselessly, the Siamese are usurping one by one all the dependencies of our protégés, the emperor of Annam and King Norodom. In vain do our protégés protest and clamor for our protection against this invasion. We have let matters take their course, in the last few years, with such an appearance of resignation that Siamese audacity is growing every day and that good patriots are worriedly asking how far it may not go. Look at the Siamese outposts at the gates of Hué. There they are a few days away from Hanoi. They do not hesitate to treat our political agents with the most perfect scorn and to mistreat our traders, as witness the expulsion from Houten of M. Champenois who is claiming on these grounds, and not without reason, an indemnity of 100,000 francs. To put it bluntly, the weakness of our representatives and sometimes of our Government in these regions is so great that two

149: Reinach--12 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial 648
175

Siamese functionaries were not at all afraid, in September 1891, to tear down the French flag at the Pouens. Not only were they not bothered, but one of them received the rosette of officer of the Legion of Honor and the other was made a chevalier through the diplomacy of the Republic. (Various movements.)

Truly, it seems to me that we have been too long-suffering. It is not possible that we should have conquered Cambodia, Tonkin and Annam, and acquired rights over all of Laos on both banks of the Mékong, by virtue of solemn and undisputed treaties, only to abandon the best fruits of our conquest to Siam. We have been the dupes of Siam for five or six years, and that is enough.

Let us return to the virile policy which, in 1882, under M. Harmand as consul general and under the administration of the honorable M. Le Myre de Vilers, placed Siam under our influence because France then knew how to speak clearly and not beat about the bush. Let us remind Siam of the limits to which it must confine itself and which it respected very well until the expedition of the Hôs, until our war in Tonkin and until the Cambodian rebellion of Si-Votha.

Doubtless there were, during this period, a few Siamese mandarins who occasionally went in search of adventure among the Laotians of the Mékong, but this was pure tolerance on the part of the Cambodians and Annamites and there was not, as there are today, brothers of the king and generals in chief camped as absolute masters on both banks of the river. The regular and official administration of the court of Bangkok did not go beyond the Ménam basin in the strict sense and the Malay Peninsula, and the kingdom contained only those provinces listed in the four classes reproduced by the printed laws of Siam, of which the Siam Directory, the official annual, [19] gives authentic extracts which are published under the supervision of the king himself. This document is absolutely conclusive. Let us bring Siam back to it. Let it reign in peace, in full integrity and independence, over the provinces listed in the Siam Directory, but let it no longer attempt to establish itself with impunity in the territories dependent on our empire.

Do not fear, Mr. Undersecretary of State, to impress on Bangkok our determined intention not to be made fools of any longer by the pleasant smiles, the lulling [illegible]macy and the complicated intrigues with which, since 1884, the best intentions of our agents have been paralyzed. (Hear! Hear!)

149: Reinach--13 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Colonial

175

648

The Siamese are like all the other people of the Orient. They believe that they are strong because we have accustomed them to regard themselves as such. They have a great deal of pride, because we have been and are too humble towards them. They make much, in their dealings with us, of pretended aid which they confidently expect from England or from Germany. But I ask you, gentlemen, what can England or Germany have to say in a question of frontiers between Siam, Cambodia and Annam which has to do only with France? Are we concerned in the frontier delimitation now in progress in the Shan-Burmese States between Siam and Britain? Have we ever for a single instant hindered German or Italian commercial activity in Bangkok?

No, gentlemen, there are no international interests involved in this matter. We have only one question to settle with Britain in this region, that of the upper Mékong from the point where this river leaves China upstream from Xieng-hong to the point in Xieng-sen where it touches the northwest frontier of Siam. There, as you know, the left bank of the Mékong constitutes the limit between French Tonkin and the Shan-Burmese States, by the terms of the Burmese declaration which I brought back in 1884 from Mandalay, and by the terms of other arrangements which enabled the honorable M. Ribot, then minister of Foreign Affairs, to declare before the Chamber two years ago that he would never accept any other frontier line between Tonkin and the Shan-Burmese States which depend on Britain.

I shall add only that, since that time, Lord Salisbury has admitted in the House of Lords that his government could not possibly have anything to say in the frontier difficulties pending between Siam and France. Our hands are therefore free, on condition that we respect the integrity and independence of Siam in the strict sense.

The Government well knows what measures are to be taken under the present conditions, and I defer to the resolute spirit of my honorable friend the Undersecretary of State.

These will not be extensive military measures for, and you will learn this not without some surprise, Siam has accomplished its work of invasion with the aid of a mere 150 or 200 Siamese soldiers. With this small number of troops they are occupying a region larger than half of France.

[20] You must admit, gentlemen, that it would be enough merely to turn to with a good will and have a genuine consciousness of France's rights, in order to restore order once again. Unfortunately

149; Reinach--14 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

I fear that our agents all too often lack this genuine consciousness. (Hear! Hear!) 175 648

Once that we had decided to intervene in Indo-China, operations were begun at three different points: in the region of Ai-Lao, in Cammon and in the north of Cambodia.

Our agents remained isolated in the Mékong valley.

Those of Luang-Prabang, who had taken refuge in the buildings of the old consulate on the right bank of the Mékong, were proscribed, blockaded and besieged. Threats of death were made against all natives who should enter into contact with them or serve them in any way whatever.

Our commercial agent in Outhène was expelled by order of the viceroy of Nong-Khay, and his merchandise was first confiscated and then almost all sold by the Siamese. The agent in Bassac escaped similar treatment thanks only to the goodwill of Prince Prit-Chit, the viceroy of Oubone and a friend of France, and they were content merely to keep a close watch on him. He was guarded so closely that he could neither send nor receive correspondence or merchandise.

The instructions given out by M. de Lanessan, the Governor General of Indo-China, for the campaign which was beginning were quite clear. He directed that open battle should be avoided insofar as possible. He said that we must seek to gain the sympathies of the inhabitants and always prefer diplomacy and peaceful means to uncertain military engagements. In order to attain this end, the Governor General recommended the use of native troops commanded by inspectors of the militia and placed under the higher authority of a few chosen residents. 648 175 726

It was in this capacity that Messrs. Luce, Dufrénil and Bastard took part in the operations.

One column, with Muong-Phin as its objective, was placed under the command of M. Dufrénil, the vice-resident in Dong-Hoi, who was assisted by M. Garnier, an inspector of militia. Following the instructions [21] of the Governor General, that is to say without entering open combat, this force reached Muong-Phin after a rapid march, which it entered on May 14, 1893. On the 26th of the same month it reached the Mékong opposite Kemmarat.

In these parts there was a veritable rout of the Siamese, who

175 "Our seamen," as M. Flourens put it, "had cut their way through
726 the barrages, the torpedos and the obstacles of all kinds which the Siamese Government had laid out in order to shield, behind a barrier which it believed insurmountable, the brazen despicableness of its incessant provocations."

175 The news aroused indignation as soon as it became known in France, and in its session of July 18 the Chamber authorized the
728 Foreign Minister to deliver the following ultimatum to the Siamese Government:

648 1. Recognition of French rights to the left bank of the Mékong and to its islands.

2. Evacuation of the Siamese outposts established on the left bank of the Mékong, within the space of one month.

3. Satisfaction for the aggressions committed.

4. Punishment of the guilty.

5. An indemnity of two millions for damages caused.

6. Deposit of the sum of three millions as security, or payment of the tax revenues from the provinces of Battambang and Siem-Reap (2).

(2) See Appendix IXa.

Siam refused at first to accept these conditions, and on July 22 offered to cede the left bank as far as the 18th parallel, thus wishing to keep Vien-Tiane, Luang-Prabang, Tran-Ninh, the Hua-Pahn, Muong-Poukha, Xieng-Khong, Muong-Sing, the two Muong-Hou and the Pahn-Na on the left bank. It was counting, and with some reason, on the support of Great Britain.

Lord Roseberry and Ed. Grey tried, but in vain, to arouse [26] opinion in London and to provoke diplomatic intervention. The Foreign Office refused categorically. Discouraged by this sudden abandonment and intimidated by the resolute attitude of the French Government (1), the king of Siam accepted the conditions which had

(1) In accordance with the Department's instructions, M. Pavie had struck his flag and left Bangkok on July 26 aboard the Inconstant.

been offered without further ado. M. Le Myre de Vilers was named Ambassador Extraordinary and arrived to conclude a treaty with the Court of Siam which should be based on the ultimatum. Signed on

149: Reinach--18 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial
175
728
648

October 3, 1893, in Bangkok, it was ratified by the French parliament in January 1894.

The following are the clauses of the treaty (2):

(2) See Appendix X.

Treaty concluded in Bangkok on October 3, 1893, between the government of the French Republic and the government of His Majesty the king of Siam, in order to bring an end to the disputes which have arisen between the two lands and strengthen friendly relations.

The President of the French Republic and H.M. the king of Siam, wishing to bring an end to the disputes which have arisen in recent times between the two States and to strengthen the friendly relations which have existed between France and Siam for centuries past, have named as their plenipotentiaries:

The President of the French Republic,

M. Charles Marie Le Myre de Vilers, Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor and of the White Elephant, Minister plenipotentiary of the 1st class, deputy;

And H.M. the king of Siam, His Royal Highness Prince Devawongse Varoprakar, knight of the order of Maha Chakrkri, grand officer of the Legion of Honor, etc., minister of Foreign Affairs; who, after communicating their full powers to one another and having recognized them as in good and due form, have agreed to the following articles:

ARTICLE 1. The Siamese Government renounces all claim to all of the territories on the left bank of the Mékong and to the islands in this river.

ARTICLE 2. The Siamese Government agrees not to maintain or circulate ships or armed vessels on the waters of the Great Lake [Grand Lac], the Mékong or their tributaries within the limits specified in the following article.

ARTICLE 3. The Siamese Government shall not construct any fortified outpost or military establishment in the provinces of Battambang and Siem-Reap or within a radius of twenty-five kilometers from the right bank of the Mékong.

ARTICLE 4. In the zones specified in Article 3, police duty shall be carried out, according to [27] custom, by the local authorities with only such contingents as are strictly necessary. No regular or

648
728
175

irregular armed force shall be maintained there.

ARTICLE 5. The Siamese Government agrees to open negotiations with the French Government, within a period of six months, with a view to drawing up regulations governing customs and trade in the territories specified in Article 3, and to revising the treaty of 1856.

Until such an agreement has been reached, no customs duties shall be established in the zone specified in Article 3. Reciprocity shall continue to be accorded by the French Government to the products of the aforesaid zone.

ARTICLE 6. Since the development of navigation along the Mékong may necessitate certain construction projects on the right bank, or the establishment of boat relays and depots for wood and coal, the Siamese Government agrees to provide, at the request of the French Government, all necessary facilities for this purpose.

ARTICLE 7. French citizens, subjects and nationals may circulate and engage in trade freely in the territories specified in Article 3, when provided with a pass issued by the French authorities. Reciprocity shall be accorded to the inhabitants of the aforesaid zones.

ARTICLE 8. The French Government reserves the right to establish consulates wherever it deems suitable in the interest of its nationals, and particularly at Korat and Muong-Nan.

ARTICLE 9. In case of any difficulties in interpretation, the French text alone shall be deemed valid.

ARTICLE 10. The present treaty must be ratified within a period of four months dating from the day of its signing.

In faith of which the below-named respective plenipotentiaries have signed the present treaty in duplicate and have affixed their seals thereto.

Done at the palace of Vallabha, in Bangkok, October 3, 1893.

(Signed) Le Myre de Vilers
(Signed) Devawongse Varoprakar

An agreement of which the following is the text was joined to the preceding treaty:

149: Reinach--20 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

648
728
175

AGREEMENT

The plenipotentiaries have determined, in the present agreement, the different measures and steps involved in carrying out the peace treaty signed this day, and the ultimatum accepted on last August 5.

ARTICLE 1. The last Siamese military posts on the left bank [28] of the Mékong shall be evacuated within the maximum space of one month dating from September 5.

ARTICLE 2. All fortifications in the zone specified in Article 3 of the treaty dated this day shall be razed.

ARTICLE 3. The authors of the attempts on Tong-Xieng-Kham and Kammoun shall be judged by the Siamese authorities. A representative of France shall be present at the judgment and shall see to it that the penalties pronounced are carried out.

The French Government reserves the right to judge whether the sentences are sufficient and, if need arise, to demand a new trial before a mixed tribunal whose composition it shall determine.

ARTICLE 4. The Siamese Government shall place at the disposition of the Minister of France in Bangkok or of the French frontier authorities all French, Annamite and Laotian subjects of the left bank and the Cambodians who are being detained on any grounds whatsoever. It shall in no way impede the return to the left bank of former inhabitants of this region.

ARTICLE 5. The Ban-Bien of Tong-Xieng-Kham and his retinue shall be brought to the French Legation by a delegate of the Foreign Minister, as well as the weapons and the French flag seized by the Siamese authorities.

ARTICLE 6. The French Government shall continue to occupy Chantaboun(1) until such time as the provisions of the present Agreement have been carried out, particularly the complete evacuation

(1) We are still there in 1901.

and pacification both of the left bank and the zones specified in Article 3 of the treaty dated this day.

In faith of which the respective plenipotentiaries have signed the present agreement and affixed their seals thereto.

149; Reinach--21 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

175
728
648

Done in duplicate at the palace of Vallabha, in Bangkok, October 3, 1893.

(Signed) Le Myre de Vilers.
(Signed) Devawongse Varoprakar.

648
175

It became perfectly apparent, after the signing of the treaty and the additional agreement, that these two acts were nothing but palliatives. Only the out-and-out annexation of Siam, in addition to the fact that it would have greatly enlarged our colonial empire, would have enabled us to hold the British and the Germans, who were our commercial rivals, in check.

For a long time the Siamese had been saying, "The day when we are forced to evacuate we shall leave nothing but the land, the water and the wild beasts of the forests." And, as a matter of fact, [29] they had applied this maxim almost to the letter in 1827 and 1840 when, out of fear of Annamite reprisals on the left bank, they had forced people and livestock to follow them over to the right bank and all the way to the Ménam valley. This procedure was altogether too simple for them not to have had the idea of trying it again in 1893. Time was the only thing they lacked to carry out their sinister plan, but they left us only a depopulated and devastated land, keeping for themselves the Laos of the right bank and the rich provinces of Angkor and Battambang, that is to say the well-populated and fertile territories which had never suffered, as the present-day Laos, several invasions in less than a century.

The hesitancy of the court of Bangkok when the ultimatum was delivered, as well as its attempts to keep the territories of the left bank of the Mékong above the 18th parallel, were once more a clear indication of British interference. Although not apparent, British influence had never ceased to make itself felt in the course of all these negotiations. The goal of this hidden influence was to preserve British preponderance in the Pahn-Na and, since Britain was already master of the kingdom of Ava, to facilitate the achievement of its plans for a railway towards S'sémao and Yunnan-Sen.

It was nevertheless forced to come out into the open, and demanded that a neutral zone or sort of buffer state be established between the British and French territories along the Upper Mékong. It aimed at preventing us from occupying territory which had been

175
648

regularly ceded to us by the treaty of October 3, by transforming them into a neutral zone where it might perhaps later find means of establishing itself.

In order to settle this ticklish question an Anglo-French commission presided over by Messrs. Pavie and Scott was to work on the very spot in order to discover the conditions under which such a buffer state might be established. A backward glance will now be necessary to set the question of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na in its proper context.

[30] THE QUESTION OF THE SIB-SONG-PAHN-NA

The confederation of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na (or twelve Pahn-Na) was situated on both banks of the Mekong between 21° and 23° N. latitude and 97° and 100° E. longitude.

Eight of these Pahn-Na were on the left bank (1) and four on the

(1) The eight Pahn-Na on the left bank were Xieng-Hong, Muong-La, Muong-Poung, Muong-Noune, Muong-Yang, Muong-Bang, Muong-Hou and Muong-Heng.

[Illustration here] right bank of the great river (2). The first had

(2) The four Pahn-Na on the right bank were Muong-Lèm (or Muong-Lim), Muong-Houng, Muong-Hai and Muong-Mèng.

their capital in Xieng-Hong (or Kiang-Oung), and the second in Muong-Lèm.

The confederation was a tributary of Burma and of China, but the latter country's suzerainty was nominal rather than real. Tribute in money and in kind was paid only to the king of Ava, and each Pahn-Na also provided him with a thousand armed men in time of war.

[31] This situation did not continue beyond 1875, for at that time Prince Thibau overthrew the reigning dynasty in Burma, put King Mèn-Dou-Mèn to death with all his family, except for one direct heir in the person of Prince Myngoun-Mèn, and then seized the throne. But the usurper was detested by the people because of his cruelty and his vices, and also because he was thought, whether rightly or wrongly, to be supported by the British.

149; Reinach--23 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

648
175

The mandarins whom he sent into the Pahn-Na to replace [Illustration here] those of the former king could not maintain themselves there, for they were not obeyed and could not collect the various tributes and taxes.

Thus after three years of fruitless attempts they returned to Mandalay and let the Pahn-Na govern themselves as they wished. It was for this reason that the confederation no longer sent Burma the customary head tax, but contented itself with sending a small honorary tribute from time to time.

China, for its part, obtained nothing from the Pahn-Na except a tribute in kind consisting of tea of that region. It also collected certain duties (Li-Kin) on this product when it was exported. Chinese suzerainty, very broad in its form and very meager in its [32] effects, limited its tribute and taxes to these simple bounties. A delegate from the Tao-Tai of Pou-Eurl-Fou with the rank of a sergeant and accompanied by four lancers who were in tatters and covered with vermin, was the only Chinese representative in Xieng-Hong in 1890 and 1891.

In 1883-84, while Britain was preparing to seize Upper Burma, King Thibau made overtures to France in the hope of obtaining our support and permission to secure supplies of weapons and ammunition by way of Tonkin and the Pahn-Na.

The Burmese plenipotentiaries thus gave official confirmation to the declaration made in Mandalay in 1884 to M. Deloncle, who was then on a diplomatic mission. The declaration contained the following passage:

"The eight Pahn-Na on the left bank of the Mékong shall become a part of French Tonkin and the river shall serve as frontier between French Tonkin and Burma, from the point where it leaves China to a point below Xieng-Sen" (1).

(1) See Appendices VIII and XI.

In the meantime Jules Ferry, who had conducted all the negotiations and parleys with Burma, fell from power and Britain, ever aware of difficulties which might hinder our forward march, profited from the circumstance and from our difficulties in Tonkin in order to seize Upper Burma. It did not, however, become interested in the Pahn-Na before 1890 or 1891.

The Pavie mission had already explored the region and had

149: Reinach--24 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial
648
175

studied its topography at the beginning of 1891. One of its members had even founded a French trading post at Xieng-Hong, over which the French flag flew, and had been accredited to the local chieftains by Prince Myngoun-Mèn who was the sole heir, in their eyes, to the throne of Ava (2).

(2) See Appendix XII.

Unfortunately, we made the mistake of not making public this agreement by our agent with the chiefs of the Pahn-Na, who were quite prepared to accept our protection. Britain quietly went to work in the land. British agents were sent there and sowed discord among the chiefs, and finally in [A two-page map, unpaged, is inserted between pp. 32 and 33.] [33] July 1894 these territories were ceded to China by the United Kingdom. A restrictive clause provided, however, that in no case might they be given back, in whole or in part, to any other nation (1).

(1) See Appendix XI.

This generosity was in absolute contradiction to the agreements which had come before. It violated in clear fashion all previous engagements and made nonsense of the Franco-Chinese treaty of 1887 which awarded us the Pahn-Na on the left bank. Moreover, the territories of Muong-Hou-Neua and Muong-Hou-Tai, which were dependencies of Luang-Prabang, had recently been occupied by the Siamese after the retreat of the Hôs.

In 1894 and 1895 the delimitation of the Franco-Chinese frontier restored the two Muong-Hou to us. Britain used this new state of things as a pretext for accusing China of not having respected the non-retrocession clause in the agreement of June 1895 (2). It

(2) See Appendix XIII.

profited by the occasion in order to take back, as compensation, certain territories in the Kachin States of the north (on the left bank of the Salouen River) which it had ceded to China together with the Pahn-Na.

By virtue of the Franco-Siamese treaty of 1893, we took possession in the following year of the territory on the left bank

Colonial

648
175

of the Mékong which was situated to the south of the Pahn-Na and to the west of Nam-Hou.

It was at this time that Britain's plans became clearly apparent. It claimed, as being under its influence--and on this pretext its agents fomented disorders and revolts there--the States of Xieng-Khong, Muong-Sing and Muong-Mugne as dependencies of Xieng-Tong (Kiang-Toung) and of Xieng-Khèng (Kiang-Khèng), situated on both banks of the Mékong.

So as to counterbalance British influence insofar as possible, and also to see that the treaty of 1893 was carried out and to protect our nationals and those under our jurisdiction, the French Government created the commercial agencies of Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sèn (right bank) in June 1894. At the same time we took possession of Xieng-Khong, Muong-Mugne, Muong-Poukha and Muong-Luong-[34] Nam-Ta on the left bank. All these territories had been ceded us by Siam, as well as that of Muong-Sing.

Our agents, who lived on the very spot, then saw clearly that the part of the territory of Xieng-Khèng which was called Muong-[Illustration here] Sing and was situated on the left bank of the Mékong belonged to us beyond any shadow of a doubt. This region of Muong-Sing was then a dependency of Siam, and in July 1894 our agents had been able to stop its ambassadors at Xieng-Khong at the very time when they were taking the annual tribute to the king of Nan, who was then to send it on to the court of Bangkok. The tribute was forwarded by them, with the message that we were acting out of pure courtesy, so as to emphasize [35] Muong-Sing's old political dependency on Siam and consequently on France, ever since 1893.

In the meantime an event occurred which cast a new light on the question and completely changed all diplomatic plans.

In contravention of the arrangements made at Bangkok by the heads of the British and French international Commissions and by the representatives of the two nations in Paris, pressing orders were sent directing the troops of Upper Burma to occupy the territory on the left bank which had recently been abandoned by Siam. [Illustration alongside text here.]

The British Commission, moreover, instead of going to Xieng-Khong on the right bank as had been agreed and waiting for the French Commission there, avoided going by this route. It went to

175
648

Xieng-Tong well before the appointed date and there it found Lieutenant Stirling, the commander of the troops from Upper Burma. Losing no time, the British mission at once ordered the Tiao-Fa of Muong-Sing to prepare lodgings and provisions for three thousand soldiers, to put the roads in good condition and to go to Xieng-Tong with all his mandarins and make his submission to H.M. the queen of England.

Upon the complaint of the Tiao-Fa of Muong-Sing and at the sight of the letters from the king of Siam saying that Muong-Sing had belonged [36] to France since 1893, M. Macey, our agent in Xieng-Khong who was responsible for organizing the new territory on the left bank, took an initiative which was bold but decreed by the gravity of the situation.

Both to safeguard our rights and to make the members of the British mission feel all the tactlessness of their proceedings, our agent gave orders to the authorities of Muong-Sing which saved the situation. He confirmed all the local functionaries in their privileges and prerogatives and gave them French flags to be distributed in their muongs and villages (1).

(1) See Appendix XIV.

When the British Commission failed to see the Tiao-Fa of Muong-Sing come to Xieng-Tong and make his submission, it decided on November 24, 1894, to cross over to the left bank by way of Xieng-Lap with a force composed of two companies of "Gurka rifles" and a troop of Indian cavalry (Sikhs). But when confronted with the fact that our agent had already taken possession, and when it saw, as it reached the left bank, that the French flag was already flying, the British Commission sent the greater part of its troops back to the right bank and waited at Muong-Sing for the French Commission, which arrived a week later from Muong-Hou.

In spite of the accomplished fact the heads of the international Commissions resumed their discussion, and by common accord they decided to evacuate the disputed territory and to refer the matter to their Governments.

After the departure of M. Pavie, our commissioner general in Laos and head of the French Commission, Sir Friars, who was commissioner general of Upper Burma, came to settle in Xieng-Tong. During this time Lieutenant Stirling had returned to occupy

Muong-Sing (April 1895).

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The effect of this broken promise was to return the question of the limits of our possessions to the agenda. After numerous protests on our part talks were begun in Europe, subsequent to which the two Governments finally elaborated the following declaration:

[37] 1. The Governments of France and Great Britain agree not to send, in any case or under any pretext without one another's consent, their armed forces into the region including the basins of the Petchaboury, Mékong, Ménam and Bang-Pakong (River of Pétriou) rivers and their respective tributaries, as well as the coastal region which stretches from Muong-Bang-Tapan to Muong-Pasé, and thus including all the territory situated to the north of the Ménam basin between the Anglo-Siamese frontier, the Mékong River and the eastern limit of the Mé-Ing basin. They further agree not to acquire any privilege or private advantage in this region the benefit of which shall not be common to France and to Great Britain and to their nationals and persons under their jurisdiction, or which shall not be available to them on a footing of equality.

These provisions, however, shall not be interpreted as affecting the special clauses which, by virtue of the treaty concluded on October 3, 1893, between France and Siam, apply to a 25-kilometer zone on the right bank of the Mékong and to navigation on this river.

2. Nothing in the preceding clause shall prevent any action on which the two powers shall agree and which they shall deem necessary to maintain the independence of the kingdom of Siam. But they agree not to enter into any separate arrangement which would enable a third power to do what they reciprocally agree not to do in the present declaration.

3. Leaving the mouth of the Nam-Huok and going northwards to the Chinese frontier, the thalweg of the Mékong shall form the limit between the possessions or spheres of influence of France and Great Britain. It is agreed that nationals of both countries and persons under their jurisdiction shall not exercise any jurisdiction or authority whatsoever in the possessions or spheres of influence of the other country. In the part of the river here in question, police powers over the islands which are separated from the British bank by a branch of the aforesaid river shall belong to the French authorities as long as such separation exists.

The exercise of fishing rights shall be common to inhabitants of both banks.

Colonial

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4. The two Governments agree that commercial or other privileges and advantages conceded in the two Chinese provinces of Yunnan and Set-Chuên either to France or to Great Britain by virtue of their respective treaties with China of March 1, 1894, and June 20, 1895, and all privileges and advantages of any nature which may thereafter be conceded in the same Chinese provinces either to France or to Great Britain, shall, insofar as it depends on them, be extended and acknowledged to be common to both powers, their nationals and persons under their jurisdiction, and they agree to use their influence and good offices with the Chinese Government to this end.

5. This article relates to the Niger.

6. This article deals with negotiations to be undertaken in order to replace the present [38] general agreement with a new agreement responding to the intentions announced in the above articles.

Done at London on January 15, 1896.

(Signed) A. de Courcel.
(Signed) Salisbury

As a result of this declaration the territory of Muong-Sing was returned to us in March 1896, and from that time on French Laos was constituted as shall be described in the following chapters (1).

(1) It will be of the utmost interest, after this rapid résumé of the situation, to read Appendices XV and XVI which show in detail what our action was in the Mékong basin, and to compare what we intended to accomplish there with what the necessities of international policy enabled us to do.

[39] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER II

§ I--GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION--BOUNDARIES--EXTENT

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Laos extends between 22° 30' N. latitude, somewhat below Muong-Kang (prefecture of S'sémao), and 13° 15' N. latitude, the latter being the parallel of Thboung-Kla, opposite Siem-Boc. Slightly to the east of this point, however, on the 105th meridian, the Laotian province of Darlac stretches a long point southwards to the 12th parallel.

131 Longitudinally it extends from 97° 45' (right bank of the Mékong at Xieng-Sèn) to 106° E. longitude in one point of [40] the Annamitic Chain bordering on the basin of the Srépok or Sé-Bang Khan.

The boundaries of Laos are (1):

(1) In what follows it will be necessary to consult the map of the Pavie mission, published by Challamel in Paris. There it will particularly be noted that Laos borders on Cambodia, Cochinchina and Annam all at once in the south.

a. FROM THE POLITICAL POINT OF VIEW

131 1. In the northeast, the Sib-Song-Chau-Thaï (Tonkin, province of Van-Bu);

●648 2. In the north, Yun-Nan (prefecture of S'sémao);

3. In the northwest, the Anglo-Burmese Shan State of Xieng-Tong as far as Nam-Huok, slightly upstream from Xieng-Sèn;

4. In the west:

a) The Siamese Shan and Youn States of Xieng-Haï and Muong-Nan;

b) Siam itself (province of Outaradit);

c) The provinces which are tributary to Siam but which were placed in the zone of French influence by the London declaration of January 15, 1896; they are: Lao-Pou-Eûn, with its capital in Ban-Dua-Makeng; Lao-Kao, with its capital in Oubône; and the principality of Tiampa-Sac (Bassac);

d) Cambodia (province of Kompong-Thom);

5. In the south, the provinces of Kratié (Cambodia), Tayninh (Cochinchina) and Binh-Thuan (Annam);

6. In the east, Annam.

b. FROM THE PHYSICAL POINT OF VIEW

131 1. In the northern region:

133 a) The watershed on the left side of the valley of the Nam-La, as far as the Mékong;

[41] b) The right bank of the Mékong, from its junction with the Nam-La to its junction with the Nam-Huok;

2. In the western region:

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"The administration of public works of Cochinchina was particularly responsible for carrying out the work. The operation was directed by Messrs. Gubiand, the engineering director of public works, and Crouzat, the chief clerk of the department of civil engineering [conducteur principal des ponts et chaussées], and was fully successful despite the haste, the difficulties and the mishaps and tribulations which we had to undergo.

"On October 31, 1893, five months after the mission's arrival in Saigon, two ships, the Massie and the Ham-Luong, had passed the Khône waterfalls.

"The Ham-Luong was a sloop from Cochinchina which was sent at the last [68] moment and in all haste to replace the La Grandière numerically and provisorily, the latter being disabled below the falls as the result of grave damage to the engine."

After they had been floated in the upper reach the Massie and the Ham-Luong pushed on to Bassoc immediately, then to the junction with the Sé-Moun. The Massie finally reached Kemmarat on February 28, 1894, after successfully passing the 120 kilometers of rapids just below it. There the Massie had to wait for high water before it could pass the Keng-Sa, one of the most dangerous obstacles in this region. In the high water season of 1894 it was in the Vien-Tiane reach, where it showed the French flag over an extent of more than 500 kilometers. On September 5, 1894, the La Grandière went to Khône in its turn, on its way from one reach to another, and then in November caught up with the Massie which it soon passed. Finally in August 1895 Lieutenant Commander Simon took the La Grandière through the series of rapids stretching over a distance of 350 kilometers between Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang, which he reached on September 1.

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"This brilliant success demonstrated France's power to the friendly and hostile populations of the banks of the Mékong. Through the more frequent sight of our officers, our weapons and our cruising steamships, which ammounted to ambulatory offices, it strengthened the work accomplished by our diplomats on the left bank, which belonged to us henceforth" (1).

[113]

(1) Lanier, L'Asie, 1898. Selected readings in geography.

We rejoice at being able to render deserved homage here to the abilities of Commander Simon who, in the midst of the greatest

161 and a few plateaus of small extent which are the only spots suited to
311 farming and, in consequence, suited to settlements by human groups.

The uneven disposition of the country is the first cause of the low population density. It is not the only one.

161 For more than a century the Hôs and the Siamese have taken
turns in sacking the country, especially the northern part. Their
175 methods differed, but the final result was the same. The former massacred the inhabitants after burning the villages, and forced those
727 who had escaped famine and torture to go and settle in another region. The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical fashion, and
648 depopulated the [125] land by making the inhabitants, livestock and elephants cross over to the right bank of the Mékong and oftentimes then taking them as far as the valley of the Ménam.

Fortunately this state of affairs, which prevailed when we took possession of Laos, is far from being immutable and there is every hope that the causes which gave birth to this forced departure will never again occur. The French occupation has safeguarded the population against the return of the old invasions, and in the same way the equity and justice of our administration make it possible for the natives to count on interior tranquillity and on the products of their labor.

Great efforts have also been made by our consuls in Siam and our administrators in Laos towards repopulating the country, and appreciable results have already been achieved in this direction. Thus by virtue of the agreement appended to the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, two thousand families including a minimum of eight thousand individuals of both sexes and a great deal of livestock who had previously been taken to Siam were able to return and settle on the left bank of the Mékong, the land of their origin.

168 Nothing, moreover, would stand in the way of an appeal to the other parts of Indo-China to repopulate Laos. The deltas, for example, are overflowing with people and their industrious population is so dense that the part of the land which is cultivable is by far too limited for each individual.

By offering these people a few advantages, especially in the beginning, it would be easy to attract them to Laos. By dint of hard work they would doubtless find existence comparatively easy there instead of being reduced, as they are today in certain regions, to a difficult struggle for survival.

149: Reinach--192 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Finally, the Ao-Tchaine Yaos owe their name (bearing sapeks) 291
to the fact that the men's jacket, which is shorter than that of the other Yaos, is ornamented in front with several rows of flat copper or silver buttons which resemble sapeks (Annamite and Chinese coins).

The women fasten a pad of compact, gummed hair on their coil 302
by means of sticks made of ivory, of bone or simply of wood.

Like the Meos, the Yaos inhabit the peaks of mountains in 361
northern Laos where they grow poppies. They are confirmed opium [276]
smokers.

[270] [Blank page] [271] [Illustration at top]

CHAPTER V

1. ORGANIZATION

Consulate and Commercial Agencies. Before 439
the treaty of October 3, 1893, we already had a consul at Luang-Prabang in the Mekong basin, on the right bank of the river. In 1892 175
the vice-consulate was closed and commercial agencies were set up at Luang-Prabang, Outhene and Bassac on the right bank, and then 648
at Stung-Treng on the left bank. The first three agencies were directed by representatives of the French Syndicate of Laos, and the last by a clerk of Posts and Telegraphs. The commercial agents performed the functions of consular agents. Later on in 1894 and 1895 when we actually took possession of Laos, that is to say of the territory on the left bank of the Mekong, two additional agencies were established at Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen. [272] Then in 1895 the agencies of Pak-Lay, Xieng-Khan, Nong-Khay, Lakhone, Ban-Mouk-Dahan and Kemmarat were created on the right bank, bringing the total number to ten, for those of Stung-Treng and Luang-Prabang had been raised to the status of commissionerships.

These new agencies were directed by "commercial agents" specially appointed for the purpose. In addition to the delegates of the French Syndicate of Laos who continued to hold office, these agents included a few inspectors of the Tonkin native guard.

The duties of these officials were poorly defined, and their chief role was to assert our presence. They were mere information agents. For this reason official circles soon decided to abolish these posts, an action made possible chiefly by the establishment of two new vice-consulates in Siam, one at Oubone and one at Ban-Dua-Maheng.

648 "However, since it did not appear advisable to sanction the abandon-
439 ment of the commercial agencies by an official act, which might
have been regarded by the Laotian people and by the Court of Bangkok
175 as a modification of the policy followed in the Mekong valley by the
French Government," the positions were not discontinued, but only
the officials who had held them.

It is thus that today the ten commercial agencies are directed by the administrators of neighboring provinces or by chief clerks or chief guards who perform the functions of commercial agents.

631 Temporary organization. Government com-
missionerships. Missions. As soon as the terms of the
175 Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, became known, various
missions originating in Annam and Cochinchina were sent to Laos to
reconnoiter, and set up a temporary organization for the territories
on the left bank of the Mekong to which Siam had abandoned its
claims.

In Upper Laos our agents, who were already established on the right bank at Luang-Prabang, took possession of the territory bearing this name. Then in the course of the first half of 1894, when the government commissioner M. Vacle had arrived, they settled in the former Annamite phus of Tran-Bienh and Tran-Ninh and in the territory of [Map, unpaged, inserted here] [273] Vien-Tiane. Somewhat later the assistant commissioner of the French Republic in Laos (1) and

(1) The general commissioner of the French Republic in Laos, M. Pavie, was the chief of two frontier delimitation missions which operated in the basin of the Red River, the Black River and the Mekong. His assistant commissioner was M. Lefèvre-Pontalis.

one of our former commercial agents in Luang-Prabang went out to reconnoiter and organize the territories of Xieng-Khong (left bank), Poukha and Muong-Sing (2).

(2) A newly appointed government commissioner went out to take possession of the territory of the two Muong-Hou and settled at Muong-Ha-Hine to await the impending delimitation of the territory.

In middle Laos, two administrative agents delegated by the

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289 The amount of paper produced is hardly significant, and is limited to local needs.

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311 TEA. Tea is the most important crop of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na and the Burmo-Shan States on both banks of the Mekong. The regions of production are included between 21° 30' and 22° 30' N. latitude and between 97° 30' and 99° 40' E. longitude.

175 The greater part of these regions, that is to say those situated on the left bank of the Mekong, belonged to us by the terms of the 1887
648 Franco-Chinese treaty of Tien-Tsin. But because of our slowness to occupy these territories England inherited the rights of Upper Burma and ceded them to China, and finally only the two Muong-Hou remained in our possession.

563 Unfortunately, the small tea-growing region left to us is not only the least productive, but also the one in which tea-growing has degenerated and is no longer practiced except by the Khas.

[377] Yet the climate of the Muong-Hou is similar to that of Man-La, which is located thirty kilometers to the west and whose tea has the same reputation as those of I-Hou, I-Bang, Muong-Hing, Muong-Pang and Muong-Yang, all of which are known as "S'semao and Pou-Eurl Teas." Furthermore, the altitude and configuration of the soil, the nature of the terrain and the varieties of tea plants are all similar in our territory of Muong-Hou and in that of Man-La. But as a consequence of various circumstances and especially of a long interruption in cultivation between 1884 and 1893, most of the tea plants have not been pruned. They have reached a height of more than six meters and the tea which they produce is almost valueless (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVI.

The average production of the whole tea-growing region has been estimated at from 600 to 660 tons. This tea is exported to China, to Burma, to Laos, to Tonkin and to Siam. In 1891 and 1892 France imported a trial shipment of 6,000 kilograms, but the transaction was not repeated because of a rise in transport costs and customs duties which did not leave a large enough profit for the importer.

435 In the regions of production prices vary, depending on quality, between 75 and 150 francs per hundred kilograms.

The teas which come from this region meet with little approval in Europe, because they lack the various aromas which the Chinese

incorporate into the teas which they send abroad. But they appeal to the Chinese and other Orientals, and part of the crop is even set aside and sent as tribute to the court of the Emperor in Peking. 245 [648]

The Shans, the Lus and the Youns use a masticatory called "Mieng" which is composed solely of tea leaves which have been preserved in brine. [276]

PIMENTOS. Since pimento is a much sought-after condiment, and one which is even indispensable to the people of Laos, as to those of neighboring countries, the cultivation of this product is quite widespread. [244 263]

This pimento is of the large, red variety. It is prepared by [378] drying and smoking it, thereby guaranteeing that it will keep. Its name in Laotian is "Mak-Phik." The price of dry pimento varies from 25 to 37 francs per hundred kilograms.

FARMING IMPLEMENTS AND TOOLS USED IN LAOS. We shall conclude this rapid listing of the chief crops grown in Laos by giving a list of the farming implements used in the country. These latter are just as primitive and just as rudimentary as the farming methods, and the Laotians do not make any more effort to improve the ones than to improve the others. 412 241

The plow (Thai). The plow is extremely simple and is the primitive swing-plow formed of a single piece of bent wood. A share or "Mak-Sob-Thai" is fitted to its front end. Sometimes the share is even supplanted by cutting the stick of wood diagonally and hardening it in a fire. Drawn by a buffalo, this tiny plow cannot break the soil to any great depth, and so is used in ricefields only when the soil has been sufficiently softened by the annual inundations.

The harrow (Khat). The harrow is a sort of wooden rake .9 meter long, the teeth of which are made of ironwood or any other very hard wood, "Mai-Lek" or "Mai-Khen-Hine." This rake forms one of the sides of a triangle, the peak of which is harnessed to a buffalo.

The roller (Ham). The roller is the trunk of some hardwood tree, "Mai-Khen-Hine" for example. It has pins over which two shafts fit, leaving space to harness a buffalo.

The sickle. There are sickles of several sizes, which are called either "Kio" or "Lek Kio" without distinction. Sickles are used to cut grasses and rice.

619 traditions and the annals which I have been able to consult, they are
643 the descendants of the last kings of the land before the Cham invasion.
[648] The kings of Cambodia have had to appeal to them for help on one
[175] or two critical occasions, and it was in return for services rendered
563 that the king of Cambodia, up until recent times, used to send them presents every year (annual tribute, according to them, payment of which stopped only five years ago).

[726] They have never been willing to recognize our authority. The king of Pa-Tao-Ia, who is situated on the Laotian side, twice attacked the Government Commissioners of Stung-Treng when the latter were making a tour of inspection in this region, first in December 1894 and a second time in January 1897. They were given a severe lesson this second time, for the village was entirely destroyed and they suffered many losses. The Sadete Loum (the Master of water) settled on the Annamite side alongside the Master of fire after the affair, and since that time has given no further orders to our faithful Djarais.

[108]

APPENDIX XIX
NOTE ON THE MEOS

563 The Meo has a savage and distrustful character. He does not
609 like the presence of foreigners, or even of people of his own race.

Clinging to the side of a mountain, and always as high up as possible, he asks only to be allowed to live in peace in his wild solitude and bodes no ill to anyone provided he is left alone and independe

He is a great hunter of wild beasts and large game. More in-
433 dustrious than the Thais, he makes all his farming implements him-
241 self (picks and shovels), as well as his wooden buckets and mills for grinding maize and paddy. He raises fine poultry, pigs, oxen, goats
231 and horses with particular care and success. If he stays in one place for any length of time he also produces, in addition to the maize and rice which form the basis of his food supply and the opium which he smokes, very fine eggplants, gourds, sweet potatoes and non-sweetened batatas very much like the common potato, sorrel, green beans and all the French vegetables whose seeds are given him. On his heights he cultivates the fruit trees which merely vegetate in the plains, such as the peach tree, and the peaches which he harvests can compete without any fear with those of our own country.

516 The Meo climbs like a cat. Over sheer paths, up ladders com-
417 posed of a single bamboo pole standing upright in which notches are cut at regular intervals which are large enough for two toes, the Meo

51: Nguyen Quoc Dinh--153-154 S-3 (no date) 1941 Laotians
116, 651 Chinese

Let us say one word about the personal tax of the Chinese in Laos. As in the other matters concerning Chinese immigration in this country, there are [154] few laws on this tax (122). The present day regulations stem from the law of December 19, 1935.

(122)- The laws of November 30, 1910 and September 22, 1926

The Chinese living in Laos are subject to a personal tax including a fixed fee of 12 piasters, which all of them pay, and a graduated fee paid by those who carry on some trade or industry. The rate of the graduated fee cannot exceed 1,000 piaster for each individual, and it varies between 15 and 100% of the license fee, depending on the class of the fee, according to the following table:

25% of the amount of the fees which are in the 10th., ninth, eighth and seventh class.
50% of those in the sixth, fifth, and fourth class.
75% of those in the third and second class.
100% of those in the first class, and of those falling in the 'out of class' category.

6: Goudal--32-33 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-1-3
116, 466, 651, 177.46 France
636.46

Laos. --An Order of 12 May 1914 regulated labour dues for natives and assimilated Asiatics between 18 and 60 years of age who inhabit the territory of Laos.

Registered Laotians are required to provide 16 days' labour per annum, which may be commuted at the rate of 0.40 piastre, while 'Khas' must provide 20 days.

The commutation of labour dues is optional. Labour conscripts may only be recruited within a radius of 100 kilometres from the place of employment or at a maximum of five days' march for the outward and return journeys. No wages are paid for days thus worked, but each day taken up by the journey from the village to the place of work is paid at the rate of 30 cents. At least one-quarter of the labour called up must be employed solely on communal work. The commutation fee is fixed at 0.25 piastre.

An Order of 18 June 1929 increased the commutation fee to 0.30 piastre.

An important Circular issued on 21 June 1934 laid down the measures to be taken by the Residents in Laos to secure that the recruiting and employment of requisitioned labour should be carried out in the best conditions and with due attention to the requirements of health and hygiene.

The recruitment of labour must be carried out with the greatest care and under the supervision and responsibility of the indigenous authorities. Sick and infirm persons, elderly persons and children may not be employed in any circumstances. When the workplace is far from the village, the workers must be carried in service lorries or canoes.

Before work is begun the encampments must be carefully organised. The workers' food must be the object of strict supervision, and every care must be taken to avoid victimisation of the workers by itinerant traders.

As a rule a dresser must be made responsible for the health in all workplaces employing at least 50 workers. The workers must be supplied with tools and implements so as to secure a maximum individual output.

In the management and organisation of workplaces, every effort must be made to co-ordinate administrative supervision, the work of the indigenous authorities and the technical instructions issued by the public works services.

It is thus clear that the regulation of labour dues has undergone practically the same evolution in all the countries of the Union. The old system of compulsory labour, which in theory was subject [33] to no restrictions, has been reduced to a reasonable number of days by the French authorities, while the work exacted from the inhabitants has been

restricted to the district in which the latter live, so as to avoid long absences from home and transfer to distant places. The regulations recommend the avoidance of mass levies likely to empty the villages of their able-bodied population, and discourage the requisitioning of labour during periods of agricultural activity. The introduction of certain measures for the protection of the workers' health (infirmaries in the work-places, etc.), together with the compulsory supply of appropriate tools and implements has certainly introduced a more humane element in the labour system. Finally, the general adoption of commutation fees has led to dues being treated as a tax (in three countries, the dues are included in the personal tax). Only for certain tribes in mountainous districts is the character of the former compulsory labour system still maintained."

7: Thompson--368-369 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 647, 651, 177.64 France
636.64

"Though the year 1893 marked the nominal occupation of Laos, it was not until three years later that the country was organized administratively as Upper and Lower Laos. This division remained purely theoretical and it was modified in 1899, when both sections were united under a single Resident Superior and a single budget. The local organization was left as it was found, only the upper stratum of offices was changed. In this the French were inspired by their Siamese predecessors, who had respected native institutions, and also by budgetary considerations. Thirteen French Commissars, aided by native officials and the inevitable interpreters, exercised all powers with a tranquil disregard of Montesquieu's principles. A native guard was adequate to perform police service among such a placid people. Revenues came from the usual head tax paid by the male population in money and in kind, and the commutation of corvée duty, licences for foreign merchants, and an export tax. There was no land tax and only a local levy on the products of the soil. The indirect tax on opium was harder to collect because certain [369] tribes had always raised enough for their own needs. There was little increase in revenues despite the steady increase in population. The budget was poor and not properly drawn up, so it had to be regularly subsidized. Cochin-China, as usual, bore the brunt of this deficit."

10: d'Orleans--268 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 166, 651, 177.65 Siam
636.65

"Fishing is one of the principal resources of the inhabitants of the valley of Nam Ou; they are forced to turn everything into money, for they are crushed by the taxes imposed upon them by Siam. The village, on the right bank, in which we spend the night, is inhabited by some people from Traniuh, who tell us that they left their homes three years ago on account of the cholera, they came to Luang Prabang in five nights, and from there they have come up here; but they do not appear to have gained any advantage from their change of place; they have fled from the frying-pan into the fire, for their new conquerors make each man pay eight rupees a year poll tax; they can remember a time before these heavy burdens were laid upon them, but now they can never satisfy the revenue collectors. A great many of them are forced to sell all their possessions."

10: d'Orleans--296-297 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 208, 647, 651 177.65 Siam
636.65

"We find that a people is being formed; if there is not a sentiment of nationality the governing power is becoming autocratic and an administrative centralization is being effected to its profit, under the control and the direction of the Siamese. The local rulers are in communication with Bangkok, even if they have not been on a visit there; they are learning to appreciate luxury, and they are upon the point of arming their troops with European weapons, of increasing their effective, and lending aid to the forces of the invaders. In order to obtain these charming results of what may be called 'the new civilisation,' much money is needed, but if the king's expenditure has increased it has not been so with the earnings of the people. The latter were not consulted when a tax was put upon opium 'for their good,' when the tchoum-tchoum was made a monopoly, or when a capitation tax of eight rupees for each man and six for each woman was imposed. The consequence is that they are discontented and unable to make any further payments, mandarins from all parts of the kingdom writing that the villagers are willing enough to come to the capital and take the oath, but empty-handed. Last year several had to sell what they possessed, and now they are endeavouring to borrow, and are murmuring [297] against those who have ruined them. The peasants bow the head in subjection because they see no liberator; but the first man who comes forward with some arms and a relatively small sum of money, in order to drive out the Siamese, may be assured of encountering an enthusiastic and almost unanimous welcome from the population."

10: d'Orleans--298-299 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 208, 647, 651 177.64 France
636.64

"To revert to Luang Prabang, we have a Vice-Consul there, or rather an agent, for he has not got an exequatur. Assisted by twelve interpreters, he does wonders with the limited means at his disposal, but as he is generally short of money and is obliged to borrow from the Chinese to pay the staff, he cannot do much to uphold French interests. The most he can do is to keep up the few friends whom he has gained for us by his personal influence and winning ways. For his title of French agent weighs as nothing in the balance compared to his personal popularity, so that he is seconded but not feared, for it is known that he cannot speak out, that his threats will remain a dead letter, that he is not backed up, and that the Foreign Office seems indifferent to the Mekong question. Compare our mode of action to that of the English in Xieng Maï, a Laos State bordering on Burmah and similarly situated to Luang Prabang. At Xieng Maï there is a consul with an exequatur, that is to say duly recognized by the native Government and his own, well [299] paid and backed up by his superiors, having under his own orders several thousand British protégés and holding very much the same position as the Siamese Commissioner here, this latter being everything while we are nothing."

10: d'Orleans--300-301 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 436, 455, 525, 651, 177.52 Siam
636.52

"In addition to the forced labour, there is, the capitation tax, the opium tax, and the monopoly of the tchoum-tchoum, but the monopoly of gaming, which is the source of large revenue in Siam itself, has been suppressed here by the Siamese as being immoral. It is the same with the speculation upon the money exchange, which is not yet resorted to in Luang Prabang. In the valley of Ménam, more especially, the money in use is composed of earthenware counters, the circulation of which is suspended or the value altered by a Government decree, large profits being thus secured in very arbitrary fashion. Another source of profit [301] for the treasury of Luang Prabang is the produce of the customs, there being a tax of three per cent. upon the merchandise and of a basket of salt upon each canoe, which comes up from the south with a load of it."

10: d'Orleans--330 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 443, 651, 177.44 Siam
636.44

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "In the market, each vendor has his own special stall, while the representatives of the same trade are all placed together, and a tax of twenty-five cowries is collected from each of them every morning by soldiers told off for the purpose, whereas the street hawkers are exempted from all dues."

68: Mouhot--115 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 439, 631, 651, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"The merchants who bring silk, [HD: to Korat, Siam] which, though of inferior quality, is an important article of commerce, come from Laos, Oubone, Bassac, and Jasoutone.

The entire province of Korat comprises a number of villages, and more than eleven towns, some containing as many as fifty or sixty thousand inhabitants. This little state is simply tributary, [HD: to Siam] but on condition of furnishing the first and most considerable levy of men in case of war.

The tribute consists of gold or silver, and in several districts, amongst others those of Chalapume and Poukiéan, amounts to eight ticals a head. Some pay in silk, which is weighed by the mandarins, who, as with the cardamom at Pursat, and the langoutis at Battambong, buy a further quantity on their own account, and at their own price.

Elephants are numerous, and a great many are brought from the north of Laos as far as Muang-Lang. I should think there must be more than a thousand of these animals in each province. Oxen and buffaloes were formerly exceedingly cheap, but the distemper, which has for some years committed great ravages among the herds, has doubled or tripled the price. They are brought southward from the extreme north of East Laos, and even from the frontiers of Tonquin."

68: Mouhot--137-138 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 101, 361, 643, 651

"Were they not restrained by fear of the Siamese, and their horror of the jungles so prolific of death, this principality [HD: i.e. Luang Prabang] would soon fall into the hands of the Annamites, who now dare not advance nearer than seven days' journey off. A beautiful stream, 100 metres wide, unites [138] with the great river to the north-east of the town, and leads to some Laotian and savage villages bearing the name of Fie. These are no other than the tribes called Penoms by the Cambodians, Khu by the Siamese, and Moi by the Annamites,--all words simply signifying 'savages.'

The whole chain of mountains which extends from the north of Tonquin to the south of Cochin China, about 100 miles north of Saigon, is inhabited by this primitive people, divided into tribes speaking different dialects, but whose manners and customs are the same. All the villages in the immediate neighbourhood are tributary; those nearest to the town supply workmen for buildings erected for the king and princes, and these are heavily taxed. Others pay their tribute in rice.

Their habitations are in the thickest parts of the forests, where they only can find a path. Their cultivated grounds are to be seen on the tops and sides of the mountains; in fact, they employ the same means as wild animals to escape from their enemies, and to preserve that liberty and independence which are to them, as to all God's creatures, their supreme good.

68: Mouhot--137-138 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 101, 361, 643, 651

Yesterday, and the day previous, I was presented to the princes who govern this little state, and who bear the title of kings. I know not why, but they displayed for my benefit all they could devise of pomp and splendour."

643* he had subsequently taken an active part in all the expeditions. In
554 the present circumstances he therefore seemed to be the man for the
175* job, but his obscure origin constituted an insurmountable obstacle to his recognition as head of the government by the immense majority of the population, who were unswervingly attached to their dynasty.

643* Third Burmese invasion (1574-1575). He tried to break the opposi-
648* tion by a reign of terror and had many rebels pitilessly executed on
175* /93/ his own authority. Then Bureng-Naung, exasperated, went on the march towards the autumn of 1574, and the Burmese army reappeared under the walls of the capital of Lan-Xang for the third time in less than a dozen years.

726 Sene-Soulintha thought that he should adopt the tactics which had
643* succeeded so well for Setthathirath, and tried to draw the enemy into
648* the forest. But the situation was no longer the same as it was in the
175* time when all the Laotians stood behind their legitimate sovereign. He took only a few partisans with him in his flight and Bureng-Naung was careful not to pursue him. The Burmese king entered the stronghold without difficulty, placed his protege on the throne, put a garrison at his disposition, consolidated the ramparts and returned tranquilly to Ava with the young Nokeo-Koumane whom he took along as a hostage. There he soon learned that the regent had fallen into the power of the Oupahat, who was sending him to him with all haste. Bureng-Naung received him with distinction and allowed him to live in complete liberty (1).

1. Cf. Lefevre-Pontalis, op. cit. /"La lutte des Thaïs contre les Birmans au seizième siècle." Revue indochinoise, 1914, Vol. XXII, Nos. 7-8./

MAHA-OUPAHAT, KING 1575-1579.

648* Lan-Xang was finally subject to the law of the /94/ Burmese con-
175* queror (1). After the Shan States, after Lan-Na and Ayutha, it
643*
/651/

1. The tribute of vassaldom was ten elephants and twelve kilograms of gold each year. (Ibid.)

succumbed in its turn because it had not been able to avoid dynastic dissensions. Nevertheless, this brilliant period of Burmese hegemony in the Indo-Chinese peninsula scarcely extended beyond the end of the sixteenth century. Bureng-Naung was to die in 1581 after a most

175* Interregnum (1583-1591). The utmost confusion then reigned in
643* the Laotian kingdom, which was henceforth entirely in the power of
648* the factions, none of which was capable of assuming control of the government. This anarchy lasted for eight long years, with no check on the passions and exactions of anyone who held the least parcel of authority in the land.

The chief bonzes, aroused by such great disorganization, came to an agreement and resolved to ask the Burmese king for his captive Nokeo-Koumane, the only son of Setthathirath and last legitimate heir of the dynasty.

NOKEO-KOUMANE (1571), KING 1591-1596.

643* Harried by Phra-Naret, the king of Ayuthya, who had resumed a
648* victorious offensive against his arms, the son of Bureng-Naung made
175* no difficulty in handing his prisoner over to the bonzes, who brought him back triumphantly to Vientiane where they had him recognized as king in 1591.

By virtue of his very presence Nokeo-Koumane restored some measure of order to the kingdom. He occupied /97/ Luang-Prabang (1592), which put up some resistance, with a military force, and then in order in his turn to assert his deliverance from Burmese protectorship he renewed the traditional bonds of suzerainty which joined Lan-Xang to Tran-Ninh.

648* Crowded between Muong-Swa and Annam, the Phoueun kingdom
175* had always been, since its very foundation, more or less of a tributary of these two countries either by turns or simultaneously. Its princes felt themselves too weak, in spite of the difficult approach to their territories, to isolate themselves in absolute independence, and by means of alliances and marriages with the Laotians and Annamites by turns had set up a kind of see-saw policy which had heretofore been successful. Even if they paid tribute to their powerful neighbors (1)

1. Xieng-Khouang paid Lan-Xang a triennial tribute composed of four branches of gold and silver flowers, fourteen hundred sabers, lances, knives, shovels, pikes, etc. It paid an annual fee to Annam. After the victories of Bureng-Naung in Lan-Xang, Tran-Ninh had followed the latter's fate, and it was therefore anxious to enter the orbit of Vientiane which would deliver it from the Burmese yoke.

/651/

439 after a ten year reign without leaving any sons." He thus explicitly
643* contradicts the native documents which recount the many competitions
175* for the throne which had divided the royal family, and according to which the "present king" succeeded his uncle (Visai).

He adds that the government of the country was divided, under the
175* high authority of the king, between three great officials:
642
645 1. The head of the army who was "governor of the province which produces benzoin" and commander of the city of Vientiane. He doubtless refers to the prime minister Tian-Thala, the son-in-law of Souligna whom he calls Tevinia-Assen;

2. The governor of Nakhone or viceroy, who commanded the whole southern part of the kingdom, including Attopeu, as far as the Cambodian frontier. This was the Nan-Tharath of the Annals, whom he calls Lachaen;

3. The minister of the Palace who is in charge of relations with ambassadors.

These three high officials "were given /110/ an audience only every two or three months, unless there were some necessity or the king had them summoned expressly."

/693/ Next to the king there was a "tribunal in charge of civil and criminal affairs" which was composed of five of his relatives who had daily access to the sovereign.

/651 Finally, Van Wusthof estimates the king's income at "two piculs"
643/* per year of gum lac, benzoin and gold (1).

1. Cf. Georges Maspero, op. cit. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./ A picul was equal to 61 kilograms.

175* The Account of Father Marini (1666). This evocation of the
114 Laotian kingdom in the seventeenth century does not differ appreciably, on the whole, from two travel accounts published in Italian at about the same time by the Jesuit fathers Martini (quoted p. 104, note 2) and Marini. A translation of the latter's accounts was placed on sale in Paris in 1666 (2). No matter how picturesque it may be in its

/127/ 2. Relation nouvelle et curieuse des royaumes de Tonquin et de Laos, traduite de l'italien du P. Marini Romain, par L.P.L.C.C. (F. Lecomte; cel.), a Paris, chez Gervais Clouzier, au Palais, sur les degres, en montant pour aller a

231 elephants in particular.
[439] Exports of elephants from Lower Laos in 1899 numbered 115 animals worth 100,754 francs.

Horses. Most regions of Laos lend themselves to the raising of horses, although these animals do not occupy the prominent place which they might. On the contrary, an appreciable decrease in the number of horses has occurred, and it is difficult today to obtain suitable mounts in the immediate locality. The causes underlying this decrease seem to be the following:

[398] 1. The many purchases made in southern Laos for Cochinchina, Cambodia, Annam and Siam;

2. The high prices offered to breeders, leading them to get rid of their stud-horses and their mares.

As a consequence, mares have become rare in the country. As for stud-horses, it is difficult to obtain any, since horses find buyers as soon as they reach the age of two and are taken out of the [Illustration here] country. Most of the finest stallions have disappeared, and practically nothing but old horses, scarcely worthy of the name of stallions, are left.

651 It was to remedy this state of affairs that the Governor-general of Indo-China, acting on a proposal by the Superior Resident, created 231 depots of stallions.

Premiums are also paid to breeders who put up mares for covering, and during three consecutive years a premium is also awarded to the issue if it is in good condition.

It would seem that the establishment of these depots has not yielded all the results which might have been expected.

[399] The stud-horses have not always been chosen with all the care desirable, and as for the Laotians, despite the premium which is paid them, they do not seem at all eager to put up their mares for covering.

Under present conditions, horse breeding cannot give good results. As long as the heads of province do not have chief guardsmen in their service who not only have a sufficient knowledge of horses, but above all have an interest in the matter, they will have to give up all hope, except for a few exceptions, of improving the breed of horses. Moreover, the pecuniary resources placed at their disposition seem to be insufficient. Nor can too much reliance be placed on the natives, for whom the bait of premiums is not an effective stimulus.

439 [450] A mere glance at the table is enough to show the enormous
489 difference between transport costs towards Siam, and those towards
Annam, Tonkin and Cochinchina. And even so, we have not
435 reckoned with the various interior local taxes which shippers have
to pay on the roads of Siam, nor evaluated the worries and bothers
to which they are subject or the robberies which they must fear.
[Illustration here]

We have already expressed the opinion that if these routes continue to win favor with merchants, this is because they end at points and at markets where the latter can be sure not only of marketing their products, but also of finding at low prices all the merchandise, no matter what its source, which is necessary to the inhabitants of Laos.

Let our markets in Cochinchina, Cambodia, Annam and Tonkin be supplied in the same way and offer the merchants of Laos the same advantages in the way of reduced prices; let trading posts or factories be established on the Mekong at Stung-Treng, [451] Bassac, Lakhone, Hin-Boun, Vien-Tiane, Pak-Lay and Luang-Prabang, and the roads leading to Siam will rapidly be forsaken for our own. Indeed, all the merchants know that security now reigns in Laos. One pays what is due only once, the distances are shorter, and transport costs are lower than those paid from the Mekong to Siam.

7. CUSTOMS SYSTEM TO BE ADOPTED

439 The valley of the Mekong, of which we occupy one side, remains
651 open in fact whereas the coasts of Indo-China are closed by the customs. If we were to close this valley as well by a customs barrier we should then have contracted enormous expenditures without any hope of compensating receipts. From still another point of view, is it not to be feared that the present state of things will bring about the following result? Today, foreign merchandise is halted on our coasts by customs duties. Since such merchandise is, moreover, indispensable to our nationals, there can be no doubt but that it is coming into our possessions by a back door, despite the long distances, the high costs and the difficulties of all kinds which the roads from Siam to the Mekong offer. After flooding this basin first, it will penetrate into Cambodia, Annam and Tonkin without any profit either for the Treasury or for our nationals.

We speak in the future tense, but who can deny that we might

434 use the present tense (1)?

651 (1) The fact is actually occurring at the present time, and has motivated the canceling of the eighty percent exemption. (See p.430, note.)

The discrepancy between the officially recognized exports and imports is a sure indication that we are here approaching the truth.

The remedy for this state of things is to make Laos freely open, on equal terms and both entering and leaving, to all goods and to all merchants. It means reducing all the duties levied to the single three percent ad valorem rate both entering and leaving. It means, in a word, parity [452] with our neighbor Siam which, after having left us the land, the water and the wild beasts of the forest, will continue, unless we take care, to be the only one to profit from our colony of Laos.

It will be objected that the remedy which we recommend would not prevent the Treasury from being cheated, since foreign goods introduced into Laos might still, as is the case at present, come in through a back door into the other parts of the Indo-Chinese union. But we reply that the situation is not at all the same. The Mekong is open over more than 2000 kilometers, and there the frontier is entirely a moral one, whereas between Laos and the other lands of Indo-China there are mountainous obstacles with only a few passages, and it would be enough merely to guard these, with respect to customs, in order to prevent fraud.

[453] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER IX

INDUSTRY. ARTS AND TRADES.

433 The only purpose of industry and trades in Laos is to satisfy local
472 needs. Indeed, one cannot regard as export trade the sale of a few silk or cotton goods of Laotian origin in the nearby regions.

463 Mention must first be made of what we may call the products of family industry. With a very few exceptions, there are no specialized workers pursuing a given trade, as regards the construction of houses and the manufacture of various useful articles, hunting and fishing devices, as well as in spinning, dyeing and weaving cloth and, in a

693 Judges, or "Kromakanes" in Laotian, are responsible to the Phaya-Muong-Sen and the Phaya-Muong-Tiane, and are the:

Phaya-Muong-Sai, second mandarin of the left.
Phya-Sieng-Tai.
Phya-Muong-Pak.
Phya-Sak-Kha.
Phya-Muong-Khouk (particularly responsible for supervision of prisons).
Phya-Phane-Nong.
Mune-Vi-Sai.

647 [492] The mandarins responsible for the collection of taxes, the assemblage of statute laborers, and the transport of bamboo, rattan, thatch straw and pirogues for the king's service and the public service are the:
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Phaya-Soune, mandarin of the middle.

Pha-Jotha.
Sanone.
Si-Phat-Thamane.
Si-Samoute.
Si-Sounone.
Sene-Tiane.
} Under the orders of the Phaya-Muong-Khang and the Phaya-Soune.

The pages of the king bear the honorary title of "Mahatlek." They are the:

644
1. Phaya-Nak-Phoumine
   Phaya-Kham-Soune-Phou } Chief pages and chamberlains.
2. Phya-Na-Heua.
   Phya-Mune-Na.
   Phya-Natai.
   Phya-Muong-Phene. } Principal pages attached to the king's person, who bear his arms and insignia in ceremonies.
3. Phout-Thavong-Mahakhote
   Mune-Vong-Sai.
   Akhasa. } Chamber pages, guardians of the king's property, of his parasol, etc.

701 The military leaders are the:

Phaya-Soupho.
Phaya-Kham-Mone.
Phya-Vieng-Ke.
Phya-Vieng-Khame.
Oupasa.
Mune-Sanone-Tiai.
} Responsible for various military duties.

693 than of the rights of the parties. Our administration is making praiseworthy efforts to halt these abuses. Those who sell justice in this way are removed from their posts, and it is to be hoped that within a few years' time most, if not all, of the Laotian judges will be upright and disinterested. As a means toward stopping these deplorable habits and informing the parties in lawsuits of the legal costs which they will regularly be asked to pay, Lieutenant-colonel Tournier took a very useful first step in April 1898, by setting up a schedule of court costs in accordance with the laws and customs of Vien-Tiane (1).

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(1) The following, for example, are the court costs to be paid in a case of theft of domesticated animals:

Legal costs.....	15.00 francs	to be paid by each accused person.
Clerk.....	3.75 "	
Archivist.....	2.25 "	
Court roll.....	1.50 "	
Prison costs.....	11.25 "	

The legal costs are divided as follows:

Tiao-Muong.....	5.00 francs	15 francs.
Oupahat.....	2.50 "	
Judge hearing the case..	7.50 "	

The prison costs are divided as follows:

Jailer.....	5.00 francs	11.25 francs.
Upkeep for food for prisoners whom their families cannot feed or who do not work outside..... Lighting and upkeep of prison.....	6.25 "	

It goes without saying that, in addition to court costs, the guilty parties are liable to a fine, which, in the present case, would be 24 francs per person.

[499]

4. THE TAX STRUCTURE

a. Direct taxes

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The direct taxes include the head tax, the optional redemption of statute labor and the licenses for Foreign Oriental merchants.

A census taken before the end of each year by the native authorities and checked by the administrators who are heads of provinces makes

[657]
[659] it possible to draw up the tax rolls for the following year.

[657] A head tax is owed by every able-bodied man between the ages of eighteen and sixty, except for bonzes, pagoda servants, the native authorities, men who have served for four years in the civil guard, militiamen on active duty, invalids and liberated slaves.

There are four categories of registered persons:

1. Those of the great Thai race, who pay five francs and also owe twenty days of service in kind in Upper Laos, and ten in Lower Laos. This service may be redeemed upon payment of five francs;

2. Those of the other races such as Khas, Meos, Yaos, etc., who pay 2.50 francs and owe ten days of service in kind, redeemable for 2.50 francs;

3. The Annamites, who pay a head tax of five francs and do not owe any service in kind;

4. Foreign Orientals, who pay a head tax of 12.50 francs per year and do not owe any statute labor. If they are merchants, they pay a license fee of five francs per shop.

[500] B. Indirect taxes

The indirect taxes include:

1. Travel permits and passports;
2. Permits for weapons;
3. Administrative fines;
4. Local taxes levied on products and animals exported from Laos.

[484] For travel permits, Laotians pay a fixed fee of 0.50 franc per person and per permit. Foreign Orientals pay 1.875 francs for a permit which is good for three months.

[411] Permits for weapons occasion the collection of a tax of 1.50 francs. Annual renewal of the permit is obligatory, and costs 0.75 franc.

[421] There are as yet no taxes on land in Laos. It would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to levy such a tax in view of the present state of the country, which has no land registry, and with the system of property (1) such as it exists at present.

423 (1) "As regards public domain, we have maintained the custom which is consecrated by the local laws and usages. By virtue of these usages and these laws, the State is sole proprietor of the land and everything under it, without any exception, no matter how it is being exploited or what establishments have been made there,

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either on the surface or underneath.

"The inhabitants of the land are, in the last analysis, only usufructuaries who have the right of enjoyment of the land which they occupy and cultivate. The State may expropriate any occupant at any time by paying him a sum equal to the value of plantations or constructions made by him on the expropriated ground.

"The right of enjoyment of land is subject to certain conditions. The first of these is that the land occupied shall really be occupied and kept in a state of cultivation. Any property which has been abandoned or not cultivated for more than three years is defined as free ground and reverts to the State, which may cede it to any new usufructuary who is desirous of working it. Any inhabitant who clears free ground and places it under cultivation becomes the legitimate proprietor of the products and harvests which he obtains therefrom.

"What is true for individuals is equally true for the groups which certain races, living a patriarchal life, are accustomed to form. These groups which hold their work and their profits in common are regarded as a single civil person.

"Here there is, therefore, neither private domain, nor public domain nor reserve. There is only the domain of the State, which includes all."

(Le Laos français, op. cit.)

[Lieutenant-colonel Tournier, (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

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In the absence of a tax on land, local exit duties have been levied [501] [Illustration] [502] [Blank page] [503] to take the place of such a tax. They bear only on products of the soil and forest and on livestock, and consist of the following:

Tax on elephants

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A duty equivalent to one-half the sale price, except in the case of exemptions granted by a decision of the superior resident.

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Tax on buffaloes, oxen, horses and pigs

Oxen, cattle	2.50 francs
Buffaloes and buffalo-cows	7.50 "
Pigs	2.00 "

Tax on rice, paddy, horns, hides, etc.

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	Per picul (francs)	Per hundred kilograms (francs)
Paddy	0.25	0.416
Rice	0.50	0.832
Gum lac	2.50	4.16
Chinese nettle	2.50	4.16
Buffalo horns and hides	2.50	4.16
Buck horns and hides	3.75	6.25
Anteater scales	3.75	6.25
Cardamom	5.00	8.32
Elephant and tiger bones	3.75	6.25
Benzoin	12.50	20.82
Rubber	12.50	20.82
Wax	12.50	20.82
Ivory	50.00	83.20
Pirogues	ten percent ad valorem.	

Also to be added are certain incidental receipts, such as those arising from chancery fees or those collected by the native tribunals in conformity with the rates scheduled by the code of Vien-Tiane.

701 557 658 The royal treasury of Luang-Prabang subsidizes certain expenses, such as the upkeep of the kingdom's militia, of the native hospital in Luang-Prabang, of the Franco-Laotian school in Luang-Prabang, etc. [504]

652 Finally, the general budget of Indo-China pays out a variable sum annually for the purpose of balancing the receipts and expenditures of Laos.

C. Opium

651 One of the most important sources of Laotian revenue is provided by the sale of opium. The administration is responsible for the sale 276 of this substance, which it manufactures itself and which is marketed 655 by licensed merchants acting as middlemen.

Before 1900, Laos sold on its own behalf the opium which was allotted to it by the Cochinchina Customs and Excise Office (1),

(1) This was true only for Lower Laos. The opium sold in Upper Laos came from the Luang-Prabang distillery, which is no longer in operation today.

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paid for these allotments in cash, and took in as receipts the difference between the allotment price and the sale price. Today, as a consequence of the establishment of a general budget for Indo-China, Laos sells directly on behalf of the Customs and Excise Office and pays this office the entire sum resulting from sales made.

The following are the sale prices, per kilogram, of the Customs and Excise opium in the various provinces of Laos in 1900 and 1901:

	1900 (francs)	1901 (francs)
Hua-Phan	90.00	100.00
Tran-Ninh	75.00	100.00
Luang-Prabang	100.00	100.00
Vien-Tiane	92.50	112.50
Song-Khone and Cammon	100.00	112.50
Ban-Mouang and Saravane	107.50	125.00
Khong and Attopeu	112.50	125.00
Stung-Treng	125.00	137.50

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In 1898, total opium sales were 150,450 francs. If the total population of Laos is estimated at 500,000, then each inhabitant would consume an average of 0.3009 franc's worth of opium per [505] year. This is a negligible amount, if we compare it with that in neighboring countries, as demonstrated by the following table:

Country	Total Population	Total opium sales in francs	Average share per inhabitant in francs
French Laos	500,000	150,450	0.3009
Siamese Laos	700,000	440,000	0.6282
Siam	6,700,000	7,758,500	1.155

It does not follow, however, that the inhabitants of Laos smoke less opium than their neighbors, but rather that fraud is more rampant there than elsewhere.

It is estimated that the minimum opium consumption in Laos must be 3.50 francs' worth per registered person and per year. Now, since registered persons represent an average of 22 to 24 percent of the total population, opium sales must bring in receipts of about 400,000 francs and the share per inhabitant must be 0.8 franc, a figure approaching the norm between the average figures for Siamese Laos and for Siam.

314 lose forever the plant which they have mutilated. The Superior Resident in Laos has had studies made of the methods of extraction which can be employed without danger, and he proposes to make
314 them obligatory within a short time. As of the present time, he
656 has issued the following decree relative to the exploitation of rubber:

"Any native desiring to engage in harvesting rubber on Laotian territory must obtain a special authorization which will be conferred by the chau-muong if the interested party resides in the muong where he desires to operate, and in all other cases by the Government Commissioner of the province.

[65] [410] "This authorization shall indicate, in as clear a manner as possible, the limits within which exploitation is to take place, the methods of extraction which may be employed and those which are prohibited, and finally the point where the rubber must be submitted for checking and payment of the duties which represent land tax before it leaves Laos.

"Businessmen and corporations desirous of sending their paid agents into the regions of rubber production may address to the Government Commissioner a collective request, in which the names and residences of such agents shall be listed and in which they shall agree to abide by all regulations which the authorities shall deem it useful to prescribe. In return they shall be sent permits drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the preceding article, these permits to be delivered to their employees.

"The above authorizations shall be granted entirely free of charge.

"Contraventions to the present decree shall be prosecuted and punished by the provincial tribunals in accordance with the laws and customs in force in Laos." (Decree of September 21, 1900.)

[141]

APPENDIX XXIII
NOTE ON TOBACCO

249 **Growth and preparation.** Tobacco is best grown on the banks of watercourses which are left dry each year when the waters fall and which are fertilized by deposits of alluvia.

Tobacco is also grown, however, on the banks in old alluvia which are no longer inundated by the river, but where an ample supply of water is assured by the presence of a nearby stream.

134 In Laos the soil which is suited to tobacco is light and sandy and
249 contains a high proportion of potash, relatively little lime and an average quantity of nitrogenous vegetable matter.

567 must be specified in a special contract signed by them. In this case
656 their work will go toward payment of their parents' debt at the rate of six ticals per year for boys and four ticals for girls.

ART. 5. If a slave dies his debt is considered paid and is not transferable to any of his relatives.

[651] ART. 6. A master is held responsible for payment of the head tax on any dutiable slave.

If the latter cannot secure the necessary sum through his own labor the master shall pay; but any such sum shall be added to the principal debt and mention thereof shall be made on the contract of debt by the authorities responsible for collecting the head tax.

426 ART. 7. Any individual who borrows money shall present him-
567 self with the lender to the highest native authority in his territory, who alone is empowered to certify debtor's notes.

656 The native authorities shall retain a duplicate of such debtor's notes; such notes shall be signed by both lender and borrower and invested with the seals of the authorities.

Notes shall be drawn up in ink and any crossings-out or additions approved.

ART. 8. For sums less than twenty ticals, the high authorities of a Muong may delegate their powers to the Tassengs or Phobans.

ART. 9. The provisions of this decree shall take effect immediately. Sons and grandsons of slaves for debt who have reached or passed the age of fifteen shall be regarded as free upon promulgation of these provisions. The same shall be true of persons under contract against their will, who shall have the right to have the contract which binds them revised in the presence of the French authorities.

6: Goudal--235 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians
186, 652

"When Mr. Paul Reynaud, then Minister for the Colonies, visited Indo-China in November 1931, the Annamite colony in Vientiane submitted to him a list of complaints which brought out the following points:

(1) Annamite emigration is a vital matter for Laos. Whether they like it or not, the Laotians must drop their policy of isolation and collaborate with the other races of the Union, and the necessary effort cannot be made by the indigenous population of Laos.

(2) In its present state, progress in Laos depends entirely on subsidies from the Federal Government; Laos must now take steps not only to meet its own expenditure but also to play an important part in the Indo-Chinese economic system, by the development of its natural wealth."

7: Thompson--369 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 647, 652, 671, 177.64 France
636.64

"Of the budget expenditures one per cent was allotted to road building, when paths were almost non-existent in Laos. Fifty per cent of the revenues was absorbed by the administration. A subsidy to the company that navigated the Mekong cost 350,000 francs: the total revenues were 600,000, and all for the occasional transportation of the hundred European residents and their mail. The Laotians were much too amiable and indolent to protest against this state of affairs. They were a charming people, who knew nothing of French civilization but the pleasure of paying taxes. They asked little and so they got little. If this were true of the Laotians it was even more so of the mountain peoples. The country was administered as if it were exclusively inhabited by Laotians. The codes, and the mandarins who applied them, were Laotian. The Provincial Council, long the sole representative organization, had no delegate from the mountaineers. Buddhists were given a monopoly of the education, though the Yaos were Confucianist and the Khas fetishists. The administration concentrated on the valley-bound Laotians and ignored the scattered mountain peoples, who differed radically in religion, language, and customs. The Meos's reaction to the Laotians was shown by the massacre of 1920."

have been introduced in the upper reaches and can easily serve, 503
during the high water period, nearly 200 kilometers in the Bassac
reach and nearly 500 in the Vien-Tiane reach. But during the low- 505
water period the stretch between Kratié and Khône is still served by
pirogue over the greater part of the course. Then the navigable reach
of Bassac is reduced to thirty kilometers for steam launches, and
the Vien-Tiane reach requires transshipment by pirogue over some
twenty kilometers between two stretches covered in the above manner.
The two reaches are, moreover, separated by a 160-kilometer strip
which is not navigable in any season.

The impetus has therefore been given, and the way lies open.
Today it remains only to complete the work thus begun and to finish
setting the necessary beacons and clearing the bed of rocks before
navigation, and that is to say trade, can be expanded further. Let
us recapitulate what has been done and what has been proposed.

First of all, from the budgetary point of view, a sum of 87,500 503
francs has so far figured annually in the budget of Laos under the 652
label Studies and projects for the navigability of the Mékong. This
sum was further increased in 1900, and in the budget for public works
in the general interest the following credits appeared:

	francs
Navigability of the Upper Mekong. Purchase of materials for clearing rocks and laying beacons	25,000
[74] Clearing rocks and laying beacons in the lower reach	12,500
Clearing rocks and laying beacons in the middle and upper reaches	62,500
Continuation of studies	25,000
TOTAL	125,000(1)

(1) In 1901 the following figures appeared in the general budget:

Clearing rocks and setting beacons in the Upper Mekong in the lower and middle reaches	75,000
In the upper reach	25,000
Studies	25,000
TOTAL	125,000

It may therefore be assumed that several thousands of francs
have already been spent to make the great river navigable. It must
be admitted that so far the visible results have not compensated for
the sacrifices made, and we prefer to suppose that such credits are

503 entered in the budget annually to satisfy the public opinion which demands them, but that in reality they are far from being spent. If
652 they have been used it has been without appreciable profit, probably as the result of the lack of a master plan governing the work to be accomplished. Indeed it is our earnest hope that expenditures of this size have not been occasioned by the few scientific missions composed of officers and engineers from the department of civil engineering.

Here, in this connection, is an extract from the interesting notice on Indo-China published at the time of the Universal Exposition of 1900:

503 "Since 1887 many missions have studied the reach between Kratié and Khône and have traced the routes which today enable the steamships of the River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales] to navigate there during the high water season. But a great deal remains to be done, and a more complete work of clearing rocks and setting beacons, if pursued perseveringly and methodically, would certainly make it possible to increase the period of navigability by several months each year. The enlargement of the canal between Stung-Treng and Thboung-Kla has already made it possible for launches to ply between Don-Logna and Siem-Boc (2) all year long

(2) In May 1897, that is to say during the low water period, Lieutenant Commander Ytier was able to negotiate the stretch between Kratié and Stung-Treng in a launch which drew 1.5 meters of water (the Sambor). He concluded that after a few rocks had been cleared and buoys set out to mark the route the Mékong would be navigable between Kratié and Stung-Treng, during the low water period, for a boat with a draft of one meter and a speed of twelve knots in a speed trial. But he added that "navigation would always remain difficult or at least ticklish during the low water period, and that without a practical man, without a Talcon pilot, the shelves could not be negotiated and there would be an almost certain risk of running aground."

over a distance of sixty to eighty kilometers. [75] [Illustration] [76] [Blank page] [77] The same will certainly be true below Siem-Boc, in the part of the rapids which are properly known as those of Préapatang, when they have been more fully studied, buoyed and

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have any elected councils or parliamentary representation. Today 631
it constitutes one of the five states in the Indo-Chinese union.

A consequence of the unification of Laos was its division into
provinces and the incorporation of its officials, who had heretofore 631
been a staff apart, in the ranks of the Indo-China Civil Service.

The government commissioners have therefore become civil service administrators.

Today each of the fourteen provinces of Laos is placed under the 635
authority of an Administrator, and the latter is seconded by a civil service clerk.

Native guard. In Laos there are no detachments of the 701
troops stationed in Indo-China, but only a native civil guard [278] composed partly of Annamites and partly of Laotians. It constitutes a police force which is distributed in detachments of varying size under the command of inspectors and chief guardsmen. It is entirely at the disposition of the administrators who are heads of provinces. This native guard numbers twenty-seven inspectors and chief guardsmen and 850 men, of which 320 are volunteer Annamite enlisted men recruited in Annam and Tonkin, and 530 are natives recruited from all the races of Laos. It may be called on to lend its support, if the need arise, to the native authorities who are responsible for maintaining order and security in their respective territories. Peace and order are so perfect in Laos, however, that one can go about freely without an escort.

The treasury service. The treasury service in Laos 652
is headed by a bursar who holds the title of "Chief Bursar of the Treasury Service in Laos." He handles all matters dealing with receipts, expenditures and treasury operations in Laos in the same forms and according to the same rules as the other bursars who are heads of services in Indo-China.

He is assisted by a deputy bursar.

These two agents reside in Vien-Tiane.

Medical service. This service includes three colonial 744
physicians on detachment in Laos who are in charge of the infirmaries at Luang-Prabang, Vien-Tiane (formerly at Pak-Hin-Boun) and Khong. They care for all sick persons, whether European or native, as has been noted above (1).

(1) See Chapter III, Health Service.

644 The functionaries responsible for minor duties inside the palace, under the orders of their chief the Maha-Monti, are the:

Maha-Nosit, Lasa-Nosit, Lasa-Mat, Sanet, Sakame-Nane, Latsavat, Out-Thamonti, Sene-Thong-Niot, Sathipavot.

[652] [493] The treasurers, storekeepers and palace guards have the 647 titles of:

Phaya-Vi-Sai-Monthiene, Phone-Seuk-Khoua, Phone-Seuk-Sai.

697 Finally the jailers and scourgers (or executioners) under the command of the king or of the head of the justice department:

Phone-Tesak, Sa-Phakdi, Sa-Dab-Khame, Vong-Phouthone.

635 In the provinces, the head of a muong bears a title which is 631 personal to him, "Phaya" or "Phya," to which he adds that of "Tiao-Muong" and the name of the province, as Phaya-Si-Vorarat-Phrak-Di, Tiao-Muong-Vien-Tiane.

Under his command he has principal mandarins in the number of three, who bear the titles of "Oupahat," "Latsavong" and "Latsaboute." Each of them is generally responsible for the administration of one part of the muong, under the supervision of the "Tiao-Muong."

These high officials are seconded, depending on the importance of the muong, by a larger or smaller number of counselors or judges who bear the titles of "Sen," "Tiane," "Khang," etc.

Muongs are generally divided into cantons, and the heads of the [63] latter bear the title of "Taseng." Each canton includes several villages or "Bans," and each of these has at its head a mayor who is usually called "Pho-Ban" (the father of the village). The head of a village is aided by a kind of council or assembly of notables, the titles of whom are "Pia," "Luong," "Koun," "Sen," "Mune" or "Nai."

643 The four principal leaders of a muong, that is to say the "Tiao-646 Muong," the "Oupahat," the "Latsavong" and the "Latsaboute" (1),

(1) In the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc, the heads of muongs bear the following titles: "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong), "Phya-Hua-Pahn" (Oupahat), "Phya-Balat" (Latsavong), "Phya-Kam" (Latsaboute). In accordance with custom, these offices are hereditary and sons succeed their fathers, except for the office of "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong) where the rule is not absolute.

are [494] elected either by the nobles or by commoners who possess certain aptitudes and sufficient intellectual culture. The whole population, nobles, officials and common people, are consulted. Then the

643 canton heads and heads of villages, who might be described as can-
646 tonal and municipal delegates, gather in the capital of the muong to vote on the names of candidates which are presented. The name of the one who obtains the most votes is then presented by the province administrator to the superior resident, who accepts or rejects him after studying his personal qualities, his aptitudes, his background, etc. In the case of a rejection the electors are consulted a second time. The superior resident names the four chiefs of muongs by delegation from the governor general. These latter may not begin office until they receive their commission, insignia and seal from the French government.

In general, the electors' choice falls on a son, brother or nephew of the high official who is to be replaced, unless he is unworthy or notoriously incapable.

635 Mandarins of lesser importance are named by the province head
647 with the approval of the persons under his administration and of the superior resident.

647 Officials receive a salary only in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang
652 and in the provinces of Vien-Tiane and Muong-Hou. Everywhere else they must be content with a fee equivalent to one-tenth of the sums they collect as taxes.

[693] In their capacity as judges, the muong authorities also collect legal costs and shares in the sums of certain fines, as is the custom of the land.

647 Such, in its general outline, is the organization of the Laotian
516 administration. It generally functions well, is sufficient to the needs of the natives and makes it possible for us, despite the vast extent of our possession, to keep only a few European officials there.

[92] The outer forms of respect towards great men, mandarins and anyone who holds a rank are dictated by Laotian etiquette, as in Siam. One does not speak to a king, a [495] [Illustration] [496] [Blank page] [497] prince or a leader as one would to an equal or an inferior. There are special expressions which are peculiar to the representatives of certain social classes or to the holders of dignities. But even while it conserves, at bottom, the ritual ceremonial forms, Laotian etiquette is paternal and much more spontaneous and genuinely respectful than elsewhere.

When they speak to the king, to princes, to great men, etc., inferiors prostrate themselves, with forehead on clasped hands, near the ground, or with their hands clasped above their head. Outside of this particular case, those present may remain squatting, smoke, talk, laugh and even disturb the audience somewhat. Moreover, no lack whatsoever of respect is to be seen in this liberty.

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Tax on rice, paddy, horns, hides, etc.

	Per picul (francs)	Per hundred kilograms (francs)
Paddy	0.25	0.416
Rice	0.50	0.832
Gum lac	2.50	4.16
Chinese nettle	2.50	4.16
Buffalo horns and hides	2.50	4.16
Buck horns and hides	3.75	6.25
Anteater scales	3.75	6.25
Cardamom	5.00	8.32
Elephant and tiger bones	3.75	6.25
Benzoin	12.50	20.82
Rubber	12.50	20.82
Wax	12.50	20.82
Ivory	50.00	83.20
Pirogues	ten percent ad valorem.	

Also to be added are certain incidental receipts, such as those arising from chancery fees or those collected by the native tribunals in conformity with the rates scheduled by the code of Vien-Tiane.

[701] 557 658 The royal treasury of Luang-Prabang subsidizes certain expenses, such as the upkeep of the kingdom's militia, of the native hospital in Luang-Prabang, of the Franco-Laotian school in Luang-Prabang, etc. [504]

652 Finally, the general budget of Indo-China pays out a variable sum annually for the purpose of balancing the receipts and expenditures of Laos.

C. Opium

651 One of the most important sources of Laotian revenue is provided by the sale of opium. The administration is responsible for the sale 276 of this substance, which it manufactures itself and which is marketed 655 by licensed merchants acting as middlemen.

Before 1900, Laos sold on its own behalf the opium which was allotted to it by the Cochinchina Customs and Excise Office (1),

(1) This was true only for Lower Laos. The opium sold in Upper Laos came from the Luang-Prabang distillery, which is no longer in operation today.

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Opium sales are constantly on the increase in Laos, moreover, and it is probable that receipts for 1900 have reached nearly 350,000 francs.

5. BUDGET

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The budget of Laos was created by a decree of the governor general dated September 30, 1895. The first budget was that of 1896. It varies little from one year to another, and amounts to about two million francs. The following are the exact figures:

	francs
1896	1,819,245
1897	1,918,207
1898	2,008,806
1899	1,988,700
1900	1,847,500
1901	1,896,65[illegible]

[506] Local receipts taken in in 1896 amounted to 356,925 francs. In 1900 they had risen to 516,250 francs, an increase of 159,325 francs. On the other hand, levies on the other parts of Indo-China which were necessary to balance the budget of Laos decreased by the same amount. In fact, since local resources are insufficient to cover expenses, it has been necessary to have recourses to subsidies provided by the other countries of the Indo-Chinese union. Thus Cochinchina provided 6/13 of the subsidy, Tonkin 5/13 and Cambodia 2/13. Since the creation of a general budget for Indo-China, the sum of these subsidies is entered there annually.

Each year a projected budget is prepared by the superior resident. It is presented to the Superior Council of Indo-China, which studies and approves it. Before it can become official, it must also be approved by the President of the Republic.

Here, as a sample, is the budget as established for the fiscal year 1900:

A. Receipts

	francs
Direct taxes.....	316,250
Miscellaneous taxes.....	200,000
Subsidy from general budget....	1,331,250
Total receipts....	1,847,500

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B. Expenditures

		francs
1.	Superior residency	125,000
2.	Commissionerships	462,500
3.	Native guard	377,500
4.	Medical services	57,500
5.	Public works	127,500
6.	Treasury	37,500
7.	Transports	407,500
8.	Miscellaneous expenses	252,500
	Total expenditures	1,847,500

If the total expenditures are distributed over the entire population we obtain an average of 3.695 francs per inhabitant. Since local receipts [507] are only 1.032 francs per inhabitant, it follows that the subsidy by the general budget is 2.663 francs (1). It cannot be said that

(1) This figure is too high, in consequence of the profits realized on the sale of opium.

the population of French Laos is overburdened with taxes as compared [illustration here] with that of Siam or Siamese Laos, where each inhabitant's share is 3.75 and 1.575 francs, respectively.

It is to be hoped, and this is the goal towards which all the efforts of the administrators are tending, that the present situation will improve from year to year until such time as Laos has sufficient receipts to cover its expenditures, without recourse to a levy on the general budget.

[508] In order to attain this goal, increased revenues might perhaps be brought about through:

1. A gradual rise in the basic head tax and the amount of statute labor;

2. Various taxes which would result from utilization of the country's agricultural and mineral resources.

3. Settlement in the basin of the right bank of the Mekong, which is included in our zone of influence by the terms of the London declaration of January 15, 1896.

A rise in the basic head tax may be achieved without hurting the inhabitants by stimulating them to increase their scavenging operations and the cultivation of certain products. Moreover, the experiment has already been tried, and Laotian taxpayers, especially the Khas,

652 prefer to pay four shares in kind rather than two in money.

Furthermore, the division of taxpayers into two classes might perhaps be modified by providing uniformity of head taxes and of statute labor for all taxpayers.

These taxes in money and in kind might result in an increase over present revenues. Moreover, since the prices adopted for the purpose of calculating the value of natural products paid to the administration are established at a reasonable rate, such products might bring in appreciable profits if they were resold on certain Far Eastern markets.

As for the miscellaneous taxes and duties (to result from exit duties, exploitation of mines, farming, livestock breeding, etc.), they will be much more important the day when colonists provided with capital spread over the country.

It is incumbent on the administration to inform interested persons, by all possible means, of the exploitable resources of Laos, and also to give them the assurance that all their efforts will be seconded in an effective manner by the local agents.

000 Finally, in order to retain our prestige among our subjects in Indo-China, it is our duty to take possession of the former territory of Vien-Tiane (1) situated on the right bank of the Mekong, and this

(1) This territory corresponds to the zone of French influence of which mention is made in the London agreement of January 1898.

[509] in retribution for the attacks, ambushes and violences of every kind committed by Siamese agents ever since 1893 on our representatives our subjects, our protégés and our nationals.

Since this territory enjoys a more favorable disposition with respect to farming, and since it is much more heavily populated than that on the left bank, it would doubtless yield maximum revenues which would be higher than the present expenses of Laos. [510]

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115: Le Boulanger--68 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

Frontier agreements with the neighboring kingdoms. In conse- 631
sequence of agreements reached with the princes of the peninsula, 643*
the frontiers of Lan-Xang were permanently fixed from Khone in 175*
the south to Pha-Day in the north, and from Siam in the west to 653
Annam in the east. With this last country, to which Souligna had
bound himself by taking one of King Le-duy-Ky's daughters as a
concubine, it was agreed that all the people who lived in "houses
on piles and with verandas" should be called subjects of the king of /342/
Vientiane, and that those who inhabited houses "without piles or
verandas" should belong to Annam.

The stay of the Dutchman Van Wusthof in Vientiane (1641). 175*
In 1641 Vientiane was visited by the Dutch traveler Van 114
Wusthof (2). /105/ The account which he has left of his stay in the

2. A Jesuit, Father Jean-Marie Leria, had visited Vientiane before Van Wusthof and had returned to Annam by way of Hinboun and Vinh. Cf. G. Maspero, op. cit. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./, and P. Martini, Relation de divers voyages curieux, published at Paris in 1666, "chez Sebastien Marbre-Cramoisy, imprimeur du Roy, rue Saint-Jacques, aux Cicognes."

capital of Lan-Xang contains precious information, even though it remains rather vague because of a lack of previous knowledge and of impartial observation (1). Thus Buddhism in Laos, for example,

1. Histoires singulieres qui se sont passees dans les royaumes du Cambodge et au pays du Laos, aux Indes orientales depuis l'annee 1635 jusqu'en l'annee 1664 avec le voyage des Neerlandais du Cambodge, en remontant la riviere de Laos, a Vinejan, la cour de S. M. le roi de Laos et enfin le cruel massacre qui a eu lieu au Cambodge par les Indiens en l'an 1643, published at Haarlem without any author's name and printed in 1669 by "Pieter Casteleyn, imprimeur demeurant au marche, dans la couronne imperiale." Cf. G. Maspero, op. cot. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./

appeared to him as a crude "paganry," and the number of bonzes scandalized him, as did the morals of the gentle and sensual

mandarin and head of the tribunal; 3) the Phaya Muong- 647
Khang or first mandarin of the center and head of the Serv- 642
ice of public works, transports, etc. 631

The Senam was composed of the Phaya Muong-Khoua or /646/
second right-hand mandarin, and of four councillors under the direction of the Phya Muong-Sen.

The judges or Kromakanes, who were under the Phaya /693/
Muong-Sen and the Phaya Muong-Tiane, numbered seven in all and included the Phaya Muong-Sai or second left-hand mandarin.

Last came the mandarins responsible for the collection of /653●
taxes, the assembling of labor drafts and the transport of 644/
bamboo, rattan, thatch and pirogues for the king's service and the public services; then the pages and chamberlains or mahaleks, the military leaders, the functionaries responsible for petty tasks inside the palace, the treasurers, storekeepers, etc.

The reader will note the insignificant position reserved /701/
for the military mandarins in this hierarchy. Of Sam-Sene-Thai's powerful army (see above, p. 56), nothing at all remained.

provinces were aided by an Oupahat, a Ratsavong and a Ratsabout who, like the court dignitaries, gave their orders to the tassengs or canton heads who had authority over the village leaders (naibans). By establishing the different government commissions in Laos Pavie therefore strengthened the native authorities in their age-old prerogatives and the princes of Luang-Prabang in /325/ their dynastic rights and privileges. In order to mark their absolute attachment to France and to give more force to their vehement protests against awarding Siam the part of the kingdom situated on the right bank, the latter insisted on receiving, in solemn fashion and as soon as possible, the investiture of the government of the Republic from the commissioner general. After his return from Muong-Sing eight 643*
months later, Pavie drew up on parchment in Hanoi the titles of the old king Oun-Kham, of King Zakarine, of his brother and of the Oupahat Boun-Khong, and on April 19, 1895 proceeded to this important ceremony.

"All those who had a part in the control of affairs," he wrote as he finished the account of his mission, "were present. The entire populace was invited. In the name of the government of the

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the steep slopes of certain peaks, the brinks of torrents, etc.--are being subjected to new routings or improvement projects which will soon be carried out. (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, loc. cit.) [Translator's note. This seems to be a reference to the December 1899 number, "Notes du Commandant supérieur du Bas Laos sur la région est du Bas Laos."]

elephant back).

Province of Saravane. 1. Road from Ban-Mouang to Saravane by way of Kham-Thong-Niai, along the Sedone (4 to 5 days). This road is a first category road over a distance of five kilometers from Keng-Kok to Keng-Pho. The falls of the Sedone can thus be avoided by a cart road at all seasons of the year. Over the rest of its route the road belongs to the second category.

2. Road from Saravane to Attopeu by way of Thateng, the plateau of the Bolovens, Nong-Bok and the Se-Pien (4 to 5 days. Second category).

3. Road from Saravane to Ai-Lao by way of Muong-Nong (a poor path).

Province of Darlac. 1. Road from Ban-Me-Thuot or Darlac to Ninh-Hoa (Annam). A six or seven day trip. This is a cart track on the Laotian side of the divide, that is to say as far as Ai-Bloum. At Me-Sao a branch forks toward Cong-Son (Annam). This is a portion of the route selected for the Saigon-Qui-Nhon railway.

[478] 2. Cart road from Ban-Done to Kratie, either by way of the Pou-Kha (10 to 12 days), or by going around the mountain to the north and connecting with the road from Stung-Treng to Kratie at Sreki.

2. PROJECTED LAND ROUTES OF COMMUNICATION

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Three large highways are projected, namely:

1. From Savannakhet to Ai-Lao and Hué; [Illustration here]
2. From Pak-Hin-Boun to Vinh by way of Ha-Trai;
3. From Luang-Prabang to Vien-Tiane.

These roads will be negotiable by carts and will be provided with iron and wooden bridges. Engineering officers have been placed at the disposition of the Superior Resident of Laos to make a study of these various routes.

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A credit of 32,500 francs has been established for the construction of [478] these roads in the 1900 budget, and another of 10,000 francs has been set aside for improving the existing roads.

These credits are allocated for meeting the costs of equipment, iron, skilled labor, etc. Current repairs are made through statute labor and payments in kind which all registered persons owe.

Supervision of these projects falls to the inspectors and chief guards of the native civil guard.

With support such as this, it becomes clear that it will be possible to carry out quite large road projects with credits which might seem quite insufficient at first glance. It is true that they will be renewed as the need arises.

3. PRESENT RAILWAY ROUTES

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"There is only one railway in Laos. It crosses the island of Khone and is used for transhipment of passengers and goods from the lower reach to the Khone-Pakmoun reach and vice versa. It is a narrow railway, with a gauge of one meter. It is 4.5 kilometers long. It was built by the administration and placed at the service of the River Merchant Fleet [Messageries Fluviales]."

4. PROJECTED RAILWAY ROUTES

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"A railway is planned which will connect the great middle reach of the Mekong with a seaport in Annam, passing through Ai-Lao, Quang-Tri and Hué. This would make it possible for all the products of central Laos to flow down towards Annam, and avoid for transports in general the disadvantages and dangers of the Kemmarat rapids. Studies for this line were begun in the first days of 1899, and have continued during the dry season of 1899-1900" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900]

The portion of this line in Annamite territory, that is to say the Quang-Tri-Hué-Tourane section, is included in the schedule of expenditures to be covered by a loan of 200 millions, to the extent of 24 millions. Since it is 195 kilometers long, the cost comes to 125,000 francs per kilometer.

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[480] Construction of this line was authorized by the law of December 25, 1898, but its extension to the Mekong, and that is to say the means of entrance into Laos, is classified among the lines of third-degree urgency for which routes have scarcely been outlined.

Another railway has also been planned from Binh-Dinh to Attopeu, with the same third-degree urgency classification as the line from Savannakhet to Quang-Tri. It seems astonishing that anyone should have thought, even as a line of third-degree urgency, of a line which would start from the sea and end in a cul-de-sac, crossing one of the most mountainous regions which is inhabited by Kha tribes who are still partly unpacified. It may be that there is some thought of facilitating, by means of such a line, the exploitation of the gold and copper-bearing deposits in the region of Attopeu, even though it has now been established that the best deposits are located on the Se-Sane, more than 50 kilometers to the south of this point as the crow flies. It is also to be feared that by reason of the nature of the terrain this line may cost as much as 200,000 francs per kilometer, if the conditions of its route be compared with those of the lines estimated at 125,000 francs.

The projected Savannakhet-Quang-Tri railway does not seem to be the best solution for creating an entry into Laos and an outlet to the sea.

In the first place, it is not the shortest and most economical, despite the low elevation of the ridge of Ai-Lao, which is only 410 meters in altitude.

Besides, Savannakhet has never been a trade center and market of distribution and transit like Luang-Prabang, Pak-Lay, Nong-Khay and Bassac.

To be sure, it is an administrative center situated opposite the market of Ban-Mouk and the seat of the main office of the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [Compagnie des Messageries Fluviales], which has storehouses, a depot, workshops, etc. there. But this center was built up from nothing scarcely six years ago. The market of Ban-Mouk is an unimportant one, and the office of the River Merchant Fleet is inaccessible to its steam launches during a large part of the year.

[481] If Nong-Khay, instead of Ban-Mouk, were located opposite Savannakhet, there would be an advantage to capturing this great market in which the major part of the trade of Upper and Middle Laos is centered, and to turn this trade away from Bangkok to the profit of Tourane. But one must surrender to the evidence, for Nong-Khay

6: Goudal--42-43 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians
116, 466, 482, 653, 177.46 France
636.46

"In Laos, the regulation of compulsory labour for public purposes has been the subject of a number of legislative measures, including an Order by the Senior Resident of 27 June 1933 which closely resembles that issued by the Governor-General of 5 February 1932.

Moreover, in the countries of the Union where this form of labour is still permitted, Orders are issued periodically establishing the [43] maximum weight of the load carried by porters and the rates of wages payable to such workers. Annual reports are also sent to the central administrative authorities on the value and usefulness of requisitioned labour. If the present effort made by the authorities is continued, it is practically certain that in the near future compulsory labour levies for transport work and large-scale public works will become a thing of the past."

7: Thompson--369-370 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians-
116, 647, 645, 653, 177.64 France
636.64

"The centralized administration of Laos was not only part of the French mania for simplification and uniformity, which for various [370] reasons had reached Laos later than elsewhere, but was primarily stimulated by the economic importance of Laos's mines and town building in the post-war period. The modernization of Vientiane was especially notable, for it had been buried under the jungle, 400 kilometres from the sea, and on an almost unnavigable river. When the potential wealth of the country became evident, the administration began to veer away from the Protectorate ideal to direct government, making tabula rasa of native institutions. Some Hanoi officials took it into their head to suppress the King of Luang-Prabang as an obstacle to transforming Laos into a bona-fide colony. Varenne had the good sense to recognize how much the Laotians venerated their king, and so he rescued his throne from the assimilationist peril. The Protectorate was saved, and to push Laos farther along the trail blazed by Annam and Cambodia, a native advisory assembly was given to the country in 1929, and a mixed Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, both of which recently sent delegates to the Grand Conseil. The process can only fully develop when the rail and road network is completed--that administrative pipe-dream linking Laos to the rest of the Union--which in 1936 looked perilously near fulfilment. An unfortunate corollary is that the forty-year tariff freedom of Laos, a miracle in French colonization, died in 1932 with the growth of the Siamese and Indo-Chinese railroad construction."

7: Thompson--375 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 489, 503, 653

"The Mekong was the only means of communication with Cochin-Chinese seaports. The subsidy accorded to the Compagnie des Messagéries Fluviales to improve its navigation of the Mekong was too high for the colony's budget, yet inadequate for the work it had to do. Hundreds of thousands of francs were lost in acquiring a knowledge of these problems and in training a personnel. Mekong boats must reckon on three periods of navigation. In low water there are no less than eight trans-shipments between Pnom-Penh and Luang-Prabang, by rail and by road, both of which were expensive and difficult to build because of the shifting surface of the land. Mid-season is the best for navigation, since high water means contending with a terrible current. Laos is desperately in need of railroads, and it has fewer than any other country in the Union. Every Governor, from Doumer on, has had railroad projects, but they have always been laid aside for other works. The recent realization of Laos's mineral wealth through journalistic propaganda has been counteracted by the depression; yet once again there is promise to fill this crying need, notably Robin's impetus to road-building in 1935-6. Unless this is soon done, Laotian commerce will escape permanently to Bangkok. Contraband can never be controlled along the great watery frontier, and Siam's comparatively duty-free imports and cheap railroad and boat transportation will always have the advantage."

653 is no further from Vinh than Savannakhet is from Tourane. In fact,
496 the distance by steamship to Hin-Boun (or Tha-Kek) and from there
185 to Ben-Thuy [Illustration here] (port of Vinh) by way of Nape, the
438 ridge of Tram-Mua and Ha-Trai by railway is only 500 kilometers,
633 whereas it is also 500 kilometers from Savannakhet to Tourane.

It has been objected that the ridge of Tram-Mua, the highest
496 point on the line in question, is at an altitude of more than 1,200
185 meters, that many calcareous peaks encumber the route, and that the port of Ben-Thuy has a sand bar (that of Cua-Hoi) which leaves a depth of water of only 1.5 to 4.5 meters, depending on the tide.

All of this information is correct, although somewhat exaggerated. The ridge of Tram-Mua is not an insurmountable obstacle, and the road which crosses it leaves the Mekong at the 250 meter level and manages to reach it by rounding the [482] peaks of Pou-Hak and Pou-Kha-Sak and by rising gradually, ascending 1000 meters over a distance of about 140 to 150 kilometers.

Ha-Trai, moreover, which is situated on the river of Ngan-Pho, is at approximately the 100 meter level, and the descent from the ridge requires half a day on elephant back. The slope is very steep, without any doubt, on the Annamite side, since it represents the hypotenuse of a right triangle with a base 15 kilometers long and an altitude of 1,100 meters. It is not such, however, as to make the establishment of a railroad impossible, and cog-railways could also be used, as in Switzerland, at the steepest parts of the route.

Finally, the bar of Cua-Hoi is only an imaginary obstacle. Indeed, it would be sufficient merely to extend the railway beyond the bar, where the foundation is everywhere solid enough, or else to dredge a channel.

From the financial point of view the advantage also lies with the Hin-Boun-Ben-Thuy project, which will cost 30 millions instead of 61. Indeed, expenditures of 24 millions are anticipated for the Quang-Tri-Tourane section, to which 37 millions must be added for the Quang-Tri-Savannakhet section (about 300 kilometers at 125,000 francs per kilometer), whereas if we assume a cost of 150,000 francs (1) per kilometer for the Hin-Boun-Ben-Thuy line (about 200 kilometers),

(1) Cost anticipated for the Vietri-Lao-Kay and Saigon-Qui-Nhon lines.

we are confronted with an expenditure of 30 millions. The difference between 30 and 61 millions is so great that it would even be possible

7: Thompson--367 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175, 484, 654

"Not until 1889, when Pavie was given a semi-official mission and numerous collaborators to study the economic possibilities of the upper country, did France's interest there reawaken. Despite Siamese opposition the mission was able to obtain precise and exhaustive information about the country, all the way from Yunnan to Cambodia, for the government and the newly formed French Commercial Syndicate of Upper Laos."

7: Thompson--374-375 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 439, 654

"When the French first occupied Laos, a number of investigations were undertaken to learn the country's commercial possibilities. The difficulties which the agents of the Commercial Syndicate encountered in the way of obstacles created by nature and by the Siamese, forced the government to grant it powers which gave a hybrid politico-commercial character to its activities. In spite of its semi-official support the Syndicate was doomed to failure, for a number of excellent reasons. [375] It was hampered by inadequate capital and knowledge of the country. Moreover, Upper Laos is an extremely unhealthy region, where even Asiatic merchants refused to go. The Syndicate's isolated efforts were concentrated on selling imports, which were more expensive than the Siamese and not so well adapted to the people's needs, and not on developing Laotian exports. The latter, to be sure, were food products, and hence very perishable. French industry simply did not produce articles essential to the Laotians, and what they sent to Laos was too high priced, not only as to original cost, but in heavy freight charges."

114 To Messrs. Jules Bosc and Louis Finot for their teaching, their advice and their kind encouragement;

To Messrs. Georges Coedès and Paul Vitry for their precious information.

The reader will pardon the errors of this modest compilation. Since the great Pavie who, by the "Conquest of hearts," gave this world to France, this is the first attempt at a chronology of the Laotian principalities.

P. L. B.

/1/ A HISTORY OF FRENCH LAOS

000 Privileged corner of the earth, where manners have retained an exquisite simplicity, so rare among Asiatics, whose dominant characteristic is duplicity. My affection quite naturally went out to the Laotian people, so gentle, so peaceable and so trusting, whom gaiety never abandons, even in the worst misfortunes.

Captain Cupet, Mission Pavie
(Vol. III, p. 220).

CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

131 The territory which is situated in the basin of the Mékong River and which is designated in the French Indo-Chinese Federation under the name of Laos, is included between 22° 30' and 13° 15' of north latitude and stretches from 97° 45' of longitude (the right bank of the Mekong) to 106° east of Paris.

Its political limits are: to the northeast Tonkin, to the north Chinese Yunnan, to the northwest /2/ the Anglo-Burmese State, to the west Siam, to the south Cambodia and to the east Annam.

131 654 Area. At present it is possible to give the colony's area only approximately. Any definite figure would run the risk of being incorrect, and indeed no complete triangulation has as yet been carried out. Laos, which is the last comer into the Indo-Chinese family and has neither sea frontiers, outlets nor an economic structure, is still isolated from the rest of the Union and is almost unknown outside the great valley of the Mekong. The labors of the officers of the Indo-

China Géographical Service /Service géographique de l'Indochine/ 131
and the road surveys made by administrators at the heads of prov- 654
inces nevertheless agree substantially in estimating the area of Laos at approximately 250,000 square kilometers, or about half that of France.

Population. This is the largest of the five countries in French 161
Indo-China, and it is also the least densely populated. According to information collected on the spot, the population must be be- /162/
tween a million and 1,200,000 inhabitants, a figure appreciably larger than the one figuring in the official documents, which estimate it to be only 800,000. Persons of the Laotian race in the strict /3/ sense form the majority. They populate the plains 162
which are watered by the Mékong and its tributaries and the low altitude plateaus. The mountains are inhabited by highly diverse races belonging to various ethnic types, some of which are related to the Chinese, and others to the Tibetan branch, while still others are grouped under the generic name of "Khas." These various groups are scattered over the western side of the Annamitic Chain, the foothills of the plateau of Trân-Ninh and in the upper valley of the Mékong.

The extremely low population density is to be explained by the 162
Siamese and Chinese invasions in the course of the nineteenth 166
century. The "Hos," plunderers who came from Yunnan, massa- 648*
cred the inhabitants after they had burned their villages and forced 175
those who escaped famine or torture to settle in another region. The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical manner and depopulated the country by transporting inhabitants, livestock and elephants to the right bank of the Mekong and oftentimes taking them as far as the valley of the Ménam.

Upper Laos. Upper Laos, a ramification of the Tibetan pla- 133
teau, "is an inextricable tangle /4/ of wild and wooded mountains in the midst of which paths wind like gigantic Russian
mountains" (1). The country has a savage look. These high 133
137

1. Dr. Lefèvre, "Le Haut-Laos" (Bulletin de la Société de Géographie commerciale, 1898).

mountain chains, which are cut here and there by deep valleys where torrents which are often invisible flow, are covered with

victorious (1), and this expedition, which would seem to have 648*
643*

1. With the help of Trần-Ninh. 728
175*

been imposed on him, is the only campaign which is related during his long forty-three year reign.

According to the Annals he strictly observed the Buddhist teach- 643*
ing and followed, in a more docile manner than his father had 175*
done, the pious counsels of Pha-Maha-Pasaman-Thala-Tiao, his /645
spiritual director, "and so his kingdom knew a long period of 792/
peace and prosperity." He was a great builder of temples, and erected the pagodas of Manorom, Ouposot (with a library which was given the manuscripts which had been brought from Angkor), and Xieng-Kang which was built in memory of his daughter, the young princess Sivayaka, who died of smallpox at the age of twelve.

The Three Hundred Thousand Thaïs. In 1376 he gave orders 161
for a general census of the inhabitants of Lang-Xang. The results 175*
gave 300,000 "registered" Thaïs, not counting women, children, 654
bonzes, foreigners, slaves and Khas (2), and Oun-Hueun took /53/

2. The number of registered non-Thaïs was about 400,000.

/C.A.M. Translator's note. Page 53 is devoted to a map: "Lan-Xang and surrounding regions at the death of Fa-Ngoun (1374)". /
as his reigning name Phaya-Sam-Sène-Thaï, the King of the Three Hundred Thousand Thaïs.

Social Organization. These folk then constituted a society 631
grouped by families and divided into Nobles and Commoners. The 565
Nobles were given certain privileges and helped to administer the 175*
kingdom, from the dignitaries who were princes of royal blood down to the simple officials who were responsible for collecting taxes, for assembling labor drafts, for transporting goods, etc.

In the provinces the heads of circumscriptions (Muongs) were elected either from the Nobles or from the Commoners, but the choice of the electors generally fell on the son or some relative of the person who was to be replaced, unless there were some unworthiness or notorious incapability.

After the ratification of the treaty of 1862 with the court of 648*
Hue which gave us /230/ Annam's rights in Cambodia, it had 175*
indeed been realized that the neighboring kingdom was indispensable to the economic development of the Mekong delta. The admiral had at once sounded out King Norodom, who had eagerly welcomed his advances, but An-Duong's son had not yet been crowned and was not at liberty to express his sentiments openly. Two years after his father's death in 1861 he had been driven as far as Bangkok by his brother Sivotha's revolt. When he returned to his States under the protection of Siamese armed force he was subject at Oudong to the strict guardianship of his suzerain. Then the governor of Cochinchina forced the issue, appointed Ship's Lieutenant Doudart de Lagree as diplomatic agent in Cambodia and, despite the maneuvers of his Siamese overseer, had Norodom sign a treaty on August 11, 1863 placing his country under a French protectorate. In vain did Siam extract a clandestine treaty from the latter, by the terms of which he acknowledged himself to be its tributary and promised to go to Bangkok to be invested. As soon as Doudart de Lagree had word of this trip he placed the royal palace under military occupation and by his forceful attitude prevailed over the Siamese court, which /231/ sent the royal insignia and recalled its agent (1).

1. By the treaty of July 15, 1867 Siam recognized our protectorate and renounced all suzerainty over Cambodia. But its embassy in Paris cleverly threatened to place itself under British protection if we laid claim to the provinces of the Great Lake /Grand Lac/, and succeeded in keeping Angkor and Battambang for Siam.

Before attempting a methodical organization of the new colony 648*
it would be essential to gain some knowledge of the course of the 175*
Mekong, "the traditional trade route between China and the Kmer 654
empire," beyond the Cambodian provinces. The question was posed in 1864 in a memorandum which caused a sensation in Saigon, by Francis Garnier (1), a young naval officer who was serving as

1. Francois Garnier, called Francis, was born at Saint-Etienne in 1839 and died at Hanoi in 1873 in a sortie in which Ensign Balny d'Avricourt was also killed.

648 an administrator. "Whence did this gigantic river come? What
175 regions did it water? To what peoples did it give access?... France
654 owed it to science and to its own interest to try in its turn to pierce the thick veil which had stretched over Indo-China for so long a time" (3).

3. Cf. P. Legendre, Nos gloires coloniales.

In 1866 Admiral de La Grandiere decided "to send out a mission to explore the course of the Mekong over as long a distance as possible /232/ from its mouth." It was placed under the command of Doudart de Lagree, who chose as his companions Francis Garnier, Ensign de Laporte, the naval doctors Thorel and Joubert and the young embassy attache de Carne.

The expedition left Saigon on June 5, 1866 on gunboats Nos. 32 and 37, visited the ruins of Angkor, went upriver as far as Kratie and then continued in pirogues. On September 10 it reached Bassac and after a thousand and one difficulties in the rapids of Kemmarat passed by Nong-Khay (1), an important trading center

1. Nong-Khay, built on the right bank some forty kilometers
/439/ (by the river) downstream from Vientiane, controlled the greater part of the traffic from Upper Laos -- benzoin, cardamom, salt, tobacco, pelts and lac. It is still an active market today, and is joined to Vientiane by a highway frequented by numerous trucks.

created by the Siamese to replace Vientiane, the impressive ruins of which the expedition saw, swallowed up as they were by the vegetation. It finally reached Luang-Prabang on April 20, 1867.

The explorers did not remain there for any length of time. After erecting Mouhot's mausoleum and exploring the region they decided to entrust all the instruments which were no longer absolutely indispensable to them, as well as their maps and their botanical and geological collections, to /233/ King Tiantha-Koumane who sent them to Saigon "with scrupulous fidelity." Then they set out again, "escorted by a throng of functionaries and of young women who cried for some kind of souvenir of their guests. Uniform buttons and the smallest galloons were given to them" (1).

1. Cf. P. Legendre, op. cit. /Nos gloires coloniales/

They struck out into the inextricable forests of Burmese Laos, 648*
which were "cut here and there by muddy ricefields and by over- 175*
flowing torrents," entered Yunnan which had been desolated by 654
the insurrection of the Tau-Pings, the latter further complicated by
new Moslem revolts, and were marching resolutely westwards into
the heart of the insurgent land when Doudart became exhausted and
was forced to halt. He was taken with difficulty to Tong-Tchouen
and to the French missionaries of Dong-Chau-Phu, but only to die
there of a hepatic attack on March 12, 1868. Francis Garnier then
took charge of the expedition, embarked at Hang-Keou bringing
back his leader's remains, and returned to Saigon on the following
June 28 after an absence of two years.

"A terrible voyage," concludes P. Legendre, "one of the most
daring of the century and which was also to cost the young de
Carne his life, but /234/ which established in a peremptory way the
necessity for France to wield a preponderant influence in Tonkin,
the key to China."

Resumption of relations between Luang-Prabang and Tran-Ninh. 648*
In the meantime Tiantha-Koumane had had occasion to resume 175*
continuous relations with the old kingdom of Xieng-Khouang.

Ever since its annexation to the empire of Annam (1) this land

1. See above, p. 178.

had been living in strict servitude. The exactions of the Quan-
Phu's soldiers weighed heavily on the natives, who were incessantly
ransomed and pillaged with the utmost severity. The authority of
the emperor's delegate met with resistance which was all the more /177/
keen in that this mandarin had undertaken a policy of brutal as-
similation the aim of which was to force the Laotian people to
adopt all the customs -- and even the clothing -- of the Annamites.
The agents which Siam secretly maintained in the region had not
failed to exploit the inhabitants' exasperation and to impel one of
Chao-Noi's cousins (2) whom Annam had mistakenly allowed to

2. Chao-Xan.

live freely in Tran-Ninh to open revolt. One /235/ fine night the
Quan-Phu was assassinated in his fortress together with his whole
guard, and the small Siamese force, which had taken part in the

but since it was ill-informed itself on the true political status of 648*
regions included between Cordillere /253/ and Mekong it invited 175*
the Annamite government at the same time to formulate its claims in a precise and unquestionable manner.

Laborious and confused negotiations ensued at Bangkok. Solidly backed by Britain, Siam claimed that it was acting in good faith and that its only aim was to defend against the "Hos" those populations which had common factors of race, language and religion with it, while Annam asserted its rights of age-old suzerainty over principalities which had paid it a regular tribute ever since the seventeenth century and the farthest reaches of which beyond the mountains had, after the fall of Vientiane and at the express request of the native leaders, been converted into "Phus" and "Huyens" which were directly connected with the administrative divisions of the empire. Maps -- highly imaginative ones, moreover -- were produced on the one side and the other, one of them drawn up after the reconnaissance carried out by the British topographer MacCarthy in Upper Laos between 1883 and 1885, and another made by M. Deveria from information supplied by the court of Hue.

Creation of a French vice-consulate in Luang-Prabang (November 1885). In the face of these /253/ irreconcilable divergences, it was finally decided "to go and see" and the Siamese government consented to the establishment of a French vice-consulate in Luang-Prabang so that both parties might reach an on-the-spot agreement concerning the contested territories through their respective representatives. To occupy this position the French government designated an agent of the rarest merit whose personal action was to exert a profound influence on the course of events. This was Auguste Pavie (1).

1. Auguste Pavie was born at Dinan in 1847 and died in 1925 at his home La Raimbaudiere.

This good and simple man who "conquered hearts" for his country 114
over a territorial area which was then practically unknown and which 175*
was larger than that of France, this "charmer of peoples" who was to 654
die a minister plenipotentiary and grand officer of the Legion of Honor, had the most modest beginnings. Discharged in Cochinchina as a petty officer in the naval infantry, he entered the administrative branch of Posts and Telegraphs in 1868 and after the Franco-Prussian

114 War was placed in charge of the station at Kampot, a small Cam-
175* bodian port on the Gulf of Siam. He soon learned how to gain the
654 confidence of the natives and became passionately interested in
studying the glorious past of the ancient Kmers. His enthusiasm
determined /255/ Governor Le Myre de Vilers in 1880 to place him
in charge of a mission for study and for the construction of a tele-
/647 graph line between Pnom-Penh and Bangkok. For five years he ex-
plored Cambodia in all directions, brought back abundant documenta-
tion from his voyages and the beginnings of the first map of the
land which he had crossed, then returned to France with thirteen
young Cambodians for whom the future Colonial School /Ecole
coloniale/ was created in Paris.

175* His ardent desire, expressed many times to his superiors, to com-
654 plete his first labors by means of methodical exploration of the
Laotian regions and to go "in the direction of those northern peoples
who had previously attracted Mouhot, Francis Garnier and de Carne"
and more recently Drs. Harmand and Neis (1), gained him an

1. Upon his return from the Tonkin expedition in 1874 Dr. Harmand had been placed in charge of a scientific expedition to Indo-China. It was in the course of this mission, the account of which appeared in the Tour du Monde ("Le Laos et les populations sauvages de l'Indochine") that he explored, in 1877, Lower and Middle Laos from Bassac to Lakhone and from Lakhone to Hue, crossing the Kemmarat, exploring the Se-Bang-Hien and gaining Hue by way of the Se-Tchepone. He thus proved for the first time that it was possible to go from the banks of the Mekong to the shore of Annam.

P. Neis, a naval doctor who was also given a scientific mission in Lower Laos by the Ministry of Education in 1882, had been told by M. Le Myre de Vilers as he passed through Singapore of the more immediate interest which the exploration of the regions situated between Luang-Prabang and Tonkin would hold. Given further information by Dr. Harmand, who was then consul in Bangkok, he went up the Mekong and reached the plateau of Tran-Ninh, but the Ho incursions forced him back to Luang-Prabang where he stayed for eight months (1883) without being able to resume his eastward march. He had to content himself with returning to Bangkok by way of Xieng-Sen and Xieng-Mai.

appointment /256/ as second-class vice-consul in Luang-Prabang 175*
with the duty "of seeking means of communication joining the 654
regions whose possession we claim to Annam and Tonkin." After
a stay of only three and a half months in France he returned to
Bangkok in the following March, impatient to turn his dream into
a reality, but he had reckoned without the ill will of the Siamese
authorities.

Provisory agreement of May 7, 1886. On May 7, 1886 a 648*
provisory agreement was signed sanctioning the creation of the 175*
French vice-consulate, but a clever draft of the agreement im-
plicitly recognized, as a guarantee, Siam's authority over the
Laotian principality. The Bangkok government flattered itself
that it would obtain the ratification of this act before the repre-
sentative of the Republic reached his post, and that the latter's
role would therefore be limited to defining the limits of "Siamese
Laos." The Quai d'Orsay had become more circumspect, however,
and reserved its /257/ acceptance until it received the first re-
ports of its representative (1). Thus Pavie was refused his exequatur

1. Pavie's recommendations and the dramatic events of June 1887 caused all notions of ratification to be abandoned.

and had to set forth "as a simple traveler" after waiting six months
for his passports -- just the time needed by the Chao-Meun to ful-
fill his mission in every particular. Pavie then had to take the
longest route by way of Xieng-Mai, where his progress was further
delayed for two months while the elephants necessary for his convoy
were collected.

FIRST PAVIE MISSION (1887-1889).

He did not reach Luang-Prabang until February 10, 1887, ac- 484
companied by eight Cambodians who showed themselves to be com- 648*
panions of the utmost fidelity and devotion (recruited for the most 175*
part, however, in a single day at Pnom-Penh) and by a Siamese
functionary "Whose duty it was to assist him in his relations with
the authorities of the country." Scarcely had he arrived before he
fell under the charm "of this delicate landscape which suddenly 000
takes on development through the action of a restfully gentle light."
From the right bank, where he proposed to build his dwelling, he
did not tire of admiring "the most /258/ beautiful site in Laos,

175* Annamite prince Thuyet, the former regent of the empire, whose
648* withdrawal to Muong-Lai (1) he admitted having aided and who had

1. After the dispersion of the bands Thuyet went to China under the protection of Deo-van-Tri.

granted him possession of all these territories.

On a map which he had had made he showed his interlocutor, who was stunned by his voluble eloquence, the Siamese borders which would henceforth be located beyond the Twelve Cantons, "dependencies of the principality of Luang-Prabang /263/ whose subjection to Siam France cannot fail to recognize, in accordance with the terms of the Treaty which at this very moment is submitted to its Parliament for ratification."

175* Of all these declarations, which at least had the merit of being
648* clear, Pavie could for the moment retain only the possibility of re-
654 suming his journey so as to pursue one of the essential goals of his mission, namely the finding of a practicable route joining the Mekong and Tonkin.

A false start for Tonkin (April 1887). He therefore set out on March 30, went up the Nam-Ou as far as Muong-Ngoi and was heading towards the watershed between the Mekong and the Black River when, on April 17, he came across some fugitives carried by a dozen "freshly cut" bamboo rafts who told him that many armed bands had captured Muong-Theng that very night, that they were preparing to march on the capital and that "everyone had fled to the woods." He returned to Muong-Ngoi, from which he sent a courier to Luang-Prabang with this disturbing news. A week later he received a reply from the Siamese leader, who assured him that no importance should be attached to the matter, but that since the season was decidedly beginning to appear highly unfavorable it would be /264/ prudent for him to return to Luang-Prabang or, better still, to Bangkok. When he persisted in his desire to continue ahead his terrified boatmen threatened to abandon him. He was obliged to retrace his journey and return to Luang-Prabang, which he reached on May 10 only to learn the surprising news of the departure of the Chao-Meun and of the first Kaluong

648* definitely on the program of reconnaissance to be carried out for the
175* "commission of delimitation" with his new colleagues, the officers
/854/ Cupet and Nicolon, who had been chosen to help him in his topographical work (1).

1. In his profound satisfaction with the results obtained jointly with Colonel Pernot, Pavie was henceforth fully determined to "give" Laos to France. He notes this under the date of March 23 in his travel journal, in the odd rhythmical style peculiar to him: "I say the ideal -- which has possessed me -- of making of Laos -- a French land -- with the consent -- of its inhabitants."

Return to Luang-Prabang and voyage to Hanoi (March-May 1888). The latter had just reached Luang-Prabang as he himself arrived there (March 26). There he also found the Phya Surrissak who had arrived a few days previously with his troops and his hostages. A gentle calm reigned in the city, and bold comments were ventured on the demoralization of the bands which had been driven back by the French and on the discouragement of the Siamese agents "whose only thought now was to /278/ manage some honorable retirement in the Twelve Cantons." Everyone joyously awaited the return of the good king Oun-Kham to his capital, word of whose passage "in great pomp" had just reached Paklay.

The interview between Surrissak and Pavie was highly courteous and almost cordial. The two men, each of whom served their country in their own way but with equal devotion, could not prevent themselves in the long run from feeling a sentiment of reciprocal esteem for one another, Pavie judging with his habitual benevolence the Siamese leader who was a slave to his orders but always amiable and congenial, and the latter attracted in spite of himself to the astonishing Frenchman whose even temper and simple frankness in all circumstances seemed to him to be the manifestations of a prodigious cleverness and the peak of rascality. Pavie did not hide from him the results of the expedition which he had just finished, nor his firm intention to claim the Twelve Cantons as dependencies of Annam. As for fixing the frontiers, he thought this would be possible only after completion of the studies which his assistants were about to undertake and the further reconnaissance which he himself proposed to make towards Hanoi to the northeast across the regions which were still occupied /279/ by the Black Flags of Ong-Ba, one of Luu-Vinh-Phuoc's lieutenants whose submission he was counting on.

With this double purpose, he entrusted the consular post to 648*
Nicolon, who was specially assigned to the Luang-Prabang "sector, "175*
and set out on April 8 accompanied by Cupet for Takhoa by way of Ngoi, Son and Muong Hett where the latter was to leave him and continue his operations in Tran-Ninh. He also took with him three of Lai's captives (1) whom Surrissak had handed over to him --

1. Cam Houil, Deo-van-Tri's brother; Cam Doi, his brother-in-law and chief of the canton of Tuan-Giao where Pavie had met the Pernot column; and a talahie (captain) of the Black Flags.

not without hesitation -- and of whom he was able to make convinced allies within a few days. As he reached Hett he was accosted by a group of grief-stricken women who asked him to have mercy on their husbands, a group of twenty or so pirates who had been captured weapons in hand by the French outpost of Son-La and who were to be shot. Pavie at once dispatched a courier asking the leader of the Son-La post to suspend all warlike acts until further orders. This gesture of clemency was at once rewarded, for when Ong-Ba learned of it he came at once to thank Pavie for having saved the lives of twenty of his men, offered him the hospitality of his post and /280/ gave him three confidential emissaries who were to take his submission to Hanoi.

The trip was completed without further incident. General Begin gave Pavie an extremely warm welcome and received kindly the Chinese delegates who had trusted in him. Then without losing any time and so as to allow the government of the colony to draw /654/
some profit from the knowledge of the country which he had just acquired, Pavie gave the general a political study including a complete program for pacification and for the gradual establishment of our authority over the cantons of the Black River. The letter by which he was thanked for his work deserves being quoted almost in its entirety, for it eloquently sums up the task accomplished and "goes to the point" by illuminating with precision this first step in our settlement in northern Indo-China:

Hanoi, July 28, 1888.

"General Begin, commander-in-chief of the troops of Indo-China, to Monsieur Pavie, vice-consul of France in Luang-Prabang, Hanoi.

648* Grasse arrived on March 24 and established himself at Nape, and five
175* days later Pavie left for Hanoi where he reported /289/ the results of
his investigations. The authority which was henceforth attributed to
648* his person and to his opinions was so great that he was able to persuade
175* both the Quai d'Orsay and the Bangkok government, without any dis-
654 cussion or delay, that it would be necessary to organize a new ex-
● ploratory mission which by ethnographical studies and a complete
topographical survey of the left bank of the Mekong from Yunnan to
Cambodia would once and for all prevent all risk of conflict and all
future disputes in the matter of the frontier. Since the ministry of
Foreign Affairs wanted to consult with him personally in Paris about
the work which had been accomplished and the new program to be
elaborated -- and inasmuch as the Siamese government had suggested
suspending all negotiations in his absence -- Pavie agreed with the
Siamese leaders on a reciprocal observation of the status quo until
such time as their governments should have reached a decision relative
to the territorial questions, and embarked for France where he arrived
on June 12 (1889).

After three years of efforts, the upshot of his campaign was the conclusion that Bangkok's claims to Laotian territories were everywhere subject to question. When Vacle showed surprise that the Siamese /290/ had not invoked the question of the watershed and especially that of the Thai race in Cammon, rather than the fable of the pirates, Pavie replied with an extremely clear exposé of his opinion of the Siamese thesis, to wit:

"Politically speaking the geography and ethnography of Siamese lands are within the province of its diplomats only and not of its soldiers. Invoking these two pretexts, if they had never been preceded by claims, would not have justified in Siam's own eyes the sudden invasion of these territories. The incursions of pirates, which actually occurred in the north, had constituted a pressing danger which it warded off. Although such raids did not occur here, it saw in them a pretended excuse.

"When its fault or error had been seen by our side, good sense decreed that it should withdraw as it had come. It is obvious that Siam has no such course in mind, for it has great hopes of the discussions which it thinks will go on until our side grows weary.

"For your edification on the other points, those of the limits and races, here is the question if it should arise. The watershed does not provide Siam with any means for determining the frontier either on the British side nor on the French side. It is an exception for

Burma and for Cambodia, and as for Annam, the mere mention of 648*
the claim which /291/ Siam recently had to the highlands of the 175*
Black River, or the claim which it still has to the thousand sources 654
of the coastal rivers in the north of Annam (canton of the Huapanh, region of Tran-Ninh), would destroy any contrary opinion and make any discussion on such a subject ridiculous.

"The ethnography is quite another matter. Our reply might well be to ask if they would give us back the Cambodians. We might also say that the Siamese people is composed mainly of Thais, but that four countries beside it each contain a much larger number, these being Burma and China, Tonkin and Laos. Would Siam, the smallest of them all, have the pretension to swallow them all up? And what would it say if one of the stronger ones had the idea of uniting them all?" (1)

1. Mission Pavie, Vol. VII, pp. 270-271.

These explanations, which were given in confidence to the future "government commissioner" of Luang-Prabang who did not then know that he was to hold this office, were developed by Pavie when he reached Paris to the officials of the Quai d'Orsay, and the latter made them their own. They were to become the basis of French argumentation in the subsequent discussions with the representatives of Siam, and a few years later their basic solidity was to find its reward in Siamese renunciation and in the creation of Indo-Chinese Laos in accordance with /292/ Pavie's most heartfelt desires -- that is to say, "with the consent of its inhabitants."

SECOND PAVIE MISSION (1889-1891).

But in 1889 we were still far from our goal. Pavie employed the five months of his stay in France to organize his second mission, the program and content of which were determined by common agreement by Spuller, the minister of Foreign Affairs, and Etienne, the undersecretary of State for the colonies. To Pavie's first colleagues, who were particularly responsible for the topographical work, were added specialists in the natural sciences and in commercial and industrial work. "These latter were to study the question of means of communication by land and by river, to set up trading posts, to collect samples, to examine the trading procedures now in use and to determine the nature and value of the products of the Mekong basin" (1). A company was formed under

1. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos (Posthumous

648* edition), Paris, 1911./, p. 9.
175*
654 the name French Syndicate of Upper Laos, which placed a first ship-
/439/ ment of fifteen tons of merchandise at the expedition's disposal.

Pavie set sail again on November 17 for /293/ Bangkok, where he stayed for only two weeks, just long enough to make contact again with our representative in Siam and to reopen negotiations with the Siamese foreign minister, who was specially appointed for the purpose by King Chulalongkorn.

On January 23, 1890 he reached Hanoi and rejoined his old and his new companions (including, among the latter, the embassy attache Lefevre-Pontalis, the vice-consul Lugan, the trader Macey, Professor Counillon, the Postal Commissioner de Coulgeans, the naturalist Le Dantec and the officers Riviere, Friquegnon, de Malglaive, Dugast and Cogniard). He divided them into several groups of operators who scattered on February 3 throughout Tran-Ninh, Cammon and the region of Stung-Treng, while he himself set out for Luang-Prabang with a last group of "fervent disciples," where he arranged to meet all the members of the mission six months later so that they could coordinate their first labors over the winter months.

Duly provided, through the intermediary of Governor General Piquet, with the authority of the king of Cambodia and that of the emperor of Annam for settling questions of frontier delimitation, and with a passport from the Chinese government /294/ which would eventually allow him to explore the Yunnanese frontiers, he first
/624/ went to Muong-Lai where Deo-van-Tri was waiting for him. Faithful to his promise, now that all his brothers had all been freed Cam-Sinh's son awaited his arrival so that he could offer himself to the French authorities, "placing all his pride in giving himself up to that man who had restored calm to his land" (1).

1. Cf. Mission Pavie, "Geographie et Voyages," Vol. II, p. 12.

Pavie had an enchanted voyage. Although the magnificent valley of the Black River no longer held for him the powerful attraction of the unknown, still he felt a profound joy as he daily noted the changes for the better which had occurred since his last trip among
/727/ these peoples. "The influence of Pennequin (who had accompanied
/178/ him with Vacle and Lefevre-Pontalis) was there, clearly marked at each step... no more Flags in the well-known colors, all had

departed... tranquillity was established to such a degree that one 654
would have thought the recent past was quite remote." 648*
175*

Submission of Deo-van-Tri (April 1890). He met Deo-van-Tri
on April 7. Under his proud exterior, the heir of the great feudal 175*
lords of the Thai cantons could not conceal /295/ his feelings of 636
deep emotion and gratitude from the liberator of his family, and Pavie knew that this old adversary of his country was henceforth won over for good and all. As the first proof that he had rallied to the French cause, Deo-van-Tri gave him the seal which had been delivered to the sovereigns of Laos by China and stolen by his own Hos when Luang-Prabang was sacked (1), then he returned some thirty

1. See above, p. 191, note 1. Pavie writes in Vol. II, p. 21: "It (the seal) constitutes a document establishing the vassaldom of this land (Luang-Prabang) to China, whose rights over it have become ours."

women and children from the Laotian capital who had been held captive ever since 1887. Finally, in "simple and worthy" language, he expressed his ardent desire to enter into active and devoted cooperation with the mission. During the days which followed he conversed at length of his family's past, of his own, of that of the cantons, of "the good which he saw could be done for the general prosperity of the region, of his campaigns with Luu-vinh-Phuoc, of his campaign in Luang-Prabang and his conduct towards the proscribed regent of Annam to whom he had been devoted in his misfortune and who, once he had reached safety thanks to him, had tried to have him massacred for fear that he might later reveal the secret of his sanctuary."

/296/ Pavie persuaded him without difficulty to accompany him as far as Theng, and their life together during five weeks was enough to ensure Deo-van-Tri's attachment to the French leader and his companions. Sure of him and certain that he had his confidence, even while journeying along Pavie commissioned him to organize administrative transports on the Black River and to make preparations for a voyage of exploration which he planned to make with him at the beginning of winter along the Yunnanese border and as far as the western frontier of the Sip-Song-Panas to fix the limits of the Thai cantons of the Upper Mekong where the last Chinese bands were still flourishing.

phantom king (1) who had remained "under the guardianship of a 642
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1. Chao-Kham-Souk, one of Chao-Houy's sons (see above 647
p. 168 and p. 177, note 2) who had been placed on the /175•/
throne by Bangkok in 1863. His fief had been dismembered by the treaty of 1893 and was in reality no longer anything but a Siamese province. He was to die in 1899.

Siamese agent of an inferior type." At Khong he met Commander Tournier, who had been placed in charge of the Legion troops stationed between Stung-Treng and the islands of Khone, and who was also invested with civil powers in the muongs of the left bank while awaiting the imminent arrival of administrators from Cochinchina (this latter country was to organize the southern Laotian provinces at the expense of its own budget). On August 9 he wit- 654
nessed the arrival of Lieutenant-commander Simon, the leader of 505
a hydrographic mission /329/ which had been planned the year before by M. Delcasse. This mission was to employ the sloops La Grandiere and Massie and to go on surveillance duty on the Middle and Upper Mekong. With this purpose it was to: 1) trans-ship its cargo at Khone; 2) cross the dangerous defiles of Kemmarat by every possible means; and 3) stop "only where it was materially and absolutely impossible to get through." At the cost of tremendous effort the mission was to reach Luang-Prabang on September 1 and Tang-Ho on October 25, 1895 at a distance of 2500 kilometers from the sea and an altitude of more than four hundred meters (1). On

1. The bold results of the Simon mission demonstrated the possibility of organizing a regular navigation service from Saigon to Luang-Prabang by using either steam sloops or pirogues, depending on the season. The service was later established.

August 13 Pavie reached Pnom-Penh and then went to Hatien where 648•
the gunboat Vipere was waiting for him. The latter took him to 175•
Bangkok on the 20th, and scarcely had he landed when he hastened to inform both the Quai d'Orsay and Prince Devawongse of the discoveries he had made all along the Mekong, namely that the treaty had not been made known to the populace and that the king of Siam's proclamation relative to the return of former inhabitants of the left bank of the river to their own country was still unknown

648* everywhere. In the restricted zone on the /330/ right bank troops
175* of soldiers were still circulating and Siamese functionaries had taken the place of the local authorities. In that part of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang which was situated on the right bank of the Mekong there was an obvious attempt -- and one clearly contrary to the treaty -- to transform the region into a Siamese province.

654 Without taking time to argue, he merely cited the fact that Chantaboun was our guaranty and that its evacuation could necessarily not be envisaged until complete satisfaction had been given to our innumerable claims. Then he embarked on September 3 for Tonkin, where he rapidly organized the important campaign which he was to undertake along the upper Black River and the Upper Mekong for the purpose of drawing up a map of the region on the very spot.

654 Delimitation of the frontier with China (December 1894). Ac-
648* companied by the Messrs. Lefevre-Pontalis, Caillat and Oum, by
175* Commander Tournier, Dr. Lefevre and several topographical officers, and wondrously aided by Deo-van-Tri who took great pride in providing, first in French territory and then in Chinese territory, for provisions at the various stops, for finding coolies and horses, for the chance repairs /331/ which the paths required, etc. (1), he reached

/186/ 1. "Never had our excellent assistant taken more pains to make us succeed. He thus manifested his gratitude not only for the past but also for the present, for he knew that the French government was determined not to cede China any of his territories, part of which the Chinese agents had had hopes of taking from him. He knew that he was indebted to us for having shed light on this question which was such a grave one for him and his people. He loved us all the more for it, and his people vied with their leader in their enthusiasm for us." Mission Pavie, Vol. II, p. 298.

Muong-Le in December where without any difficulty he established the frontier line in full agreement with the two Chinese commissioners. The latter, knowing the place he held in the cantons and the perseverance with which he had steadily aimed at their pacification, manifested a perfectly correct and conciliatory attitude (2).

/642/ 2. The agreement awarded the two Muong-Hou to France.

648* As soon as they met the two missions, British and French, set to
175* work. Living side by side, after three months of the same kind of life their members were on terms "of cordial simplicity." Since they made the same maps they reached the same conclusions, and finally judged that the creation of a buffer state would only result in creating a permanent source of intrigues on their frontiers and a true den for rebels, pirates and highwaymen. The British government had the good sense to accept Scott's arguments and not to adhere blindly to its first claims. By the terms of the declaration of January 15, 1896, which was supplemented by that of April 8, 1904, it finally recognized the thalweg of the Mekong as the frontier between its Burmese possessions and French Laos. As a consequence the territory of Muong-
/334/ Sing was permanently awarded to us in March 1896.

Dissolution of the Pavie mission (August-September 1895). This happy state of agreement -- a prelude to the "Entente cordiale" -- was the last manifestation of August Pavie's activity in Indo-China. For the rest, his task had been accomplished, at least the one which he had set himself seven years before: "to make of Laos a French land" (1). If the task was not complete it was nonetheless "fertile

/114 1. The geographic results which were also achieved by
654/ Pavie and his colleagues were immense. The distance which they had covered in their journeys was more than 30,000 kilometers, and the area of the territories explored was about 675,000 square kilometers. Each member's explorations went into an atlas and ten volumes dealing with the ethnography, literature and natural history of the regions traversed. (See the bibliographic index at the end of the present work.)

in its means and great and beautiful in its results," and if there were errors to correct and gaps to fill Pavie was certainly not responsible for them. Moreover, he was also to be asked to remedy faults which he had not committed. The just claims which he had formulated both against Siam's interpretation of the treaty and against the treaty itself had, in fact, attracted the attention /335/ of his department. The latter being desirous of reaching an overall decision governing all questions relative to the frontiers which Indo-China and Siam had in common (Cambodia and Laos), it reopened negotiations in Paris and summoned Pavie to "illuminate" the talks which were to be begun

648* Siamese high commission" meeting in Vientiane and presided over
175* by the superior resident in Laos was established to study all questions arising from the application of the new system, including definition and /352/ delimitation of the river frontier; determination of the regime to be applied to the demilitarized zone; eventual modification of the system of leased concessions which had previously been granted to France on the right bank; and elaboration of regulations
/654/ governing the program of public maintenance and improvement works along the Mekong, policing the river, policing navigation, sanitary police, fishing in the river, etc. The carrying out of these extremely liberal provisions, which was begun in all sincerity in January 1928, justifies us in believing that a true entente cordiale has been reached to the greater profit of the two neighboring States.

ACCESSION TO THE THRONE OF H. M. SISAVANG-VONG, KING OF LUANG-PRABANG, 1886. -- KING 1904.

643* King Zakarine died in Luang-Prabang on March 25, 1904 at the
175* age of sixty-three, at the very moment when the agreement which we made with Siam at this time fulfilled his last desires with respect to the integrity of his domains. The heir apparent Sisavang-Vong, who had just finished his studies in Paris, was on the way to Indo-China. He was back in his country's capital in time to attend the cremation ceremonies. /An unpaged photograph is inserted between pp. 352 and 353: "H. M. Sisavang-Vong, king of Luang-Prabang."--Translator/

643* /353/ The Laotians of today. On March 4, 1905 the new
178 sovereign solemnly received his investiture from Superior Resident Mahe acting in behalf of the government of the Republic. Profoundly attached to France, H. M. Sisavang-Vong has for more than a quarter of a century exercised, under our supervision and with the utmost loyalty, his high and benevolent authority over his faithful and trusting people. Thanks to his prestige, and to his great personal activity, and thanks also to the precious help given us by his dignitaries, some of whom have the most enlightened and active comprehension of the civilizing mission which France has set herself in the Far East, the Laotians of the kingdom have wholeheartedly accepted our methods of social renovation and of making their magnificent land productive. They are awaking from the kind of lethargic somnolence into which their historical calamities had plunged them. They have regained the consciousness of their political personality

149: Reinach--6 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial 648 175

Such overt acts were the certain prelude to a more complete annexation, and finally shook off our torpor and quickened our vigilance.

Since the king of Annam, our new protégé, had rights over this region which were equal and in several cases superior to those of Siam, our intervention became necessary. It resulted in the treaty of May 7, 1886 (1).

(1) See Appendix VI.

[10] So that the treaty should not remain mere words, the Government of the French Republic sent M. Pavie (1) on a geographical and 175 127 654

(1) Now minister plenipotentiary.

political mission in Upper Laos and named him consul in Luang-Prabang, but without Siam's exequatur.

The work of this first mission provided precious information on all the regions invaded by the Hôs and later occupied by the Siamese.

With the help of Commander Pennequin (2), our valiant consul

(2) Now brigadier general; former interim governor general of Madagascar.

succeeded in driving the last bandits back to China and made the advance outposts which had been established by the Siamese withdraw to the far limits of the Mékong basin. Turning this situation to their profit, and now strong in the knowledge which they had acquired, our diplomats concluded with the court of Bangkok, so as to be able to face any difficult eventuality in the future, as well as to give us time for reflection, the arrangement of March 27, 1889, by the terms of which Siam agreed to respect the status quo (3).

(3) "By the terms of this agreement the Siamese troops were to halt their eastward march, and then evacuate the region of Cammon. A Siamese 'Kha-luong' was allowed to remain in this province for the time being, and we obtained the right to construct a military post at Napé." E. Picanon, 1900. Le Laos français. [648]

149: Reinach--7 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

SIAM'S VIOLATION OF THE 1889 ARRANGEMENT
VARIOUS INCIDENTS
OCCUPATION OF LOWER LAOS--NAVAL DEMONSTRATION AT PAK-NAM
ULTIMATUM AND TREATY OF OCTOBER 3, 1893

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The arrangement of 1889 was unfortunately much too lenient. Even several years after the fall of the great and clairvoyant patriot Jules Ferry, however, and as a consequence of the profound discredit into which the whole colonial idea and cause had fallen among us, our political situation made it impossible for us to take more effective measures and to assert the rights of our protégé, the emperor of Annam, in a more pressing way. [11] Nor could we give full satisfaction to the completely legitimate requests for protection which were made by the king of Luang-Prabang.

Our political difficulties were perfectly well-known to the Siamese government. Emboldened by our hesitation, it consented, in agreement with Great Britain, to arrangements and delimitations of frontiers in the Shan States which annihilated the plan conceived by Jules Ferry in 1883 and canceled all the results of the Deloncle treaty concluded in 1884 (1) with Upper Burma, which was then

(1) See Appendices VII and VIII.

independent. This treaty, in effect, recognized as limits of "French Tonkin the Mékong River, from the point where it leaves China as far as Xieng-Sèn," including the Pahn-Na on the left bank, the principality of Muong-Sing and the States of Pou-Kha, Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sèn to the west of Nam-Hou.

In exchange for this territory--a gracious gift which cost it all the less in that it did not belong to it--Great Britain obtained Karennée (or Karèng) from Siam. The latter territory was situated in the valley of the Salouen, and had been under Siamese domination for centuries.

The delimitation of the Anglo-Siamese frontiers, including those of the Shan States of Xieng-Mai, Lam-Poun and Muong-Haut, was completed only in 1892.

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In 1889 M. Pavie was sent on another mission and was accompanied by many civil and military assistants whose particular province was to be topography and the natural sciences. A

commercial and industrial mission was attached to the former, and it was to study the question of means of communication by land and river, to create trading posts, to collect samples, to examine the commercial methods in use and to determine the nature and value of the products of the Mékong basin. Funds for this mission, which left France with an initial stock of fifteen tons of various kinds of merchandise, were provided by a syndicate which had just been formed, with an initial capital of 100,000 francs, under the name of French Syndicate [12] of Upper Laos. It included representatives of Parisian trade and industry who had united for the experiment thanks to the initiative of M. Léon Tharel, the president of the group.

175 654 433 [439]

All throughout 1890 and 1891 the missions fulfilled their tasks with ardor, not without constant struggle against the implicit hostility of the Siamese, which although occasionally concealed under an [Illustration here] affable outward mask nonetheless continued to manifest itself and created obstacles everywhere in the hope of discouraging the valiant explorers and causing their work to fail.

In spite of the difficulties which they encountered, the two missions were successful in their delicate enterprise and the results of the latter were most significant. From that point on we were in possession of precise information concerning the whole region extending from Yunnan to Cambodia.

What was more, by continuing the tradition begun by Mouhot, the [13] Lagrée mission, Harmand, Néis, etc. we had made contact with the Laotian people and made them know and love the French name. In us they saluted their future liberators and the ones who would come to free them from the brutal and detested Siamese yoke.

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Finally--a fact of no less importance--thanks to the activities of the commercial mission, to the trading posts which it had established and to the contacts and arrangements which it had prepared, we were in possession from that time on of private commercial interests in the Mékong basin. Thus greater force was given to the rights which we already had to intervene in Laos against Siamese intrigues in the name of our protégés, the emperor of Annam and the king of Cambodia.

Frightened and surprised by the results which France had achieved in so short a time in the Mékong valley, despite the ambushes which it had laid on all sides and the hostile maneuvers which it had supported, Siam began to fear that France might invade its Laotian territories. It then invoked the friendship of Great Britain and

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503 member of the Lagrée mission, in 1891 (1), "have resulted in a plan

[113] (1) L. Delaporte, La grande voie commerciale de l'Indo-Chine, 1891.

505 to establish a complete service serving the course of the Mékong, in order to divert its trade to the heart of the kingdom of Siam via the fine Sé-Moun river and then take it by railway to the capital and the sea. This plan is now in the process of full achievement. Two steamships will very shortly be introduced, one on the middle course of the river between Bassac and Kemmarat with its headquarters at Pak-Moun at the river junction, and the other on the Sé-Moun between Pak-Moun and Khorat at the point where the river ceases to be navigabl and this service will be completed by a railway joining Khorat to Bangkok."

505 It was thus a question of out-distancing the Siamese sloops. Governor General Piquet himself became interested in the matter
503 and embarked on board the Cantonnais (October 1891) in the hope of passing the Khône rapids and showing the French flag in the upper
654 reach. The Argus, under the command of Ensign Guisrez and serving as a look-out ship for the Cantonnais, reached Khône and tried to reconnoiter the passage. The latter had been shown by the inhabitants to M. Pelletier and Dr. Mougeot, two Europeans who then held the concession to the large island of Ca-Lomnieu, and was accessible at certain times of the year to pirogues coming down the river. But the season was far advanced (it was the end of October). The low water made it impossible to attempt the desired trial, and the Cantonnais had to return to Saigon.

In the meantime the Argus anchored in the pass of Ka-Sedam between the rapids of Tat-Vai and Tat-Liou in order to complete the studies which had been begun and the exploration of the river as far upstream as possible. For more than two years this launch tried to negotiate the passes, but failed because of its large draft, its instability and its lack of speed.

The persevering energy and efforts of its commander were not lost, however, for they prepared the way for the work subsequently undertaken in these parts.

It being impossible to find a suitable passage for [65] [Illustration] [66] [Blank page] [67] steamships, a transshipment railway was built

across the island of Khône. It was further necessary to establish two docks, one a tidal dock and the other a launching basin, at South Khône and at North Khône, especially for the transshipment of launch cargoes.

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Lieutenant Commander Simon expressed himself as follows in a lecture which he delivered to the Geography Society [Société de Géographie] on May 15, 1896:

"Believing themselves protected, thanks to this natural barrier, from any repressive measures on our part, the Siamese had crossed the Mékong at Kemmarat, Lakhône and Outhène and were invading Annam little by little and establishing advance posts as little as three days away from Hué. This took place in 1892.

"The government became alarmed, and in order to satisfy solicitations by Cochinchina at the same time, it decided at the suggestion of M. Delcassé in March 1893 to purchase two screw-propelled gunboats, the La Grandière and the Massie, which were intended to exercise surveillance over the upper Mékong.

"These two ships were to be set afloat above the Khône waterfalls. From there they were to negotiate, by any possible means, the Kemmarat gorge which is particularly dangerous for its rapids, and then show their flag at daybreak in the great reach, presumably navigable, which extends from Kemmarat to Vien-Tiane and whose eastern bank includes Annamite Laos.

"Such was the object of the mission which was entrusted to us.

"It was at the same time a hydrographic mission whose work was to take the Khône waterfalls, which steam navigation has today brought within four days' journey of Saigon, as its point of departure and stop only when it was materially impossible to proceed any further.

"As far upriver as possible and as far as possible, these were the orders of the day.

"The ships, which were demountable in five sections, were assembled and set afloat at Saigon in August 1893, and their transshipment past the waterfalls was accomplished in one piece, that is to say without disassembling them, on a carriage which was built for the purpose and which rolled along a track. The track, which was one meter wide, started at the downstream end of the falls, that is to say in the lower basin, and ended in the upper basin after crossing the island of Khône.

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"The administration of public works of Cochinchina was particularly responsible for carrying out the work. The operation was directed by Messrs. Gubiand, the engineering director of public works, and Crouzat, the chief clerk of the department of civil engineering [conducteur principal des ponts et chaussées], and was fully successful despite the haste, the difficulties and the mishaps and tribulations which we had to undergo.

"On October 31, 1893, five months after the mission's arrival in Saigon, two ships, the Massie and the Ham-Luong, had passed the Khône waterfalls.

"The Ham-Luong was a sloop from Cochinchina which was sent at the last [68] moment and in all haste to replace the La Grandière numerically and provisorily, the latter being disabled below the falls as the result of grave damage to the engine."

After they had been floated in the upper reach the Massie and the Ham-Luong pushed on to Bassoc immediately, then to the junction with the Sé-Moun. The Massie finally reached Kemmarat on February 28, 1894, after successfully passing the 120 kilometers of rapids just below it. There the Massie had to wait for high water before it could pass the Keng-Sa, one of the most dangerous obstacles in this region. In the high water season of 1894 it was in the Vien-Tiane reach, where it showed the French flag over an extent of more than 500 kilometers. On September 5, 1894, the La Grandière went to Khône in its turn, on its way from one reach to another, and then in November caught up with the Massie which it soon passed. Finally in August 1895 Lieutenant Commander Simon took the La Grandière through the series of rapids stretching over a distance of 350 kilometers between Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang, which he reached on September 1.

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"This brilliant success demonstrated France's power to the friendly and hostile populations of the banks of the Mékong. Through the more frequent sight of our officers, our weapons and our cruising steamships, which ammounted to ambulatory offices, it strengthened the work accomplished by our diplomats on the left bank, which belonged to us henceforth" (1).

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(1) Lanier, L'Asie, 1898. Selected readings in geography.

We rejoice at being able to render deserved homage here to the abilities of Commander Simon who, in the midst of the greatest

difficulties, was able to complete the daring work which he had assumed. He did not fear to turn his own hand to the task by giving largely of himself and often remaining in a pirogue in the middle of the river, despite the heat of the sun, in order to seek out a passage for his gunboat.

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But Luang-Prabang was not to be the terminus of the La Grandière's journey.

[69] "The difficulties which had long been pending in western upper Laos had just entered into a more acute phase. It was more than ever timely and urgent for us to strengthen our diplomatic arguments with the help of effective justifications of our rights based on accomplished facts.

"We had to show our colors still farther upstream, at least as high as Xieng-Khong, that is to say, in the heart of the territories which others had attempted to detach from our influence by proposing that they remain neutral" (1).

(1) Lieutenant Commander Simon, op. cit. [Lecture delivered to the Société de Géographie on May 15, 1896.]

On September 8, the La Grandière resumed its march upriver. "Finally we reached our last stage, Tang-Hô, on October 25, 1895. We were a day's journey from Xieng-Lap, at 20° 40' N. latitude, 2500 kilometers from the sea and at an altitude of more than 400 meters. Here the La Grandière was stopped once and for all, for in the present state of things Tang-Hô must be regarded as the limit of all possible ventures in steam navigation, at least when the water level is low" (2).

(2) Lieutenant Commander Simon, op. cit.

These conclusions did not give pause to Lieutenant Commander Mazeran, for he took his gunboat further still. It is now at Xieng-Lap, immobilized and unable to return downriver. There is some question of disarming it and attempting to bring it down to Luang-Prabang by surrounding it with a bamboo sheath. It could at least be used and render some service in Luang-Prabang.

The results of Lieutenant Commander Simon's mission relative to the navigability of the reaches of Bassac and Vien-Tiane enabled the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des

505 Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine] to introduce a regular service
503 of steam launches there. To this end the company signed a contract
654 with the general government of Indo-China, the purpose of which was to organize a complete service from Saigon to Luang-Prabang for passengers and merchandise, using steamships and pirogues by turns, depending on the navigability of the river and on the season. The task was a difficult one, for it was first necessary to enlarge the [70] tidal docks and launching basins and to rebuild, strengthen and correct the railway on the island of Khône to permit the transshipment of three steam launches weighing seventy tons each (1). This [Illustration

(1) The gunboats Massie and La Grandière weighed only twenty-two tons each.

here] was a veritable tour de force which had to be repeated three times. During the high water period of 1893 (2) the operation was

(2) For this transshipment, as for that of 1894, human labor was the driving force. Only since August 1898 has a locomotive run along this railway.

carried out with complete success, [71] [Illustration] [72] [Blank page] [73] thanks to the combined work and efforts of the local administration and the River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des Messageries fluviales]. Today one of these ships, the Garcerie, is assigned to regular service in the Bassac reach between Khône and Pak-Moun. The two others, the Trentinian and the Colombert, have followed the path laid out for them by the gunboats through the Kemmarat rapids and provide service in the Vien-Tiane reach over a distance of nearly 500 kilometers (1).

(1) Just recently the launch Hamluong, which is 22 meters long, has a draft of 1.3 meters and a speed of seven to eight knots, has gone upriver through the Kemmarat rapids under the command of the engineer Jeanneau and has reached Vien-Tiane where it is at the disposition of the Superior Resident.

503 Here, then, is an initial result achieved. During the high water
505 period steamships can provide service from Kratié to Khône. Others

132 Vegetation dries out then, and some plants and trees even lose their leaves. The earth cracks and pulverizes under the action of the drought and sun.

2. METEOROLOGICAL STATIONS

[654] The meteorological system of Laos includes:

1. Main stations:

Vien-Tiane, administrative capital of Laos and seat of the Superior Residency.

[112] 2. Secondary stations:

Luang-Prabang, Savannakhet, Khong, Attopeu.

3. SANITARY CONDITIONS

132 164 At the beginning of the rainy season the body is tired out after the excessive drought and heat of the last two months, and is predisposed to attack by the fever-bearing mosquitoes and various bacillae for which river water serves as a vehicle after it has watered the vegetation. It is then that the many different kinds of fever strike, with their characteristics varying depending on season, region, race, individual and temperament. Attacks which take a pernicious form are rare, however, both in the natives--who are nevertheless without preventive treatment--and in Europeans, who are better protected by a good diet and specific medication.

To be sure, in a form which may be more or less benign these attacks of paludism end, in the long run, by damaging even those temperaments which are most robust in appearance, especially if the latter suffer from any kind of stomach, liver or intestinal disorder. It is also at this time of the year, as well as during the first cold spells, that dysenteric diarrhea and diarrhea in the strict sense occur, striking both natives and Europeans.

The cause of these afflictions may be attributed, in May and June, to excessive ingestion of insufficiently ripe fruits and vegetables, and in November and December to nocturnal abdominal chills. The various liver ailments also strike during the changes in season.

Cholera is epidemic in the country, and reappears at more or less distant intervals. Each year, however, diarrheic cholerine claims a number of victims among the native population.

near their silkworm breeding houses, but it is unfortunate that the new 249
conditions in which the trees are placed should have an adverse effect 231
on silk production. On the plateaus and in the high valleys, in the
vicinity of land once occupied by villages, there are many mulberry
trees which have continued to survive. They send out new leaves
again even after the annual burnings of the forest clearings, and bear
leaves which are vigorous and have a more pithy appearance than
those of their fellows in the low, humid parts of the country. They
are also said to be preferable for feeding silkworms (2).

(2) See Appendix XXIV.

Local consumption absorbs the greater part of the silk production, 231
for the majority of Laotians, both men and women, use it in making 286
the garments which they wear.

We do not possess exact data on the total production of silk in Laos. It has been estimated at about twenty tons annually. The price varies from 400 to 500 francs per hundred kilograms.

OPIUM POPPIES. The opium poppy is cultivated by the Yaos and 276
the Meos, in northern Laos. Towards the end of the rainy season, [376] 249
in September, the poppy seeds are sowed broadcast on land from which 314
maize has just been harvested. Germination is activated by the last
rains of the season and the plant flowers at the beginning of December.
Harvesting is done shortly after the petals have fallen.

Closely spaced lengthwise incisions are made all along the surface of the capsule, allowing the plant juice to escape. It coagulates upon contact with the air and is collected daily until the plant has been completely exhausted (1).

(1) See Appendix XXV, report of M. Lussan, Cochinchina customs agent. The latter was sent on a mission to Upper Laos to experiment with growing opium poppies by less rudimentary methods than the ones in use among the Meos and the Yaos. [654]

PAPER TREES. There are several trees in Laos whose bark is used 249
to make paper. They seem to be of the mulberry type and are called 289
"Kok-Sa."

The paper is made by hand on forms, by extremely rudimentary methods. Its manufacture occupies several villages of northern Laos.

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Coffee. The coffee bushes which have been planted in Laos by way of experiment in different regions and at different altitudes, depending on the variety (Liberian or Arabian), seem to be thriving. A few small plantations, like those on the Black River (on the frontier of the Sib-Song-Chau-Thai) and at the mission of the Bahnars, are even said to be producing a full yield already. But these results are still too sketchy for us to be able to state that the cultivation of coffee in Laos is ready to leave the period of experimentation and be undertaken on a large scale.

If it is true, as some say, that planting coffee in Annam and Tonkin has been extremely disappointing, then this does not offer encouragement for trying this crop in Laos.

Jute. The fiber of this plant is in great demand for making grain sacks and cloth wrapping material known as gunny. Although some jute is grown in Annam and Tonkin, in Indo-China we are still dependent for this product on British India, which sends us large quantities of it. The cultivation of this plant might be tried in Laos, in the higher parts of the country.

III

FOREST PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION--REFORESTATION

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The administration of Laos has made an effort to remedy, insofar as possible, the indifference of the population as concerns conservation of forest resources. It has taken measures to facilitate the reforestation of hills and plateaus which have been cultivated as rais.

These measures were indispensable, if any attempt was to be made to prevent the hills and hillocks of Laos, as well as the mountainsides, from becoming bald and sterile over the years as has already occurred in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na and the northern regions. The heights do not have any trees or green foliage, the rock is bare on their [391] prominences, and only in the valleys which face to the north is there any soil containing vegetable matter.

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This deforestation and denudation are due to the annual burnings which spread from one rai to another at the time when the inhabitants turn to new clearings. Out of indifference they allow the fires to consume the young vegetation which was beginning to cover the old rais and which, by holding back the soil containing vegetable matter, was attenuating the destructive effects of erosion.

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Furthermore, the oft-repeated clearings cannot fail to have a certain influence on the atmospheric state of the region and on the constitution of the soil. Deforestation, in fact, brings about the denudation of high points all the way down to the rock which has not yet become decomposed, and rainwater, by carrying sterile alluvia down to the valley bottoms, partly obstructs the beds of rivers and causes the latter to overflow and erode their banks.

Furthermore, since clouds are no longer stopped by the forests which used to cover the heights they carry their fecundating water elsewhere at the very time when it is the most needed.

The result, in the last place, is a diminution in the yield from plains ricefields, which suffer from this insufficiency of natural irrigation.

Finally these clearings, made in a brutal, arbitrary and irrational manner, were causing the disappearance of useful varieties of trees forever. A little soda and potash is the only benefit to be drawn from combustion of the forests, and even this fertilizer is carried off by water in the following rainy season.

Henceforth, in accordance with the instructions published throughout the whole country by the superior administration of Laos and by the province administrators, cultivation on rais will be subject to the following regulations.

1. Sites to be cleared shall be determined by the local authorities, who shall choose land sufficiently far from old rais which are in the process of being reforested so that fires may be kept from spreading.

2. Rais in the process of being reforested shall be surrounded by a ditch [392] and by felled trees and brush. The owners of the nearest rais shall keep a careful watch, despite these precautions, in order to prevent fires from spreading.

3. When trees of a fine growth or of a useful variety are found on land which has been selected for the purpose of making a new rai, these shall be felled according to custom. But instead of burning them on the spot the woodcutters must push them off the limits of the rai and into a place safe from fire, so that they may later be utilized.

4. Furthermore, the local authorities shall oblige the inhabitants to sow or plant rapid-growing trees with roots sufficiently powerful to hold back the soil containing vegetable matter, over the whole area of abandoned rais.

By following the above procedure on all abandoned rais, it is to be hoped that they will be restored within fifteen or twenty years and will have enough humus so that they will again lend themselves to cultivation.

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When restored in this manner, their vegetation will reestablish the hygrometric regime of the region and the rational distribution of ground water.

FOREST PLANTATIONS

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Starting from the principle that trees of hardwood or precious varieties will rapidly disappear as soon as the forest riches of Laos are regularly exploited, a few administrators have thought that it would be wise to begin now and plant selected varieties.

This precaution will not seem either excessive or premature if one considers the time it takes for any tree whatsoever to reach full growth and acquire commercial value.

Since no reliance can be placed either on the people's initiative or on their willingness to concern themselves with plantings, it has been proposed that action be taken by way of authority. The inhabitants of each village, and particularly the registered inhabitants, would be forced to plant each year, in suitable spots which are easily accessible and near inhabited centers and watercourses, a certain number of trees of the [393] [Illustration] [394] [Blank page] [395] most useful varieties, which were well suited to the climate and soil of the region, and then forced to supervise their growth.

An example has already been provided in the way of teak plantations, for higher authorities had seeds of this precious tree distributed to the natives through their administrators.

The Laotians are so carefree and have so little concern for the morrow that many of them allowed the seeds to spoil without sowing them. It was necessary to issue orders and even make threats before the seeds were finally sowed.

One day we may therefore hope to see a great many teak trees rising from the ground where today there grow only the dwarfed and inferior quality trees of the forest glades. They will provide a source of inestimable wealth for the land (1).

(1) In Siam, teak exports represent an annual value of six to seven million francs.

Colonel Tournier, the Superior Resident in Laos, recently took the following measures for the conservation and reforestation of the teaks in the region of Xieng-Khong:

1. Designation by the Administration to the concessionnaire of trees which must be notched;

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2. The obligation on the part of the concessionnaire to rid the young teaks of the lianas which choke them;

3. The obligation to replant ten young teak shoots for every tree which is felled;

4. The obligation on the part of villages near groups of teaks to open up roads leading to these groups; a prohibition against making rais and cutting down trees without permission; the obligation to plant from fifty to a hundred teaks per house each year, depending on the remoteness of the village.

In return, the inhabitants of these villages need not fulfill the twenty days of labor drafts due each year.

Besides teak, we may recommend the planting of certain other trees, such as the "Mai-Niom-Pha" (mock mahogany), the "Mai-Thon" (mock walnut), the "Mai-Kha-Nioung" (mock rosewood), the "Mai-Lang-Dam" (ebony), etc.

The eucalyptus would doubtless grow well in certain regions of Laos.

PROVINCE EXPERIMENTAL GARDENS

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For several years now there have been experimental gardens in each commissionership. They serve as trial fields for the cultivation of certain European and Asian plants which are unknown or rare in Laos.

[396] These gardens are also schools of practical agriculture for the natives. Seeds and plants are distributed to the latter, and they are given extremely summary bits of information about certain plants whose cultivation would be advantageous from the point of view of commercial transactions. These gardens are destined to render services to future colonists, and the trials which are made there deserve encouragement.

Although not all heads of provinces possess the same degree of agricultural and horticultural knowledge, they devote the utmost zeal to making the most of their gardens. Seconded by their staff and guided by the enlightened counsels of the Superior Residency, of the department of Agriculture and of the directors of the botanical gardens of Indo-China, most of them have already achieved satisfactory results.

[113] The special periodicals such as the Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, the Revue des cultures coloniales, etc. which are sent to each commissioner are of invaluable help in this connection (1).

(1) Some of the libraries in the commissionerships contain a book

•654 241 of the highest merit entitled Petit traité d'Agriculture tropicale, by H.A. Alford Nicholls, translated from the English by E. Raoul (Paris, 1895, Challamel). This work, which is as complete as it is practical, cannot be too highly recommended.

IV

LIVESTOCK BREEDING

231 175 Without speaking of the poultry which goes to feed the population, the Laotians engage in breeding elephants, horses, buffalo, oxen, pigs, goats and silkworms.

Elephants. Elephant breeding is profitable, even [397] though this animal does not acquire any commercial value until about its fifth year. It is true that young elephants do not necessitate any special care or any expense, since they always go with their mother and provide for their own food.

In one part of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang, in a province on the right bank of the Mekong which numbers scarcely 13,000 inhatitants (Outhai-Tani), there were a hundred some domesticated elephants in 1898, plus twelve young ones which were the result of breeding. If the example of this province were followed throughout all Laos the number of elephants would rapidly increase, and within a relatively short time would constitute a new source of wealth for the country, one part alone of which was said to possess a million of these animals before the Siamese incursions (1).

(1) The kingdom of Luang-Prabang used to be called "Lan-Xang," The Land of the million elephants.

But with each invasion which Laos underwent, especially during the nineteenth century, the Siamese, the Annamites and the Cambodians did not fail to take turns despoiling it of this veritable wealth in order to increase their own.

231 In southern Laos, breeding consists mainly in the training of young animals which have been recently captured. Thus in the province of Ban-Mouang the vast plains of the Se-Kampho and the Sepien provide excellent pasturages for elephants. Indeed, there are always fifty or so newly captured animals in the vicinity of Ban-Pa-Pho, which are being trained for sale. It is to be regretted that these beautiful plains are not used for raising livestock in general and

[563] 231 The breed of horses in Laos is therefore continuing to degenerate. Certain Kha tribes (Djarais and Rades), however, still possess very fine specimens, but these Khas will not sell their horses and mares except with a great deal of urging and at a very high price. They never come and offer their horses to buyers, and only by chance can the latter discover any by traveling through their villages. It is a certain fact that most of the fine horses of Phu-Yen and Binh-Dinh come from the region of the Rades (1).

[654] (1) The establishment of a depot of stud-horses in Darlac, in the midst of these Kha tribes, may soon give excellent results from the point of view of production and breeding.

In southern Laos, no epizootic disease has yet been noted among horses. The same is not the case in northern Laos, where it causes great ravages every year in the province of Vien-Poukha. The progress of this epidemic has been described in the following manner by M. Garanger, former Government Commissioner at Vien-Poukha:

"Well before any exterior symptoms of the disease appear, the horse manifests a bad disposition, sulks over its food, carries its head low and is anxious to lie down. Its hair becomes dull.

"Then under the abdomen a swelling appears which extends from the breast to the testicles (to the vulva in mares). It rapidly increases in volume and grows as thick as a man's hand. The scrotum and penis (the vulva in mares) [400] take on an abnormal growth. Exploration by hand reveals considerable obstruction in the hollow space within the lower jaw, yet there is no discharge.

"The animal then has difficulty in walking, then the hindquarters act as though paralyzed. It falls down in the stable and remains down until death, which is not far off.

"The period of algidity varies in length. Old horses do not last more than seven or eight days after the swelling forms, while young animals may not die until around the twentieth day.

"The epidemic always strikes during the rainy season and seems especially active in July and August.

"If the carcass is opened after death it is found that the whole interior (viscera) is covered with thousands of little black dots the size of a pinhead. This disease seems to be extremely contagious. In vain did I practice isolation and burn three contaminated stables in succession. Yet it also breaks out spontaneously, since it struck at the same time in Vien-Poukha, in Xieng-Khong and in the brush,

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Years	Number of animals exported	Average purchase price in Laos	Sale price at outlet markets
		francs	francs
1898	103 Horses	50	112.50
1899	185 Horses	From 30 to 125	From 88.50 to 225
	14 Mares	From 30 to 75	From 40 to 95

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Finally, we recommend the introduction of donkeys into Laos, with a view toward producing mules by coupling the donkeys with Laotian mares. The mules of Yunnan, which are highly reputed, reach heights as great as 1.32 meters. Extremely sturdy, they can readily carry a net weight of ninety kilograms of merchandise, not counting the saddle and pack-saddle. It is obvious that much use might be made of these animals in Laos for all kinds of transport.

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Buffalo. Buffalo breeding is much in honor throughout all of Laos. It supplies the needs of agriculture and of food consumption, which [403] absorbs a large number of these animals, particularly young ones. Many of them, in fact, are sacrificed on the occasion of celebrations and various ceremonies, while others are used daily for food in some of the larger centers.

It may truly be said that buffalo are raised everywhere, and since this animal is extremely hardy it can always find enough to eat, even in the forests.

The administration is encouraging the raising of buffalo in a most effective way, and since our arrival in Laos the work has grown by such proportions that exports of buffalo to nearby regions has assumed genuine importance. (4,721 head in 1898 and 3,144 in 1899.) When we entered into possession of Laos, however, the land had been largely depopulated of its animals. They had been removed by the Siamese, and it is nothing short of miraculous that the herds have been restored in so short a time despite the considerable losses caused by periodic outbreaks of epizootic disease, often extremely violent.

These favorable results have been achieved thanks to the wise foresight of the higher authorities, who prohibited all exports and imports as long as the bovine plague lasted.

231 654 It is much to be desired that the work of our physiologists may finally be successful and place at the disposal of everyone serums which will be capable of fighting the epizootic diseases which are decimating horned animals. In the meantime our administrators can only recommend to the natives a few rules of veterinary hygiene, a feeble protective measure against the epidemic. They should be particularly careful to see that dead carcasses are not thrown into watercourses.

231 492 Oxen. In Laos, oxen are raised mainly for use in transport or for export as animals for slaughtering. In the far north they are also harnessed to carts.

262 825 The Laotians have an instinctive repugnance for beef meat, and eat it only when an animal dies by accident or has to be killed as the result of a wound or broken bone. There are even certain prejudices and certain customs in this matter, which are doubtless vestiges of another age when the ancestors of the present-day inhabitants were pastoral people among whom slaughtering [404] oxen for food was prohibited under penalty of a fine.

231 Whereas the buffalo in Laos are sturdy and of a fine height, the oxen often leave much to be desired. This is due to the fact that the natives raise oxen as they do buffalo, that is to say by leaving it to forage for itself. Although the buffalo, a hardy and autochthonous animal, requires almost no care in breeding, the ox, which is a cross-bred animal, imported and not so tough, requires a great deal of care and management. But when ox raising is treated like buffalo raising, the result is an inferior product and thence a progressive degeneration of the breed.

The Youns, the Lus and the Burmese are the only ones who have a complete mastery of raising oxen as draft and pack animals, and who produce individuals of comparatively tall stature which are sturdy, courageous and resistant to fatigue. They are even able, thanks to suitable treatment and care, to condition and train the often puny specimens which they sometimes go great distances to buy, even into southern Laos.

231 The oxen of Song-Khone (1) and of the Kham-Thong-Niai-Saravane

439 (1) In 1898 the presence of about 1,500 oxen and cattle was reported in this province.

region are destined mainly to be sold for meat in Cambodia and in cochinchina, and this is quite a lucrative trade.

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The above engineer remained in the country for more than a year. He made a careful study of the deposits, and the report which he presented to the Company upon his return from his mission stated that we had been too modest in our estimates; that the gold-bearing deposits were of the first order, easily workable and almost at ground level. He concluded by proposing that a company with a very high capital be formed (1). Things seemed to be going well when an

(1) The content of these deposits varies from 3 to 14 grams of visible gold per ton of alluvia or of rich gravel.

event took place which reduced all our hopes to naught and rendered sterile the efforts of the Mining and agricultural company of Laos.

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Subsequent to a report by M. Mallet, an engineer sent by the government to prospect the region with which we are dealing, the governor general issued a decree dated February 16, 1896, stipulating that "possession and exploitation of gold-bearing mines or mines so reputed which are situated in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang on the left bank (between the Mekong and the Nam-Hou) may not be effected, until further notice, except by public tender."

This decree was not known in Laos until the engineer Isnard was actually on the spot. But it was justifiable to suppose that when confronted with the capital which had been collected, with that which had been offered, and with the work already done the government would invite tenders for the deposits.

Such was not at all the case. Today in 1900, it is still not the case!

The consequences may easily be guessed. Faced by this occurrence with the impossibility of doing anything at all, the Company abandoned the matter.

In the interest of Laos and of the finances of French Indo-China, we should like to express the wish (2) that the above-quoted decree be

(2) A proposal made by M.P. Macey before the 1900 Convention of Economic and Commercial Geography [Congrès de Géographie économique et commerciale de 1900].

abrogated and that the further notice of which mention is made be given within a short time so as to enable French capital to be put to good use in this part of our possession.

314 The bark of these varieties is lighter in color, with green, gray and red spots. The leaves are a duller green and the fruits heavier and longer.

[32] These lianas belong to the highlands of Laos and to the thick mountain forests. The Mac-ka-khay is very plentiful in Borikan; the two following ones are found in the region of Van-Vien and the Tang-tong, which is quite rare, has been found in the interior on the right bank of the Mekong, as well as in Paksan.

In the absence of botanical specimens, we can only suppose that all these varieties belong, according to the indications given as to their fruits, to the Apocyneae family.

As for the samples of rubber which we have from these plants, some in balls and others in rolls of small dimensions, they all seem to have been obtained by the method of coagulating latex with heat in a receptacle of a certain size. The gum has remained sticky, and today, after having been kept for a year, all of it except one or two samples has become soft and viscous.

I am nevertheless persuaded that two or three of these lianas will yield rubber which is as good in quality as that of Nghe-An, provided that the crop is harvested in "tears" or in threads, this being the best system for avoiding the inclusion of putrescible serum.

Moreover, the rubber produced by these lianas already constitutes a noteworthy trade commodity in the Hua-Phans. M. Chaussé, one of our countrymen, has been making sizeable purchases of rubber there for several years, and comparatively large amounts of this product are said to be marketed in Cho-Bo at the rate of 45 piasters per picul, that is to say at more than two francs per kilogram.

[426] M. Delineau, whose commercial ventures in rubber in Tran-Ninh have also been brought to light, has bought wax and rubber there and tried to make the population accept loans which would be repayable in rubber.

314 654 But disadvantages are already arising in these regions--disadvantage of which the cascarilleros, or seekers of cinchona trees, once set a bad example in Brazil. Since the elastic gum is coming more and more into demand in Upper Laos, in some places the natives have hacked and massacred the producing plants in order to obtain the coveted merchandise more easily and in larger quantities.

Since this habit shows a tendency to become widespread, in Muong-Son M. Montpeyrat has drawn up restrictive measures against these clumsy procedures. And in order at the same time to encourage cultivation of these plants which yield a desirable product, he has

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established a seed-garden designed to supply the inhabitants with cuttings and to teach them the most advantageous methods of exploitation.

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I do not, however, believe that there is any need to fear the danger of the present barbarous method of exploitation, provided that it be carried out in a radical fashion. This estimate of the situation, which seems paradoxical, can be justified as follows. If the native fells the liana with a blow of his machete, it is best for him to cut it off at ground level. I assume that he will not be content merely with collecting the latex which flows out of the cutting [133] thus made, but that he will cut the liana into suitably small sections and collect the greater part of the latex which the whole length of the stalk contains at the time. This amount will certainly be greater than the amount which would flow out of an incision made so as not to compromise the life of the plant. What is more, new shoots will sprout from the foot of the felled liana, and it will then be a question of protecting them from too hasty a destruction so that after the required number of years there will be new plants which can be tapped. This amounts, so to speak, to exploitation of the rubber lianas by a radical pollard method. It would become profitable the day when the industry could obtain a constant output of rubber from the fresh or dried leaves, as is now done for gutta percha.

I believe, however, that exploitation by the method of regular and annual tappings of the adult plant is preferable by far. Felling would present really grave dangers only if it caused the felled plants to disappear and never to return.

We now have specimens of rubber from various regions of Upper and Lower Laos--from Vien-Tiane, Cam-Muon, Savanakhet, Ban-Mouang, Saravane, Song-Khone and Khong.

From the point of view of quality these specimens can be divided into two groups which, it would appear, are determined by two causes: their botanical origin and the way in which they are harvested.

The first group includes specimens in a compact, hand-kneaded ball the size of a billiard ball, or in twists from 10 to 15 centimeters long and 2 to 3 centimeters in diameter which are collected in bamboo tubes. These specimens are blackish, softer and less resilient, and occasionally contain hollow parts which are filled with a black pitch-like substance.

The second group includes specimens which are lighter in color, reddish and even whitish, dry and resilient. They are harvested in tears, thin strips or agglutinated threads, from which balls are made

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of 40,869 francs; to Hong Kong warehouses, 1,271 kilograms with an estimated value of 2,458 francs; making a total of 14,894 kilograms valued at 43,227 francs.

Thus while the customs statistics for the years previous to 1898 do not even mention the export figures for this product, we find that the 1898 figure, which is a little more than two tons, has more than sextupled in the first quarter of the following year, which is the current one.

This amount of progress gives us every right to conceive real hopes for the future.

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The general government of Indo-China (Department of Agriculture and Commerce) recently sent to the business house Michelin et Cie. (Clermont-Ferrand, and 7 Rue Goumod, Paris), for the purpose of analysis and evaluation, specimens of rubber which were collected in Laos through the offices of the superior resident.

According to the report of the superior resident in Laos, these specimens were produced by a liana, the Khua-nhut-niai of the Laotians, which is quite widespread in the thick forests on the banks of the Mekong and on the Bolovenes massif, as well as on the sides of the Annamitic Chain. One of the specimens submitted for analysis (No. 1) comes from a variety of rubber which is found particularly in Saravane. The other (No. 2) is the ordinary rubber harvested by the natives, with no further processing.

[135] An expert chemist sets forth in the following terms the results of the examination to which these specimens were subjected at the rubber factory of Michelin et Cie. at Clermont-Ferrand (August 5, 1899):

"The rubber in both boxes has the outer appearance of rubber from the Dutch East Indies of the kinds known in trading circles as 'Java,' 'Penang' or 'Préanger.' Like the latter, it probably comes from plants of the Ficus family. This presumable identity of origin is confirmed, moreover, by the characteristics of the isolated gum and resin of these specimens, as well as by the nature of the bark fragments which the specimens contained.

"We purified this rubber mechanically by the usual shredding processes. The thin leaves thereby obtained were dried in a drying-cabinet at a temperature of 25°-28° C.

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	No. 1 Saravane	No. 2
Weight of specimen	.608 kilog.	1.86 kilog.
Weight of purified gum	.58 kilog	1.54 kilog.
Yield of purified gum	95.39%	82.79%

Proximate analysis of the product yielded:

Moisture at 105°	1.06	1.4
Fixed ashes	1.3	1.4
Resins	3.4	9.76
Rubber	89.24	87.44

For comparison, the following is an analysis of Java rubber:

	Type 1[a]	Type 2[a]
Moisture	.75	
Ashes	.8	1.3
Resins	4.48	7 to 9%
Rubber	93.97	
	100.00	

Indo-Chinese rubber, if in accordance with the specimens examined, would be likened on the market to Java type 2[a] rubber, which is graded and regulated as follows:

First quality Java rubber includes sound gums, without resinified parts (parts which have turned oily), of a fine light color, and without bark fragments.

Darker gums containing some fragments, but which are still sound on the whole are classified as second quality.

The third quality includes rubber which has been harvested with less care or in the wrong season, which has been poorly preserved, is more or less resinified and laden with foreign matter, ligneous debris, bark, sand, etc.

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The following figures, taken from the daily price lists on the markets of Antwerp, Hamburg, Liverpool and London, will give some idea of the commercial value of these types of rubber.

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PRICE QUOTED ON "JAVA" OR "PENANG" ON THE VARIOUS EUROPEAN MARKETS

Source	Date	Grade 1ª	2ª	3ª
Hamburg	7-30-1899		6.95	
"	7-8	8.95	6.95	
"			7.55	
"	6-28		7.55	
London	6-1	8.98		
Antwerp	3-14			3.00
Amsterdam	4-10		7.59	
Antwerp	3-3			3.00
Le Havre	11-18-1898	8.40	5.85	
Hamburg	11-9	8.45	6.55	
"	11-2	8.55	5.55	
Antwerp	10-25			3.00
Hamburg	10-11	8.80	6.25	
"	9-9	8.80	6.25	
"	9-9	8.75	6.30	

(Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine. Report of the Director of the Indo-China Department of Agriculture and Commerce, October 1, 1899.)

II

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In August 1900 the Indo-China Department of Agriculture and Commerce sent to the Colonial Office, for purposes of analysis, specimens of rubber extracted from the bark of rubber lianas by simple grinding processes using native crushers and successive washings.

These specimens were prepared under the auspices of M. Gaillard, government commissioner in Khong. The crushed bark came from the liana called Khua-nhut-nhai which is found throughout all Laos.

The Colonial Office has published the results of the analysis of the specimens sent from Khong. The analysis was carried out under the direction of Dr. Heim, head of the Laboratory of the National Office for Foreign Trade [Office national du Commerce extérieur].

The following are the results of a comparison made between the rubber which was extracted from the liana Khua-nhut-nhai [137] by coagulation of the latex, according to this report, and the rubber extracted by grinding from the dry bark.

It is of particular interest to compare the rubber extracted from

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the liana by grinding the bark with that prepared by coagulation of the latex. The latter process probably includes spontaneous coagulation of the latex on the plant incisions, drawing the still soft gum into threads, and winding the gum threads into a ball immediately. We have been able to draw up this comparison thanks to a study previously made in the Laboratory of rubber from the Khua-nhut-nhai which was prepared in the same province of Khong from latex which was obtained by bleeding the plant.

The table below makes the comparison possible:

	Rubber extracted by grinding the dry bark. I	Rubber extracted by coagulation of the latex. II
Water	2.07%	1.8%
Inert matter	1.75	7.9
Resinous matter	1.05	4.9
Ashes	.32	.49
Water-soluble matter	1.14	1.7
Reducing agents	.19	.43
Nitrogenous matter	traces	traces
Rubber in the strict sense	93.5	82.78
Calculated losses in washing	4.94	11.4
Experimental losses in washing		12.2

This comparison lends itself to the following remarks:

The excess water noted in I may be attributed to the method of preparation itself, but it is too slight to cause any appreciable increase in the washing losses and, what is more, the very low hydration of II may be such as to facilitate its "turning oily" (if we accept the current and entirely empirical opinion of the experts).

The much higher losses in washing for II will lead I to be preferred, for the resiliency of I is at least equal to that of II, although II is quite noteworthy in this respect. The lower proportion of resinous matter in I again seems such as to give it the preference in this regard, yet the scope of this factor should not be exaggerated. I was analyzed as soon as received, whereas a lapse of time of about two to three months separated the date of the arrival of II in France and the date of the analysis, and as we know, time has a considerable influence on the resin content of all rubber.

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Having made these reservations, we are justified in concluding that I is a type of rubber which [138] is appreciably superior to II, although II deserves to be classified among the very good varieties of gum.

One last remark is, however, necessary. Before giving any final pronouncement as to the value of a type of rubber it is indispensable to subject it to the test of time, since its value is in direct proportion to its resistance to resinification. Under this heading I can nevertheless indicate already that rubber from the Khua-nhut-nhai (sample II) was subjected for three months to the worst kind of preservation conditions and that it withstood this trial admirably, not becoming subject to any resinification and not losing any of its elasticity.

There does not seem to be any doubt, moreover, but that the method of extracting rubber by grinding the bark gives a much higher yield of gum than can be obtained by the extraction method of bleeding the liana (assuming equal weights of fresh liana to be used in both cases).

I shall add, by way of indication, that according to the replies sent in answer to a questionnaire which was prepared under my direction at the request of a private corporation which exploits the rubber lianas of Laos, it appears to be a proven fact that cutting completely through the Khua-nhut-nhai lianas in no way compromises their vitality, on the express condition that the cutting be made above the level of the buds. Repeated bleedings of the same branch, on the other hand, yield an increasingly watery latex with an increasingly lower gum content.

The above information seems to me to be such that it might usefully be communicated to the agents of the administration, for it constitutes yet another argument in favor of exploiting the lianas exclusively by the method of grinding up the bark.

[113]

(Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, January 1901, No. 31.)

III

It is of interest to note that the Superior Resident in Laos, following a long trip which he had just made between the Nam-Hou and the Mekong, remarked on the presence everywhere of numerous rubber lianas.

These lianas had not as yet been noted in the west. Colonel Tournier gave instructions for immediate exploitation to all the native chieftains who were not acquainted with the liana or its value.

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What is more, according to the economic report for the months of February and March 1900 in Upper Laos, which has just reached the Indo-China Department of Agriculture and Commerce, 3,250 kilograms of rubber were exported during this period, or, to be precise, this was the verified figure at Vien-Tiane. The storehouses in this center also contained a large supply which would probably go downriver at the first rises of the Mekong. [139] The sale price by natives at Vien-Tiane was said to be one piaster per kilogram.

Tran-ninh, which had not yet been able to supply any statistics, even approximate ones, indicated exports of 1,500 kilograms to Tonkin for the same period and at the same price as being the amount of export rubber which represented purchases from Vien-Tiane.

These prices, which are reasonable ones in view of the present value of money in Laos and the needs of the inhabitants, leaves the exporters sufficient profits. On the other hand, we have had occasion to note the entirely abnormal price of 5.50 francs per kilogram which rubber reached at Vinh towards the end of March 1900, a price which, when the cost of freight, transhipment and handling, insurance and losses in weight along the way is added, leaves only a small profit for the export trade.

IV

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339,400 kilograms of rubber were exported from Indo-China during 1900, as against 52,813 in 1899. Of this amount, 300,400 kilograms went out through Tonkin, and 39,000 kilograms through Saigon. The greater part of this rubber comes from Annam, and especially from Tran-Ninh (Laos).

By these figures we see how greatly the rubber trade has grown in Indo-China, and what a factor this raw material promises to be in the economic development of the colony.

The sale price in 1899 was one piaster per kilogram. Since that time it has risen appreciably in consequence of a rising demand from all quarters. In the province of Vien-Tiane the average price is two piasters per kilogram, and in the forests where the rubber is grown it costs 90 piasters per picul.

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The rapid rise in the price of rubber has encouraged the natives to engage in excessive exploitation of the product, and without any care for the future they have destroyed large quantities of extremely productive lianas. The Laotians do not know how to collect the sap of the rubber plant and still spare the plant itself, and they thereby

7: Thompson--185-186 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 276, 655

"Laos's opium Régie [JUM: government agency charged with administering an indirect tax] was always directly administered because it presented the unique feature of a soil suitable to poppy growing. The natives had always grown enough for their own needs, so the government subsidized local efforts for a large-scale production. The result was not without charm. Two colonists in different regions were given seed and piastres. After two years, officially given to ruthless labour, an Inspector was sent to report. One of the colonists claimed that the seed [186] he had sown never came up. The other was more cynical: 'I am a remarkable man,' he told the Inspector. 'Potatoes grow where I sowed poppy seed.' (1)

1. Salé, G., Histoires Coloniales (Paris, 1931), p. 84."

10: d'Orleans--362-363 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 276, 439, 655, 177.27 Siam
636.27

"... The opium monopoly has been set up in Luang Prabang by the Siamese. Not content with having, during the past century, ruined and depopulated the valley of the Mekong, and with weighing it down with taxation, they now seem anxious to crush its trade and arrest its growth. From our point of view, it is a matter of indifference to us if the relations between Luang Prabang and China become less close and friendly, and we may even turn this change to our profit, for the caravans which were wont to bring opium down the routes parallel with the Mekong, will find it answer [sic] their purpose to branch off in the direction of the Black River, and to effect their exchanges with Upper Tonkin.

I can answer for the fact that during the past year only one caravan reached Luang Prabang from the north, this consisting of sixty mules from Xieng [363] Hong, which took a month upon the journey by short stages, eight being loaded with iron, four with tea, and the rest with Chinese groceries, sugar, opium and a little silk."

642 Indo-Chinese Federation.

The commercial agencies on the right bank, whose number had
439 reached ten, were fully functioning in 1895, but the duties of their
655 directors had been so ill defined /340/ /Page 340 is devoted to a map: "Laos in the Indo-Chinese Federation."--Translator/ /341/ that these posts did not render any real service. No one dared to suppress them officially, however, for fear that Bangkok's agents
/648/* might find an argument in such suppression for aggravating still further their maneuvers among the populace of the restricted zone. France was content merely with removing the directors and placing control of the agencies in the hands of the nearest government commissioners.

Further Franco-Siamese negotiations. Indeed, the Siamese governors did not cease to act in contravention of the provisions of the agreement appended to the treaty of 1893. They particularly endeavored, by intimidation, to prevent the former inhabitants of the left bank who had been transferred to or detained on the right bank from leaving the restricted zone and having recourse to the French agents for help. In Bangkok itself the trial of the Pra Yott had resulted in an acquittal, and an appeal by Attorney General Ducos (1), who was sent to Siam specially to draw up the indictment,

1. Attorney General in Hanoi. Later he was lieutenant-governor of Cochinchina (1896-1897) and superior resident in Cambodia (1897-1901).

and the formation of a mixed tribunal had been needed to obtain conviction of the guilty party. As for the incident /342/ of Tong-Xieng-Kham, criminal proceedings in the case were always suspended! Yet in the course of a voyage to Europe King Chulalongkorn had had a long conversation in Paris in 1897 about the consequences of the treaty with Foreign Minister Hanotaux, to whom he had given the most reassuring promises. In 1899 Governor General Doumer had returned this visit in Bangkok and, by the terms of the extremely cordial talks which he had with the chief officials, he had believed as he left Siam that a final agreement was imminent. All these courteous gestures, however, had not been followed by any change in the attitude of the Siamese agents on the Mekong, and Minister Defrance continued to formulate constant claims...

149: Reinach--381 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Tax on rice, paddy, horns, hides, etc.

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	Per picul (francs)	Per hundred kilograms (francs)
Paddy	0.25	0.416
Rice	0.50	0.832
Gum lac	2.50	4.16
Chinese nettle	2.50	4.16
Buffalo horns and hides	2.50	4.16
Buck horns and hides	3.75	6.25
Anteater scales	3.75	6.25
Cardamom	5.00	8.32
Elephant and tiger bones	3.75	6.25
Benzoin	12.50	20.82
Rubber	12.50	20.82
Wax	12.50	20.82
Ivory	50.00	83.20
Pirogues	ten percent ad valorem.	

Also to be added are certain incidental receipts, such as those arising from chancery fees or those collected by the native tribunals in conformity with the rates scheduled by the code of Vien-Tiane.

[701 557 658] The royal treasury of Luang-Prabang subsidizes certain expenses, such as the upkeep of the kingdom's militia, of the native hospital in Luang-Prabang, of the France-Laotian school in Luang-Prabang, etc. [504]

652 Finally, the general budget of Indo-China pays out a variable sum annually for the purpose of balancing the receipts and expenditure of Laos.

C. Opium

651 One of the most important sources of Laotian revenue is provided by the sale of opium. The administration is responsible for the sale 276 of this substance, which it manufactures itself and which is marketed 655 by licensed merchants acting as middlemen.

Before 1900, Laos sold on its own behalf the opium which was allotted to it by the Cochinchina Customs and Excise Office (1).

(1) This was true only for Lower Laos. The opium sold in Upper Laos came from the Luang-Prabang distillery, which is no longer in operation today.

657 paid for these allotments in cash, and took in as receipts the difference
276 between the allotment price and the sale price. Today, as a con-
655 sequence of the establishment of a general budget for Indo-China, Laos sells directly on behalf of the Customs and Excise Office and pays this office the entire sum resulting from sales made.

The following are the sale prices, per kilogram, of the Customs and Excise opium in the various provinces of Laos in 1900 and 1901:

	1900 (francs)	1901 (francs)
Hua-Phan	90.00	100.00
Tran-Ninh	75.00	100.00
Luang-Prabang	100.00	100.00
Vien-Tiane	92.50	112.50
Seng-Khone and Cammon	100.00	112.50
Ban-Mouang and Saravane	107.50	125.00
Khong and Attopeu	112.50	125.00
Stung-Treng	125.00	137.50

276 In 1898, total opium sales were 150,450 francs. If the total population of Laos is estimated at 500,000, then each inhabitant would consume an average of 0.3009 franc's worth of opium per [505] year. This is a negligible amount, if we compare it with that in neighboring countries, as demonstrated by the following table:

Country	Total Population	Total opium sales in francs	Average share per inhabitant in francs
French Laos	500,000	150,450	0.3009
Siamese Laos	700,000	440,000	0.6282
Siam	6,700,000	7,758,500	1.155

It does not follow, however, that the inhabitants of Laos smoke less opium than their neighbors, but rather that fraud is more rampant there than elsewhere.

It is estimated that the minimum opium consumption in Laos must be 3.50 francs' worth per registered person and per year. Now, since registered persons represent an average of 22 to 24 percent of the total population, opium sales must bring in receipts of about 400,000 francs and the share per inhabitant must be 0.8 franc, a figure approaching the norm between the average figures for Siamese Laos and for Siam.

249 Chinese and Laotian middlemen and even the few European merchants--
263 have found that it brings in rewarding profits. Indeed, by exporting
438 this product the latter are assured of an almost certain gain of 20 to 30 percent.

248 [387] Ramie. There is also much to be gained from increasing
434 the production of ramie or Chinese nettle. It is assured of an outlet in Cambodia, where it sells for as much as 80 francs per hundred kilograms.

249 Cinnamon. The extension of the plantations and gardens of
185 cinnamon trees already in existence in the province of Vien-Tiane deserves serious encouragement. The bark of these trees is a valuable product which is much sought-after in China and in Europe.

276 Opium poppies. The Government of Indo-China, which is
656 both the preparer and seller of chandoo or opium for smoking, is the party which would gain most from obtaining the raw drug on French territory. It is, indeed, still dependent on British India for this product, and can acquire it only on extremely disadvantageous terms.

Since much time must still pass, however, before the Meos and the Yaos give up their age-old methods, it would be essential for the intensive cultivation of the opium poppy to be undertaken by Europeans on behalf of the administration. This would be possible if there were a guaranteed labor supply in the form of Chinese coolies, who would be enlisted primarily for the greater part of the work, and of native specialists who would deal only with scarification of the capsules, harvesting the opium and the first stage of its preparation.

These delicate operations are the ones which the Meos and the Yaos like best, but they dislike plowing, fertilizing, weeding and irrigation, all of which tasks are indispensable for obtaining a high yield of capsules and consequently of the raw drug. It would therefore be best to entrust this heavy work to foreign coolies, and it is probable that after a certain time they too would be capable of extracting the opium. Impelled by their example, the natives would doubtless then be seen to break with their prejudices and devote themselves also to intensive cultivation so as to reap its full benefits.

The role of the administration would then be at an end, and it would gradually diminish its intervention as free cultivation of the poppies increased.

[435 Raw opium which is produced locally or which comes from [388] neighboring countries is worth 22 francs, 50 centimes to 32 francs, 25 centimes per kilogram, depending on quality, in northern Laos.

314 lose forever the plant which they have mutilated. The Superior Resident in Laos has had studies made of the methods of extraction which can be employed without danger, and he proposes to make
314 them obligatory within a short time. As of the present time, he
656 has issued the following decree relative to the exploitation of rubber:

"Any native desiring to engage in harvesting rubber on Laotian territory must obtain a special authorization which will be conferred by the chau-muong if the interested party resides in the muong where he desires to operate, and in all other cases by the Government Commissioner of the province.

[65] [110] "This authorization shall indicate, in as clear a manner as possible, the limits within which exploitation is to take place, the methods of extraction which may be employed and those which are prohibited, and finally the point where the rubber must be submitted for checking and payment of the duties which represent land tax before it leaves Laos.

"Businessmen and corporations desirous of sending their paid agents into the regions of rubber production may address to the Government Commissioner a collective request, in which the names and residences of such agents shall be listed and in which they shall agree to abide by all regulations which the authorities shall deem it useful to prescribe. In return they shall be sent permits drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the preceding article, these permits to be delivered to their employees.

"The above authorizations shall be granted entirely free of charge.

"Contraventions to the present decree shall be prosecuted and punished by the provincial tribunals in accordance with the laws and customs in force in Laos." (Decree of September 21, 1900.)

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APPENDIX XXIII
NOTE ON TOBACCO

249 Growth and preparation. Tobacco is best grown on the banks of watercourses which are left dry each year when the waters fall and which are fertilized by deposits of alluvia.

Tobacco is also grown, however, on the banks in old alluvia which are no longer inundated by the river, but where an ample supply of water is assured by the presence of a nearby stream.

134 In Laos the soil which is suited to tobacco is light and sandy and
249 contains a high proportion of potash, relatively little lime and an average quantity of nitrogenous vegetable matter.

567 clothed--very simply, to be sure, like the rest of the family--but he is free to work for himself and can free himself quite easily if he is not too lazy. He is not mistreated by his masters and has scarcely any real work to do except during the rainy season at plowing time. As soon as the grain is in the slave for debt, who up to that time has lived in the house in the fields watching over the crop, goes back to town with the family to the houses surrounding those of his master, and if the harvest is a good one he has a good life without anything to do, taking part in all the festivities which go on in the house.

One unusual feature of these customs is that the master seems more to be pitied than the slave. Whereas the latter is free to change masters at will (in order to do so he has only to find a new one who will lend him the sum of money he owes), the latter cannot sell his interest in the slave to anyone else without the slave's consent. Thus if a master has the good fortune to find a good servant he has to treat him with a great deal of consideration, for there are plenty of people around him who would like to find a good one too. (Extract from a report by the Superior Commandant in Lower Laos.)

REGULATIONS GOVERNING SLAVERY FOR DEBT
(March 29, 1896)

567 656 ARTICLE 1. Any man or woman who borrows a sum of money may, if not under fifteen or over fifty years old, engage his or her person in order to acquit the contracted debt.

[159] Such an engagement, which is an absolutely personal one, shall not be contracted for a sum greater than eighty ticals (one cattie).

ART. 2. A sum of six ticals for men and four ticals for women shall be deducted from the debt each year towards payment in full.

ART. 3. Any non-indentured wife living with her husband while the latter is a slave shall be fed and supported under the same conditions as her husband, and each year the latter's debt shall be decreased by a sum of four ticals representing the voluntary labor of the wife.

ART. 4. Children of slaves shall be free of all debts contracted by their parents.

Until they reach the age of fifteen they shall be bound to serve their parents' master in payment for food and effects given them. After the age of fifteen they shall be entirely free. If they agree to remain with their parents and serve their parents' master, their consent

567 must be specified in a special contract signed by them. In this case
656 their work will go toward payment of their parents' debt at the rate of six ticals per year for boys and four ticals for girls.

ART. 5. If a slave dies his debt is considered paid and is not transferable to any of his relatives.

[651] ART. 6. A master is held responsible for payment of the head tax on any dutiable slave.

If the latter cannot secure the necessary sum through his own labor the master shall pay, but any such sum shall be added to the principal debt and mention thereof shall be made on the contract of debt by the authorities responsible for collecting the head tax.

426 ART. 7. Any individual who borrows money shall present him-
567 self with the lender to the highest native authority in his territory, who alone is empowered to certify debtor's notes.

656 The native authorities shall retain a duplicate of such debtor's notes; such notes shall be signed by both lender and borrower and invested with the seals of the authorities.

Notes shall be drawn up in ink and any crossings-out or additions approved.

ART. 8. For sums less than twenty ticals, the high authorities of a Muong may delegate their powers to the Tassengs or Phobans.

ART. 9. The provisions of this decree shall take effect immediately. Sons and grandsons of slaves for debt who have reached or passed the age of fifteen shall be regarded as free upon promulgation of these provisions. The same shall be true of persons under contract against their will, who shall have the right to have the contract which binds them revised in the presence of the French authorities.

23: Franck--301 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 657, 779, 177.77 France
636.77

"But the French do not insist on imposing their religious beliefs on their wards and colonies. In Luang Prabang they go so far as to provide for the up-keep of the temples and monasteries in the annual governmental budget. In a way this is a means of supporting the educational system, for the priests act as schoolmasters to their novices. In great contrast to China, there is not a single Christian missionary in all the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha, not even a Catholic priest."

Service of Posts and Telegraphs. Before 1900, Upper Laos paid Tonkin a yearly sum of 157,500 francs for the service of posts and telegraphs. 205 206

Lower Laos had an appropriation in its budget for wages, personnel housing, new construction, maintenance of lines, etc., and this rose to 165,295 francs in 1898.

Since 1900 the general budget has covered the service of posts and telegraphs in unified Laos. [279] [Illustration] [280] [Blank page]

[281] Public education. An appropriation of 13,750 francs is written into the 1900 budget for public education. This is a negligible expense, yet the results achieved in the Franco-Laotian schools are satisfactory. The Superior Resident writes as follows: 658 871

"Primary schools in which the elements of the French language are taught to the natives are in operation at Luang-Prabang, Vien-Tiane, Khong and in all the province capitals. There students are given basic training by an interpreter who is appointed for the purpose and for whom a salary is appropriated. As soon as they can read and write fluently the most intelligent pupils are sent to the Collège Chasseloup-Laubat in Saigon, where they continue their studies for two or three years to perfect their knowledge. Under this system we shall shortly have a good body of interpreters for the administration and for private enterprise" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

Some students from the Laotian primary schools have even been sent to the Colonial School in Paris.

Apostolic missions. 797

"The missionaries who endeavor to evangelize the peoples of Laos all belong to the French Foreign Missions Society [Missions Étrangères de France]. Some are attached to the bishop of Bangkok (2).

(2) Since 1900 the missions of Laos have been under the direction of a bishop of Laos, Msgr. Cuaz, whose temporary residence is at Nong-Sene, two kilometers to the north of Lakhone.

and these are the ones whom one meets on the banks of the Mekong.

149: Reinach--381 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Tax on rice, paddy, horns, hides, etc.

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	Per picul (francs)	Per hundred kilograms (francs)
Paddy	0.25	0.416
Rice	0.50	0.832
Gum lac	2.50	4.16
Chinese nettle	2.50	4.16
Buffalo horns and hides	2.50	4.16
Buck horns and hides	3.75	6.25
Anteater scales	3.75	6.25
Cardamom	5.00	8.32
Elephant and tiger bones	3.75	6.25
Benzoin	12.50	20.82
Rubber	12.50	20.82
Wax	12.50	20.82
Ivory	50.00	83.20
Pirogues	ten percent ad valorem.	

Also to be added are certain incidental receipts, such as those arising from chancery fees or those collected by the native tribunals in conformity with the rates scheduled by the code of Vien-Tiane.

701 557 658 The royal treasury of Luang-Prabang subsidizes certain expenses, such as the upkeep of the kingdom's militia, of the native hospital in Luang-Prabang, of the Franco-Laotian school in Luang-Prabang, etc. [504]

652 Finally, the general budget of Indo-China pays out a variable sum annually for the purpose of balancing the receipts and expenditures of Laos.

C. Opium

651 216 655 One of the most important sources of Laotian revenue is provided by the sale of opium. The administration is responsible for the sale of this substance, which it manufactures itself and which is marketed by licensed merchants acting as middlemen.

Before 1900, Laos sold on its own behalf the opium which was allotted to it by the Cochinchina Customs and Excise Office (1),

(1) This was true only for Lower Laos. The opium sold in Upper Laos came from the Luang-Prabang distillery, which is no longer in operation today.

7: Thompson--379-380 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 659, 797

"The static condition of the Laotian Mission moved the Society to change its policy. As in Annam, they are trying to appeal to all classes of the people through education, books, and medical care. The cult of phi, or evil spirits, is so deep-rooted in Laotians and so universally practised in cases of sickness, that Western science and social service can perhaps find there the most advantageous point for attacking native superstitions. Of course, here as elsewhere, they encounter the administration's jealous rivalry, but as yet in Laos penetration of any sort is so superficial that there is room for all comers. The government has recently dealt a blow to Mission prestige, as it did in Cambodia, by becoming the patron of Buddhism. Though recently founded, the Buddhist Institute in Luang-Prabang aims to train bonzes who formerly went to Bangkok for their instruction, as well as their investiture. This not only counteracts Siamese influence--and Bangkok has always been the lodestar of Laotian aspirations--but it is part of the French policy with Indianized peoples to revive their cultural heritage. In 1907 Tournier chose Vientiane to transform into a modern city, for he thought [380] that it might attract all Laotians thither and away from Bangkok, the moral capital of the Thai people. It remains to be seen whether all these attempts will be successful."

Military organization. As a wise sovereign who was the 701
friend of peace but knew how to prepare for war, Sam-Sène-Thaï 175*
profited by the census in order to reorganize his kingdom's army. 643*
He raised its strength to 150,000 men, whom he divided into /659/
three distinct groups: the first to form an interior police force, the second to be specially drilled in defending the country from foreign attack and the third as a reserve force. The total army was divided into five corps with 30,000 fighting men each, plus 20,000 coolies responsible for provisioning the army. The warriors fought on horseback or on elephants and had lances and swords for weapons. They also had a few flintlock rifles which were originally imported from China and which the Laotians were already learning how to make themselves.

This large military force made no small contribution /57/ to 701
the tranquillity of Lan-Xang. Sam-Sène-Thaï also seems to have 643*
been a clever politician. Already allied to Siam by his marriage, 648*
he strengthened his neighborly relations with Lan-Na by taking 175*
Nang-One-Sa, a daughter of the king of Xieng-Mai, for his second wife. Moreover, the fall of the Mongol dynasty and the accession of the Ming to the throne were of no small importance to him, if we are to believe H. Maspero who relates that he received Chinese titles in 1404 (1). After the epic of Fa-Ngoun this was a happy

1. According to H. Maspero, Bulletin de l'E. F.E.O., Vol. XVIII, No. 3. Cf. R. Grousset, op. cit. /Histoire de l'Extrême-Orient/, p. 612, note 4.

stage of calm in the enjoyment of the fruits of the preceding reign, and when he died in 1416 he handed down to his successor a prosperous kingdom which was solidly based and living in peace, and all the while dreaded by its neighbors.

LAN-KHAM-DÈNG (1375), KING 1416-1428.

When the King died he left a numerous progeny, six sons and 643*
five daughters whom Nang-Keo-Yopha and Nang-One-Sa had 648*
given him. We do not know the reason why it was not the eldest 175*
Mun-Ban, but the second son Lane-Kham-Dèng who succeeded his father. The second son /58/ mounted the throne at a time when Tran-Ninh had fallen prey to dynastic disorders, he welcomed the queen Nang-Phom-Dam and her son Kham-Phong when they were

693 than of the rights of the parties. Our administration is making praiseworthy efforts to halt these abuses. Those who sell justice in this way are removed from their posts, and it is to be hoped that within a few years' time most, if not all, of the Laotian judges will be upright and disinterested. As a means toward stopping these deplorable habits and informing the parties in lawsuits of the legal costs which they will regularly be asked to pay, Lieutenant-colonel Tournier took a very useful first step in April 1898, by setting up a schedule of court costs in accordance with the laws and customs of Vien-Tiane (I).

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(I) The following, for example, are the court costs to be paid in a case of theft of domesticated animals:

Legal costs.....	15.00 francs	to be paid by each accused person.
Clerk.....	3.75 "	
Archivist.....	2.25 "	
Court roll.....	1.50 "	
Prison costs.....	11.25 "	

The legal costs are divided as follows:

Tiao-Muong.....	5.00 francs	15 francs.
Oupahat.....	2.50 "	
Judge hearing the case..	7.50 "	

The prison costs are divided as follows:

Jailer.....	5.00 francs	11.25 francs.
Upkeep for food for prisoners whom their families cannot feed or who do not work outside..... Lighting and upkeep of prison.....	6.25 "	

It goes without saying that, in addition to court costs, the guilty parties are liable to a fine, which, in the present case, would be 24 francs per person.

[499]

4. THE TAX STRUCTURE

a. Direct taxes

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The direct taxes include the head tax, the optional redemption of statute labor and the licenses for Foreign Oriental merchants.

A census taken before the end of each year by the native authorities and checked by the administrators who are heads of provinces makes

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659 it possible to draw up the tax rolls for the following year.

657 A head tax is owed by every able-bodied man between the ages of eighteen and sixty, except for bonzes, pagoda servants, the native authorities, men who have served for four years in the civil guard, militiamen on active duty, invalids and liberated slaves.

There are four categories of registered persons:

1. Those of the great Thai race, who pay five francs and also owe twenty days of service in kind in Upper Laos, and ten in Lower Laos. This service may be redeemed upon payment of five francs;

2. Those of the other races such as Khas, Meos, Yaos, etc., who pay 2.50 francs and owe ten days of service in kind, redeemable for 2.50 francs;

3. The Annamites, who pay a head tax of five francs and do not owe any service in kind;

4. Foreign Orientals, who pay a head tax of 12.50 francs per year and do not owe any statute labor. If they are merchants, they pay a license fee of five francs per shop.

[500] B. Indirect taxes

The indirect taxes include:

1. Travel permits and passports;
2. Permits for weapons;
3. Administrative fines;
4. Local taxes levied on products and animals exported from Laos.

[484] For travel permits, Laotians pay a fixed fee of 0.50 franc per person and per permit. Foreign Orientals pay 1.875 francs for a permit which is good for three months.

[411] Permits for weapons occasion the collection of a tax of 1.50 francs. Annual renewal of the permit is obligatory, and costs 0.75 franc.

[421] There are as yet no taxes on land in Laos. It would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to levy such a tax in view of the present state of the country, which has no land registry, and with the system of property (1) such as it exists at present.

423 (1) As regards public domain, we have maintained the custom which is consecrated by the local laws and usages. By virtue of these usages and these laws, the State is sole proprietor of the land and everything under it, without any exception, no matter how it is being exploited or what establishments have been made there,

7: Thompson--371 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 563, 661, 671, 177.67 France
636.67

"Nowadays the code of Vientiane or of Luang-Prabang is applied to the Thai peoples and to certain Kha tribes; Burmese custom law to the Lus in Muong Sing; and their particular customs to the other ethnical groups--all under magistrates of their own people. The judgments of these courts are examined by the French authorities. This is not a useless precaution, as often the judges themselves are in a quandary about interpreting their laws and traditions. Moreover, the venality of these judges passes all understanding. If the native appears without offerings appropriate to his station and that of the judge, he is lost. Undoubtedly with time the specialization of magistrates, with guarantees in salary and promotion, will obviate the most flagrant of these evils."

10: d'Orleans--300 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 647, 662, 681, 695

"The administrative functionaries and the judges are appointed by the king, subject to the approval of the Siamese Commissioner. Justice is administered according to the traditions of what was known in the early ages as 'the judgments of God.' That is to say the oath is taken upon a silver cup or a sword, and holy water is given the accused to drink, and if the accused person has wrongly declared himself innocent the water will poison him or the sword will be thrust through him by a spirit, at night. It need hardly be said that the judges are not satisfied with this test, that is to say, they take care to inform themselves before the trial as to the fortune of the prisoner, and it is said that they are easily influenced by bribes.

The punishments comprise fines, the bastonade, penal servitude, and being put in chains, but torture is not practised."

114 and on cross checks between the Annals and family documents,
643* is an attempt to reestablish the facts. The exact correspond-
175* ence of the dates justifies us in thinking that it is as close to historical truth as possible.

175* ambitious princess and limit themselves to recording her crimes with-
643* out explanation or comment. It may be that her intrigues had al-
562 ready brought Lane-Kham-Dèng to the throne in utter disregard of the eldest son's rights, or, on the other hand, she may have been impatient /60/ to see this younger son, who does not seem to have submitted to her influence and whose life she may have shortened, placed on the throne.

Phommathat, king 1428-1429. -- Pak-Houeï-Luong, king 1429. Thao-Sai, king 1430.

643* Whatever the case may be, she was discontented with her nephew
175* Phommathat, the eldest son of Lane-Kham-Dèng, and had him de-
662 posed ten months after his accession to the throne, then slaughtered on the rock of Pha-Dieou at the mouth of the Nam-Khane. Then she gave the crown to her brother Kham-Teun, the fourth son of Sam-Sène-Thaï and governor of Pak-Houei-Luong, who reigned under this latter name. Five months later, however, Kham-Teun had ceased to please and was replaced with Thao-Sai, the third son of Sam-Sène-Thaï and of Nang-Keo-Yopha. Scarcely six months had passed when the king discovered a plot to assassinate him which had been fomented by his sister. At his wits' end, he chose to hang himself in the bath chamber of his palace.

Phaya-Khai, king 1430-1433. -- Xieng-Sai, king 1433-1434.

Then Nang-Keo-Phimpha let her choice fall on her nephew Gnou-Khone, the second son of Lane-Kham-Dèng, who was governor of the /61/ Muong of Xieng-Khai and who chose the name of his province as his reigning name. Phaya-Khai "lasted" for three years and then died at Pak-Khane, assassinated by the inhabitants on his aunt's orders. Khone-Keo, the son of Sam-Sène-Thaï and of Nang-One-Sa, succeeded him under the name of Xieng-Sa and died in the same way seven months later.

Third son of Lane-Kham-Dèng, king 1434-1435.

Lane-Kham-Dèng's third son (whose name is unknown) replaced him for a space of eight months. In order to escape his aunt's fury,

he fled secretly by way of the Mékong, but Nang-Keo-Phimpha 643*
learned of his flight and had him pursued and massacred on his 175*
raft a little way downstream from the capital. 662

We can only conjecture as to the motives which impelled this princess, fiercer even than a Frédégonde or a Marguerite de Bourgogne, to make such a hecatomb of kings. Was she a bloodthirsty despot, or simply a royal Lampito with an exasperated temperament? (1) /62/ We do not know, but it is certain that she /582/

1. Marriages between brothers and sisters were always permitted in the royal family of Lan-Xang. They were forbidden, on the other hand, among the common people.

finally inspired such terror in the court that there was no one left to intrigue for the throne, the last two sons of Lane-Kham-Dèng being too young.

Kam-Kheut, king 1435-1438.

It was then that Nang-Keo-Phimpha discovered the son of a palace slave girl who had once been singled out by King Sam-Sène-Thaï for her beauty. The young man, Xieng-Ma by name, conquered the Gorgon by his keen intelligence and a perfect knowledge of the events of the great reign of Oun-Hueun. She had no doubt but that he was her brother, and forced him on the court as sovereign under the name of Kham-Keut (golden birth). Whether the latter was a docile tool in the hands of the princess, or whether Nang-Keo-Phimpha became genuinely and profoundly attached to her creature, calm seemed permanently restored to the palace when Kham-Keut fell sick and died of dropsy after a three years' reign.

Death of Nang-Keo-Phimpha (1438). Then there was an ex- 669
plosion of hatred against Nang-Keo-Phimpha. This death was 643*
seen as a /63/ punishment inflicted on the kingdom by Heaven for 175*
having accepted a usurper. Anger got the better of fear, and the ministers arrested the princess, tied her to the rock of Pha-Dieou and had her shot. "Her body was abandoned to the crows and vultures."

SAI-TIAKAPHAT (1415), KING 1438-1479. 645

The Council of Ministers at once set out to choose a new king 175*
643*

557 the people, and finally took a major part in the direction of the king-
643* dom's affairs. Thammikarath was wounded in his paternal pride,
175* would not countenance this premature interference in his royal prero-
/578/ gatives, and treated his son as a rebel (1621).

OUPAGNOUVARATH (1598), KING 1622-1623.

669 Supported by the majority of the ministers and by /101/ one of
578 his brothers, Mone-Keo, Oupagnouvarath entered into an open struggle
643* against his father, defeated the troops who had remained faithful to
175* the latter in bloody battles, and had himself proclaimed king in Vientiane on the "Sunday, first day of the crescent moon of the fourth month of the year 984" (1622). Three months later, Thammikarath was killed at his orders, together with his last partisans, in Pha-Deng. The epilogue of this somber family drama was not long in coming, for Oupagnouvarath died the following year under unknown circumstances.

662 With his death the intrigues for the crown began all over again,
175* and during a new period of nearly fifteen years, which the confusion of the Annals obscures as if intentionally, princes succeeded one another in Vientiane without any reference point for the chronicler and without any probable date which would make it possible to establish even an approximate chronology.

PHOTHISARAT II, KING 1623-1627.

643* We may nevertheless agree that it was one of Sene-Soulintha's sons
175* who seized power in 1623 under the name of Phothisarath (a fact which further complicates this imbroglio).

/102/ MONE-KEO, OUPAGNAOVARATH, TONE-KHAM, VISAI, KINGS 1627-1637.

The national dynasty resumed its prerogatives in 1627 with, successively, Oupagnouvarath's brother Mone-Keo, Mone-Keo's son named Oupagnaovarath (?), and finally with the latter's two sons Tone-Kham and Visai. The last-named died in 1637 (1).

648* 1. It was fortunate for Lan-Xang that the Burmese had been
175* driven back by the Thais of the Menam and had abandoned all action in the territories once subject to the rule of Bureng-Naung. If this had not been the case the historian of today would doubtless be somewhat more clear as to the events of the time, but Lan-Xang would certainly have sunk permanently into anarchy and into the partitioning which

726 a few vestiges of his scattered troops and urged him to ask all his
648* neighbors for aid in order to make a supreme effort.
175* He addressed himself first to the king of Xieng-Mai, who gave him an out-and-out refusal. The king of Luang-Prabang offered him platonic consolation and a few officers whom he was never to receive. The emperor of Annam promised him an army, but without specifying any date or place of concentration. As for the king of Xieng-Khouang he preserved a prudent silence.

643* Chao-Noi, king of Xieng-Khouang. This latter, Chao-Noi, who
175* was to play a major role in the years which followed, has left the memory of a detestable prince. To be sure, he was confronted with a tragic situation and one fraught with difficulties which little by little caught him up in a close net from which he could not extricate himself, but he did nothing to force the hand of destiny and showed himself to be, if not cowardly, at least hesitant and without political sense at a time when events demanded decisiveness and courage.

He had succeeded, in 1791 at the age of twelve, his /171/ father Chao-Xieng who was a brother of Xom-Phou (1). He had soon freed

1. See above, p. 149.

/429/ himself from the guardianship of the counselor Phou-Ho-Xieng-Di whom the dignitaries of his kingdom had given him, and had at once manifested a brutal despotism towards his unhappy subjects whom he overburdened with taxes and vexations (repeated levies of first grade materials for the reconstruction of his palace, unjustified drafts of soldiers and continual abductions of children, for to expensive tastes he joined a passion for women).

●/662/ Phou-Ho-Xieng-Di had dared to complain to King Anou, and the latter had summoned Chao-Noi to Vientiane, but there the clever fellow had charmed his suzerain with his talents as a horseman, by training a horse which was reputed to be unmanageable. He had returned to Xieng-Khouang laden with presents and honors and had lost no time in having his childhood mentor assassinated.

648* The results of the Siamese campaign of 1827 were not such as to
175* displease him, for hatred for Vientiane was a tradition in his family. At first he therefore turned a deaf ear to the appeals of the wandering king. In a second message, after Anou had called on him to fulfill his duties as a vassal, he announced that two thousand men were being sent, /172/ although he ordered them not to arrive "until after

648* bands, was given by the latter to Auguste Pavie who placed
175* it in the Quai d'Orsay Library. See below, p. 295.

The chroniclers seem to attach considerable importance to these missions to China. They dwell on each of them in detail and mention the most futile incidents along the way, the names of the envoys, of the camacs and even of the elephants (2). Indeed, the

2. A third mission left Luang-Prabang in 1739. Intha-Som did not send the fourth until 1745 and instructed it to ask the emperor, by reason of the length and difficulty of the voyage, to accept four elephants every ten years. This proposal was accepted by the Chinese government.

support which Intha-Som was seeking from the emperors of Pekin was of capital importance /192/ to the principality, whose isolation on the peninsula was then complete.

643* Conspiracy of Saia-Sane (1740). This long forty-nine year
175* reign was a tranquil one at home, if we except one attempted re-
/662/ bellion, which was quickly repressed, by Saia-Sane, a son of Khamone-Noi. The conspiracy was discovered and Saia-Sane was at once arrested with his partisans and executed at the junction of Houei-Hop (around 1740).

Death of the heir apparent Tiao-Mang (1749). In accordance with the promise which he had made Thene-Sao when he took her as his wife, the king designated the eldest of the sons which this princess bore him as his successor, but the young man, who was named Tiao-Mang, fell into the water during a ride in a pirogue, took a chill and died of congestion at the age of fifteen (1749) (1).

1. Thene-Sao bore him three sons and a daughter, Thene-Kham bore him two sons and three daughters, and a third wife, Nang-Thep-Boupha bore him two sons and a daughter.

648* Difficulties with Annam (1750). At about the same time Intha-
175* Som received a message from the king of Annam demanding the pay-
721 ment of tribute. Indeed, this monarch (2) regarded /193/ the

2. Le-Hien-Tong.

pious king who justified the bonzes' prophecies by his deeds. He 643*
built a magnificent pagoda to the memory of his father, the
Wat-Visoun (2), the materials for which were requisitioned from 346
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2. The edifice which bears this name dates from the time of the king Zakarine (1898). The enormous "stupa" next to it, which covered rich treasures which have only recently come to light, is now in the process of being restored.

the vassals of the northern provinces. Legend has it that the raft
carrying the columns provided by the king of Tran-Ninh sank /539/
downstream from Pak-Vet, and the inhabitants of the region still
say today that they can be seen at certain times of the year beneath the waters of the Nam-Khane.

Edict against the cult of the "Phis." The king's great piety 771
and his mystical attachment to the /73/ dogmas of orthodix 175*
Buddhism made him intolerant of the Brahmanic practices which 643*
continued to be honored by the peoples of his States. In 1527 he
prohibited the cult of the Genii and decreed that all the temples
erected to the "Phis" should be demolished. A pagoda called
"Sisouvannathevalok" (1) was built on the very site of the sanctuary/778/

1. This pagoda was destroyed by a tornado in 1883. The king at that time, His Majesty Sisavang-Vong, had it rebuilt in 1905 on the original foundations.

of the tutelary Genie of the capital. But it was impossible, even
for the supreme chief of existences, to drive from the heads of
people as fatalistic as his subjects were the innumerable superstitions
which they attached to accidents, to diseases and to the phenomena
of sky, earth and water. Despite the royal ordinances the cult of
the "Phis," together with a belief in sorcerers and witches, persisted and still persists today.

Phothisarath was the first of the kings of Lan-Xang to leave his 663
Xieng-Thong palace and reside at Vientiane for many years. 175*

Thanks to its central location and its comparative nearness to 633
the kingdoms of Ayuthya and Annam, this city had grown extensively as a consequence of the development of trade. The
Kmers, who had been in full decline /74/ since the ruin of Angkor
by the kings of Ayuthya, no longer had any influence there. The

663 Thais of the Menam, on the other hand, who were rid of the Cam-
175* bodians in the south but were pressed by the Burmese in the north, were
633 coming there in increasing numbers in search of gum lac and benzoin,
/439/ which they took back with them and sold to the Dutch navigators who had been sailing the waters of the Indian Ocean ever since the sixteenth century.

643* War against Ayuthya (1536). Phothisarath had just settled in
721 Vientiane when he received a visit from Ekaracha, the prince of
175* Ayuthya, who had been driven out and was being pursued by his relative the Phaya-Attit. He welcomed the fugitive and refused to give him up, and war was the result. The king of Ayuthya was halted at Muong-Khuk (1) by the Lan-Xang troops before he could even cross

1. On the right bank, a little way downstream from Vientiane.

the river and had to beat a retreat. He died when he reached home from a wound received in the course of the battle.

643* Relations with Annam. Phothisarath confirmed his peaceful in-
648* tentions with respect to the king of Annam. Relations between the
175* two peoples had become more frequent since their violent /75/ contact in 1479, and quite a few Annamites had remained in Lan-Xang after the retreat of Lê-Thanh-Tôn's troops. The two sovereigns exchanged presents and established neighborly relations between their States which were marked by a cordiality heretofore unknown, even before Lê-Loi and Lane-Kham-Dèng. This was true to such a degree that Lan-Xang became the refuge of the partisans of the Lê while the Mac usurpers held sway. One of these partisans, Nguyên-Câm, who was the ancestor of the present royal family, came to seek asylum there around 1530.

Succession of Xieng-Mai. In 1546 the throne of Lan-Na (Xieng-Mai) became vacant, and Phothisarath claimed the succession rights which he held through his mother, a princess of that kingdom. To establish his claim he sent the governor Sene-Si-Mun-Muong with a sizeable armed force which dispersed the local pretenders and rapidly overcame any hesitation on the part of the latters' partisans. The chief of the bonzes came in person to offer the crown of Lan-Na to the king of Lan-Xang, and the king accepted it in behalf of his eldest son,

645 who should be in the dynastic tradition. After a long deliberation
175* which was made laborious by the fact that Lane-Kham-Dèng's children
643* were minors, it offered the crown to Thao-Lu-Sai, the governor of Muong-Sai-Muoi and last legitimate son of Sam-Sène-Thaï. Thao-Lu-Sai accepted and mounted the throne under the name of Phaya-Sai-Tiakaphat.

643* Twenty-three years old, he assumed power under difficult condi-
175* tions. The excesses of Nang-Keo-Phimpha had indeed weakened royal authority within the country and aroused the attention of the neighboring princes who, whether tributaries or not, were more or
/668/ less jealous of the power of the king of Lan-Xang. The rich province of Vientiane had always retained an inclination /64/ towards independence, and its governor, Sai-Moni, thought that the moment had come to shake off the yoke, but he was assassinated before he even had time to set out on the march (1). The failure of this movement

/346/ 1. The temple of Wat-Thai is supposed to have been erected in his memory by the inhabitants of Vientiane.

which was crushed "in the egg" doubtless gave cause for reflection to the vassals, who lay quiet and congratulated themselves on their reserve when they realized that Tiakaphat was a wise, steadfast and prudent sovereign who was quite determined to maintain the integrity of his States. He governed peaceably for forty years, intelligently seconded in the last years of his reign by his eldest son Thao-Kone-Kèo, who rapidly acquired an enlightened knowledge of the kingdom's affairs and an unquestioned authority in the Council of Ministers. The king created the unprecedented title of Sene-Muong for him, named him prince of Xieng-Lo and gave him the position of Oupahat.

721 The Annamite Invasion (1478-1479). Meanwhile the Annamites
643* were only waiting for an opportunity to extract vengeance for the
175* affront which Lê-Loi had once suffered and also to consolidate their western frontier which lay open on the Black River. /65/ If they had not done so before it was only because they had been prevented by the incessant incursions of the Chams on their southern frontiers, but in 1471 the king Lê-Thanh-Tôn occupied the land of Qui-Nhon and succeeded in destroying the kingdom of Champa once and for all, and in 1478 he used a futile incident as a pretext for invading Lan-Xang. If we are to believe the legend, Tiakaphat had refused

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To dream of a woman and be awakened by the dream.
To covet the property of others.
To speak profanely of earth, wind, fire, water or anything whatsoever.

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Ordained bonzes, like novices and students, shave their heads, eyebrows and beards carefully and repeat this operation every two weeks. Their clothing, which is the same for all and is of a uniform yellow color obtained by means of a jackwood dye, consists of a sarong, a kind of very full skirt which is worn folded in pleats and extends from the waist to the ground, and which is held in at the waist by a narrow sash. A half-tunic passing under one arm is attached to the opposite shoulder, and is split on one side. The whole garment is kept in place by a sash worn crosswise, and is covered with a kind of toga in the antique manner which is severely draped.

Ordained bonzes wear in addition a piece of pleated cloth on the left shoulder on which sacred characters and various formulas are inscribed.

Bonzes obey a code which was brought to them from India together with the sacred books, and a part of which has been quoted above.

The code requires that their clothing should not be made of one piece of cloth which is whole and of full width, but that it be made of unmatched pieces sewn together. Since the code does not in any way specify the nature of the cloth, one sees bonzes' garments [164] of silk and velvet as well as of cotton and flannel, depending on the generosity of the donors.

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Failure to keep the vow of chastity is very severely punished. The guilty person is marched through the village or city and seated backwards on a horse or carried on a wattle while a minor functionary proclaims the fault committed aloud and beats on a gong. Children and even adults utter hoots and throw filth at the guilty party and his female accomplice, who follows a few steps behind him. When he gets back to the pagoda the bonze is degraded from his rank and then handed over to the civil authorities if there are any grounds for so doing (1).

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(1) This custom has fallen into disuse. Faults committed by bonzes are treated much more indulgently in Laos than in Cambodia.

Kha

563 their prisoners among the Djarais. This state of affairs cannot go on
567 [106] indefinitely, and after settling the question of the Djarais which is more urgent, it will be necessary for Annam and Laos to pacify these tribes by a common agreement.

563 4. Rognao, Bahnar, Goelar and Haban Khas. These tribes, over
797 whom the missionaries exercise moral authority and many of whose villages are Catholic, can be regarded as pacified even though they do not pay any tribute. I have previously explained why it would not be politic, in my opinion, to require tribute in this region as of the present time.

These tribes, which are entirely located in Laotian territory, are quite tranquil but in continual dread of undertakings by their Djarai neighbors.

563 5. The great Djarai tribe, which is by far the most important and most numerous in the estimation of the missionaries. It is said to include nearly 150,000 inhabitants and is the finest racial type which I have seen in all the Kha region.

Many villages are subject to our authority and pay the head tax. Others, such as those which I found in the valley of the Psi and on the Sesane, obey our orders, keep the roads in repair, receive traders and travelers with perfect hospitality and will pay tribute whenever we wish.

563 But there are two groups which are absolutely rebellious to our
[619 643] penetration. These are: 1) the groups of villages of Pley-Qho and Pley-Denang immediately south of the mission; and 2), somewhat further to the south, the group of the Sadetes whose two chieftains, the kings of water and fire, inhabit the points which are marked on
579 the map as Pa-Tao-Ia and Pa-Tao-Ngo.

The first of these groups has continuously committed hostile
563 acts against us. They are the ones who attacked the convoy of M.
• 668 Navelle when this official came to visit the mission, who have constantly attacked convoys on the road from Ang-Ke to Kon-Toum,
726 who more recently robbed a Laotian hunter of merchandise valued at more than 1,000 piasters and pierced him with sword thrusts, and, finally, who attacked M. Lacouture and killed one of his guides. These villages are dreaded by all their neighbors. It was they against whom Meyréna (1) marched, but his success was not sufficiently

(1) Since I have been led to pronounce the name of the man who dreamed of creating a Cedang kingdom, I should say a few words regarding this adventure which seems to me to have been greatly exaggerated.

Kha

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I shall not dwell on all the personalities implicated in the matter, for I have neither the right nor the means to define the responsibilities incurred, but shall simply say that his authority has never been recognized by the Khas in any effective fashion. In a gathering held in the common house of Kon-Hoirin and at which the representatives of some twenty Cedang villages were present, he appeared in the guise of one who had come to lead them in their defense against attacks by their neighbors and to command them against the enemy Djarais (the tribes of Pley-Qho and Pley-Demang, to be exact). His proposal was naturally accepted, and was also given sanction by some semblance of an expedition against the Djarais. When the Cedangs did not take all the booty and especially all the prisoners that they had anticipated, they broke off relations with Meyréna. What is more, when Father Vialleton, the director of the Catholic mission of the Bahnars and a man of extremely subtle mind, subsequently realized what the situation was, he did not want to enter into open conflict with Meyréna but was content to set up a confederation of the Bahnar, Rognac and Gnelar tribes, a confederation which had the Kha chieftain of the village of Kon-Toum at its head, but which was under the moral and actual leadership of Father Vialleton. This master stroke, the only purpose of which had been to prevent Meyréna's authority from prevailing over these tribes, dealt the death blow to the kingdom of which he had dreamed and he was obliged to leave the country.

Such, in all its simplicity, is the truth of this adventure when disengaged from all the little incidents of a more or less humorous nature which occurred at the time.

followed up. It is [107] now necessary that this den of bandits should disappear or surrender. The hatred which they have aroused against themselves is so great that during my inspection tour all the neighboring tribes, including the Cedangs, asked permission to join forces with me and march against them immediately. I had to promise that satisfaction would be given them.

When this group has disappeared or surrendered, all the hesitant factions of Djarais, Salangs and Halangs-Doang will make their submission once and for all.

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As for the second group, that of the Sadetes, the question is a ticklish one. The two Sadete kings are unquestionably the religious leaders of all the Kha tribes south of the Cedangs. According to the

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

000 tasted of earth and bitter herbs when a commotion aroused us. Hurrying from the restaurant we saw Dupont's dog busy with carrion in a nearby field, surrounded by an excited huddle of vultures for whose benefit it had been exposed there. Dupont's cries of horror were interrupted by the whistle of the convoy-commander, who this time signalled for all officers to gather round
494 him. He told them that seventy Issaraks[1] were reported to be in
● 669 ambush, awaiting us at Kilometre 115 – about twenty miles further
725 on. They were turned out in new American uniforms, he said, and were well armed. At Kilometre 115 a cross-country track leading from Siam into Viet-Nam crossed our route. It occurred to both Dupont and myself that if this report was several hours old, it was not likely that the Issarak would be in the place where they were first seen. However, the official view taken was that they would not have moved more than five kilometres down the road in our direction, because orders were given for the infantry escort to dismount from their lorries at Kilometre 110 and to precede the convoy on foot for the next five kilometres. We noticed, too, that the officer assumed that the Issarak, if they had moved at all, would have inevitably marched towards us, and not in the other direction, because, once Kilometre 115 had been reached, the danger would be officially declared at an end, and the infantry ordered back into their lorries.

137 We now entered a country of low, bare hills; a whitish landscape, rarely animated by wandering pink-skinned buffaloes. In the hollows there were islands of splendid vegetation – flamboyant trees, arranged as if by design, with giant ferns and feathery bamboos. Peacocks gleamed in abandoned paddy fields, and storks, flapping away at our approach, trailed their legs in pools of yellow marsh-water. The vegetation was sensitive to quite small variations in altitude. The valley-bottoms were choked with bamboo thickets, and slender, segmented canes, wreathed in blue convolvulus, curved over our path like coachmen's whips, flicking us as we passed beneath. At this level the ditches were full of dead butterflies

[1] [i.e., "freemen" of Laos and Cambodia. -- Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

A DRAGON APPARENT

000 Up till the last fraction of a second before a thousand graceful stems screened it from our view it was still upright and quite level. The soldiers in it had hardly risen from their seats and raised their arms not so much in alarm, it seemed, as to wave farewell.

Soon after, the infantry climbed down from the lorries and began their march in single file along the sides of the road in front. This manœuvre seemed to me not only useless but dangerous, since nothing could have been easier for ambushers than to let the soldiers go by and then destroy the defenceless vehicles. In the spirit of one who whistles in the dark to keep his courage up, the armoured car ahead occasionally opened up with its machine-guns and 2-cm. cannon, provoking, to the great discomfort of the following cars, one small forest fire. We never heard that the enemy
494 was other than imaginary. At five in the afternoon we crawled into the village of Vang Vieng, having done about twenty miles since mid-day.

133 Vang Vieng was just such another village as the one where we had had our mid-day Chinese soup, but it was set in the most staggering surroundings. Overhanging it was a range of mountains which were not very high, since the peaks only reached 8000 feet, but which did not look like any mountains I had ever seen before. There was no visual preparation by a gently rising foreground of foothills. These were stupendous walls of rock rising 4000, 5000 and 6000 feet sheer out of an absolutely flat plain. We were overhung, as it were, by a huge scrabbling in the sky, which at its base had been erased by mists. Dupont said that we would pass over these mountains that night.

494 It was at Vang Vieng that Dupont had planned to slip away. His
725 resolution was only slightly shaken when it was announced that the
669 whole convoy would stay in the village overnight, owing to the presence of a small force of Viet-Minh, which the infantry would have to clear out, in a village fifteen kilometres further along the

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

road; but as all the men were thoroughly tired this operation would 494
be postponed till early next morning. Dupont was determined not 725
to stay in Vang Vieng, but even he seemed to think twice about 669
deliberately disobeying the convoy-commander's orders, and when
he finally did so it was done in gentle stages, rather than in one
flagrant act of insubordination. The excuse given for this phobia
about Vang Vieng was that all the sleeping space would be taken
up and we should find nowhere to stretch out comfortably.

We were still filthy from our travels; sweat-soaked and covered 494
in bright yellow dust, through which the perspiration trickled down
regular courses. As part of his campaign Dupont suggested that
we should have a meal first and after that get permission from the
convoy-commander to go for a bathe in a river, twelve kilometres
down the road, where we should still be three kilometres short of
the village with the Viet-Minh. Dupont described this river as if
it had magical curative properties. It came out of a cave not far
away, he said, and the water was icy cold. This course being agreed 251
upon, we went to the usual Chinese eating-house run by one Sour 265
Hak. Taken by surprise by our invasion, Sour Hak found himself
short of food. However, as these villages are completely cut off
during the six months' rainy season, there are always standbys for
emergency. Reaching to the top of the cupboard he found a hunk
of venison *boucané*, dusted it off and set it before us. This meat,
prepared in a manner similar to that employed by the Argentine
gauchos, was black, fine grained in texture as cheese, odourless and
tasted slightly of liquorice. According to the usages of life in the
bush, strips were cut off it with one's clasp knife. Fortunately, Sour
Hak was found, quite mysteriously, to have a stock of first-rate
Burgundy; doubtlessly bought in the belief that it was Algerian.
Dupont's sudden optimism was only lowered by Sour Hak's refusal 000
at any price to sell a green parakeet, which had flown in one day
and attached itself to the house. Since tasting civilization nothing
could persuade this bird to use its wings again, although like a true
Laotian it enjoyed being taken for a ride on a bicycle. Dupont's

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

the greatest artistic interest. I asked the headman if it would be 796
possible to take any, as the bonze was crumpling and smashing them 782
vigorously with his broom. But the chief shook his head regretfully. 532
Buddhism had degenerated in these remote provinces and was 285
swamped with re-emergent spirit cults. These objects had been dedicated to the *phi*[1] and would have to be burnt in a ritual fire. The *phi* would also receive the burnt essence, I noticed, of a large, very obscene, and no doubt magically valuable picture.

At about this time when the bonze was treading underfoot the 669
village's artistic output of several months, a party of Issarak or Viet- 726
Minh, timing their action to coincide with the convoy's arrival at 731
Moung Kassy, had set fire to the forest just south of the post. A steady breeze was blowing from that quarter, and the fire, started over a width of about a mile and fanning out as it advanced, moved slowly towards the fort.

Coming up over the river bank it took us some time to realize what was happening. There was a haze; but then there was always a haze in Laos, although by this time of day it should have been clearing and not thickening. And then we heard the crackling, punctuated with the sharp pops, which might have been distant rifle fire, but which were the explosions of thick stems of bamboo. Looking up then we saw the curtain of smoke hanging over Muong Kassy, white at the top, and black at its base and streaked occasionally by lance-points of flame, which were still two miles away.

We ran to where the car was parked, started it and tried to drive down the road towards the fire. Dupont was as pleased with it as July 14th. In about fifty yards we got tangled up with the convoy and had to leave the car on the side of the road and run on. The fire was advancing on a ragged front and was as irresistible as a volcano. Black smoke was being blown before it so that at first the flames were out of sight; but when they came through they were two hundred feet high – twice the height of the tallest tree. It went forward in zigzagging rushes; eating its way quickly through the bamboo

[1] [i.e., spirits. -- Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

669 thickets, which went up like oil wells. A lane of fire had broken
726 right out of the general advance and its spear-point was wandering
731 up over the hill-side, already level with the fort. Large clumps of green forest were being left behind or encircled and then consumed at leisure as the fire went through the bamboo. It caught at the lianas, too, and went up a tree from top to bottom in shrivelling streamers – just like Christmas decorations catching fire. The noise of the exploding bamboos was becoming deafening and the sky was covered in a cloud through which black ash streamed up like flotsam carried on flood-waters. I noticed, though, that only the tops of some of the trees had caught on the other side of the road.

Orders were given to prepare to evacuate the fort. There was a great deal of ammunition and thousands of gallons of petrol, stored in cans, and the soldiers were swarming like ants stacking it in the road and loading the lorries. Confusion developed and matured into chaos, largely caused by the arrival of half the convoy, which blocked the road and prevented the lorries being driven out of the fort. Before an evacuation could be made the convoy had to be moved on through the village, but half the drivers couldn't be found. They had wandered off to look at the fire and taken their starting keys with them.

In the meanwhile the Laotians and Chinese rushing out of their houses with their beds and bedding, and piling their stocks of groceries between the wheels of the cars had made rapid movement impossible, even when the drivers could be rounded up. One family was actually at work taking their house down.

And then as an hour passed in struggling tumult with the convoy at last bludgeoned on through the village and safely parked on the other side, and hundreds of crates and cans loaded on to the lorries, the wind veered and the main front of the fire went by, about half a mile away. A few offshoots coming in our direction burned feebly for a while among the bamboos, and it was all over.

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
1[M. Leveau, senior French official in Laos.--Analyst] Laotians AM8 Kha AM7

INTO THE MEO COUNTRY

After dinner, when the Conseiller[1] relaxed for an hour, he could L 669 sometimes be persuaded to talk about some of his problems. These 579 were the chronic worries of the Issarak[2] and the Viet-Minh. To 548 the west of Luang Prabang the frontier with Burma started, and Burmese irregulars crossed it from time to time. Chinese opium smugglers conducted a regular trade with the Meos, and turned pirate when business was bad. But now that the communists had taken over in Yunnan there was some signs of this traffic slackening. And then the Meos themselves. They were passing like a blight through the mountains. Leveau's ambition was to change their agricultural habits. If they could be persuaded to come down to 1000 feet he could give them irrigated rice-fields to cultivate, and had offered to provide the buffaloes to do the work.

I brought up the question of the Khas. The Khas are the aboriginals K of Laos and are, in fact, Moï tribes under another name. Several 566 hundred years ago they were conquered and enslaved by the Laotian 769 nation, and now Khas were to be seen hanging about the market places of Laotian towns and villages, utterly broken and degenerate; as helpless as the pathetic remnants of once powerful Indian tribes in North America. I asked if it was true that Laotians still possessed Kha slaves. Leveau smiled in his tolerant and sceptical Laotian way and said that it all depended what you meant by slavery. The slavery of the old West Indian plantation kind was unknown in the Far East. For superstitious if for no other reasons, the peoples of Indo-China always trod very gently when it came to oppression of others. The spirits of their ancestors had to be reckoned with, and they themselves if pushed too far might be forced to revenge themselves by the efficient, occult methods strangers were always imagined to possess. He cited the well-known fact of a collective bad-conscience on the part of the Vietnamese, who conduct special sacrifices and offer symbolical rent to the spirits of the unknown aboriginal possessors of the land they now occupy. Leveau believed 566 that slavery did occasionally exist, but that it took more the form of a racial aristocracy maintaining a subject people in a condition of

2["free men" of Laos and Cambodia.--Analyst]

he fled secretly by way of the Mékong, but Nang-Keo-Phimpha 643*
learned of his flight and had him pursued and massacred on his 175*
raft a little way downstream from the capital. 662

We can only conjecture as to the motives which impelled this princess, fiercer even than a Frédégonde or a Marguerite de Bourgogne, to make such a hecatomb of kings. Was she a bloodthirsty despot, or simply a royal Lampito with an exasperated temperament? (1) /62/ We do not know, but it is certain that she /582/

1. Marriages between brothers and sisters were always permitted in the royal family of Lan-Xang. They were forbidden, on the other hand, among the common people.

finally inspired such terror in the court that there was no one left to intrigue for the throne, the last two sons of Lane-Kham-Dèng being too young.

Kam-Kheut, king 1435-1438.

It was then that Nang-Keo-Phimpha discovered the son of a palace slave girl who had once been singled out by King Sam-Sène-Thaï for her beauty. The young man, Xieng-Ma by name, conquered the Gorgon by his keen intelligence and a perfect knowledge of the events of the great reign of Oun-Hueun. She had no doubt but that he was her brother, and forced him on the court as sovereign under the name of Kham-Keut (golden birth). Whether the latter was a docile tool in the hands of the princess, or whether Nang-Keo-Phimpha became genuinely and profoundly attached to her creature, calm seemed permanently restored to the palace when Kham-Keut fell sick and died of dropsy after a three years' reign.

Death of Nang-Keo-Phimpha (1438). Then there was an ex- 669
plosion of hatred against Nang-Keo-Phimpha. This death was 643*
seen as a /63/ punishment inflicted on the kingdom by Heaven for 175*
having accepted a usurper. Anger got the better of fear, and the ministers arrested the princess, tied her to the rock of Pha-Dieou and had her shot. "Her body was abandoned to the crows and vultures."

SAI-TIAKAPHAT (1415), KING 1438-1479. 645

The Council of Ministers at once set out to choose a new king 175*
643*

coming down the great river, and in the following 643*
he repressed with no less vigor a new attempt on the 648*
part of this ambitious prince." We have been un- 175*
able to find any confirmation of this expedition in
the Laotian chronicles.

General Sene-Soulintha took command /91/ of the troops and 643*
brought them back to the capital, where he had difficulty in ex- 669
plaining the king's disappearance. Since the ministers and the 175*
queen, who had just brought a son named Nokeo-Koumane into the
world, affected not to believe him, he had the palace surrounded
and the prime minister Tian-Ta-Simmarath, the governor of
Vientiane, assassinated together with his partisans and proclaimed
himself regent (1).

1. The Annals state that the chief bonzes preached conciliation and succeeded in avoiding the conflict for three months.

SENE-SOULINTHA (1511), REGENT (1571-1575).

Nothing could have been more favorable to the plans of the 643*
king of Burma than the disappearance of Setthathirath, and espe- 648*
cially these court quarrels which he resolved to exploit without de- 175*
lay. To the highly questionable regent he opposed the rights to
the crown of the former Oupahat, whom he had kept at Ava as a
hostage since 1565. But his envoys were ignominiously massacred,
"a fact which shows to what a degree people in Lan-Xang still
thought they could scorn the Burmese provocations." In order to
avenge this outrage Bureng-Naung sent out an expedition which /726/
was weakly /92/ led by contingents from Xieng-Mai and even
from Siam, and which ended in complete failure. Then he multi-
plied his intrigues and worked behind discontented persons who
naively imagined that with their old Oupahat there would no longer
be anything to fear from Burma.

In spite of the opposition which he encountered, the regent held 643*
his power in Vientiane for four years. Sixty-one years old, he was 554
the son of a simple village chieftain whom King Phothisarath had 175*
singled out for his intelligence and bravery. Setthathirath had em-
ployed his skill in Xieng-Mai, where he had proved his military
talent against the Burmese and the pretenders to the throne of Lan-
Na. Promoted to the rank of general and governor of Muong-Sai,

glorious reign of thirty-two years, and his successors would not 648*
have the prestige or the authority of the great politician and great 175*
man of war who had disappeared to keep so vast an empire in one 643*
piece.

In Vientiane, however, the new king was not obeyed any more 669
than the regent had been, and the Oupahat saw a void growing up 175*
around him little by little. The situation grew worse in 1579 when 643*
the rumor spread that Setthathirath was not dead and that he had reappeared in the region of Attopeu (2). This was only an impostor

2. Cf. ibid. /P. Lefevre-Pontalis, "La lutte des Thais contre les Birmans au seizieme siecle." Revue indochinoise, 1914, Vol. XXII, Nos. 7-8. /

who was exploiting the great memories left by the famous king and was trying to group the large number of discontented persons. Bureng-Naung sent his son to restore order once again in Lan-Xang, but the latter stayed there as short a time as /95/ possible and "did not prolong his sojourn in this detested land" beyond the dry season. Scarcely had he left Vientiane when a revolt drove out the Oupahat, who hastily embarked for Luang-Prabang and Ava. When he reached the pass of Keng-Chan his pirogues sunk and he was drowned with all his followers (1579).

SENE-SOULINTHA (1511), KING 1580-1582.

The king of Burma then offered the crown to his prisoner 648*
Soulintha. The former regent was allowed to return with all of the 643*
hostages captured in the course of the preceding wars to Vientiane, 175*
with the exception of the young Nokeo-Koumane, to be sure, and he mounted the throne in 1580.

His great age appeased the partisan struggles for a time, but at his death which occurred two years later they resumed more bitter than ever with the accession to the throne of his son Nakhone-Noi.

NAKHONE-NOI, KING 1582-1583.

Bureng-Naung was dead and his successor came up against the awakening of all the enslaved Thai princes. Overcome by the revolts which were being fomented in all parts of his empire, he was unable to impose his will on Lan-Xang. He was circumvented by /96/ a delegation from the court of Vientiane itself and gave orders for Nakhone-Noi to be deposed without making any provision for a successor.

557 the people, and finally took a major part in the direction of the king-
643* dom's affairs. Thammikarath was wounded in his paternal pride,
175* would not countenance this premature interference in his royal prero-
/578/ gatives, and treated his son as a rebel (1621).

OUPAGNOUVARATH (1598), KING 1622-1623.

●669 Supported by the majority of the ministers and by /101/ one of
578 his brothers, Mone-Keo, Oupagnouvarath entered into an open struggle
643* against his father, defeated the troops who had remained faithful to
175* the latter in bloody battles, and had himself proclaimed king in Vientiane on the "Sunday, first day of the crescent moon of the fourth month of the year 984" (1622). Three months later, Thammikarath was killed at his orders, together with his last partisans, in Pha-Deng. The epilogue of this somber family drama was not long in coming, for Oupagnouvarath died the following year under unknown circumstances.

662 With his death the intrigues for the crown began all over again,
175* and during a new period of nearly fifteen years, which the confusion of the Annals obscures as if intentionally, princes succeeded one another in Vientiane without any reference point for the chronicler and without any probable date which would make it possible to establish even an approximate chronology.

PHOTHISARAT II, KING 1623-1627.

643* We may nevertheless agree that it was one of Sene-Soulintha's sons
175* who seized power in 1623 under the name of Phothisarath (a fact which further complicates this imbroglio).

/102/ MONE-KEO, OUPAGNAOVARATH, TONE-KHAM, VISAI, KINGS 1627-1637.

The national dynasty resumed its prerogatives in 1627 with, successively, Oupagnouvarath's brother Mone-Keo, Mone-Keo's son named Oupagnaovarath (?), and finally with the latter's two sons Tone-Kham and Visai. The last-named died in 1637 (1).

648* 1. It was fortunate for Lan-Xang that the Burmese had been
175* driven back by the Thais of the Menam and had abandoned all action in the territories once subject to the rule of Bureng-Naung. If this had not been the case the historian of today would doubtless be somewhat more clear as to the events of the time, but Lan-Xang would certainly have sunk permanently into anarchy and into the partitioning which

643* The Oupahat Chao-Anou. A clever politician, the Oupahat
175* was able to conceal his true sentiments and maintain the attitude of deference which circumstances imposed on him with respect to the sovereign. He thereby gained the trust of the court of Bangkok, and the Siamese chronicles acknowledge his courage and the unquestionable service which he rendered to Siam for nearly twenty years (1). Thus when Chao-In died he was immediately designated

1. Cf. H.R.H. Phanuphanthuvongswardja, op. cit. /Repression de la revolte de Vientiane. Bangkok, 1926./

as his successor.

CHAO-ANOU, KING 1805-1828.

643* This reign, which was to end in the total and final ruin of the
648* principality, therefore began under the most favorable auspices.
175* /160/ Siam granted him the investiture with great pomp, and when Anou took power he was able to strengthen an authority of which the kings of Vientiane had long been dispossessed.

Appointment of Chao-Ngo to the government of Bassac (1819). He strengthened still further his friendship with Bangkok, and climaxed his reputation as a valorous warrior by his opportune intervention, in 1819, in a revolt of the Khas of the province of Bassac.
/669/ He succeeded in persuading Siam to place his son Chao-Ngo, who had commanded the police column, in charge of the government of this important province. He thereby extended his sphere of action as far as the old southern frontiers of Lan-Xang, thus effacing, in some measure, the grievous consequences of the reverses suffered in 1778.

In the years which followed he seemed to devote his attention solely to beautifying his capital, but in reality he was only waiting for an opportunity to raise the standard of revolt. From the time of his accession to the throne he had renewed his homage to the new emperor Gia-Long (1), and in 1820 he had secretly undertaken

1. "In the 11th month of the 4th year 1806 Chao-Anou, prince of Vientiane, sent an embassy (to Hue) bringing a tribute composed of two elephants, two rhinoceros horns, 800 pounds of cinnamon bark and a letter of which the following is a summary: 'The State of Vientiane has long

How could I, the chieftain of a small State, have done so, when 648*
the emperor of Annam found the undertaking beyond his strength?" 175*

Minh-Mang scorned to answer this impertinent reply and contented himself with having the accused man executed with great pomp. He even granted him magnificent funeral rites. Chao-Noi's family had their lives spared, and his children remained in Hue for five years and were then exiled to Hatinh.

The kingdom of Xieng-Khouang had the same fate /179/ as /635/
that of Vientiane, and was suppressed. It was annexed to Annam and became a prefecture of the empire, divided into eight huyen, under the name of Tran-Ninh-Phu-Tam-Vien. A Quan-Phu was placed over it and settled at Muong-Kham with a garrison of five hundred soldiers (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique." Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./

II. -- LUANG-PRABANG

KING-KITSARATH, KING 1707-1726.

King-Kitsarath and Intha-Som, who had long been united in 643*
misfortune and in their stubborn struggle against Thao-Nong and 175*
Ong-Hue (2), fell out shortly after their common victory.

2. See above, p. 133.

Revolt of Intha-Som. Jealous of his brother's authority and 669●
discontent with the limited role which he was henceforth to play, 175*
Intha-Som intrigued against King-Kitsarath and commissioned Ong-Ek, the prince of Tran-Ninh and his "inseparable friend" (3), to

3. Ong-Ek was, according to certain chronicles, the father-in-law of Ong-Hue.

assemble troops secretly. A small army was formed of highly disparate elements recruited in Muong-Ou, in /180/ Dien-Bien-Phu and even in Burma and Yunnan. Then when he thought himself ready for action Intha-Som took charge of the operations and entered into open revolt against his brother.

King-Kitsarath had to undertake a veritable expedition. The

669 royal troops succeeded in dispersing the partisans of Intha-Som and
175* forced them, after a bloody encounter, to retreat in disorder along the Nam-Ou. Ong-Ek swam across the river and fled to Phoutong-Nongboua. As for Intha-Som, he was able to gain the Sip-Song-Panas where he kept a close watch on events and waited for a more favorable opportunity.

Finally free to organize his conquest, King-Kitsarath endeavored to restore some measure of order in the kingdom, which was greatly in need thereof. Aided by his cousin Khamone-Noi (1), he succeeded

1. See p. 133.

within a few years in restoring tranquillity to his subjects. Luang-
/633/ Prabang, once again a royal metropolis, was slowly repopulated and resumed the foremost place in a diminished State.

633 Gracefully stretching across the junction of the Mekong and the
175* Nam-Khane and dominated by the verdant hill of the "Phou-Si," the
133 city regained some of its animation and gradually became covered /181/ with new buildings grouped around the ancient pagodas which recalled the past grandeur of the legendary Muong-Swa.

"Moreover, the configuration of the principality's territory and the particular topography of the region combined at this river junction to provide all the elements for the prosperity of a great city. Luang-Prabang is in fact contained in the immediate zone where the region's three great navigable watercourses converge on the Mekong. These watercourses (Nam-Ou, Nam-Suong, Nam-Khane) have in the past favored the political centralization of the country as well as trade relations with China, Tonkin and Annam. Whereas both upstream and downstream for a distance of several hundred kilometers the banks of the river are constantly cut deep between the mountains and nowhere offer a surface of flat land which would lend itself to large agglomerations, here nature has provided on both banks a broad extent of land which can be cultivated as ricefields and is capable of supplying all the needs of a large population" (1).

1. Cf. Captain Cupet, Mission Pavie, Vol. III /Voyages au Laos et chez les sauvages du Sud-Est de l'Indochine (1900)/, p. 34.

643* At his death, which occurred about 1726, King-Kitsarath left
595 three daughters born of three different wives /182/ /Page 182 is
175*

devoted to an illustration: "Junction of the Nam-Khane and the 643*
Mekong at Luang-Prabang." --Translator/ /183/ whom he had 595
chosen in Luang-Prabang itself from the families of his mandarins. 175*

KHAMONE-NOI, KING 1726-1727.

Khamone-Noi succeeded him and took as wives two of the dead /595/
king's daughters, Thene-Sao and Thene-Kham. But Intha-Som at 175*
once began to agitate. Not daring to hope that the family of the 669
Sip-Song-Panas would lend him aid against one of its children, he 643*
addressed himself to some newcomers to the land who had been 563
infiltrating for some time into the valley of the Nam-Ou. These /167/
were the "Mousseux," mountainfolk driven out of Yunnan by the
religious wars (1). Although their temperament was not at all war-

1. Violent Moslem rebellions were then devastating southern China.

like, these fugitives nevertheless agreed, since they had no choice, 721
to lend their aid to Intha-Som. In return the latter promised their 643*
leaders La-Nga and Noli that he would recognize and confirm their 175*
occupation of Muong-Yo and Boun-Neua as soon as he became king. 669
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Submission of Intha-Som (1726). But the Mousseux (2), al-

2. The word "Mousseux" is the word which most nearly approaches the native appellation. With their slender fig- /142/
ures, their rather white coloration, their prominent cheekbones and their well-shaped and not flattened noses, the "Mousseux" type has a greater affinity with the Indo-European type than with the yellow race type.

though they were supported by Nha-No- '184/ Muong of Muong-La, failed in their march on Luang-Prabang and Intha-Som had no other recourse than to make his submission. He gave up his weapons, took an oath of obedience and fidelity in the pagoda of Xieng-Thong, and was given permission to live in the capital, where he settled near the Vat-Visoun with a large retinue of Mousseux.

He was quite determined not to keep his word. The king, moreover, was not at all worried and did not even have him watched.

643* Khamone-Noi seems to have been a most unusual man, and it
157 is to be regretted that we cannot paint a more precise picture of
175* him. Brought up at first as an exile in Vientiane, far from his native land, then the companion of Souligna's grandsons in their peregrinations, and finally king of Luang-Prabang which he had to leave in order to combat the Burmese and mount the throne of Xieng-Mai, this wandering prince experienced a thousand adventures which he faced with equanimity, manifesting on all occasions, both good and bad, a surprisingly philosophical humor and a most un-
/224/ usual carefreeness. He had one passion, hunting, to which he devoted all his time and which gained him the surname "Ong-Nok," the /185/ prince of the birds (unless it meant the prince who was "always out").

669 Intha-Som's bold stroke (1727). One day in 1727 when he was
643* away from Luang-Prabang and, as the Annals say, in the company
175* of Phya-Keo, Thai-Sang, Chabane, Thao-Bang-Khom and Thao-Bang-Houak, Intha-Som suddenly closed the gates of the city and occupied the palace. The maneuver was not accomplished without some disturbance, and on the way back Khamone-Noi had wind of some kind of treachery. He sent Thao-bang-Houak up to the approaches of the capital to find out what was going on. When he learned of the defection of all those in whom he had placed his confidence he halted, bewildered, and broke a gold carafe which he was holding in his hands. Then, as if ashamed of a gesture of anger which he had not been able to repress, he turned on his heel, leaving his companions free to follow him or not as they wished, and set out calmly in the direction of Xieng-Mai where new destinies awaited him.

This is how tradition relates the last part of this odd man's life:

643* Odyssey of Khamone-Noi. "The inhabitants of Luang-Prabang
175* had grown tired of seeing /186/ their king always absent from the palace and neglecting the management of their affairs. One day as he was returning from a long outing he was surprised to find the gates of his palace solidly closed. The people whom he met avoided him or fled when he approached. Some children who had gathered round and who were looking at him curiously said to him: 'You are never there, the leaders and the people are not satisfied, they have closed the gates of your palace so that you can leave it.' Then Khamone-Noi went away sadly, entered the pagoda of

579 ravaging the region of Dien-Bien-/246/ Phu as far as Muong-Ngoi.
563 King Oun-Kham was growing old and carefree and felt incapable,
727 when left entirely to his own resources, of calming the mortal dis-
175* quietude of his people. Thus Siamese agents, the number of whom
/648/* was constantly on the increase, were welcomed all along the Upper Mekong as the only protectors from whom effective aid could be expected.

636 Relations with the cantons of the Black River. The man Cam-
175* Sinh, who was of Chinese origin himself, was nevertheless a friend of the princes of Luang-Prabang, but he was then too preoccupied with driving the invaders out of his own domains to lend any support to his neighbor.

His remote ancestors were military mandarins in Quang-Si and had settled three hundred years previously in Muong-Lai, which they had pacified in behalf of the king of Anna. Their authority extended around Lai-Chau as far as Yunnan in the north and Muong Theng in the south (Dien-Bien-Phu, the legendary cradle of the Laotian race). At this time they had reached a peaceful agreement
/728/ with the kings of Lan-Xang, most likely Nokeo-Koumane or Thammi-Karath who had just /247/ shaken off the Burmese yoke (1) and who

1. See above, pp. 97 and 100.

were glad to give them charge of the "white" and "black" Thais of the region in exchange for a triennial payment of thirty-three taels of silver "and one horse" (2). Relations had subsequently become

2. Cf. the Chronicle of Muong-Lai given by Deo-van-Tri to Auguste Pavie in 1894.

completely friendly and trusting to such a degree that when Cam-Sinh was in conflict with several of his relatives around 1850 he had not hesitated to place two of his children, one of whom was Deo-van-Tri, in Souka-Seum's hands (3).

3. See above, p. 213, note.

669 Revolt of the Khas of Muong-Ngoi (1876). It was not until 1876,
175* after he had temporarily driven back the Yellow Flags, that he was
563 able to send any reinforcements to Oun-Kham to sustain the struggle

against the revolted Khas. But scarcely had the latter made their 669
submission when Cam-Sinh was again overwhelmed by a return of- 175*
fensive of the pirates in his territory, and then soon drawn by his 563
ally Liu-Vinh-Phuoc into the ambush warfare which the emperor /648/*
of Annam was sustaining in the Tonkinese delta against the French
of Francis Garnier and Henri Riviere.

/248/ Siamese occupation (1883-1885). The old king Oun- 648*
Kham was therefore left to confront the ever-threatening Hos by 175*
himself, as well as a populace which was perpetually on the qui-
vive and Siamese who were settling daily in his land in increasing
numbers as in a conquered country. The latter redoubled their
activities when the French advance in Tonkin, despite a thousand
setbacks, resulted in the protectorate treaty of August 25, 1883
which posed the problem of Annam's political frontiers in a precise
way. Bangkok's agents immediately enlisted Laotian recruits,
marched against Xieng-Kham and once more besieged the Hos in
their entrenched positions, but they suffered so grave a setback (1)

1. The Siamese general Phya-Khon-Thay was killed and his troops disbanded.

that King Chulalongkorn decided to send out a large force im-
mediately and place the whole upper country to the north and east
of Luang-Prabang and as far as the approaches to the Black River
under military occupation.

Upon his arrival in October 1885 the Chao-Meun-Vai-Voronat (2),

2. He was elevated to the dignity of "Phya" Surrissak upon his return to Bangkok in 1887. (See below, p. 271.)

who was commander-in-chief of the occupation forces, took ef-
fective possession of the principality, entrusted its administration
to two commissioners or Kaluongs who were stationed /249/ with
King Oun-Kham, and himself went into the field in a prudent
march towards Tran-Ninh and the Houa-Phans, taking the oupahat
Souvanna-Phouma and one of his sons with him as hostages rather
than as comrades in arms.

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648* possible be done to halt the Siamese invasion." /300/ Then on
175* January 2, 1891 he set out with Deo-van-Tri for Lai and the Sip-Song-Panas.

669 Reconnaissance in the Sip-Song-Panas (January-June 1891). Three
175* months later he reached Xieng-Houng, the capital, to find a young queen who was in anguish over the danger to which her husband the king was exposed in a war on the other bank of the Mekong against one of his brothers who was desirous of taking his crown from him. Pavie's reputation had preceded him in these remote regions where the memory of the Lagree mission's passage had not been lost. His intervention was therefore solicited and he succeeded, by his personal authority, in reconciling the two adversaries. When he had gathered all the ethnographical and political information which he had come to seek in these parts, he returned to Tonkin by crossing southern Yunnan to reach the Red River at Man-Hao and go down it to Hanoi.

175* There he learned that Siam's intrigues had not been modified, but
648* had become worse from north to south between the Mekong and the Cordillere. Levies of extra troops, provisioning in weapons and munitions, construction of forts and, in short, veritable preparations for war were going forward. /301/ Pavie felt it to be an urgent matter for Paris itself to determine "a line of conduct in tune with the circumstances," and declining the offer which Bangkok made to resume the talks, he embarked for France on July 7, 1891, taking with him four youths from Deo-van-Tri's family whom the latter had sent to begin their studies in the Colonial School.

The affair of Ton-Xieng-Kham (September 1891). Shortly after his arrival news reached Paris that great difficulties were accumulating on the Annamite frontiers, where the Siamese advance posts had advanced beyond the dividing line of the Chain, "causing disorder among the populace which was urgently demanding that the governor general use force to repulse the invaders." The forbearance which the French government had too long manifested by remaining content with vague formulas of protest had evidently been interpreted in Bangkok as an indication of indifference or weakness, and the boldness of the Siamese agents, in Pavie's absence soon knew no bounds. Thus in Tran-Ninh a force of thirty Siamese regulars surrounded /302/ the house of the Annamite huyen (1) of Tong-Xieng-Kham on September

1. Pavie called him "Bambien" and his native companions "Chao-Muong."

115: Le Boulanger--209 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(20th Cent.) Laotians AM8●
Kha Am7

Franco-Siamese treaty of October 7, 1902. Finally after more 648*
than three years of negotiations which were skilfully terminated in 175*
Paris by the Phyas Sri and Suriya, a new treaty was signed on October 7, 1902 by the terms of which we gave Siam back its liberty on the right bank of the river in exchange for the return to the French authorities of the territories of Melouprey and Tonle-Repou in Cambodia and of Bassac in Lower Laos. The king of Luang-Prabang obtained the frontier correction /343/ which he had been claiming for nine years, but we allowed Siam to retain the status of suzerain with respect to our protege as regarded this large part of his domains. As for our Asiatic nationals residing in Siam, we lost touch with them to such a degree that the revision of their lists was left to the entire discretion of the Siamese authorities.

This treaty provoked the sharpest and most fully justified protests on the part of the colonial group in the Chamber. How had the high competence of Auguste Pavie and the repeated advice of our successive ministers in Bangkok led the Quai d'Orsay to conclude a treaty which did not decide anything and which, in exchange for slight territorial satisfactions in the south, completely abandoned our influence over the whole Laotian right bank to the north of the Se-Moun? Under the pressure of parliament, which refused to ratify the treaty, the talks had to be resumed with more care given to "making our rights and interests respected."

Insurrection of the Khas of Lower Laos (1901-1907). The necessi- L
ty for reaching some kind of agreement, however, was becoming all K
the more desirable on both sides in that Lower Laos had for /344/ 669 ●
about a year been the theater of an insurrection, as violent as it was 175*
singular, by the Khas on both banks of the Mekong. 563

The fief of Bassac, which was administered by the descendants of L
Chao-Houy (1) in behalf of the king of Siam, had lost much of its K
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1. See above, pp. 168; 177, note 2 and 328, note 1.

importance for the latter ever since the treaty of 1893 had amputated the muongs of Saravane and Attopeu. All this region, which was populated mainly by Khas (Boloven, Alak, Nha-Heun, on the left bank), had been only sparsely colonized by a few Phou-Thai and Laotian families, and Siamese domination over these tribes which were refractory to all authority had never been more effective than the purely nominal domination of the old kings of Vientiane (2).

2. See above, p. 90, the campaign of Setthathirath in

K Attopeu and p. 160, the first known rebellion of the Khas
L of Bassac.
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175* In fact the region had long been a vast supply ground for slaves --
563 "Annamites generally, whom the turbulent and hardly Khas went and kidnaped on the other side of the watershed chain" and bartered on the banks of the Mekong for buffalo, gongs, metals and cloth, of which they stood in permanent need.

K The cause of the rebellion of 1901, which /345/ arose in the re-
/567/ gion of Oubone and spread like wildfire, remains highly obscure. Doubtless the abolition of slavery by King Chulalongkorn and the prohibition against engaging in this traffic which was pronounced by our first administrators were not unconnected with the mystical fervor which agitated the Khas, who were tacitly supported by those
K Laotian functionaries who had suddenly been deprived of profitable
/791/ dealings. Whatever the case may be, these basically superstitious people were inflamed by their sorcerers or "Phou-Mi-Boun," who resembled messiahs and in whose supernatural gifts they had an unshakeable faith, and they declared war against the established order for the purpose of imposing the authority of their ringleaders, who alone were worthy, in their eyes, of "governing men and causing justice to reign among them" (1). In March 1901 the situation had

L 1. Cf. J.-J. Dauplay, Les terres rouges du plateau des
K Boloven. Saigon, 1929, p. 55.
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become so grave on the plateau of the Bolovens that M. Remy, the
L government commissioner in Saravane, was surrounded together with
K some fifteen militiamen in the pagoda of Thateng by 1500 Khas,
669 almost all of whom were armed with flintlock rifles, and that he
175* owed his own salvation only to a forceful resistance. "A few days
563 later the whole plateau was up in arms. All the villages /346/ had followed the Phou-Mi-Boun, without distinction of race. They had, moreover, scarcely any other alternative, for the lukewarm and hesitant individuals were simply massacred" (1).

1. Cf. J.-J. Dauplay, op. cit. /Les terres rouges du plateau des Boloven. Saigon, 1929./, p. 60.

The rebels' success had no aftermath, however, and thanks to

the resolute action of administrator Remy the situation was greatly improved in the spring of 1902. "The fact that the Phou-Mi-Boun were powerless to perform the slightest miracle was recognized by all the insurgents, three-quarters of whom had made their submission and reintegrated their villages. . . . But other agitators, also from Siam (2), had already abandoned the plateau and directed

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2. Thrown back to the Mekong from the territory of Oubone by the Siamese military forces sent against them.

their efforts against Savannakhet and Vientiane. At about eight in the morning on April 19, 1902 the Savannakhet commissariat was surrounded by hordes of Laotians, bands of inspired folk who marched, sang and played the khene, convinced that the bullets from our rifles would change into frangipane flowers. It was necessary to open fire in order to free the capital. They left 150 dead on the square, and probably carried off as many wounded. On our side losses were limited to one militiaman killed and two wounded. Then everything became calm again" (1).

1. Cf. J.-J. Dauplay, op. cit. /Les terres rouges du plateau des Boloven. Saigon, 1929./, pp. 62 and 64. "Vientiane was also seething with agitators, and the Europeans there spent more than one anxious night. In fact, however, peace and order was never disturbed." P. 63.

From then on the revolt seemed to be throttled. It nevertheless lasted longer than was reasonable as a result of the lack of agreement between the heads of the provinces involved, who could not settle on an overall plan of action "against the rebel chieftains who had taken refuge (with their last partisans) in the wooded mountains of the left bank of the Sekong." The latter were able to hold out in their dens for more than four years, and not until 1906-1907, when discord spread among them, did they make their submission "discouraged and dying of hunger" (2).

2. "In the case of one of the rebel chieftains, the famous Bac-My, his so-called submission was only a pretense designed to lull our vigilance, to enable him to recruit partisans and above all to procure arms from Siam. This was so true that he had to be suppressed towards the end of 1910.

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As for the Boloven-Khomadan, he never made his submission. He still lives with his partisans on the mountain of Phou-Luouang in the northeast of the plateau." Cf. ibid., p. 65.

Franco-Siamese treaty of February 13, 1904. In the meantime the governments in Bangkok and Paris had succeeded in reaching an agreement on a rough and ready compromise, in /348/ an obviously reciprocal desire to end all misunderstandings and to restore between France and Siam the friendly relations of former times which were now seen to be more indispensable than ever between immediate neighbors.

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By the new treaty of February 13, 1904 Siam confirmed its previous territorial cessions, and also renounced all rights of suzerainty over the territories of Luang-Prabang situated on the right bank of the Mekong. For its part, France continued its 1902 policy of renouncing all rights to the 25-kilometer zone, but obtained permission to retain seven establishments there (by application of Article 6 of the treaty of 1893 which had authorized boat relays, storehouses for wood, etc. for the development of navigation on the river). It was understood that the list of our Asiatic proteges would not be revised, and future enrollments would be limited to subjects placed directly under the authority of French jurisdiction. Finally, the treaty provided for mixed commissions composed of officers which should shortly undertake to delimit the new frontier "between the kingdom of Siam and the territories forming French Indo-China."

The goodwill of the negotiators /349/ triumphed over the complexity of the interests at stake and their entanglements. Thus signatures were exchanged to general satisfaction and ratification was obtained without any comment.

Franco-Siamese relations since 1904. The mixed commissions began their work in Cambodia almost immediately in an atmosphere of cordial collaboration. We were able to evacuate Chantaboun in 1905 at the very beginning. We obtained a broad protective zone surrounding Kratt in the region included between Tonle-Sap and the sea, and the operations which were subsequently carried out in Laos awarded us the district of Dan-Sai which runs southwards for some hundred kilometers alongside the territory of Luang-Prabang. Profiting by these gracious marks of a sincerely friendly spirit, Commander Bernard, the leader of the French mission, skilfully reintroduced the

and, even as they retain their smiling native good nature, they are 643*
becoming increasingly adapted with each passing day to the rude 178
necessities of modern existence in the hectic struggle between
individuals and peoples.

Nearly identical results have been achieved in the other parts of Laos where /354/ the influence of our administrators is exercised in a more direct manner, even though it is still usually based on the ascendancy which the local mandarins have retained over the populace.

Annexation of the territory of Bassac (1905). It was thus that 635
the territory of Bassac on the right bank, which was in full disorder 175*
when it was returned to France, was pacified by the Laotian "governor" whom we appointed there. Annexed in January 1905 to the province of Ban-Mouang, this territory had been abandoned in the previous year by the oupahat Boua-Laphan, who was the successor of King Kham-Souk (1) and who had taken refuge at Ban-Toung-

1. See above, p. 328.

Loung in the Siamese district of Oubone. In a most loyal manner Chao-Nhouy, one of Kham-Souk's sons, offered us his services and took an oath of fidelity before Superior Resident Mahe on October 14, 1905. He was named governor of the region, and since then has not ceased to give the French administration the benefit of his influence and his devotion (2).

2. The "delegation" which replaced the commercial agency in Bassac was discontinued in 1908 and the capital of the circumscription, which took the name of province of Bassac, was transferred from Ban-Mouang to Pakse.

/355/ The Khas of Lower Laos. The Khas of Lower Laos have 563
remained perfectly peaceful ever since their 1901 escapade was 669
suppressed. They have even tended imperceptibly to come out of their fierce isolation as new means of communication have connected their villages, which only yesterday were hidden in the brush, with the vast network of roads now under construction which will soon open up the Laotian hinterland (1).

1. The question of the Indo-Chinese "Moi hinterland"

563 deserves full study but would be beyond the scope of the
669 present work, which is strictly limited to an account of historical events.

The mountain tribes of Upper Laos. The mountain tribes of Upper Laos, on the other hand, have been subject to more or less violent unrest during the period 1914-1921.

The Lus of Muong Sing and of the Sip-Song-Panas, as well as the representatives of the many races which inhabit this land with a chaotic relief structure, had previously accepted the establishment of French guardianship without any hostile reaction, for the misdeeds of the Lu chieftain Van-Na-Poum, who was, all in all, only a common bandit who robbed the people by force of arms /356/ and was killed in 1910 by our militia after he had wounded Inspector Nollin, who was sent to arrest him, cannot be regarded as acts of out-and-out rebellion. But in the first months of the World War the Yunnanese frontier, which was well-known to smugglers and brigands, was troubled by a marked recrudescence of outlawry, and suddenly in November 1914 Chinese bands, which were probably encouraged by Annamite agitators in contact with the Germans who had been expelled from Indo-China, broke out in the Muong-Hou and the Houa-Phan, burned the capital at Sam-Neua, at which time Administrator Lambert was massacred, killed Militia Inspector Tuyaa who was sent against them, and spread terror throughout the whole region.

624 1. The Muong-Sing incident (1914-1916). Phra-Ong-Kham, the
669 Chao-Fa of Muong-Sing, who was the son and the successor in 1907 of the prince who had spontaneously turned to Auguste Pavie in the past when he wished to escape British domination (1), did not share

1. See above, p. 331.

his father's sentiments with regard to France's representatives. His abuses of his power had gained him vigorous protests on the part of the government commissioner's delegate, and he had sworn to /357/ revenge himself on the latter by -- quite simply -- having him assassinated. His plot was discovered and he fled to China (December 2), from which point he gave active help to the brigands by inciting his subjects to revolt and by propagating false rumors designed to discredit French prestige among the populace.

Even though the latter responded half-heartedly at best to his

urgings, no less than three successive expeditions (the Sourisseau, 624
Friquegnon and Dussault columns) and two years of difficult and 669
costly operations were necessary to restore order and suppress the Yunnanese bands. The deposition of the Chao-Fa -- applicable both to himself and his heirs -- was decreed in April 1916, and the former principality was converted into a simple "muong." Phra-Ong-Kham died in China in 1923, and when his family offered to make its submission it was given permission to return to Muong-Sing.

2. The Meo rebellion (1919-1921). While these events were M
transpiring the Meos, who lived mainly high up on the peaks of 563
Luang-Prabang and Tran-Ninh (1), had maintained a proper atti- 669
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1. See above, p. 212. 787

tude even though approached by the Chao-Fa and the /358/ Chinese brigands. Nor had they seemed at first to pay any more attention to the movement which their fellows in Tonkin had just initiated in the basin of the upper Black River.

Continuing to live apart from other races in jealous isolation, they had nevertheless seemed for some time past to be moving towards closer terms with the provincial administration, which had succeeded in interesting them in road projects. But in July 1919 one of the leaders of the Tonkin rebellion who was being pursued by our troops and was called Batchay came to seek refuge among them. From this lair he sent out emissaries whose mission it was to devote themselves to secret propaganda efforts among the Meo groupings of Upper Laos in favor of a king who, "accomplishing the will of Heaven, was to bring them happiness, peace and prosperity." The rumor rapidly circulated among these credulous tribes that a prophecy which had fallen from the sky was summoning all Meos to revolt and form a great independent kingdom with its capital at Dien-Bien-Phu or Muong-Heup. To the accompaniment of incantations and magic formulas, the able-bodied population was called to march against the Laotians, Khas and Annamites and to build the palace of the awaited sovereign.

/359/ In vain did the king of Luang-Prabang send messages to L
the Meo leaders in protest against these absurd rumors. Within a M
few weeks armed bands were formed which began to ransom and 563
pillage the villages of Tran-Ninh, Luang-Prabang and the Houa- 669
Phan. Our militia had to occupy the outpost of Muong-Heup, which

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was attacked on August 15. It repulsed the assaillants, two of which were killed and some ten wounded. The Muong-Ngoi outpost was then reinforced by riflemen under the command of Lieutenant Distanti, and detachments led by Laotian leaders scoured the country. On September 23, however, Lieutenant Distanti fell into an ambush and suffered a mortal wound, and in October we committed the error of evacuating Muong-Heup, an action which heightened Batchay's prestige still further and provoked a veritable panic among the terrorized populace.

The matter was becoming serious, and reinforcements had to be sent from Hanoi and Saigon. A military column was organized and placed under the direction of Colonel Angeli, who was able to free the plateau of Xieng-Khouang and part of the Houa-Phan only after fierce battles at Ban-Ban, Bergerie, Ban-Phadeng and Pakkha /360/ (January-May 1920). At the same time attempts had been made to enter into negotiations with the principal rebel leaders so as to open their eyes to the dangers and ordeals into which they were drawing their families. A few submissions were obtained in this manner, but when the rainy season halted all operations Batchay profited from the respite in order to regroup his partisans east of Nam-Ou.

In December Commander Dorey resumed the offensive, and despite the many obstacles in a "land bristling with mountains, sown with ambushes and devoid of all resources" succeeded in driving the Meos "from one entrenched position to the next," harrying them without respite, encircling them and decimating them with such rapidity that a month later all their bands were either destroyed or had surrendered, that Batchay was in flight and abandoned by the last survivors, and that the column could be disbanded in March 1921 (1).

1. Batchay's refuge was not discovered until October 1922. Surprised by Khas in the vicinity of Muong-Heup, he was killed by the latter on November 17.

Thus ended, almost as suddenly as it had broken out, this surprising insurrection which was uniquely due to the fanatacism of skittish and excessively superstitious tribes which were /361/ blindly obedient (like the southern Khas towards the Phou-Mi-Boun) to leaders who imposed on them by practices drawn from the lowest kind of sorcery. It is indeed a proven fact that the Meos had not been exposed to the

influence of any foreign propaganda and that their revolt did not L
at any time assume the character of an anti-French manifestation. M
Thus their uprising had no repercussions on the other ethnic groups 563
in Laos, which in spirit and in deed stood behind our repressive 669
measures.

They returned in peace to their agricultural labors (chiefly the L
cultivation of poppies) in their precipitous solitudes. A special M
administrative statute gave them the cantonal and communal 563
autonomy which they desired, with no Laotian or Annamite inter- 636
mediary. No matter how infrequent their contacts with the popu- 609
lations of the valleys and plains, it is quite certain that racial
antagonism (exploited by agitators during the revolt) was maintain-
ing a state of mind among their groupings which was suspicious and
devoid of friendliness towards the native authorities. The reforms 178
which were put into effect seem to have yielded good results. In 563
the same way, a prudent policy towards the still unsubdued tribes
of Lower Laos, one which will avoid direct conflict with their
customs /362/ and prejudices, will gradually tame these last repre-
sentatives of another age whom the opening-up of means of com-
munication will finally incorporate into the larger Indo-Chinese
family.

/ Pages 363-367 contain a Bibliography. Page 368 is blank. Pages 000
369-375 contain an Alphabetical Index of Names Mentioned. Page
376 is blank. --Translator/

6: Goudal--161-162 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians-1-2
116, 466, 671, 177.46 France
636.46

"Laos--Sections 197-201 of the Laotian Civil Code provide for two methods of assessing workmen's compensation, according to whether the accident was or was not the consequence of an operation or dangerous work for which no special remuneration was laid down to offset the risk. If the accident is caused by dangerous work, the liability of the employer is regulated as follows: in the case of death or permanent total incapacity, the victim or his dependants are entitled, according to their situation, to an allowance amounting to 100 piastres for officials, 80 piastres for an employee of the administration or a skilled worker exercising a remunerative trade, and 50 piastres for all other workers.

These allowances are reduced to one-half or to one-quarter of the stated amount when the victim's working capacity is reduced, even permanently, by 50 or 25 per cent.

In case of temporary incapacity, the person liable in case of accident is required to pay as damages to the injured party the cost of the treatment entailed and in addition, throughout the whole period of incapacity, full wages in the case of an official, 0.55 piastre a day in the case of an employee of the administration or a skilled worker, and 0.25 piastre a day in the case of all other persons. [162]

All the above-mentioned allowances are reduced by one-half if the injured person is under age and has undertaken the operation or dangerous work with the authorisation of his parents.

Among other classes of work, the Civil Code classifies the following as dangerous: scaling of tall trees, going down wells or underground caves or passages, diving into a deep or rapidly flowing part of a river, the capturing of wild animals, the training of untamed animals, pursuit of criminals, etc.

When, on the other hand, the accident is not the result of dangerous work, but is nevertheless incurred in the course of, or arising out of, paid employment, the employer is required, in case of death or permanent incapacity, to pay to the victim an allowance equal to one-half of the corresponding indemnity established for injuries caused by dangerous work. In case of death he must also pay the cost of burial or cremation.

If the accident results in minor injuries, the employer must provide the injured person with medical attendance and food throughout the period of temporary incapacity.

Finally, in no case is the employer responsible for accidents resulting from unavoidable circumstances."

7: Thompson--365 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 671, 682

"The two indigenous codes of Luang-Prabang and Vientiane have a gentle amiability that well reflects the character of their people, and which differentiates them from their neighbours. All penalties are commutable to money fines, and the severest is directed against adultery. Prison is agreeable enough, and the inmates wear flowers behind their ears. Crimes are few and capital punishment even rarer. Those condemned to death wear only a few more chains than the others. The code, in great detail, excuses everything that is remotely excusable. Hunger justifies one's eating another's provisions, and it is not punishable provided nothing is carried away--externally."

7: Thompson--369 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 647, 652, 671, 177.64 France
636.64

"Of the budget expenditures one per cent was allotted to road building, when paths were almost non-existent in Laos. Fifty per cent of the revenues was absorbed by the administration. A subsidy to the company that navigated the Mekong cost 350,000 francs: the total revenues were 600,000, and all for the occasional transportation of the hundred European residents and their mail. The Laotians were much too amiable and indolent to protest against this state of affairs. They were a charming people, who knew nothing of French civilization but the pleasure of paying taxes. They asked little and so they got little. If this were true of the Laotians it was even more so of the mountain peoples. The country was administered as if it were exclusively inhabited by Laotians. The codes, and the mandarins who applied them, were Laotian. The Provincial Council, long the sole representative organization, had no delegate from the mountaineers. Buddhists were given a monopoly of the education, though the Yaos were Confucianist and the Khas fetishists. The administration concentrated on the valley-bound Laotians and ignored the scattered mountain peoples, who differed radically in religion, language, and customs. The Meos's reaction to the Laotians was shown by the massacre of 1920."

7: Thompson--370 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 671, 177.67 France
636.67

"Justice has followed in the wake of the Laotian administration. At first it was left almost untouched, with Laotian codes and magistrates, even for the mountain peoples. In 1900 the Resident Superior, Tournier, made a first tentative translation of some Laotian laws, but he found them so incomplete and so poorly organized that the work was temporarily abandoned. In 1908 Sallé, a Saigon magistrate, took up the task. Beginning with the kingdom of Luang-Prabang he promulgated three codes of civil and criminal law and procedure. Then new texts were discovered, which necessitated more study from 1917 to 1922, when another code was promulgated. It was this time very complete, in fact too complete for the type of judge who applied it. Simplification was needed for their understanding as well as for the illiterate masses. A modified version was put out in 1928, but the following year it was again changed. As in Cambodia and Annam, the problem of discovering, understanding, translating, re-organizing, and harmonizing native law with some basic principles of Western legislation is so delicate that it requires an enormous amount of time and experimentation."

7: Thompson--371 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 563, 661, 671, 177.67 France
636.67

"Nowadays the code of Vientiane or of Luang-Prabang is applied to the Thai peoples and to certain Kha tribes; Burmese custom law to the Lus in Muong Sing; and their particular customs to the other ethnical groups--all under magistrates of their own people. The judgments of these courts are examined by the French authorities. This is not a useless precaution, as often the judges themselves are in a quandary about interpreting their laws and traditions. Moreover, the venality of these judges passes all understanding. If the native appears without offerings appropriate to his station and that of the judge, he is lost. Undoubtedly with time the specialization of magistrates, with guarantees in salary and promotion, will obviate the most flagrant of these evils."

115: Le Boulanger--74 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

"But in regard to the kingdom's laws, it is a certain fact that 671 ●
there are very few of them, because, in my opinion, there is no 571
great need of any in order to live in accordance with the customs 626
of the land. The people are brought up to work, to have very little
to do with foreigners, not to undertake anything which might dis-
turb them and to live an idle and /115/ listless life although not
lacking any of the things necessary to preserve it. The king's will,
which does not greatly interfere with his people, takes the place
of a great many laws for them... . The manner in which the in-
habitants of the land live with one another is highly civil and
obliging. Unfriendliness and quarrels are banished... they all have
enough to live on and get along on, so that one does not hear of
thieves except as a thing quite out of the ordinary.... But the /565/
mandarins do not behave in the same way. Indeed, their insolence
and their insulting and criminal conduct dim the praise which the
common people merit on this account, because they abuse the
power which they have in the kingdom, and when they see some-
thing which pleases them... they act in such wise as to find means
for taking possession of it.

"But if we should now pass to the person of the king in order to 643*
describe him, there is no monarch, no matter how powerful, whom 174
he does not regard as beneath him, and it would indeed seem that 648
he affects not to yield in any particular to the emperors of China...
Only rarely does he appear in public... preferring to be worshiped
by his people as a hidden God rather than as a man like themselves
and of the same nature... He allows himself to be seen only twice
/116/ a year, for a period of three days, by his people, who re-
ceive this grace from their prince with such gratitude and joyous
sentiments that he forgets nothing on these occasions which might
contribute to their amusement. For this purpose there are several /527/
elephants which are trained to do a thousand little tricks and several wild
animals which are kept chained and made to fight... finally there
are wrestlers and gladiators and others, with their skirmishes which
last until last until evening and terminate all this rejoicing...

"Of all the prerogatives which he (the king) has, and which are 643*
a further mark of the extent of his power, that of having several 576
petty tributary kings in his dependency who come to his court to do
him homage and acknowledge him as their sovereign and who give
him superb presents, is by no means the least. He receives these
ambassadors in a great parlor seated on an extremely high throne
and garbed in his ceremonial robes, and replies to their civilities

include all the local genii one comes across in Indochina, either under the name of Neak Ta in Cambodia, or Phi in Laos, to mention only two countries. The cult of the Phi is still very much alive in Laos, although it has long been contested by the Buddhist clergy and forbidden by an edict of Phothisarath in 1527. 771 776

[30] But there are several classes of phi. First of all there are the universal phi, those are the ones which Buddhist tradition has attempted to assimilate for better or worse. 776

The book of Khun Bolom says precisely that the Phi Fa (Phi of heaven) and the Phi Then are in reality Indra, and the guardians of the four worlds. The Phi Sua Muon are Nang Tholani (Dharani, goddess of the earth) and Nang Mekhala (Manimekhala, deity of the sea). Finally there is the Phi Then Ten (Visvakarman, the builder).

The local protecting genii of the kingdom of Lan Xan are the fifteen Nagaraja (Praya Nak) who are the genii of water, living in the river rapids, at the confluence of rivers, on the rocks on the river banks or in caves. Their natural form is that of a serpent, but they can also take on human form.

Then follow the familiar genii, the wandering phi (Phi Pho), and the phi of dwellings (Phi Heuan). The Phi Heuan are honored at the time of marriage, and the Laotian code prescribes the indemnities which must be paid to please the Phi. There are also the phi of parents [or relatives--Translator] (Phi Me). These are often confused with the preceding ones. Their cult is celebrated either inside the house, or outside in a small shelter built for this purpose. This little structure is usually built leaning against a tree; sometimes it contains a small statuette or a stone, or even nothing. In that case one finds only a few grains of glutinous rice, and one or two small sticks of incense in a horn made of a banana leaf. This little house is the home of the Phi. He watches the living from the beyond and manifests himself every time a member of the family behaves badly. His intervention is most often known by a sudden and serious illness. One must then try to find out what has displeased the phi. For this one goes to the "sorcerer" and he will indicate [31] the sacrifice which must be made to the phi to appease his anger." [671] [788 778] 755

There exist also village phi to whom honor and offerings are due at the time of every ritual or local ceremony, particularly about the seventh month. Coinciding with a sort of pause in the ordinary activity of the Laotian, a pause which is regulated by a change in season, return of the rains and the rise of the Mekong waters, the feasts of the "months of the spirits" are centered around the evocation 776 796 787

567 upbringing and sentiments rejected the idea of such slavery, and
177 without giving in gracefully, for some of them stood to lose large capital investments, they accepted without question the principle of emancipation of slaves by capture. A few attempted to use subterfuge and tried to pass off slaves who were really slaves by capture as
[675] slaves for debt. Fortunately every contract among the Laotian people, whatever it be, is a written one, and examination of these contracts was sufficient to foil all their ruses.

At the present time it may be said that this question has been solved. There are no longer any but voluntary slaves who like their life under their masters and, although free, want to stay there. Nearly all of them, moreover, are provided with a certification of liberation which their masters have forced them to request so that they, the masters, will not be accused later of keeping slaves by force.

Full justice must be given to the Laotian authorities who, although the first to suffer from this measure, have freely aided us in our task.

The reports by the government commissioners have noted the
[126] good consequences of the measure. One of its first results was to bring a stop to the inter-tribal warfare among the Khas, warfare whose origin, if not its sole purpose, almost always lay in the capture of human cattle demanded by recognized slave traders [158] who were established in the land--they were mainly Burmese--and who had deliveries to make.

567 As regards slaves for debt, the question is a much more delicate one, for here we are confronted by a voluntary and for the most part uninteresting form of slavery.

In Laos, all crimes and misdemeanors must be paid for. This is the origin of nearly all debts, among the well-to-do as well as among the poorer classes. Among the latter, sentences for stealing buffalo or rice are usually involved, and among the well-to-do sentences for adultery or judicial decisions resulting from unsuccessful speculations. When sentence has been pronounced, money must be found immediately in order to avoid prison. If the borrower can offer security for payment the necessary sum is lent to him at annual interest rates which vary, depending on the province, from ten to twenty percent.

If the borrower is a poor man, he offers his person in payment of the interest and then becomes not the slave, but the servant in a house.

His status is not comparable to that of a slave by capture. Whereas the latter is a veritable beast of burden, often badly mistreated, obliged to work only for his master and to provide himself for his food and clothing, the slave for debts, on the other hand, is fed and

10. d'Orleans--300 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 647, 662, 681, 695

"The administrative functionaries and the judges are appointed by the king, subject to the approval of the Siamese Commissioner. Justice is administered according to the traditions of what was known in the early ages as 'the judgments of God.' That is to say the oath is taken upon a silver cup or a sword, and holy water is given the accused to drink, and if the accused person has wrongly declared himself innocent the water will poison him or the sword will be thrust through him by a spirit, at night. It need hardly be said that the judges are not satisfied with this test, that is to say, they take care to inform themselves before the trial as to the fortune of the prisoner, and it is said that they are easily influenced by bribes.

The punishments comprise fines, the bastonade, penal servitude, and being put in chains, but torture is not practised."

648* King Souligna, who was unquestionably a great king, was
175* to succeed in postponing for a century.

SOULIGNA-VONGSA (1613), KING 1637-1694.

643* At this time the documents regain some degree of precision and
175* mention a violent struggle for the throne between the three sons of Tone-Kham, namely Somphou, Boun-Sou and Souligna-Koumane, on the one hand, and on the other hand the two sons of Visai, Tiao-Bou and Tiao-Soy.

We may safely believe that it was, by some chance, the best of them who finally gained the upper hand. This was Souligna-Koumane, who was to reign undisputed /103/ under the name of Souligna-Vongsa for fifty-seven years (1).

1. Tiao-Bou entered into orders. Tiao-Soy and Boun-Sou died shortly after Souligna's accession to the throne. As for Somphou, the eldest of them all, he took refuge in Hue where the emperor of Annam took him in. During his exile his wife gave birth to a son who was named Sai-Ong-Hue. After his death his wife remarried, this time one of his early comrades named Sene-Thip, by whom she had another son, Thao-Nong. These two children were to play one of the foremost roles in the history of Lan-Xang at the beginning of the eighteenth century. (See p. 131 ff.)

Authoritarian and intransigent, but just and loyal, this prince soon inspired a respectful fear in the whole court and gained the affection of his people by his administration which was at once severe, prudent
/681/ and sage. He repressed piracy without mercy, punished robbery and adultery rigorously by death and was thereby able to restore absolute tranquillity to his kingdom within a few years.

648* Abroad, he kept on peaceful terms with all his neighbors. Lan-
643* Xang had regained the stature of a powerful State against which any
175* war would have involved too many risks to be ventured. Strong garrisons defended the passes on the north and east and were a sufficient guarantee against any invasionary whims. Thus the only incidents of this long reign were those involving delimitations of the frontiers, if we except a few short expeditions into Tran-Ninh /104/ "for the beautiful eyes of a new Helen" (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, "Le Tran-Ninh historique." (Revue indochinoise, 1906.)

7: Thompson--365 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 671, 682

"The two indigenous codes of Luang-Prabang and Vientiane have a gentle amiability that well reflects the character of their people, and which differentiates them from their neighbours. All penalties are commutable to money fines, and the severest is directed against adultery. Prison is agreeable enough, and the inmates wear flowers behind their ears. Crimes are few and capital punishment even rarer. Those condemned to death wear only a few more chains than the others. The code, in great detail, excuses everything that is remotely excusable. Hunger justifies one's eating another's provisions, and it is not punishable provided nothing is carried away--externally."

"There are not only the spirits, ghosts and demons themselves, but there are also their servants in human shape, there are sorceresses and there are witches, and these last can, and do, change themselves into tapeworms, gnawing at your guts until you die, so the moment that you must know that you have a witch-tapeworm inside you, you must send for the wise man, who will pinch and prick you until the bewitched tapeworm crawls out in fear. There are also what are known as hereditary or innocent witches, poor women who have not acquired but have only inherited their dread arts; such innocents can be cured, it seems, and are more to be pitied than reviled.

But there was no quarter shown to wizards. If a man was marked as a wizard he must emigrate or be slain. And we may take it that in a rather 'primitive' and static and isolated community, a 'wizard' was often no more than a queer fellow who thought for himself and did not like the way of life of the majority, had different tastes in meat and drink, did not care for sports, dances and festivals, possibly was sexually aberrant, in fact the sort of scoundrel who must be suppressed if society is to be kept decent and reasonably conservative. In some communities such deviant members are more lucky and are straightway hailed as shamans or medicine-men. But the Laotians just did not like wizards at all. Before the French got to interfering with good old customs, there was an ordeal for wizards and their accusers. Two pots of boiling coconut oil were set up. Into one pot went the sorcerer and into the other his denouncer. Whoever got out of his pot first was cracked over the head and disposed of.

25: Brodrick--98 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-2
116, 626, 683, 754

So, underneath all the easy-going, good nature of the Laotians lie, when the conventions are outraged, some definite reactions of a rather violent kind. One wonders what has happened to these reactions now that they cannot be released in a right and proper and traditional way. For, if we can say that the Laotians have little or no religion, in the sense of a way of life or a moral discipline, they are filled and informed with beliefs."

149: Reinach--113 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

776 "The Laotians also believe that there are people who are possessed
771 by the demon or who have [151] the evil eye. They call them 'Phi-
791 pop.' When a person or family in a village is so regarded by the other inhabitants, they are forced to move and to go and live in one of the villages composed exclusively of Phi-pop" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

The boatmen and folk who dwell along the watercourses also believe in the existence of certain particular beings, as for example the Siren or "Nguoc." The siren, whom some people claim to have seen (?), is said to have the form of a snake with paws and an enormous head surmounted by a red, saw-toothed crest. It is supposed to have seven nostrils in a single nose, and a mouth provided with several rows of teeth. The scales which cover it and the lobes of its tail are said to be able to clash against one another and make a great deal of noise.

791 In times of public calamity, the "Tho-Nguoc" assumes a human voice and announces important events or cataclysms to come.

754 The "Phi-pop," to whom we have referred above, have, according
683 to popular belief, the power of casting spells and causing the death of animals and even persons by means of their incantations, their practices or their glance. The natives say that they can reduce a buffalo hide to the size of a grain of rice and thus make a person swallow it. Once in the stomach the hide is supposed to regain its natural volume and cause the death of the person who has swallowed it by making the stomach burst after intolerable suffering. It goes without saying that the "Phi-pop" who is the cause of the evil can, in return for certain gifts, arrest the suffering and deliver the patient before death overtakes him. A person who believes he has swallowed a buffalo hide falls prey to a kind of madness and commits all sorts of extravagances, to such a point that his neighbors try to get him out of the village and get rid of him, for he has become a "Phi-pop" in his turn. People claim that there is only one way to find out if a man is possessed, and that is to throw him into the water with his feet and hands tied. If he floats he is not possessed, but if [152] the opposite proves to be the case--and this is what invariably happens--then a "Phi-pop" is really present and his disappearance is regarded as a blessing.

But that is another story...

The belief in the phi and an excessive credulity results in Laotians being often the victims of charlatans who are severely punished by the Laotian code. Luck-bringing amulets are also very widespread. But this belief in the inhabitants of the invisible world is most apparent in childbirth and in profane ceremonies.

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757

RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES AND FESTIVALS

The Calendar

The Laotian calendar belongs to the lunar-solar system. Its elements are borrowed principally from the Indian calendar. As in all the other countries of Indochina the Laotians use the cycle of the 12 animals (Rat, Ox, Tiger, Hare, Dragon, Serpent, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Cock, Dog, Pig).

805

The era most commonly used in Laos is that of Cullasakaraj (little era) beginning in A. D. 638, the next most used is the Buddhasakaraj (Buddhist era beginning in 544 B. C.). Finally the Mahasakaraj (great era) is found in ancient inscriptions. At the present time only the Christian era is used officially.

The months.

The Laotian months are alternately of 20 and 30 days. Sometimes their Indian name is used, but most often their number is used. Their names are as follows:

No.	Laotian	Pali	
1.	deuan Tieng	Magasira	December-January
2.	- Gni	Phussa	January-February
3.	- Sam	Magha	February-March
4.	- Si	Phagguna	March-April
5.	- Ha	Citta	April-May
6.	- Hoc	Visakha	May-June
7.	- Chet	Jettha	June-July
8.	- Pet	Asadha	July-August
9.	- Kao	Savana	August-September
10.	- Sip	Potthapada	September-October
11.	- Sip Et	Assayuja	October-November
12.	- Sip Song	Kattika	November-December

10: d'Orleans--308-311 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 582, 684, 836, 848

"Some flirtations are durable, for a young man who has paid court for a long time to a girl generally ends by making her his mistress, but this is not looked upon as at all dishonourable, for there are a great many unmarried women mothers, and some of them are held in as much respect as those [pages 309 and 310 contain illustration] [311] that are married, while marriage often follows the birth of a child. Moreover, if the girl informs her parents and reveals the name of her lover, the latter is bound to pay a fine of about fifteen rupees, or to marry her. All assaults upon women are taxed at varying rates, there being different fines for a kiss upon the mouth or upon the arm, and for rape."

10: d'Orleans--311 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 586, 593, 627, 684, 837

"Adultery with a married woman, which is of very rare occurrence, entails a fine of 200 rupees; but, after having been very gay in their youth, husband and wife generally settle down quietly, the former often taking it out of his wife for her unceremonious treatment of him beforehand. I happened, while walking about the town one morning, to witness one of these little family scenes. A woman was shrieking and crying because her husband had been beating her, and when I came to question the pair, the man complained that his wife, who had been out to market, had not returned by nine o'clock to get his breakfast ready, so she must have stopped to gossip on the way. Her answer was that she had not heard the gong strike the hour, that she had not stopped on the way home, and that there was no reason why she should have had a beating. The quarrel was eventually made up without having recourse to a divorce, which, though legally recognised, is rarely resorted to."

23: Franck--257-258 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 684, 834

"The conversation hovered chiefly about the women of Laos. The lieutenant [EJ: an officer in the Foreign Legion stationed in Laos] asserted, and was borne out by his wilderness companion of the sex under discussion, that to touch the [258] hair or breasts of a Laosian woman is a more serious crime than actual violation. In fact Laosian law prescribes a much more serious penalty for the former than for the latter indiscretion, and the lieutenant in his judicial capacity had often been called upon to try cases under this strange code. Naturally, he explained, again abetted by his lady-love, what the Western world considers the lesser of the two crimes might be committed entirely against the will of the victim, while the other...In brief, here was an example of Oriental wisdom to which the other side of the earth has not yet attained.

In a case of what, in the language we were then using, is called tromper le mari, the Laosians again outdid us in their sense of justice. By their law the lover is punished for the first offense, the woman for the second, and the husband for the third! For, as the lieutenant said, and his domestic partner again agreed, the woman who is party to such an act a second time must have some of the guilt; and the husband who is so inattentive as to be trompé three times is either a fool or is knowingly permitting it, and deserves punishment in either case."

23: Franck--290-291 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 684

"Though they did not thrust themselves forward, the women of this region were not so retiring as those of most of the Orient. Some of them were distinctly good-looking, well formed, their skin of an almost golden color, enhanced by the frequent bathing of most tropical peoples; and at least one of these village maidens would not have looked at all out of place in a famous Broadway review--[291] except that she was far too modest both in dress and demeanor for such company. With the conversation at Muongsen still in mind, I took care not to touch these fair damsels in getting photographs of them, though with difficulty, since it has become almost second nature during two decades of wandering among camera-shy peoples to arrange by hand my subjects to the camera's liking. It would have been a sad ending to so officially attested a trip to have been charged with one of the most serious crimes in the Laosian code!"

285 lacquer -- red on the inside and black on the outside -- and deco-
532 rated with a fine gilt design which makes a border, like a galloon" (1).
175*

1. Cf. G. Maspero, ibid. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930/, pp. 190-191.

286 Even today weaving remains women's work, and is done solely in
462 the home. The materials, which may be silk or cotton, striped or
532 splashed with colors, embroidered or spangled with gold and silver thread, nevertheless acquire, under the action of light and carefree hands, chatoyant, harmonious or dazzling tones, and yet the looms which are used are simple in the extreme. Patterns "are obtained, as before the invention of the Jacquard loom, by alternately isolating or raising certain woof threads by means of thin bamboo splints" (2).

2. Cf. L. de Reinach, ibid. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 333.

181 Thus did the Laotian of the seventeenth century live in peace, respecting the law of the least effort with an amiable perserverance amidst his laughter and his games. . . . The princes were perhaps the
/565/ only ones in the whole kingdom to know any of the worries which power and its exigencies bring, and it was for not having wished to compromise with his authoritarian principles that King Souligna, towards the end of his reign, compromised the destinies of his people forever.

643* Condemnation of the heir apparent to death. He had three chil-
175* dren, a son Tiao Ratsabout and two daughters. His son married Nang-
648* Tian-Koumali, who gave birth in her turn to two children, King-Kitsarath and Intha-Som. Nang-Tian-Koumali was the sister of a prince of the Sip-Song-Panas who had been driven out of his country by a Chinese invasion and whom the king of Lan-Xang had welcomed in Vientiane together with his family. Tiao Ratsabout, however, committed the imprudence of seducing the wife of the chief palace page. In accordance with his edict which punished the crime of
/684/ adultery by death, Souligna pitilessly referred the deceived husband's complaint to the royal tribunal and allowed his son to be sentenced to capital punishment

The result was that at the king's death, which occurred /130/ in 1694, the direct heirs to the crown were his grandsons King-Kitsarath

decently covered at all times, [196] especially in public. There is nothing to shock one's modesty, then, if their clothing is by some chance disordered or even if they take it off completely, as when bathing. It may be said that Laotians of both sexes feel the utmost repugnance to disrobing when they sense that they are observed. 832 834

Although it is true that during festivals and certain public celebrations the men parade "phalli" and make suggestive gestures, and that extremely licentious remarks are exchanged on such occasions, we should remember that all these actions are a vestige of the paganism under which the male organ was glorified as an emblem of generation. The acts are much rather the traces of a rite surviving from a religion of the earliest times than an obscene provocation made before an audience in which there are a large number of children.

The sentiment of pudicity is so very real in Laos, despite appearances to the contrary, that the laws specify comparatively heavy punishments for contact in public between individuals of opposite sexes. These penalties vary with the acts committed, which are classified in three categories: 684

1. Clasping the waist, kissing;
2. Touching the breasts, fondling;
3. Rape.

Prison, corporal punishments and fines are the penalties applied to offenders. They vary in severity depending on the rank of the girl or wife, that is to say depending on whether she is of common, noble or royal blood. Sentence may be pronounced by the court on the basis merely of a statement by the plaintiff, or on the basis of a statement by a third party, whether an eyewitness, relative, friend or simple passerby.

The fines paid by gallants who are too enterprising and not sufficiently discreet are used as offerings accompanied by propitiatory sacrifices either to the protective "Phis" of the victims or to the Spirits or Genii of their region or house. It is customary, finally, to offer a feast to nearby relatives and friends whom one may suppose to have been offended by the reprehensible acts of the guilty parties. [197] [Illustration] [198] [Blank page] [199]

Adultery. Divorce. "Since natural inclinations are rarely opposed in Laos, and since divorce is an extremely simple matter through mere mutual consent, cases of adultery are very rare.

"Divorces, on the other hand, are numerous.

149: Reinach--175 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai 341

Building materials, interior arrangement and furniture in Thai houses do not differ in any significant way from what we have described in connection with the Laotians.

Births. Like the Laotian women, Thai women generally give birth to children with the greatest ease, and the ceremonies accompanying births are identical. 844

Marriages. Betrothals generally take place among the Thais after the farming work is over, in December or January, during the cold season. Sheds are built in the villages. Fires are laid there and the marriageable girls install themselves there with a spinning wheel, reel or cotton gin to keep them busy and prevent them from losing countenance. The young men come and join them and exchange declarations, compliments, betel quids and cigarettes with them. There it is that promises of marriage are made, which are followed by a request to the girl's parents when she gives her lover permission to do so. 584

A few days later, during a banquet which takes place in the girl's house, the engagement is announced and the young [236] people are then free to see one another and come and go together at all hours and in all places.

The marriage is not celebrated until several months after the betrothal unless traces of pregnancy are evident in the engaged girl, in which case the marriage takes place at once.

The ceremony is much simpler than among the Laotians, but it is followed by a series of banquets which succeed one another for several days and at which great quantities of rice brandy and rice beer are consumed. 585

The groom comes to live in his wife's room on his wedding day. He is supposed to stay in the home of his in-laws for eight years (only three years in some regions) and share in their work. 591

Adultery. Divorce. "Cases of adultery are extremely rare. When such an eventuality does occur, the man is condemned to a fine of seven bars of silver (about 260 francs) and the woman to a fine of six bars of the same metal (about 225 francs). Half of these sums is awarded to the judges and the other half to the husband, who may then either take back or repudiate his unfaithful wife. 586 684

"In the latter case, the unfaithful wife generally marries her accomplice.

"Divorce is rarer, but just as easy among the Thais as among 586

149: Reinach--184 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

291 Men's clothing consists of a jacket and pair of trousers which have the same shape as those of the Lus and are made of coarse cotton cloth manufactured locally. Their headgear is a turban cut from a piece of Turkey-red cotton.

For work, clothing is generally reduced to a narrow strip of cloth forming a belt, one of the ends of which is passed between the legs and fastened in the middle of the back.

During the cold season a jacket is added to this loin-cloth.

The women wear a skirt of the Laotian type which is fastened under the armpits so that it does not come down below the calves of the legs. A short jacket completes their costume. On their head they wear a turban which is generally dark in color. [Illustration alongside text here]

301 Jewelry. Both sexes have silver or copper jewelry such as wide stiff neckbands, bracelets, rings, buttons, clasps, etc. Like the Lus and the Youns, the Khas pierce the lobes of their ears. Often the holes are of such dimensions that a roll of leaves or a bouquet of flowers can be inserted in them.

262 Food. Their diet is very like that of the Laotians and Thais. When there is a shortage of rice its place is taken, until the following harvest, by yams, taros, bamboo sprouts, banana flowers, etc.

462 Occupations. Women and children are given the hardest tasks imaginable, and it is unusual to meet them without baskets on their backs. The men carry only their bag, their sword, their rifle and their pipe.

595 Marriage. Divorce. Adultery. Polygamy is widespread among the Khas, and the number of wives a man possesses is the sign of his wealth. For, regarded as they are rather like beasts of burden and working constantly, the more numerous these wives are the more they will produce.

584 [254] The rules for marriage preliminaries closely resemble the Laotian customs and the ceremony itself, although much less splendid, comprises the same rites. To be sure, the role of the bonzes is filled here by "Pho-Tao," that is to say elders or sorcerers.

586 Divorce may be requested by the wife, or one of the wives, for
684 personal reasons. It may also take place by mutual consent. Finally, it is compulsory in the case of adultery, since the guilty woman must marry her accomplice.

Contrary to what is the case elsewhere, adultery on the part of the husband is punished by a double fine awarded to his wife's family

Kha

586 684 and to the family of his accomplice. In a case of flagrante delicto, however, he has the right to kill the guilty parties.

[462] Kha women, when married, are renowned for their austerity, and their conduct is usually exemplary. Moreover, they are very soon disfigured by precocious and repeated childbearing, as well as by the difficult work which they do, and after two or three years of marriage the poor women are no longer tempting to anyone.

764 Deaths. Cremation is not practiced by the Khas. They bury their dead in as summary a fashion as the Lus, and for a few days bring food to the freshly filled grave. Then the latter is abandoned.

When a chief or a rich man is to be buried, the body is placed in a coffin hewn from a tree trunk.

181 Character. Like all oppressed peoples, the Khas are reserved and timid. They are afraid of innovations and new faces. But in intimate gatherings with their own people they are just as merry and love music, dances, celebrations and festivals just as much as the other peoples of Laos.

535 536 Music and dancing. They know certain dances imitated from the Lus, pantomimes (1) which resemble the I-Ke of the Burmese,

(1) They also have the habit of performing scenes in pantomime, rather like extremely primitive ballets. We shall describe one such scene:

"A group of girls, guarded by two respectable men, are pursuing the pleasures of dancing. A rogue comes up and tries to make off with one of the girls. After a few unsuccessful attempts he succeeds in eluding the guards' vigilance, jumps forward to seize the girl on whom he has designs, and clasps her in his arms. But his happiness is too much for him and he falls senseless at the feet of the girl he wanted to abduct." (Le Laos français.) - [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

and [255] singsong legends in which the r's and k's roll out in terrible fashion. They also have songs which they accompany on flutes, clarinets and single-stringed violins. Some tribes have xylophones, these being instruments compos.d of bamboo tubes of [Illustration here] different thickness and length, each of which produces a tone varying with its size. It will be seen that by striking with a [256] stick of wood on these tubes, a combination of more or less harmonious sounds will

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115: Le Boulanger--140 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

000 If death had not placed a brutal term on his wanderings a few weeks later, the serious Mouhot might also have been the first man to question the impassive Buddhas on the mysterious past of this remote land, felt the infinite charm of its melodious nights when the khenes give voice to their moving chords, and -- who can say? -- sung the grace of the pretty girls with bare and gilded breasts who in their carefree way weave multicolored scarves under their flowered huts.

105 He contents himself with noting rapidly: "Fortunately this is not like Siam, and I can get help from the natives. . . . The /225/ Laotians are peaceable, submissive, patient, sober, trusting, credulous, superstitious, faithful, simple and naive. They naturally
/685/ hold robbery in horror. The story is told that one of their kings had thieves fried in a cauldron of boiling oil, but since the ravages of the last wars a certain number of thieves are beginning to be found among them who have been driven to rapine by poverty or by the spirit of vengeance.

/685/ "Besides cultivating rice and maize the Laotians grow batatas,
/241/ gourds, red peppers, melons and other vegetables. . . . They sell
/438 the Chinese ivory and pelts from tigers and wild animals. They
434/ also trade gold dust, silver and copper ore, gamboge, cardamom, lac, wax, dyeing wood, cotton, silk and all the products of their soil for heavy porcelain, small glassware and other small commodities of Chinese industry.

"The Laotians are not made for war. Ever since the beginning they have been subjected to the neighboring kings, and have never been able to shake off this heavy yoke.

"They seem to be more industrious than the Siamese and to
/101/ possess more of the spirit of adventure and trade. Although both peoples /226/ have many points of resemblance, both physical and moral, the Laotians can nevertheless be distinguished by their dialect and especially by their customs, which are simpler and more amiable.

533 ". . . Their music is very sweet, harmonious and sentimental.
101 Only three people are needed to make a melodious concert. One plays a bamboo organ, the second signs romances with the accent of a man inspired, and the third strikes strips of a sonorous wood together in rhythm, the clicking sounds of which have a striking effect" (1).

1. This praise of Laotian music should be compared with the

693 than of the rights of the parties. Our administration is making praiseworthy efforts to halt these abuses. Those who sell justice in this way are removed from their posts, and it is to be hoped that within a few years' time most, if not all, of the Laotian judges will be upright and disinterested. As a means toward stopping these deplorable habits and informing the parties in lawsuits of the legal costs which they will regularly be asked to pay, Lieutenant-colonel Tournier took a very useful first step in April 1898, by setting up a schedule of court costs in accordance with the laws and customs of Vien-Tiane (1).

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(1) The following, for example, are the court costs to be paid in a case of theft of domesticated animals:

Legal costs.....	15.00 francs	to be paid by each accused person.
Clerk.....	3.75 "	
Archivist.....	2.25 "	
Court roll.....	1.50 "	
Prison costs.....	11.25 "	

The legal costs are divided as follows:

Tiao-Muong.....	5.00 francs	15 francs.
Oupahat.....	2.50 "	
Judge hearing the case..	7.50 "	

The prison costs are divided as follows:

Jailer.....	5.00 francs	11.25 francs.
Upkeep for food for prisoners whom their families cannot feed or who do not work outside..... Lighting and upkeep of prison.....	6.25 "	

It goes without saying that, in addition to court costs, the guilty parties are liable to a fine, which, in the present case, would be 24 francs per person.

[499]

4. THE TAX STRUCTURE

a. Direct taxes

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The direct taxes include the head tax, the optional redemption of statute labor and the licenses for Foreign Oriental merchants.

A census taken before the end of each year by the native authorities and checked by the administrators who are heads of provinces makes

7: Thompson--370-371 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 692, 177.69 France
636.69

"The Resident Superior is at the head of native justice, which is administered by native magistrates under the control of French ad-[371]ministrators. As yet there is no specialization of administrative and judicial powers, since magistrates are taken from the civil service. The general organization of the courts resembles that of the other countries of the Union. Unimportant cases are settled by the heads of the villages and cantons. Important suits are sent to the provincial courts, which are presided over by the administrative head of the province and native judges. A higher court judges appeals from the provincial courts and is placed under the Resident Superior, French, and native judges. Wholly French courts exist for European cases."

whatsoever of respect is to be seen in this liberty.

3. JUDICIAL SYSTEM

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In French Laos, justice is meted out by the native tribunals:

1. In accordance with the codes of Vien-Tiane (1) or Luang-

(1) See Appendix XXIX.

Prabang for all individuals of the Thai race and for Khas of certain tribes;

2. In accordance with the Burmese customs which are peculiar to the Lus of the territory of Muong-Sing;

3. In accordance with their particular customs for the individuals of various races--Meos, Yaos, etc.--who are not subject to any of the above codes.

The judgments of the native tribunals are examined, and revised or approved if the need should arise, by the French authorities.

Matters of little importance, such as those which fall under the jurisdiction of our justices of the peace, are settled by canton heads or the heads of villages.

Acts qualified as criminal by our law are judged by a mixed province tribunal presided over by the government commissioner who is head of the province. He is seconded by a native assessor and by a secretary-clerk. Such tribunals sit in the capital of each province. [498] In reaching its decisions, it takes its inspiration from the native laws and customs, insofar as they agree with our sentiments of humanity and dignity and with the spirit of French law. It judges appeal cases which have already come before the native tribunals.

Finally a superior court, presided over by the superior resident aided by two assessors, one European and the other a native, fulfills the functions of a court of appeal with respect to the mixed province tribunals.

Foreign Orientals, that is to say Annamites, Cambodians, Chinese, Burmese, Siamese, etc., may be judged only by the mixed province tribunals. As for Europeans, they are subject only to the regularly constituted French tribunals of Tonkin and Cochinchina.

693 The venality of the magistrates in Laos cannot be denied, as in all of the Far East, and the natives generally prefer our arbitration to that of their natural judges. They say that we render justice free of charge, while their own magistrates take more notice of the offerings

439 after a ten year reign without leaving any sons." He thus explicitly
643* contradicts the native documents which recount the many competitions
175* for the throne which had divided the royal family, and according to which the "present king" succeeded his uncle (Visai).

He adds that the government of the country was divided, under the
175* high authority of the king, between three great officials:
642
645 1. The head of the army who was "governor of the province which produces benzoin" and commander of the city of Vientiane. He doubtless refers to the prime minister Tian-Thala, the son-in-law of Souligna whom he calls Tevinia-Assen;

2. The governor of Nakhone or viceroy, who commanded the whole southern part of the kingdom, including Attopeu, as far as the Cambodian frontier. This was the Nan-Tharath of the Annals, whom he calls Lachaen;

3. The minister of the Palace who is in charge of relations with ambassadors.

These three high officials "were given /110/ an audience only every two or three months, unless there were some necessity or the king had them summoned expressly."

/693/ Next to the king there was a "tribunal in charge of civil and criminal affairs" which was composed of five of his relatives who had daily access to the sovereign.

/651 Finally, Van Wusthof estimates the king's income at "two piculs"
643/* per year of gum lac, benzoin and gold (1).

1. Cf. Georges Maspero, op. cit. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./ A picul was equal to 61 kilograms.

175* The Account of Father Marini (1666). This evocation of the
114 Laotian kingdom in the seventeenth century does not differ appreciably, on the whole, from two travel accounts published in Italian at about the same time by the Jesuit fathers Martini (quoted p. 104, note 2) and Marini. A translation of the latter's accounts was placed on sale in Paris in 1666 (2). No matter how picturesque it may be in its

/127/ 2. Relation nouvelle et curieuse des royaumes de Tonquin et de Laos, traduite de l'italien du P. Marini Romain, par L.P.L.C.C. (F. Lecomte; cel.), a Paris, chez Gervais Clouzier, au Palais, sur les degres, en montant pour aller a

643* Indeed King Zakarine, no matter what his attitude of detachment
648* towards power, was noteworthy for his simplicity, his good sense and
175* his ability to see /323/ the usefulness of certain reforms. For he was
/178/ very poorly seconded by the mandarins of the kingdom council (Senam),
/646/ who were "incompetent men and scoffers dominated by their immediate and individual interests" (1). On the whole, however, the

1. Cf. ibid., p. 78.

642 political and social organization which we found was a good one,
178 and we acted wisely in preserving all the mechanisms of the native administration and in respecting the traditions, customs and mores of the populations throughout all of Laos, insofar as they were compatible with our own institutions (2). This was all the more easy for

2. Thus we were led to suppress radically the slave traffic which was enriching a few Siamese, Cambodian, Laotian and Burmese mandarins. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos (Posthumous edition), Paris, 1911./, pp. 230 ff.

us in that all the Laotian muongs (whether or not they were dependencies of Luang-Prabang) had a similar organization which was a smaller model of that of the kingdom (except for the Senam) and
647 was an obvious vestige of the epic times of Fa-Ngoum and the great
642 State of Lan-Xang (3). Like the king, the governors of /324/
631

3. The following was, in outline, the political organization of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang in 1894:

/643/* At its head the king, the great master of existences (Somdet-Phra-Chao), and the second king, the great master responsible for the preservation of property (Chao-Maha-Oupahat).

Then came the minister princes: the Ratsavong or first prince and right-hand minister; the Ratsabout or second prince and left-hand minister; and the Komakhoune or third and fourth princes and ministers of the center and of the civil services.

The first three mandarins, who bore the title of Phaya, were, in order of importance: 1) the Phaya Muong-Sen or
/646/ first right-hand mandarin, head of the Senam and head of
/693/* of justice; 2) the Phaya Muong-Tiane or first left-hand

mandarin and head of the tribunal; 3) the Phaya Muong- 647
Khang or first mandarin of the center and head of the Serv- 642
ice of public works, transports, etc. 631

The Senam was composed of the Phaya Muong-Khoua or /646/
second right-hand mandarin, and of four councillors under the direction of the Phya Muong-Sen.

The judges or Kromakanes, who were under the Phaya /693/
Muong-Sen and the Phaya Muong-Tiane, numbered seven in all and included the Phaya Muong-Sai or second left-hand mandarin.

Last came the mandarins responsible for the collection of /653
taxes, the assembling of labor drafts and the transport of 644/
bamboo, rattan, thatch and pirogues for the king's service and the public services; then the pages and chamberlains or mahaleks, the military leaders, the functionaries responsible for petty tasks inside the palace, the treasurers, storekeepers, etc.

The reader will note the insignificant position reserved /701/
for the military mandarins in this hierarchy. Of Sam-Sene-Thai's powerful army (see above, p. 56), nothing at all remained.

provinces were aided by an Oupahat, a Ratsavong and a Ratsabout who, like the court dignitaries, gave their orders to the tassengs or canton heads who had authority over the village leaders (naibans). By establishing the different government commissions in Laos Pavie therefore strengthened the native authorities in their age-old prerogatives and the princes of Luang-Prabang in /325/ their dynastic rights and privileges. In order to mark their absolute attachment to France and to give more force to their vehement protests against awarding Siam the part of the kingdom situated on the right bank, the latter insisted on receiving, in solemn fashion and as soon as possible, the investiture of the government of the Republic from the commissioner general. After his return from Muong-Sing eight 643*
months later, Pavie drew up on parchment in Hanoi the titles of the old king Oun-Kham, of King Zakarine, of his brother and of the Oupahat Boun-Khong, and on April 19, 1895 proceeded to this important ceremony.

"All those who had a part in the control of affairs," he wrote as he finished the account of his mission, "were present. The entire populace was invited. In the name of the government of the

693 Judges, or "Kromakanes" in Laotian, are responsible to the Phaya-Muong-Sen and the Phaya-Muong-Tiane, and are the:

Phaya-Muong-Sai, second mandarin of the left.
Phya-Sieng-Tai.
Phya-Muong-Pak.
Phya-Sak-Kha.
Phya-Muong-Khouk (particularly responsible for supervision of prisons).
Phya-Phane-Nong.
Mune-Vi-Sai.

647 651 [492] The mandarins responsible for the collection of taxes, the assemblage of statute laborers, and the transport of bamboo, rattan, thatch straw and pirogues for the king's service and the public service are the:

Phaya-Soune, mandarin of the middle.

Pha-Jotha.
Sanone.
Si-Phat-Thamane.
Si-Samoute.
Si-Sounone.
Sene-Tiane.
} Under the orders of the Phaya-Muong-Khang and the Phaya-Soune.

The pages of the king bear the honorary title of "Mahatlek." They are the:

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1. Phaya-Nak-Phoumine
   Phaya-Kham-Soune-Phou } Chief pages and chamberlains.
2. Phya-Na-Heua.
   Phya-Mune-Na.
   Phya-Natai.
   Phya-Muong-Phene. } Principal pages attached to the king's person, who bear his arms and insignia in ceremonies.
3. Phout-Thavong-Mahakhote
   Mune-Vong-Sai.
   Akhasa. } Chamber pages, guardians of the king's property, of his parasol, etc.

701 The military leaders are the:

Phaya-Soupho.
Phaya-Kham-Mone.
Phya-Vieng-Ke.
Phya-Vieng-Khame.
Oupasa.
Mune-Sanone-Tiai.
} Responsible for various military duties.

643 canton heads and heads of villages, who might be described as can-
646 tonal and municipal delegates, gather in the capital of the muong to vote on the names of candidates which are presented. The name of the one who obtains the most votes is then presented by the province administrator to the superior resident, who accepts or rejects him after studying his personal qualities, his aptitudes, his background, etc. In the case of a rejection the electors are consulted a second time. The superior resident names the four chiefs of muongs by delegation from the governor general. These latter may not begin office until they receive their commission, insignia and seal from the French government.

In general, the electors' choice falls on a son, brother or nephew of the high official who is to be replaced, unless he is unworthy or notoriously incapable.

635 Mandarins of lesser importance are named by the province head
647 with the approval of the persons under his administration and of the superior resident.

647 Officials receive a salary only in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang
652 and in the provinces of Vien-Tiane and Muong-Hou. Everywhere else they must be content with a fee equivalent to one-tenth of the sums they collect as taxes.

[693] In their capacity as judges, the muong authorities also collect legal costs and shares in the sums of certain fines, as is the custom of the land.

647 Such, in its general outline, is the organization of the Laotian
576 administration. It generally functions well, is sufficient to the needs of the natives and makes it possible for us, despite the vast extent of our possession, to keep only a few European officials there.

[192] The outer forms of respect towards great men, mandarins and anyone who holds a rank are dictated by Laotian etiquette, as in Siam. One does not speak to a king, a [495] [Illustration] [496] [Blank page] [497] prince or a leader as one would to an equal or an inferior. There are special expressions which are peculiar to the representatives of certain social classes or to the holders of dignities. But even while it conserves, at bottom, the ritual ceremonial forms, Laotian etiquette is paternal and much more spontaneous and genuinely respectful than elsewhere.

When they speak to the king, to princes, to great men, etc., inferiors prostrate themselves, with forehead on clasped hands, near the ground, or with their hands clasped above their head. Outside of this particular case, those present may remain squatting, smoke, talk, laugh and even disturb the audience somewhat. Moreover, no lack whatsoever of respect is to be seen in this liberty.

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3. JUDICIAL SYSTEM

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2. In accordance with the Burmese customs which are peculiar to the Lus of the territory of Muong-Sing;

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The judgments of the native tribunals are examined, and revised or approved if the need should arise, by the French authorities.

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Acts qualified as criminal by our law are judged by a mixed province tribunal presided over by the government commissioner who is head of the province. He is seconded by a native assessor and by a secretary-clerk. Such tribunals sit in the capital of each province. [498] In reaching its decisions, it takes its inspiration from the native laws and customs, insofar as they agree with our sentiments of humanity and dignity and with the spirit of French law. It judges appeal cases which have already come before the native tribunals.

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Foreign Orientals, that is to say Annamites, Cambodians, Chinese, Burmese, Siamese, etc., may be judged only by the mixed province tribunals. As for Europeans, they are subject only to the regularly constituted French tribunals of Tonkin and Cochinchina.

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(1) The following, for example, are the court costs to be paid in a case of theft of domesticated animals:

Legal costs.....	15.00 francs	to be paid by each accused person.
Clerk.....	3.75 "	
Archivist.....	2.25 "	
Court roll.....	1.50 "	
Prison costs.....	11.25 "	

The legal costs are divided as follows:

Tiao-Muong.....	5.00 francs	15 francs.
Oupahat.....	2.50 "	
Judge hearing the case..	7.50 "	

The prison costs are divided as follows:

Jailer.....	5.00 francs	11.25 francs.
Upkeep for food for prisoners whom their families cannot feed or who do not work outside.....	6.25 "	
Lighting and upkeep of prison.....		

It goes without saying that, in addition to court costs, the guilty parties are liable to a fine, which, in the present case, would be 24 francs per person.

[490]

4. THE TAX STRUCTURE

a. Direct taxes

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The direct taxes include the head tax, the optional redemption of statute labor and the licenses for Foreign Oriental merchants.

A census taken before the end of each year by the native authorities and checked by the administrators who are heads of provinces makes

10: d'Orleans--300 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 647, 662, 681, 695

"The administrative functionaries and the judges are appointed by the king, subject to the approval of the Siamese Commissioner. Justice is administered according to the traditions of what was known in the early ages as 'the judgments of God.' That is to say the oath is taken upon a silver cup or a sword, and holy water is given the accused to drink, and if the accused person has wrongly declared himself innocent the water will poison him or the sword will be thrust through him by a spirit, at night. It need hardly be said that the judges are not satisfied with this test, that is to say, they take care to inform themselves before the trial as to the fortune of the prisoner, and it is said that they are easily influenced by bribes.

The punishments comprise fines, the bastonade, penal servitude, and being put in chains, but torture is not practised."

It was in this holy place that Anou received /164/ his subjects' 796
and vassals' oaths of fidelity twice a year up until 1827. The 643*
ceremony was continued, after his downfall, in honor of the king 175*
of Siam. Nowadays it takes place in April and November of each
year and the oath, accompanied by prayers from the bonzes, is
addressed to the president of the French Republic in accordance
with the traditional formula: "May any one of us who breaks this /695/
oath be devoured by the tiger, may he be struck by lightning, may
his soul burn in blazing flames... etc. " (1).

1. A monastery was recently built near the cloister, which 792
has been transformed into a museum. A center of religious
learning has been revived there by the leader of the bonzes
who is presently in charge of it.

Voyage to Bangkok (1825). In the meantime Anou kept closely 643*
informed of the events which were transpiring in the west of the 648*
Indo-Chinese peninsula. In the south the Siamese had come to 175*
grips with the Annamites in Cambodian territory, and in the north
the British in India were extending their sphere of action towards
Burma in a way which was disturbing for the Thai regions of the
basin of the Salouen and the Upper Menam. In 1825 he went to
Bangkok to attend the funeral of king Phan-Dinh- /165/ /Page 165
is devoted to an illustration: "Square of the temple of Sisaket at
Vientiane. "--Translator/ /166/ Klang, and there he learned that
a British delegation had entered into ticklish negotiations with the
government of the deceased king and that the intransigence of the
English was causing the greatest difficulties at the court. He profited
thereby in order to ask permission to repatriate to his country the
Laotian families who had been taken captive in the course of the
preceding century, but was given a categorical refusal (1).

1. He was told that the Laotian families had been settled
in Siam for too long a time not to have become completely
Siamese. Cf. H.R.H. Phanuphanthuvongswardja, op. cit.
/Repression de la revolte de Vientiane. Bangkok, 1926. /

Hiding his disappointment, he regained his capital greatly dis- /721/
contented. The following year, when the rumor reached Vientiane
that the Anglo-Siamese parleys had been broken off and that a

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[169] The formula used in southern Laos is more concise and slightly different.

The natives of Laos, whatever their race, have a great respect for any oath and stand in much dread of the consequences of perjury.

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Oaths are widely used in courts of law in cases of disputes between individuals. When a judge has reached the end of his arguments and is confronted with a stubborn plaintiff he sends him to the pagoda before the sacred statues to deny the accusation or affirm his statements.

In this case, the above formula is modified in accordance with the needs of the case, as regards the object of the oath and the type of authority invoked as sanction. But the basis is always the same.

As a means of legal procedure, an oath is regarded as an argument of such force and of such grave consequences that it is used only as a last resort. In Laos it is the ultima ratio judicium.

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The Laotian calendar (1). The Laotian year is calculated on the

[792]

(1) Since the bonzes establish the calendar we have thought it well to place this information in the chapter devoted to religion in Laos.

phases of the moon and includes twelve months which are divided into twenty-four half-moons. The months have thirty and twenty-nine days alternately, giving 354 days in the year or eleven days less than in the solar year.

In reality the Laotian calendar is luni-solar, for in order to bring the ordinary year into approximate harmony with the solar year an extra month is inserted every three years after the eighth month, and repeats the latter. It is called the "second eighth month" (Dueune pèt song). In chronological dating, the Laotian year begins about the middle of the fifth month (April).

Like the Siamese, the Laotians have adopted a system for coordinating and numbering their years which is based on a great cycle of sixty years and two other intermediate cycles of ten and twelve years each. The first of these intermediate cycles is decimal, and the second is zodiacal (duodecimal).

[170] Each year is designated first by the name of the great cycle, then by those of each of the intermediate cycles and by a chronological number.

693 than of the rights of the parties. Our administration is making praiseworthy efforts to halt these abuses. Those who sell justice in this way are removed from their posts, and it is to be hoped that within a few years' time most, if not all, of the Laotian judges will be upright and disinterested. As a means toward stopping these deplorable habits and informing the parties in lawsuits of the legal costs which they will regularly be asked to pay, Lieutenant-colonel Tournier took a very useful first step in April 1898, by setting up a schedule of court costs in accordance with the laws and customs of Vien-Tiane (1).

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654 statute labor and the licenses for Foreign Oriental merchants.

A census taken before the end of each year by the native authorities and checked by the administrators who are heads of provinces makes

25: Brodrick--104-105 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 346, 696

"Most of the Laotian pagodas are a mass of jumbled ruin. Others are in sore straits. Still, there is an abundance of temples in Luang-Prabang itself. The sixteenth-century That-Luong has been restored, as has the old [105] Royal Pagoda. There is the ruined Vat-Manorom, built it is said, in 1372 to shelter a colossal statue of the Buddha, of which only the bust and head have survived. And there is the Pagoda of the Crystal Statue, which statue was carried off in 1827 by the Siamese to Bangkok. Any criminal who reached the Temple of the Crystal Statue could claim absolute asylum--in the olden days--but now the building is breached. And there are many more, temples and stupas."

10: d'Orleans--266 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 396, 462, 697, 834

[LSS: at Muong Ngoi] "As I walk down by the side of the river I find a very animated scene; prisoners are going to and fro with manacles on their legs, which do not seem to inconvenience them at all. Elsewhere, men are making rafts and cutting planks; some of them are sawing a tree; they work horizontally, in pairs, putting in wedges as they advance. Women are fetching water in buckets made of bamboo tubes; they take the opportunity of bathing, and do not seem hindered by any bashful feelings. There is a curious remark to make on this point: amongst the Thaï's of the Black River, the men never hesitate to strip themselves, and enter the water; but the women appear more reserved; here, on the contrary, they are the ones that feel no shame, whilst their husbands seem to avoid undressing in our presence."

10: d'Orleans--325-326 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 301, 563, 697

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "It is a strange crowd, [326] and among the component parts of it are young girls bare to the waist, with a smile upon their lips, their arms encircled by several gold bracelets, and with a gardenia in their hair, while beside them, perchance looking much more frail and humble, is a Ka woman with a turban upon her head and a basket on her back, fastened by a piece of leather going round her forehead. Then there are groups of Kas, ten or twelve together, who walk about with a timid, startled look, and try to dodge my photographic apparatus. Following these, perhaps, is a convoy of prisoners, wearing black gaiters to avoid the friction of the rings in their chains, behind them being the Siamese soldiers, who have silk trousers, linen vest and felt hat. Their aspect and bearing denote the parvenu, and they display all the insolence of new masters, contrasting with the calm, dignified air of the portly bonzes, who, robed in yellow and escorted by their young pupils, proceed with measured and self-satisfied tread.

There is little sign of hurry in the crowd, and it is as much as they can do to move out of the way to let a royal elephant or the vehicle which is conveying a Minister to the Royal Council Chamber go by."

23: Franck--298 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 366, 697, 793

"The main street of the capital, [EJ: Luang Prabang] dying out at either end in semi-jungle, is lined by a long market, facing the entrance to the king's palace. But for that matter there is a market just outside the royal palace in Madrid, too, and many beggars also, which here seem to be unknown, unless we count the yellow-clad priests sauntering along with their begging-bowls in the early morning. Even such an Eden as this is not without its serpents, however; and rattling chains on the legs of prisoners working about the town make strange contrast both to its quiet gentle atmosphere and to the regality of its king."

644 The functionaries responsible for minor duties inside the palace, under the orders of their chief the Maha-Monti, are the:

Maha-Nosit, Lasa-Nosit, Lasa-Mat, Sanet, Sakame-Nane, Latsavat, Out-Thamonti, Sene-Thong-Niot, Sathipavot.

[652] [493] The treasurers, storekeepers and palace guards have the 647 titles of:

Phaya-Vi-Sai-Monthiene, Phone-Seuk-Khoua, Phone-Seuk-Sai.

Finally the jailers and scourgers (or executioners) under the 697 command of the king or of the head of the justice department:

Phone-Tesak, Sa-Phakdi, Sa-Dab-Khame, Vong-Phouthone.

635 In the provinces, the head of a muong bears a title which is 631 personal to him, "Phaya" or "Phya," to which he adds that of "Tiao-Muong" and the name of the province, as Phaya-Si-Vorarat-Phrak-Di, Tiao-Muong-Vien-Tiane.

Under his command he has principal mandarins in the number of three, who bear the titles of "Oupahat," "Latsavong" and "Latsaboute." Each of them is generally responsible for the administration of one part of the muong, under the supervision of the "Tiao-Muong."

These high officials are seconded, depending on the importance of the muong, by a larger or smaller number of counselors or judges who bear the titles of "Sen," "Tiane," "Khang," etc.

Muongs are generally divided into cantons, and the heads of the [63] latter bear the title of "Taseng." Each canton includes several villages or "Bans," and each of these has at its head a mayor who is usually called "Pho-Ban" (the father of the village). The head of a village is aided by a kind of council or assembly of notables, the titles of whom are "Pia," "Luong," "Koun," "Sen," "Mune" or "Nai."

643 The four principal leaders of a muong, that is to say the "Tiao-646 Muong," the "Oupahat," the "Latsavong" and the "Latsaboute" (1),

(1) In the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc, the heads of muongs bear the following titles: "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong), "Phya-Hua-Pahn" (Oupahat), "Phya-Balat" (Latsavong), "Phya-Kam" (Latsaboute). In accordance with custom, these offices are hereditary and sons succeed their fathers, except for the office of "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong) where the rule is not absolute.

are [494] elected either by the nobles or by commoners who possess certain aptitudes and sufficient intellectual culture. The whole population, nobles, officials and common people, are consulted. Then the

10: d'Orleans--301 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 644, 701, 177.70

"The Laos army is kept up at a very slight cost, there being only, apart from the Siam troops, a royal corps, dressed in European style and armed with rapid-firing rifles. The rest of the men are supplied in the event of war, by the villages with their own form of weapon, and they are not likely to be dangerous opponents for a long time to come, as shown by the way in which they fled before the soldiers of Deo Van Tri."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

INTO THE MEO COUNTRY

489 It was fitting that at Luang Prabang the impetus of travel should
509 have spent itself. Not even convoys ever came as far as this. Groups of unfortunate men occasionally set off on foot and walked for as long as three weeks through jungle trails to relieve isolated posts. Other arrivals and departures were by a weekly D.C.3 plying between Luang Prabang and Vientiane. It was booked up well ahead.

505 Down at the riverside the story was much the same as at Vientiane. There were pirogues which supposedly made regular journeys, but no one was prepared to commit himself to positive information about them. One authority went so far as to say that it was out of the question to hope to travel north by pirogue because the river was too low at this time of the year. I had just thanked him when the engine of what looked like a totally abandoned hulk, lying in an oily pool not far away, suddenly burst into wheezy activity. One of the crew of two said that they would be leaving in half an hour. Bound for where? – Vientiane? No . . . Xieng
701 Khong – for the unnavigable north, of course. All the space had been reserved for a body of ex-pirates who had changed sides and had now, it was said, demanded to be sent back to fight their former allies.

While I was slowly piecing together this jig-saw of information in pidgin-French, the brand-new patriots arrived for embarkation; a most apathetic looking body of men. In their ill-fitting uniforms they were standardized; deprived of individuality by a common factor of misery, an ingrained habit of expressionless stoicism. Silently they filed up the gang-plank and filled the dim interior of the pirogue. It was difficult to believe that the fire of conviction burned in any of these breasts, and I felt sorry for the French N.C.O. who was being sent back in charge.

000 But Monsieur Leveau said that there would also be a pirogue going south one day, and to save me from being victimized by Chinese cat-and-mouse tactics he sent for the owner and asked him when the boat would leave. With gentle satisfaction the Chinese

Military organization. As a wise sovereign who was the 701
friend of peace but knew how to prepare for war, Sam-Sène-Thaï 175*
profited by the census in order to reorganize his kingdom's army. 643*
He raised its strength to 150,000 men, whom he divided into /659/
three distinct groups: the first to form an interior police force, the second to be specially drilled in defending the country from foreign attack and the third as a reserve force. The total army was divided into five corps with 30,000 fighting men each, plus 20,000 coolies responsible for provisioning the army. The warriors fought on horseback or on elephants and had lances and swords for weapons. They also had a few flintlock rifles which were originally imported from China and which the Laotians were already learning how to make themselves.

This large military force made no small contribution /57/ to 701
the tranquillity of Lan-Xang. Sam-Sène-Thaï also seems to have 643*
been a clever politician. Already allied to Siam by his marriage, 648*
he strengthened his neighborly relations with Lan-Na by taking 175*
Nang-One-Sa, a daughter of the king of Xieng-Mai, for his second wife. Moreover, the fall of the Mongol dynasty and the accession of the Ming to the throne were of no small importance to him, if we are to believe H. Maspero who relates that he received Chinese titles in 1404 (1). After the epic of Fa-Ngoun this was a happy

1. According to H. Maspero, Bulletin de l'E. F.E.O., Vol. XVIII, No. 3. Cf. R. Grousset, op. cit. /Histoire de l'Extrême-Orient/, p. 612, note 4.

stage of calm in the enjoyment of the fruits of the preceding reign, and when he died in 1416 he handed down to his successor a prosperous kingdom which was solidly based and living in peace, and all the while dreaded by its neighbors.

LAN-KHAM-DÈNG (1375), KING 1416-1428.

When the king died he left a numerous progeny, six sons and 643*
five daughters whom Nang-Keo-Yopha and Nang-One-Sa had 648*
given him. We do not know the reason why it was not the eldest 175*
Mun-Ban, but the second son Lane-Kham-Dèng who succeeded his father. The second son /58/ mounted the throne at a time when Tran-Ninh had fallen prey to dynastic disorders, he welcomed the queen Nang-Phom-Dam and her son Kham-Phong when they were

633 be seen from a great distance. To be sure, it extends over a prodigi-
174 ous area and is so large that one would take it for a city... The king's
344 apartments, which are embellished with a superb and magnificent portico and a large number of beautiful rooms accompanied by a large parlor, are all made of wood which will not decay and ornamented inside and outside with excellent bas-reliefs so delicately gilded that they seem rather to be covered with flakes of gold than gold leaf.

"From that point one enters the courtyards which are extremely spacious, and one first sees a long line of houses built entirely of brick and roofed /113/ with tile in which the second wives usually stay, and outside another row of houses built alongside in the same symmetry for the mandarins' officers. I could write a whole volume if I undertook a minute description of all the other parts of the palace, the riches, the departments, the gardens and a number of other such things...

565 "The houses of the principal lords and of well-to-do persons are
342 very high and beautiful, and are all made of wood with a great deal
352 of artifice and a greater or lesser number of ornaments, depending on the expense to which the individuals are willing to go, but I must confess that the common people and the poor are housed extremely badly
/793/ and that their dwellings are cabins and huts rather than houses. Only the talapoins (bonzes), who are the priests of the idols, have permission to build their monasteries and houses out of brick and stone. Instead of rugs and other such furnishings, persons of quality use small reed mats in which the weave is so delicate and so highly ornamented with figures and various leaf patterns that, to my mind, there is nothing more beautiful nor more pleasing to the eye. They ordinarily use them to cover the walls of /114/ their rooms and houses inside and outside, which they keep very clean and of which they take particular care...

643* "The king is absolute and independent... all the land belongs to
/423/ him, and he disposes as absolute lord of all that his subjects possess...
631 offices, employment, honors and wealth depend absolutely on the
174 king, who raises those persons who please him most to the highest offices in the kingdom... . The principal dignities and offices of the kingdom are eight in number. The first is that of viceroy general... and because the kingdom is divided into seven provinces seven other viceroys are appointed... there are also other governments of less consequence which depend on the former both in respect to civil affairs and to those which concern war... . Each of these provinces has
/701/ its militia, which consists of infantry and cavalry.

mandarin and head of the tribunal; 3) the Phaya Muong- 647
Khang or first mandarin of the center and head of the Serv- 642
ice of public works, transports, etc. 631

The Senam was composed of the Phaya Muong-Khoua or /646/
second right-hand mandarin, and of four councillors under the direction of the Phya Muong-Sen.

The judges or Kromakanes, who were under the Phaya /693/
Muong-Sen and the Phaya Muong-Tiane, numbered seven in all and included the Phaya Muong-Sai or second left-hand mandarin.

Last came the mandarins responsible for the collection of /653
taxes, the assembling of labor drafts and the transport of 644/
bamboo, rattan, thatch and pirogues for the king's service and the public services; then the pages and chamberlains or mahaleks, the military leaders, the functionaries responsible for petty tasks inside the palace, the treasurers, storekeepers, etc.

The reader will note the insignificant position reserved /701/
for the military mandarins in this hierarchy. Of Sam-Sene-Thai's powerful army (see above, p. 56), nothing at all remained.

provinces were aided by an Oupahat, a Ratsavong and a Ratsabout who, like the court dignitaries, gave their orders to the tassengs or canton heads who had authority over the village leaders (naibans). By establishing the different government commissions in Laos Pavie therefore strengthened the native authorities in their age-old prerogatives and the princes of Luang-Prabang in /325/ their dynastic rights and privileges. In order to mark their absolute attachment to France and to give more force to their vehement protests against awarding Siam the part of the kingdom situated on the right bank, the latter insisted on receiving, in solemn fashion and as soon as possible, the investiture of the government of the Republic from the commissioner general. After his return from Muong-Sing eight 643*
months later, Pavie drew up on parchment in Hanoi the titles of the old king Oun-Kham, of King Zakarine, of his brother and of the Oupahat Boun-Khong, and on April 19, 1895 proceeded to this important ceremony.

"All those who had a part in the control of affairs," he wrote as he finished the account of his mission, "were present. The entire populace was invited. In the name of the government of the

149: Reinach--76 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

rocks which tower precipitously over its course, the Sé-Kémane widens out as it is joined by the Dak-Bla, the sources of which, like those of its chief tributary the Sé-Souk, are near the Sésane. The Sé-Kémane is hardly navigable for pirogues except from Muong-Kao on. The latter is the most important center in the region and is generally known by the name of Attopeu. Pirogues can ply back and forth between this point and Stung-Treng in all seasons, but the many rapids with which the Sékhong is encumbered, mainly as far as the Sé-Pien, make its course extremely torrential and navigation very difficult. Before it reaches Siempang the Sékhong is joined on its right bank by the Sé-Pien which, like its [102] tributary the Sé-Kampho, comes from the plateau of the Bolovens. When they leave their gorges these two rivers water marvelous plains which are slightly hilly towards the north and which could serve as pasture land for immense flocks. From Siempang on the Sékhong can be navigated by steam launches during the high water period.

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Before it reaches the Mékong the Sékhong is joined, less than ten kilometers from its mouth, by its chief tributary the Sésane, which with its 400-kilometer course is of no less importance and interest than the Sékhong itself.

The Sésane comes from a mountain mass which dominates the amphitheater of Cong-Bol just above the 15th parallel. Its deep valley is called Poco by the natives. Like all the upper valleys of the watercourses in this region, it is encumbered with rapids and waterfalls and deeply cut between rock walls. On its left bank the Poco is joined by the Bla, the valley of which is followed for some distance by the road joining Attopeu to Qui-Nhon by way of Kon-Toum. The Sésane then traverses all this gold-bearing region which is still little-known and, so to speak, unexploited to this day. In its valley are found the mining posts of Ban-Phi, Ruhleville and Bokham. It can be navigated by pirogue in all seasons from Kong-Sédam on. The latter point, slightly above Ban-Phi, has a militia post stationed there to provide security for the works of the Attopeu Gold Mining Company [compagnie des Mines d'or d'Attopeu].

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Some twenty-five kilometers from its mouth the Sésane is joined by the Ton-Lé-Srépok, a large tributary. This river, also known as the Sé-Bang-Khan, comes from the south, not far from the plateau of Lang-Bian. It passes close by Darlac, the capital of the province of the same name, and through Ban-Don, from which point it is

Tribal Tai

291 the Deng-Thais, is applied to the edges of the gown. It is further
563 ornamented [233] on the outside edge opposite the buttonholes with colored silk embroidery which does not go down below the waist.

This garment is also folded in half lengthwise and worn rolled around the body with the sleeves left hanging.

302 The women wear their hair parted down the middle in front and rolled into a sort of long tassel behind which is contained within
301 the folds of a little turban. The latter is wound above the forehead and the free end inserted under the first turn, on the nape of the neck. This headdress is quite similar to that of the Annamite women in Tonkin.

In certain regions of Laos, Thai women wind their hair into a sort of coil which girls wear loosely down their neck and betrothed or married women wear on top of the head. Thai jewelry is made of heavy silver and is of the same type as Laotian jewelry. The men wear bracelets on their wrists.

262 Food. The Thai diet is like that of the Laotians, but they prefer non-glutinous white rice and use chopsticks like the Chinese and
264 Annamites.

The use of betel is quite widespread among the Thais, but in
276 contrast to the Laotians they keep their teeth white. The Thais smoke the oily, opiated tobacco of Tonkin and China in bamboo waterpipes whose tiny bowls only contain a small pinch of tobacco. They also smoke a local variety of tobacco, either in cigarettes or in pipes with a highly worked clay bowl into which a long stem ending in a glass or jade mouthpiece is inserted.

156 Character. Although serious and reflective, the Thais have a vivacious and friendly character. They are somewhat cold in appearance, but are sound friends and highly affable when one gets to know them better.

[701] Gentler and more timid than the Laotians, they have no taste for the art of war and it is difficult to get them to stay in the native militia.

433 They are very self-seeking and much more miserly than the Lao-
tians. [234] It should be noted, moreover, that since they produce
438 everything themselves and are a people of farmers and livestock breeders, they do not have, by virtue of their ever sedentary occupations,
156 the opportunities which these latter have to enjoy fairly high profits resulting from commercial transactions, nor the special habits which contact with different races gives.

181 The Thais love pleasure and celebrations. Guaranteed their daily
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have any elected councils or parliamentary representation. Today 631
it constitutes one of the five states in the Indo-Chinese union.

A consequence of the unification of Laos was its division into 631
provinces and the incorporation of its officials, who had heretofore been a staff apart, in the ranks of the Indo-China Civil Service.

The government commissioners have therefore become civil service administrators.

Today each of the fourteen provinces of Laos is placed under the 635
authority of an Administrator, and the latter is seconded by a civil service clerk.

Native guard. In Laos there are no detachments of the 701
troops stationed in Indo-China, but only a native civil guard [278] composed partly of Annamites and partly of Laotians. It constitutes a police force which is distributed in detachments of varying size under the command of inspectors and chief guardsmen. It is entirely at the disposition of the administrators who are heads of provinces. This native guard numbers twenty-seven inspectors and chief guardsmen and 850 men, of which 320 are volunteer Annamite enlisted men recruited in Annam and Tonkin, and 530 are natives recruited from all the races of Laos. It may be called on to lend its support, if the need arise, to the native authorities who are responsible for maintaining order and security in their respective territories. Peace and order are so perfect in Laos, however, that one can go about freely without an escort.

The treasury service. The treasury service in Laos 652
is headed by a bursar who holds the title of "Chief Bursar of the Treasury Service in Laos." He handles all matters dealing with receipts, expenditures and treasury operations in Laos in the same forms and according to the same rules as the other bursars who are heads of services in Indo-China.

He is assisted by a deputy bursar.

These two agents reside in Vien-Tiane.

Medical service. This service includes three colonial 744
physicians on detachment in Laos who are in charge of the infirmaries at Luang-Prabang, Vien-Tiane (formerly at Pak-Hin-Boun) and Khong. They care for all sick persons, whether European or native, as has been noted above (1).

(1) See Chapter III, Health Service.

693 Judges, or "Kromakanes" in Laotian, are responsible to the Phaya-Muong-Sen and the Phaya-Muong-Tiane, and are the:

Phaya-Muong-Sai, second mandarin of the left.
Phya-Sieng-Tai.
Phya-Muong-Pak.
Phya-Sak-Kha.
Phya-Muong-Khouk (particularly responsible for supervision of prisons).
Phya-Phane-Nong.
Mune-Vi-Sai.

647 651 [492] The mandarins responsible for the collection of taxes, the assemblage of statute laborers, and the transport of bamboo, rattan, thatch straw and pirogues for the king's service and the public service are the:

Phaya-Soune, mandarin of the middle.

Pha-Jotha.
Sanone.
Si-Phat-Thamane.
Si-Samoute.
Si-Sounone.
Sene-Tiane.
} Under the orders of the Phaya-Muong-Khang and the Phaya-Soune.

The pages of the king bear the honorary title of "Mahatlek." They are the:

644
1. Phaya-Nak-Phoumine
Phaya-Kham-Soune-Phou } Chief pages and chamberlains.
2. Phya-Na-Heua.
Phya-Mune-Na.
Phya-Natai.
Phya-Muong-Phene. } Principal pages attached to the king's person, who bear his arms and insignia in ceremonies.
3. Phout-Thavong-Mahakhote
Mune-Vong-Sai.
Akhasa. } Chamber pages, guardians of the king's property, of his parasol, etc.

701 The military leaders are the:

Phaya-Soupho.
Phaya-Kham-Mone.
Phya-Vieng-Ke.
Phya-Vieng-Khame.
Oupasa.
Mune-Sanone-Tiai.
} Responsible for various military duties.

Tax on rice, paddy, horns, hides, etc.

438
651

	Per picul (francs)	Per hundred kilograms (francs)
Paddy	0.25	0.416
Rice	0.50	0.832
Gum lac	2.50	4.16
Chinese nettle	2.50	4.16
Buffalo horns and hides	2.50	4.16
Buck horns and hides	3.75	6.25
Anteater scales	3.75	6.25
Cardamom	5.00	8.32
Elephant and tiger bones	3.75	6.25
Benzoin	12.50	20.82
Rubber	12.50	20.82
Wax	12.50	20.82
Ivory	50.00	83.20
Pirogues	ten percent ad valorem.	

Also to be added are certain incidental receipts, such as those arising from chancery fees or those collected by the native tribunals in conformity with the rates scheduled by the code of Vien-Tiane.

701
557
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The royal treasury of Luang-Prabang subsidizes certain expenses, such as the upkeep of the kingdom's militia, of the native hospital in Luang-Prabang, of the Franco-Laotian school in Luang-Prabang, etc. [504]

652

Finally, the general budget of Indo-China pays out a variable sum annually for the purpose of balancing the receipts and expenditures of Laos.

C. Opium

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276
655

One of the most important sources of Laotian revenue is provided by the sale of opium. The administration is responsible for the sale of this substance, which it manufactures itself and which is marketed by licensed merchants acting as middlemen.

Before 1900, Laos sold on its own behalf the opium which was allotted to it by the Cochinchina Customs and Excise Office (1).

(1) This was true only for Lower Laos. The opium sold in Upper Laos came from the Luang-Prabang distillery, which is no longer in operation today.

149: Reinach--384a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

292

701

Fig. 120 /p.507/ Militiamen at Muong-Son. (Courtesy of M. Besson

This strained reception under which Pavie divined the effort to 648*
mask great natural benevolence; the embarrased bearing of the 175*
/260/ eldest son Kham-Souk and that of the Oupahat, "princes /643/*
already mature" who although titular holders of the first offices in the land held themselves "humble before the Kaluongs, seeking approval in their eyes of the replies which they make" to the visitor; and the praises which he heard "whispered in the town of this king who is cherished by his people" but placed in guardianship by foreign agents, confirmed the suspicions which had been aroused in his mind by the enigmatic and reserved attitude of the Kaluongs. He consigned his impressions to his travel journal: "I have an increasing suspicion that your soldiers are waging a campaign in a land where Siam has no business to be. Even here where we are, I sense that your rights are not established. . . " (1).

1. Mission Pavie, ibid. /"Geographie et Voyages," Vol. VI/, p. 38.

Finally the Chao-Meun arrived. On March 13 he appeared in a brilliant parade surrounded by his officers, by the princes in ceremonial dress and by the leaders of the bonzes who came to thank him "for having saved the country and guaranteed peace on the frontiers." His troops were clothed in blue and helmeted in /704/
white, and filed past in European fashion led by buglers under triumphal arches which had been erected in their honor all the way from the bank to the camp entrance. Young, alert, "full of well-being and charm," Vai- /261/ /Page 261 is devoted to an illustration: "The peristyle of the Vat-Mai in Luang-Prabang."--Translator/ /262/ Voronat received Pavie with kind assurances, declared that he would have full prerogatives and told him of the success of his campaign in the Houa-Phans and the Black River cantons. According to him all of these regions would henceforth be pacified, and the bands of Hos which he had not driven out had made their submission and acknowledged Siam's authority. As a guaranty of their faith he was followed by a large number of hostages. The French "traveler" might, therefore, since he held firm to his purpose, continue his journey towards Tonkin in complete security even though the coming rains would risk making the roads difficult and the climate dangerous. . . it was thus that his forces had lost a third of their total number by fever last year. He added that during his stay in Muong-Son he had met the great

10: d'Orleans--258 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 712, 177.71 Siam
636.71

[LSS: at Sop Nao] "Accompanied by Takiate, I repair to the Siamese post, which is formed of a collection of huts rather larger than the others, surrounded by a palisade; there is no flag, but a great many women and dogs. The garrison consists of twelve men, in European clothes made of strong linen, and armed with Remingtons. The officer in charge invites me to sit down and take tea with him. He tells me that the boats are ready, and promises to give us a letter for the chief of Muong Ngoi."

10: d'Orleans--265-266 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 531, 712

[LSS: at Muong Ngoi] "On the summit of a hillock that overlooks the valley stands a polygonal embankment formed of red [266] earth in which some openings have been made, a wall in the centre surrounds a block of masonry seven or eight yards in diameter which supports a dome of white plaster, with gilt ornaments. Above it, there is a cone made of seven gilded circles, surmounted by a point, the whole edifice may be about fifteen feet high, and I remark some small reliquaries containing rough statuettes, of which the faces are half obliterated. The natives, whom I question, tell me that it is a fort, and in truth, a few cannons in that position, could easily command both sides of the valley, but at present they are missing. However, in my opinion, the monument is of religious origin; it reminds me of similar edifices in Thibet; but I cannot obtain any information either upon the date or the object of its construction."

10: d'Orleans--369-370 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 342, 361, 563, 712

"We reach Paklay. The river here is broad with sand-banks on either side and water just covering the top of the rocks. The village is situated on the right bank. The piles which support the houses are hid by a net-work of bamboo, arranged also to shut in the animals. A fairly clean hut is set apart for us, as we are to stay here for a day. The Siamese lieutenant has ordered our elephants, but we cannot have them before to-morrow, so I employ a part of the day in taking photographs. The town, if so it may be [370] called, is not large, having 780 inhabitants, including women and children. The Siamese garrison is made up of eighty men, and is shifted every three years. The lieutenant lives in one half of a rather large house, and the other half is occupied by Chinese merchants."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

we sneaked past we could see a bonfire with a group silhouetted round it. Our passing appeared to go quite unnoticed.

We reached Muong Kassy about two hours later and slept in a large, barn-like Laotian building of thatch and bamboo, which served as the officers' mess. Insects had been at the bamboo and the slightest movement filled the air with a powder which had the effect of snuff. The building swayed slightly with each step, but no more when there were twenty occupants, as there were next day, than when there were only two.

Muong Kassy was the headquarters of a company of Engineers whose job was the upkeep of the bridges. They were uncomfortably isolated here on top of a small hill rising only partially free of the forests, with magnificent views in all directions, which nobody noticed any longer. There was no doctor, so that casualties of any kind might have to wait several weeks for a convoy going in any direction. In the rainy season, when roads and bridges disappeared, the garrison was confined to barracks for five or six months. Outside the stockades the usual straggling collection of Laotian and Chinese huts had formed, with saloons selling 'shoum', a fire-water made from maize. Everything was brought by convoy and was in short supply, except the shoum which was a local speciality. The store-keepers also had a stock of what was described in English on the label as 'fruit tonic'. The fruit tonic was made in Siam and was probably an industrial by-product; but the garrison had found out that shoum plus fruit tonic was more effective than either separately, and that stunned by a good stiff early morning dose of this, the day's boredoms could be better supported. A shoum-and-fruit-tonic relaxed the nerves too. It was after we had been introduced to this Muong Kassy custom that Dupont changed his plans, and quite forgetting about his pregnant wife, and the bicycle she might succeed in putting together, he said we would stay the day, and leave next morning.

Taking a guide from the camp, we went for a dip in the river.

facing: MEO WOMAN

When he returned to his States, Setthathirath endeavored to 726
win over permanently to his cause the chieftains of Lakhone, 643*
Xieng-Khong, Xieng-Hai, /80/ Muong-Pray and Muong-Nan who 648*
had not supported Bureng-Naung, and when he was sure of their 175*
support he advanced as far as Xieng-Sen. But there he soon learned
that the governor of Xieng-Hai had been taken prisoner by the
Burmese and that his sister Nang-Kalay had been treacherously ab-
ducted. In spite of his anger, he judged it prudent to withdraw in
the company of his allies, who left their governments in the hands
of Bureng-Naung's lieutenants.

Treaty of alliance with Ayuthya (1560). In order to oppose the 728
common danger, he took the first steps towards reconciliation with 643*
the king of Ayuthya, to whom he proposed a treaty of alliance. 648*
The Siamese, who were rebuilding the ruins of their capital with 175*
courage but not without disquietude, joyfully accepted and their
prince gave one of his daughters to Setthathirath. A frontier
pyramid was built on the watershed between the basin of the Mekong
and that of the river of Nan which flows down to the Menam. Sol-
emnly surrounded by their courts, the two kings swore reciprocal
friendship and assistance: "May the ties that bind us be prolonged
from father to son down to our grandchildren and great-grandchil-
dren; may quarrels be unknown between us and peace continue to
reign /An unpaged photograph is inserted between pp. 80 and 81:
"The That-Luong at Vientiane. "--Translator/ /81/ until the day
when the sun and the moon fall to the surface of the earth" (1).

1. Cf. Lefevre-Pontalis, La lutte des Thaïs contre les
Birmans au seizieme siecle.

Vientiane, capital of Lan-Xang (1563). In order to avoid any 643*
surprise by the common enemy as well as to maintain the connec- 648*
tion with Ayuthya, Setthathirath left Luang-Prabang permanently 175*
and transferred the capital of Lan-Xang to Vientiane.
He was the true founder of this city which owes to him the 633
splendor with which it shone during all of the seventeenth century 643*
and part of the eighteenth. He first surrounded it with solid bas- 175*
tion fortifications (2), then in the center near the river built the 172

2. From the vestiges which still remained around 1900 be- /712/
fore the canal was dug and the circular boulevard laid out,

633 Lunet de la Jonquiere has deduced that the ramparts of
643* Vientiane were composed of brick walls from four to six
175* meters in height with an earth banquette inside. They in-
172 cluded three sections, the salients of which were provided
/712/ with circular forts about eight meters high. Two gates which were fortified and crowned with spearhead ornaments gave entrance to the second section, one on the east towards the That-Luong, and the other on the west at the exit of the present Luang-Prabang road.

royal palace in the pagoda of which the emerald Buddha (Pra-Keo), the sign of power and command /82/ which he had brought from Xieng-Mai in 1548 (1), was placed.

/778/ 1. The emerald Buddha was in reality cut from a block of green jasper. The Siamese were to capture it in 1778 and take it to Bangkok, of which it became the tutelary divinity and where the sumptuous temple which rises today in the first court of the royal palace was built for it in 1785.

172 Of the eighty some pagodas which Vientiane was to boast, the
633 Wat Pra-Keo was assuredly one of the greatest and most beautiful.
175* "The trees which veil it (today), the lianas which tie it to the columns and spread a mysterious shadow over its ruins make the visitor feel something of what the soul of the ancients felt on the threshold of a sacred wood. Brick openwork forms the enclosure and monumental staircases lead to the parvis. A dragon writhes on the ramps and raises its menacing head in a last coil. The columns of the gallery are graceful, tall, slender and without a base, but end in a capital of long, sharp leaves which fold outwards and look as though they were raised by the weight which they bear. . . " (2).

2. De Carne, op. cit. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois. Paris, 1872. /

175* The sanctuary was built on a terrace with three levels. The facade
172 opened onto a monumental portico whose three gateways and side
346 windows were richly framed /83/ /Page 83 is devoted to an illustra-
532 tion: "Ruins of the Pra-Keo at Vientiane"--Translator. / /84/ with many-colored sculptures. The whole edifice was entirely gilded on the outside.

149: Reinach--188 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

101 [261] [Illustration] [262] [Blank page] [263] As far as marriages, deaths, etc. go, we find practically the same customs among the Kha tribes of southern Laos as among their fellows in northern Laos.

231 It should be noted that the Rades breed a variety of small horses
439 which are highly prized in Annam, Laos and Siam.

[533] "These Khas love music and dancing. Their favorite instruments are gongs and bells.

534 "A set of gongs consists of seven, nine or twelve single ones. Made of copper and often very beautiful, these gongs take the shape of a cylinder from forty to eighty centimeters in diameter, only one end of which is closed by a vibrating plate. The cap worn by our judges and professors, although on a smaller scale, gives a fairly clear idea of the shape of these instruments. A few of the instruments are artfully cast and ornamented with much elegance. There is a solid ring about a third of the way along the gong's length which is part and parcel with the rest of the gong and makes it possible to hang it up on a side of the house, at about the height of a man's head, by means of a rattan thong fastened to the frame.

"The performers stand facing the battery and pummel it with their fists, taking care to strike the vibrating plate in the center so that it will emit a true tone. This procedure produces perfect musical notes, which are accompanied by the dull resonances of the tom-toms and the sharp sonorities of the bells made of a copper and tin alloy. The gongs bring a high price, and when it is a fine one a complete series is worth from 1,200 to 1,500 francs.

"In some villages the performers each take an instrument and hold it in a sling fastened to their shoulder, then form a column in single file. This Indian-style procession marches from the center of the house towards one of its extremities, striking more and more gently as it moves away from its point of departure. Then it returns to the center, unleashing a compensating crescendo. The maneuver begins again towards the other end of the house, and the musical promenade continues until the musicians are exhausted.

535 "When the Khas begin to play and perform the Kimlang (a very
272 stirring war dance) and the warriors grow excited from dancing and
579 from drinking rice wine, it is wise to make them stop as soon as they begin to pick up their weapons, for when drunk with alcohol and enflamed with ardor they are no longer masters of themselves.

714 "War dress includes feathers in the hair and a sort of cross of Saint Andrew formed of cloth rolled and crossed on the chest. Weapons, quivers, arrows, crossbows, bucklers, spears and swords complete their equipment.

10: d'Orleans T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
563, 634, 721, 175.72 Ethnic subgroups

[LSS: For the history of the family of Deo Van Tri, chief of the Lai district and for the history of the wars in the area of Laichau and Luang Prabang, see Indochina, category 116, pp. 204-209.]

"It may be remarked that the centre of Indo-China, and especially the region traversed by the upper course of the Mekong, is made up of kingdoms and principalities, formed for the most part out of the same territory which surrounds a town, always at loggerheads with one another, absorbed one after the other by the strongest States and only maintaining their independence in the interval through the rivalry of their powerful neighbours. Paying tribute first to the one side and then to the other, sometimes [292] to both at once, these Laos States have often been as reasonably considered Burmese as Annamite, or later on, as Siamese. At war with Annam now and again, the Laotians of this region conquered Tonquin eight centuries ago, but it is, none the less, with the Court of Hué that Luang Prabang preserves the closest ties. The chronicles of the town, which have been very conscientiously kept and which were saved from the flames by M. Pavie, testify in many passages to this state of dependency; and among these annals may be found the narrative of an invasion of Annamite troops in the seventeenth century which led to the suicide of the sovereign of Luang Prabang. (1) At a more

1. The legend has it that the king, when on the point of being made prisoner, had himself attached to the trunk of an elephant and the animal taken down into the river. A pagoda was erected in memory of the drowned ruler.

10: d'Orleans--291-292 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-2
116, 175, 627, 631, 721

recent date eye-witnesses have related the expedition of Deo Van Tri referred to in a previous chapter, the Laï chief assuming his right to treat with the king upon behalf of the Emperor of Annam."

10: d'Orleans--292-294 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-4
116, 648, 721, 177.72 France
636.72

"Without seeking to undertake an historical work, which would carry us too far, we have only to glance over some of the old maps to find the justification for that phrase of Garnier's which should have been the groundwork of our policy in this region. 'What we had to do was to make the king of Luang Prabang feel that a day might come when we should take up the rights exercised over his principality by the Court of Hué, which has now become once more our vassal. Unfortunately, the Siamese, whose influence had extended, after 1838 (2) towards Luang Prabang, came and [293] established

2. According to Hallett (A Thousand Miles on an Elephant, p. 201), the Shan States of Vienchang and of Luang Prabang became tributary to Siam. The Siamese authority in the Shan States consisted in arranging their external affairs and sanctioning the nomination of their chiefs. In return for the protection of Siam against the foreign invaders, three States consented to send a triennial tribute, consisting of gold and silver boxes, chased cellarettes and salt-cellars, as well as gold and silver trees worth from fifteen to thirty-five pounds each. To these statements of Hallett as to the early date at which Luang Prabang bebecame tributary to Siam, I would rejoin that the chronicles of Luang Prabang, which have been consulted by M. Pavie, do not contain any

10: d'Orleans--292-294 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-2
116, 648, 721, 177.72 France
636.72

allusions to Siam at an earlier period than the last half-century. The Lai' chronicle, to which I referred above when dealing with Deo Van Tri, only alluded to the state of dependency in which the King of Luang Prabang stood with regard to Annam.

M. Deschanel would seem to have anticipated the views suggested, if not openly expressed by Hallett, Colquhoun and Lord Lamington, when he wrote in 1885: 'The day that England seizes Burmah, our authority in the eastern part of the Indo-Chinese peninsula will receive a severe shock. If we do not take our precautions (in the Upper Laos) the English, once established at Xieng Mai' (in Siamese Laos) will be masters, morally speaking, of the valley of the Mekong and the important position of Luang Prabang, which was tributary to Annam. Thus cut off from the great river, in danger of seeing England secure the protectorate of Siam, our situation in Indo-China will be very much weakened.'--Compare Garnier above,

themselves there for good a few years ago, when they learnt that the French were approaching from the direction of Tonquin. I have already related, when speaking of Deo Van Tri, the ambush set for his brothers, the Siamese officers being accompanied by an Englishman, one McCarthy, who, with another of his compatriots, had been appointed agent at Luang Prabang. I have also referred to the meeting of French and Siamese troops in the plain of Theng, and the retreat of the latter. We were not able to push on any further, for the aged king of Luang Prabang, who [294] had at one time hoped to be backed up by our arms, foresaw the policy of non-intervention and excessive prudence which would be impressed upon our officers. He recognised that the valiant champions of our colonial extension would have their hands tied and that it would be no use reckoning upon us. 'The Siamese are coming up,' he said to Dr. Neis; 'we are lost.'

As a matter of fact, while we were standing still, the Siamese were advancing, and it is easy to understand the political course followed by the Court of Bangkok; as long as it is left free, it is always marching forward, occupying advance posts, sometimes with only seven or eight militia men, but still making a reality of its occupation. But for Colonel Pennequin, Theng would have fared no better than all the important centres upon the Mekong as far as Cambodia and than several towns between the coast and the river; one can feel that these Siamese troops, when they are on the march, have behind them

10: d'Orleans--292-294 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-4
116, 648, 721, 177.72 France
636.72

the moral if not the effective support of intelligent and fearless persons, who are used to getting their way by firm speaking, the only obstacles which they are likely to encounter from European nations being idle diplomatic protests."

10: d'Orleans--305-306 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 563, 567, 721

"In former times the men of the conquering race made inroads into the Kas villages and carried off a number of the inhabitants as slaves, the males being seized in preference to the females, while with the people of the plain the reverse was the case. Now the king has abolished slavery in theory, though in reality it still exists; (1) but

1. Slavery as practised upon the Kas is regarded as legal among the Laotians; a father who is poor and has a large family, often sells one or two of his sons, at the rate of fifteen rupees if they are very young, and of from twenty to forty for adults. They are then employed as boatmen.

the armed raids are not of frequent occurrence. Here, as is the case with certain European nations upon the coast of Africa, who claim [306] to be fighting the battle of liberty, the term forced labour is substituted for slavery, because it sounds better. I do not wish to criticise the generous sentiments which humanitarian ideas have evoked against slavery, but I am inclined to ask myself whether, taking everything into account, this condition is not often preferable for the people of the inferior races to liberty without the means of livelihood.

I was talking with a young slave who had been purchased by the mother-in-law of one of our interpreters. and he did not seem at all desirous of being freed. His parents, too

10: d'Orleans--305-306 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-2
116, 563, 567, 721

poor to support him, had sold him, he was well-fed and happy with his masters, and asked for nothing better."

which we have now reached they were in full struggle 648*
against the Chams. The diversion of the king of 175*
Sukhothaï was therefore inopportune and vexing, and so 643*
King Triet-Hoàng was preparing to cross the Cordillera
and have done with this new enemy when death overtook
him and prevented him from carrying out his plan. "As
for the king of Sukhothaï, we do not know the reason why
he stopped his attacks." Cf. G. Maspero, op. cit. /Un
empire colonial français: l'Indochine/, p. 110.

Souvanna-Kham-Phong was therefore a vassal of Siam when, about 1320-1330, he drove his son Thao-Phi-Fa out of his States for having seduced one of his concubines, Nang-Ok-Khong.

FA-NGOUN (1316-1374), KING 1353-1373.

The exile, who was taken under escort on a raft as far as 643*
Khône, took refuge with the king of Cambodia who gave him a 648*
warm welcome. He brought with him his eldest son, Fa-Ngoun, 175*
who was brought up at the court of Angkor /42/ and was given
the Kmer princess Nang-Yot-Kèo in marriage when he reached
his majority.

The king Paramathakhemaraja continued to endure the merciless struggle which the Thaïs of the Ménam had started against his predecessors more than a century before. After they were forced to evacuate the basin of the Ménam, and as a con- 643*
sequence all of western Laos, the Kmer kings were to find them- 175*
selves directly threatened in their capital by the founding of 726
Ayuthya not far from Angkor. Paramathakhemaraja therefore 648*
gave Fa-Ngoun and his father an army of ten thousand warriors to 721
reconquer the region of Muong-Swa, hoping thereby to restore his influence there and to rely on it in the future in order to put a halt to the Siamese in Ayuthya.

Expedition of the "ten thousand." Phi-Fa and Fa-Ngoun set forth. They overthrew the troops of the prince of Bassac who tried to bar their way and put to flight the prince of "Nam-Boun" (doubtless Cammon-Kamkeut), who was terrified at the mere rumor of their exploits, without striking a single blow. When they reached Paksane they encountered Thao-Thiem-Kham-Gno, the heir apparent of Xieng-Khouang. The latter had been condemned to death by his father because he too had /43/ seduced

643* one of his father's wives. He was now wandering about haphazardly
175* and implored their protection.
726

648* Capture of Xieng-Khouang. Fearful lest there should be an alliance
721 between Souvanna-Kham-Phong and the king of Tran-Ninh (whose reinforcements might take them from the rear in their direct march on Muong-Swa), they agreed to support the rebel. They went up the Nam-Nhiep and lay siege to Xieng-Khouang which they took by assault and whose king was put to death and replaced by Kham-Gno who acknowledged himself their vassal.

Capture of Xieng-Thong (Luang-Prabang). Reinforced by a Phoueun contingent, they then moved forward towards Xieng-Dong-Xieng-Thong. Their troops were divided into two armies, and one of these, under the command of Fa-Ngoun, entered the valley of the Nam-Khane. The other, under Phi-Fa, went down the Nam-Suong,
721 but the latter was stricken with cholera and died on the march at Hat-
643* Thoi. When he reached Dane-Khoua, Fa-Ngoun demanded that his
726 grandfather, Kham-Phong, abdicate in his favor. The latter was
175* highly indignant and moved to attack his grandson, whom he en-
648* countered at Pak-Ming. His troops were defeated and had to retreat
/762/ in disorder, /44/ his capital was captured and the old sovereign, "mad with shame and grief," hanged himself in his palace at Xieng-Thong.

726 At the age of thirty-seven Fa-Ngoun proclaimed himself king of
643* "Lan-Xang" and at once demanded submission of all the Thaï princes
175* of the Mékong. Without awaiting their "reactions" he set out to make
631 his authority accepted, and in a sort of triumphal march received the submission of all the chieftains of the northern muongs as far as the limits of the kingdoms of Xieng-Maï (Lan-Na) and Xieng-Houng (Sip-Song-Panas). He met with greater resistance in the south and had to enter into a struggle to the death against Phaya-Phao, prince of Vientiane, who had taken the leadership of the opposition.

175* The discovery by Georges Maspero in 1902, in the vicinity of the
633 present-day administrative capital of French Laos, of steles of Kmer
648* origin amidst the ruins of twenty-eight pagodas, makes it possible to
631 suppose that the first capital of the land was Say-Fong, that "dead city" stifled by the forest. In the time of its splendor it was the advanced citadel of Cambodian hegemony in Thaï territory, but its importance declined quite rapidly, doubtless with the first blows struck against the suzerainty of Angkor by the kings of Sukhothaï and

of Ayuthya. /45/ And even before it disappeared it had been 175*
supplanted by Vientiane, which was built some ten kilometers 633
upstream, unless the two cities formed a single immense one or 648*
unless the first one moved without changing its name at first 631

Capture of Phaï-Nam (Vientiane) Whatever the case may be, 643*
the center of resistance against Fa-Ngoun was then called "Phaï- 721
Nam" (thorny bamboos) because of the impenetrable vegetable 175*
belt which defended it like veritable ramparts. It resisted re- 725
peated assaults and Fa-Ngoun was able to get the better of it only 633
by using a ruse. He had gold and silver projectiles shot at the 631
bamboo enclosure and then simulated a retreat. The besieged
army, seeing the royal troops fall back, thought that their delivery
was at hand and came out to pick up the precious projectiles. Then
the assailants suddenly returned to the charge and entered the city
without difficulty (1). Phaya-Phao had to make his submission.

1. These tactics are celebrated in several Thaï legends to explain the capture of a stronghold.

He received his pardon and was kept on as governor of the principality.

In memory of this episode, the city was baptized /46/ "Vien-Kham" which signifies "gold enclosure." This was later corrupted to "Vientiane" (sandalwood enclosure) (1)

1. There is permanent confusion in the Laotian chronicles between the Vien-Kham on the banks of the Mékong and the Vien-Kham in Tran-Ninh.

Formation of the kingdom of Lan-Xang (1353). Fa-Ngoun, 643*
henceforth the uncontested master of a vast kingdom, gave it a 175*
strong organization and ruled over it as a despot. 642

He summoned an Oupahat or second king to him to assist him
in his political duties and instituted a Council of ministers chosen /646/
from the princes of royal blood and arranged in a hierarchy according to their respective ranks and attributions. But he would suffer no infringement on his own authority, neither at court or in the provinces. He took terrible reprisals against the vassals who did not obey his orders blindly, and replaced nearly all of them in succession with mere governors as the fancy took him.

645 who should be in the dynastic tradition. After a long deliberation
175* which was made laborious by the fact that Lane-Kham-Dèng's children
643* were minors, it offered the crown to Thao-Lu-Sai, the governor of Muong-Sai-Muoi and last legitimate son of Sam-Sène-Thaï. Thao-Lu-Sai accepted and mounted the throne under the name of Phaya-Sai-Tiakaphat.

643* Twenty-three years old, he assumed power under difficult condi-
175* tions. The excesses of Nang-Keo-Phimpha had indeed weakened royal authority within the country and aroused the attention of the neighboring princes who, whether tributaries or not, were more or
/668/ less jealous of the power of the king of Lan-Xang. The rich province of Vientiane had always retained an inclination /64/ towards independence, and its governor, Sai-Moni, thought that the moment had come to shake off the yoke, but he was assassinated before he even had time to set out on the march (1). The failure of this movement

/346/ 1. The temple of Wat-Thai is supposed to have been erected in his memory by the inhabitants of Vientiane.

which was crushed "in the egg" doubtless gave cause for reflection to the vassals, who lay quiet and congratulated themselves on their reserve when they realized that Tiakaphat was a wise, steadfast and prudent sovereign who was quite determined to maintain the integrity of his States. He governed peaceably for forty years, intelligently seconded in the last years of his reign by his eldest son Thao-Kone-Kèo, who rapidly acquired an enlightened knowledge of the kingdom's affairs and an unquestioned authority in the Council of Ministers. The king created the unprecedented title of Sene-Muong for him, named him prince of Xieng-Lo and gave him the position of Oupahat.

721 The Annamite Invasion (1478-1479). Meanwhile the Annamites
643* were only waiting for an opportunity to extract vengeance for the
175* affront which Lê-Loi had once suffered and also to consolidate their western frontier which lay open on the Black River. /65/ If they had not done so before it was only because they had been prevented by the incessant incursions of the Chams on their southern frontiers, but in 1471 the king Lê-Thanh-Tôn occupied the land of Qui-Nhon and succeeded in destroying the kingdom of Champa once and for all, and in 1478 he used a futile incident as a pretext for invading Lan-Xang. If we are to believe the legend, Tiakaphat had refused

to send him a young white elephant captured by the Khas, after 721
having promised explicitly to deliver it to him through the inter- 643*
mediary of Boutevong, the king of Tran-Ninh (1). But in reality 175*

1. According to a popular tale, the history of this offering was a complete invention by Boutevong and the king of Annam had this prince's head cut off as a punishment for his lie. The son and successor of Boutevong is then supposed to have perfidiously told the Oupahat Kone-Kèo that Lê-Thanh-Tôn only wanted the claws and a few hairs from the sacred animal. Kone-Kèo sent these relics in a golden coffer, but the king of the Phoueuns replaced the claws and hairs with elephant excrement. The king of Annam was convinced that the king of Lan-Xang wished to do him a mortal wrong and sent "six immense armies" against Luang-Prabang.

the king of Annam had been making sizeable preparations for a whole year and had made sure that Tiakaphat's vassals who governed the frontier provinces would either cooperate or remain benevolent neutrals.

/66/ Siege and capture of the capital (1479). In 1479 Lê- 726
Thanh-Tôn placed his armies under General Phoua-Khouang-Soun, 643*
who installed himself firmly in Xieng-Khouang in order to cut off 175*
all aid to Lan-Xang. Then he had his troops execute a convergent march. They crossed the various passes of the Annamitic Chain and advanced in compact masses towards Muong-Swa, which they besieged.

The Oupahat Kone-Kèo took command of the Laotian troops without delay, assisted by the generals Mun-Luong, Mun-Bouone and Mun-La. He placed a strong cover over the approaches to the capital but could not prevent the Annamite soldiers from penetrating it. Then the struggle became desperate, with the warriors of Lan-Xang defending their city house by house while "the priests prayed in the temples and the women wept in the streets" (1). Kone-Kèo

1. Ibid. (legend).

and his lieutenants were killed near the royal palace of Xieng-Thong. Their death was the signal of the rout and the old king Tiakaphat fled in haste with his family, followed by the remains

663 Thais of the Menam, on the other hand, who were rid of the Cam-
175* bodians in the south but were pressed by the Burmese in the north, were
633 coming there in increasing numbers in search of gum lac and benzoin,
/439/ which they took back with them and sold to the Dutch navigators who had been sailing the waters of the Indian Ocean ever since the sixteenth century.

643* War against Ayuthya (1536). Phothisarath had just settled in
721 Vientiane when he received a visit from Ekaracha, the prince of
175* Ayuthya, who had been driven out and was being pursued by his relative the Phaya-Attit. He welcomed the fugitive and refused to give him up, and war was the result. The king of Ayuthya was halted at Muong-Khuk (1) by the Lan-Xang troops before he could even cross

1. On the right bank, a little way downstream from Vientiane.

the river and had to beat a retreat. He died when he reached home from a wound received in the course of the battle.

643* Relations with Annam. Phothisarath confirmed his peaceful in-
648* tentions with respect to the king of Annam. Relations between the
175* two peoples had become more frequent since their violent /75/ contact in 1479, and quite a few Annamites had remained in Lan-Xang after the retreat of Lê-Thanh-Tôn's troops. The two sovereigns exchanged presents and established neighborly relations between their States which were marked by a cordiality heretofore unknown, even before Lê-Loi and Lane-Kham-Deng. This was true to such a degree that Lan-Xang became the refuge of the partisans of the Lê while the Mac usurpers held sway. One of these partisans, Nguyên-Câm, who was the ancestor of the present royal family, came to seek asylum there around 1530.

Succession of Xieng-Mai. In 1546 the throne of Lan-Na (Xieng-Mai) became vacant, and Phothisarath claimed the succession rights which he held through his mother, a princess of that kingdom. To establish his claim he sent the governor Sene-Si-Mun-Muong with a sizeable armed force which dispersed the local pretenders and rapidly overcame any hesitation on the part of the latters' partisans. The chief of the bonzes came in person to offer the crown of Lan-Na to the king of Lan-Xang, and the king accepted it in behalf of his eldest son,

643* through the mouth of his chancellor and never speaks to them ex-
576 cept through a go-between..."

643* A "Trojan War" in Tran-Ninh (1651-1652). Under the firm hand
648* of such a monarch, the vassals and tributary princes eagerly com-
175 plied with the slightest of their sovereign's orders. Great was the
584 astonishment, therefore, when it was learned in 1651 that Chao-Kham-Xan, king of Xieng-Khouang, whom Souligna had asked for the hand of his daughter Nang-Ken-Chan in marriage, had dared to reply that the princess was not free and that he declined the honor of this alliance. Enflamed by the accounts which had been given him of the beauty and wisdom of the "pearl" of Tran-Ninh, the king of Lan-Xang pretended not to notice the affront but gallantly persisted and sent a messenger to take rich gifts to the girl. In vain. Then Souligna sent for the princess manu militari. The detachment was brought to an abrupt halt by the troops of King Chao-Kham-Xan and had to retrace its steps, while the people of Xieng-Khouang foresaw the worst and hastily built a fortress at Pana to protect their capital (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique." Revue indochinoise. Hanci, 1896./

643* Souligna decided that a small army of two thousand men would
648* be enough to punish Chao-Kham-Xan for his insolence. This force
721 did in fact take the stronghold of Pana by surprise and penetrate into
175* Xieng-Khouang on a bridge /118/ thrown over the ramparts. The king, a prisoner in his own palace, had to give in. But although he surrendered to force he kept a stubborn rancor over this misadventure which was inherited by his son Chao-Kham-Lan who succeeded him in 1688. This prince raised a thousand difficulties in paying the traditional tribute to Lan-Xang, and friendly relations between the two sister states were ended for good and all. In the eighteenth century Xieng-Khouang was to be engaged in a permanent struggle with Souligna's successors, and in the nineteenth century Chao-Noi, a king of Tran-Ninh, was to deliver up the unfortunate king Anou, the last monarch of Vientiane, to Siam.

643* But let us not anticipate further on these events but rather re-
175* turn to the year 1652, when Lan-Xang was shining with all its splendor and when the minor expedition in Xieng-Khouang meant no more to its king than a simple demonstration of his power and his authority.

115: Le Boulanger--104 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

It was in this holy place that Anou received /164/ his subjects' 796
and vassals' oaths of fidelity twice a year up until 1827. The 643*
ceremony was continued, after his downfall, in honor of the king 175*
of Siam. Nowadays it takes place in April and November of each
year and the oath, accompanied by prayers from the bonzes, is
addressed to the president of the French Republic in accordance
with the traditional formula: "May any one of us who breaks this /695/
oath be devoured by the tiger, may he be struck by lightning, may
his soul burn in blazing flames... etc. " (1).

1. A monastery was recently built near the cloister, which 792
has been transformed into a museum. A center of religious
learning has been revived there by the leader of the bonzes
who is presently in charge of it.

Voyage to Bangkok (1825). In the meantime Anou kept closely 643*
informed of the events which were transpiring in the west of the 648*
Indo-Chinese peninsula. In the south the Siamese had come to 175*
grips with the Annamites in Cambodian territory, and in the north
the British in India were extending their sphere of action towards
Burma in a way which was disturbing for the Thai regions of the
basin of the Salouen and the Upper Menam. In 1825 he went to
Bangkok to attend the funeral of king Phan-Dinh- /165/ /Page 165
is devoted to an illustration: "Square of the temple of Sisaket at
Vientiane. "--Translator/ /166/ Klang, and there he learned that
a British delegation had entered into ticklish negotiations with the
government of the deceased king and that the intransigence of the
English was causing the greatest difficulties at the court. He profited
thereby in order to ask permission to repatriate to his country the
Laotian families who had been taken captive in the course of the
preceding century, but was given a categorical refusal (1).

1. He was told that the Laotian families had been settled
in Siam for too long a time not to have become completely
Siamese. Cf. H.R.H. Phanuphanthuvongswardja, op. cit.
/Repression de la revolte de Vientiane. Bangkok, 1926. /

Hiding his disappointment, he regained his capital greatly dis- /721/
contented. The following year, when the rumor reached Vientiane
that the Anglo-Siamese parleys had been broken off and that a

643* British fleet was going to threaten Bangkok (2), he suddenly cast
648*
175*

2. In fact, Captain Burney's mission was to obtain, by peaceful means, a trade treaty which would open the port of Bangkok to the British.

off his mask and declared war.

648* Opening of hostilities against Siam (1826). The pretext invoked
175* has remained rather obscure and the Siamese accounts pass over the
721 matter in silence, merely accusing Anou of ingratitude and ambi-
● tion (3). According to a Laotian version, Anou /167/ had sent a

3. Cf. H.R.H. Phanuphanthuvongswardja, op. cit. /Repression de la revolte de Vientiane, Bangkok, 1926./

number of his subjects to the Bangkok government to work at building roads. The labor draft had been judged too small, his delegate had replied arrogantly to the observations of the Siamese, and when the king of Vientiane was informed of the incident he deliberately opened hostilities.

648 March on Korat and Bangkok. Whatever the case may be, the
175* first operations were unleashed with lightning-like rapidity. Three
726 armies were sent against Bangkok, one leaving from Oubone and led by Chao-Ngo, the second concentrated at Roi-Et and led by the Oupahat Tissa, and the third under the command of Anou himself, seconded by his sons Chao-Po and Chao-Ngao, and with Khorat as its objective.

These troops encountered but insignificant resistance (1) and

1. Anou is said to have safeguarded his rapid march by telling the population that he was hastening to the aid of the king of Siam, who was being attacked by the British. Cf. ibid.

news of the invasion had scarcely reached Bangkok when Anou, already established in Khorat, sent his advance guard to threaten Sraboury, which was three days' march from the capital.

/168/ Great was the disturbance among the Siamese, who dug trenches in all haste to protect their city. A first contingent was levied, and in a lucky sortie on "the Saturday of the fourth month of the waning moon" it succeeded in throwing the Laotian advance

727 ruins, for the city had been given over to fire and bloodshed. The
175* Siamese had deported six thousand families to the right bank of the Mekong, had taken all the elephants and removed four hundred warhorses. They had not, however, been able to lay hands on /174/ the royal treasures, which had been carefully hidden. Phia-Bodin had then left for Bangkok leaving matters in the hands of Phia-Papha and driving towards the Menam terrified throngs of men, women and children who were followed by long files of carts filled with plunder and statues taken from the overturned temples (1).

1. Including the Prabang, carried off for the second time.

645 Since Phia-Papha had only a small force at his disposal, he left
175* Vientiane, crossed the river, dispatched a messenger to his master and settled in Thabo to await the turn of events.

721 Battle of Makheng. According to a Siamese version, the Annamite
175* "commissioners" accompanying Anou interceded in his behalf and obtained his pardon. In this version, the king of Vientiane was given permission to settle in the city again, but then had all the Siamese who were there massacred by surprise, immediately sent out his troops in pursuit of Phia-Papha and was again defeated in the vicinity of Makheng (2).

2. Cf. Phanuphanthuvongswardja, op. cit. /Repression de la revolte de Vientiane, Bangkok, 1926. /

726 In the meantime the king of Siam, at the news of the rebel's re-
643* turn, had sent out a new army 20,000 men strong which reached
175* /175/ the banks of the river in forced marches. Then Anou realized that struggle was impossible, and so as not to bring down further misfortunes on his subjects he resolved to go to China. He left by the valley of the Nam-Song with only one of his wives and 120 devoted partisans (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique." Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896. /

648* Chao-Noi delivers up Anou (1831). The Siamese general sus-
175* pected that he had made his way towards Tran-Ninh and sent orders

devoted to an illustration: "Junction of the Nam-Khane and the 643*
Mekong at Luang-Prabang." --Translator/ /183/ whom he had 595
chosen in Luang-Prabang itself from the families of his mandarins. 175*

KHAMONE-NOI, KING 1726-1727.

Khamone-Noi succeeded him and took as wives two of the dead /595/
king's daughters, Thene-Sao and Thene-Kham. But Intha-Som at 175*
once began to agitate. Not daring to hope that the family of the 669
Sip-Song-Panas would lend him aid against one of its children, he 643*
addressed himself to some newcomers to the land who had been 563
infiltrating for some time into the valley of the Nam-Ou. These /167/
were the "Mousseux," mountainfolk driven out of Yunnan by the
religious wars (1). Although their temperament was not at all war-

1. Violent Moslem rebellions were then devastating southern China.

like, these fugitives nevertheless agreed, since they had no choice, 721
to lend their aid to Intha-Som. In return the latter promised their 643*
leaders La-Nga and Noli that he would recognize and confirm their 175*
occupation of Muong-Yo and Boun-Neua as soon as he became king. 669
563

Submission of Intha-Som (1726). But the Mousseux (2), al-

2. The word "Mousseux" is the word which most nearly approaches the native appellation. With their slender fig- /142/
ures, their rather white coloration, their prominent cheekbones and their well-shaped and not flattened noses, the "Mousseux" type has a greater affinity with the Indo-European type than with the yellow race type.

though they were supported by Nha-No- '184/ Muong of Muong-La, failed in their march on Luang-Prabang and Intha-Som had no other recourse than to make his submission. He gave up his weapons, took an oath of obedience and fidelity in the pagoda of Xieng-Thong, and was given permission to live in the capital, where he settled near the Vat-Visoun with a large retinue of Mousseux.

He was quite determined not to keep his word. The king, moreover, was not at all worried and did not even have him watched.

648* bands, was given by the latter to Auguste Pavie who placed
175* it in the Quai d'Orsay Library. See below, p. 295.

The chroniclers seem to attach considerable importance to these missions to China. They dwell on each of them in detail and mention the most futile incidents along the way, the names of the envoys, of the camacs and even of the elephants (2). Indeed, the

2. A third mission left Luang-Prabang in 1739. Intha-Som did not send the fourth until 1745 and instructed it to ask the emperor, by reason of the length and difficulty of the voyage, to accept four elephants every ten years. This proposal was accepted by the Chinese government.

support which Intha-Som was seeking from the emperors of Pekin was of capital importance /192/ to the principality, whose isolation on the peninsula was then complete.

643* Conspiracy of Saia-Sane (1740). This long forty-nine year
175* reign was a tranquil one at home, if we except one attempted re-
/662/ bellion, which was quickly repressed, by Saia-Sane, a son of Khamone-Noi. The conspiracy was discovered and Saia-Sane was at once arrested with his partisans and executed at the junction of Houei-Hop (around 1740).

Death of the heir apparent Tiao-Mang (1749). In accordance with the promise which he had made Thene-Sao when he took her as his wife, the king designated the eldest of the sons which this princess bore him as his successor, but the young man, who was named Tiao-Mang, fell into the water during a ride in a pirogue, took a chill and died of congestion at the age of fifteen (1749) (1).

1. Thene-Sao bore him three sons and a daughter, Thene-Kham bore him two sons and three daughters, and a third wife, Nang-Thep-Boupha bore him two sons and a daughter.

648* Difficulties with Annam (1750). At about the same time Intha-
175* Som received a message from the king of Annam demanding the pay-
● 721 ment of tribute. Indeed, this monarch (2) regarded /193/ the

2. Le-Hien-Tong.

agreement to which Ong-Hue had subscribed in 1696 as binding on 648*
all of Lan-Xang and was surprised that the king of Luang-Prabang 175*
had not taken part in it. 721

Intha-Som had participated too actively in the events which had preceded and followed the division of Lan-Xang for him ever to accept a yoke which neither he nor his elder brother had bought. He therefore gave a categorical refusal to the king of Annam's claims, and his troops drove out of the country the Annamite detachment of General Chiem-Thiem who had been sent by his master to go and obtain tribute manu militari (1).

1. The "Biographies" quoted by Ch. B. Maybon in his Histoire moderne du pays d'Annam place this event in 1771, but this source seems rather unreliable. The chroniclers, who confuse Vientiane with Luang-Prabang, are obviously unaware of the existence of several Laotian principalities at this time, and relate without further explanation that "the king of Laos succeeded in capturing Annamite soldiers by treachery and sent them as prisoners to the king of Siam, with their gongs and their standards." This latter detail would nevertheless have merited some commentary.

It may seem surprising that Annam did not react immediately but let this failure pass. This was because that State was then living in complete anarchy, despite its territorial expansion which had been progressively increasing for three centuries. The king reigned but did not govern, and the kingdom's affairs were in the hands of /194/ dignitaries -- the Trinh in the north and the Nguyen in the south -- whose powers and exactions are singularly reminiscent of the palace mayors of our do-nothing kings. There were nothing but conspiracies and insurrections which paralyzed the government's action abroad and which were already preparing the terrible revolt of the Tay-Son whose authors, in 1774, were to make a clean sweep of the established state of things (1).

1. Between 1750 and 1776 the chronological documents of 175*
Luang-Prabang show gaps which Pavie's translators have filled in the most whimsical fashion. Thus they give 1749 as the date of Intha-Som's death and name one of his sons whom they call Intha-Prom as the vanquisher of the Annamites--

648* Panas, and married a princess of Muong-La in 1782. In the same
175* year he sent out an embassy to take the decennial tribute to Pekin.
643* /198/ He died prematurely in 1787 without leaving any posterity.

Interregnum, 1787-1791. Tiao-Vong's brothers could not agree
648* on a successor, and for four years Luang-Prabang was without a
721 king.
175* Ong-Boun's son Chao-Nan profited by this in order to invade the principality. In the face of this danger Anourout, the second son of Thene-Kham and Intha-Som, assumed power and organized the resistance. Although the Annals make no mention thereof, he probably had to appeal to the Siamese alliance, and even if the king of Bangkok did not intervene directly he at least took action, in the common interest, against the perpetual incursions of the Burmese into his own territory. It may well be that the Siamese avoided taking any side, feeling that a new war would weaken both principalities and could only serve their own ends.

ANOUROUT, KING 1791-1817.

726 Siege and capture of Luang-Prabang by Chao-Nan, king of
175* Vientiane (1791). When besieged by the Vientiane troops Luang-Prabang /199/ put up a fierce resistance and succumbed only because of treachery on the part of Tiao-Vong's widow.

We may assume that the latter was dissatisfied over her brother-in-law's accession to the throne and gave ear to Chao-Nan's proposals regarding the family dissensions.

Popular tradition has preserved several accounts of this war which differ as regards the circumstances under which Luang-Prabang was captured. According to one version, "shots were fired from within and from without, but without meeting." The people of Vientiane finally grew short of food and made ready to raise the siege. It was then that Chao-Nan is supposed to have sent "Anourout's sister" (his sister-in-law, to be precise) a note in which he promised to marry her if she would have one of the city gates opened for him. "It depends only on you," he wrote her, "for me to be a conqueror and for you to become queen of a reconstituted Lan-Xang." Seduced by this proposal, the princess is supposed to have placed a trusted servant at the Pak-Man gate and sent word to Chao-Nan that he could enter. "She put her letter in a bamboo tube which she filled with powder, and sent her device into the enemy camp. The addressee received the epistle, got the keys within three /200/ days, took Luang-Prabang and married the princess."

century, on the eve of the Burmese invasions, they exer- 648*
cised a veritable suzerainty over all of Cambodia. 175*

in the Cochinchinese delta. A great many adventurers, vagabonds, deserters, proscripts and miscreants who had been driven out of Annam had come to settle in these rich alluvial lands, "which held forth the promise of fertile harvests of all the fruits of the earth," and the Nguyen had soon used the settlement of these "colonists" as a pretext for taking pieces of territory, bit by bit, from the kings of Cambodia. The latter, who had already been despoiled of their western provinces by Siam, had offered only slight resistance, and it was in the theater of their /207/ dynastic convulsions that the Siamese and Annamites had first confronted one another.

The Burmese invasions had momentarily paralyzed the kings 721
of Ayuthya, but scarcely had Phia-Tak warded off the catastrophe 175*
of 1767 when the new king of Thanaboury resumed the traditional 648*
Siamese policy towards Cambodia and invaded this unhappy land yet another time as far as Chaudoc and Hatien (1772-1774). It was then for the first time that a Siamese army had come face to face with Annamite troops. The soldiers of the Cochinese governor Dam had brought Phia-Tak's march to a sudden halt, and since the latter was still too deeply involved with the Burmese he had broken off fighting and fallen back to Nam-Van (Pnompenh).

By driving the Nguyen out of Cochinchina the Tay-Son revolt 648*
had arisen in so opportune a way as to leave the field open to the 175*
Siamese once again, and General Chakkri had been placing the country under military occupation when he had suddenly been recalled to Thanaboury by the king's madness (1782).

He had assumed the crown himself, and a few years later had welcomed the fugitive and proscribed Nguyen-Anh as he wandered from island to island in the Gulf of Siam. He had even given him an armed fleet to combat the Tay-Son, but /208/ the Nguyen heir had been defeated at Rach-Gam and had returned to Bangkok discouraged(1785). With the passage of time the sentiments of the Siamese court changed. Although he had participated with honor in an expedition against the Burmese, the young prince of Annam had gradually come to be treated as a quasi-prisoner. He had finally fled to Hon-Tre, from there to Phu-Quoc and then to Ha-Tien (1787), from which point he was to reconquer Cochinchina with the Bishop of Adran's handful of Frenchmen (1).

1. Cf. Schreiner, Abrege d'histoire d'Annam, 1906. Siam's

149: Reinach--186 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Kha

result. But the Kha ideal is to possess a battery of gongs of different 533
sizes and timbres, and with these they manage to obtain quite perfect chords.

Industry. Withdrawn in their mountains where they live in small 433
isolated groups, the Khas use their leisure time to make many basket-work and hollow-ware products which have a mark of elegance and a great deal of delicacy. Other tribes make paper from wood pulp, weave mats from rattan and bamboo bark, etc. They use all these products in trade.

Finally, certain Khas exploit deposits of iron ore and transform 316
it into farming implements, while others wash gold-bearing sands.

In general, although the Khas are industrious they work only to 461
procure what is strictly indispensable. They cannot resign themselves to staying away from home for any length of time and dread any stay in the low country, which they say is unhealthy for them. Since they [313] have particular aptitudes for woodcutting, however, they have been successfully employed to cut teak wood in the forests on the right bank of the Mekong which are situated in Siamese territory. But it must be admitted that there they are in mountainous country and in the midst of forests, as in their native region.

The Khas of southern Laos. In southern Laos Khas are found who differ very little from those of Upper Laos. We shall not concern ourselves with them, but shall deal briefly with the many more numerous ones who have particular mores and customs.

The Djarais, the Rades, the Bahnars, the Cedangs, the Peunongs, [619]
the Rognaos (1), etc. are the principal types of these Kha tribes,

(1) See Appendix XVIII.

which for the most part are still independent.

These people are proud, large and muscular, supple, trained in 181
all forms of bodily exercise, bold, warlike and brave.

These qualities, moreover, have been developed by their pe- 567
culiar way of [257] [Illustration] [258] [Blank page] [259] life.
Accustomed to hunting slaves from which they extracted large profits 721
by selling them on the banks of the Mekong, these Khas have had to resort to continual expeditions in order to obtain their human game.

For many long years, in fact, they could acquire [Illustration 567
here] the gongs, buffalo, metals, textiles, etc. which they needed only by selling captives, generally Annamites, whom they went and

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

000 the point of respecting in a light-hearted way all the superstitions of East and West combined; sometimes perplexed when they were in conflict, as happens, for example, with Friday the 13th; since in Indo-China all odd days are fairly lucky, and Friday is the luckiest day of the week. He carried a Laotian sorcerer's stick, engraved with signs and symbols enabling him to cast a rapid horoscope, but was only affected by verdicts in support of decisions he had already taken. Dupont was in a great hurry to get back to Luang Prabang, because his wife was pregnant and he was afraid that she would hurt herself on her bicycle, although he had dismantled it and had
494 hidden some essential parts. We were supposed to stay in the convoy until the Xien Khouang embranchment was reached, about a hundred miles from Luang Prabang, but Dupont said that if I had no objection we would clear off on our own at the first possible opportunity. He then made some fatalistic remarks about death and predestination.

494 At the convoy assembly-point, we found a great show of discip-
722 line. Tight-lipped officers were walking up and down examining tyres and checking guns and ammunition. Drivers were assembled and lectured on convoy discipline. A soldier's Laotian wife, being observed to be pregnant, was refused permission to travel. The infantry escort was carried in five or six lorries and as many others were loaded with supplies. A dozen jeeps were placed in the middle of the convoy, which was guarded at each end by an armoured car. Dupont was turned back when he tried to bluff his way to the head of the column behind the leading armoured car, from which position he had hoped to be able to sneak away at an early opportunity

527 Although by the time we got under way it was shortly before dawn, all Vientiane was still awake. Grinding our way through the streets we passed a *boun* in full swing with its temple-dancers still trapesing round their stage, and the magnified sobbings of a crooner not quite drowned in the roar of thirty exhausts. The streets were full of torch-carrying crowds.

in the course of which Setthathirath, faithful to his tactics, suc- 643*
ceeded in escaping once again. Since the rainy season was ap- 648*
proaching and the Burmese were without provisions, they had to go 726
back towards Vientiane where they expected to be able to spend 175*
the winter. But they were so harrassed all along the road by the detachments which Setthathirath sent out on their heels that they regained Burma in all haste with their prisoners (August 1565).

"In sum Bureng-Naung's efforts, in spite of splendid victories, remained without /88/ any final result. There were those who /723/ criticized the king of Lan-Xang for his way of waging war, but the latter knew the defensive resources which his vast country offered, covered as it was with forests and very sparsely cultivated. By constant elusion and by harrying the enemy when they advanced too far he did what very great captains have done under similar circumstances, and it would have been a great imprudence on his part to risk the salvation of the Thai race in formal battles" (1).

1. Cf. Lefevre-Pontalis, op. cit. /"La lutte des Thais contre les Birmans au seizieme siecle." Revue indochinoise, 1914, Vol. XXII, Nos. 7-8./

Campaign of 1568-1569. The king of Burma thought that if he turned his arms against Ayuthya once more he would be more successful (2). The young Siamese prince Phra-Naret sent word to

2. The former king of Ayuthya, taken prisoner by Bureng-Naung, had entered a monastery in Ava and had played his /557/ role so well that he had been allowed to go on a pilgrimage to Ayuthya. He at once threw off his frock and actively seconded his son in preparing their resistance.

Setthathirath, who hastily sent him reinforcements (1568), but the Laotians fell into an ambush prepared with the assistance of a Siamese turncoat named Oya-Ram and had to return home with all speed. The Siamese had to give up their anticipated revenge, but fortunately for them the /89/ Burmese army was anxious to deal with Setthathirath and did not linger in the region of Ayuthya, but moved towards the Mekong and Vientiane by forced marches.

Second Burmese invasion (1569-1570). The Laotian army was waiting for it at the river crossing and tried in vain to prevent it

daughter, Princess Nang Yot Keo. At an indeterminate date which must come between 1340 and 1350, he was given the command of an army destined to reconquer the kingdom of his fathers. According to the Laotian chronicle, the victorious advance of this army enabled Fa Ngoum to declare himself king of Lan Xan. He immediately demanded the submission of all the Thai princes of Mekong. The center of resistance to Fa Ngoum was Phai Nam (spiny bamboos) because of the impenetrable vegetable belt which protected it like veritable ramparts. Fa Ngoum seized it by means of the classical trick of ornamenting missiles with gold and silver, then pretending to retreat and then pouncing on the enemy at the moment when they had scattered to gather the precious metal. In memory of this episode, the town was baptized Vieng Kham which means "circled with gold" and which later became Vientiane, "circled with sandalwood." Fa Ngoum organized his kingdom with force and reigned as a despot. Complaints were made and the king of Cambodia advised him to be moderate. Fa Ngoum then requested that a mission be sent him from Cambodia consisting of religious and lettered men, and of artisans. This mission introduced the orthodox books of Buddhism and a statue of the Buddha (Prabang) which had been presented in the eleventh century to the Khmer sovereign by the king of Ceylon. Prabang thus became the safeguard of the kingdom.

Up until recent years this tradition led one to believe that the introduction of Buddhism into Laos dated from Fa Ngoum. The discovery of a certain number of Buddhist sculptures of Khmer manufacture of the twelfth century A.D., has destroyed this theory (see below: Introduction of Buddhism to Laos).

After a series of wars, Fa Ngoum died in 1373 at the age of fifty-eight. His successor Sam Sen Thai reigned from 1373 to 1416. He kept [16] peace in his kingdom and passed on to his successor a prosperous kingdom, well established and living in peace, and at the same time dreaded by its neighbors.

The fifteenth century saw a succession of sovereigns about whom history has nothing in particular to tell. Let us mention, however, a war with the emperor of Annam. The first part of the sixteenth century passes under the reign of King Phothisarath (1506-1547), a pious Buddhist. One of his most famous actions is the edict against the cult of Phis. Setthathirath came into power in 1548 after a war with the Burmese. His death was followed by a troubled period. The beginning of the seventeenth century is particularly obscure, but in 1637 a great king called Souligna Vongsa (1637-1694) ascended

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

000 tasted of earth and bitter herbs when a commotion aroused us. Hurrying from the restaurant we saw Dupont's dog busy with carrion in a nearby field, surrounded by an excited huddle of vultures for whose benefit it had been exposed there. Dupont's cries of horror were interrupted by the whistle of the convoy-commander, who this time signalled for all officers to gather round
494 him. He told them that seventy Issaraks[1] were reported to be in
669 ambush, awaiting us at Kilometre 115 – about twenty miles further
725 on. They were turned out in new American uniforms, he said, and were well armed. At Kilometre 115 a cross-country track leading from Siam into Viet-Nam crossed our route. It occurred to both Dupont and myself that if this report was several hours old, it was not likely that the Issarak would be in the place where they were first seen. However, the official view taken was that they would not have moved more than five kilometres down the road in our direction, because orders were given for the infantry escort to dismount from their lorries at Kilometre 110 and to precede the convoy on foot for the next five kilometres. We noticed, too, that the officer assumed that the Issarak, if they had moved at all, would have inevitably marched towards us, and not in the other direction, because, once Kilometre 115 had been reached, the danger would be officially declared at an end, and the infantry ordered back into their lorries.

137 We now entered a country of low, bare hills; a whitish landscape, rarely animated by wandering pink-skinned buffaloes. In the hollows there were islands of splendid vegetation – flamboyant trees, arranged as if by design, with giant ferns and feathery bamboos. Peacocks gleamed in abandoned paddy fields, and storks, flapping away at our approach, trailed their legs in pools of yellow marsh-water. The vegetation was sensitive to quite small variations in altitude. The valley-bottoms were choked with bamboo thickets, and slender, segmented canes, wreathed in blue convolvulus, curved over our path like coachmen's whips, flicking us as we passed beneath. At this level the ditches were full of dead butterflies

[1] [i.e., "free men" of Laos and Cambodia. -- Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

A DRAGON APPARENT

000 Up till the last fraction of a second before a thousand graceful stems screened it from our view it was still upright and quite level. The soldiers in it had hardly risen from their seats and raised their arms not so much in alarm, it seemed, as to wave farewell.

Soon after, the infantry climbed down from the lorries and began their march in single file along the sides of the road in front. This manœuvre seemed to me not only useless but dangerous, since nothing could have been easier for ambushers than to let the soldiers go by and then destroy the defenceless vehicles. In the spirit of one who whistles in the dark to keep his courage up, the armoured car ahead occasionally opened up with its machine-guns and 2-cm. cannon, provoking, to the great discomfort of the following cars, one small forest fire. We never heard that the enemy
494 was other than imaginary. At five in the afternoon we crawled into the village of Vang Vieng, having done about twenty miles since mid-day.

133 Vang Vieng was just such another village as the one where we had had our mid-day Chinese soup, but it was set in the most staggering surroundings. Overhanging it was a range of mountains which were not very high, since the peaks only reached 8000 feet, but which did not look like any mountains I had ever seen before. There was no visual preparation by a gently rising foreground of foothills. These were stupendous walls of rock rising 4000, 5000 and 6000 feet sheer out of an absolutely flat plain. We were overhung, as it were, by a huge scrabbling in the sky, which at its base had been erased by mists. Dupont said that we would pass over these mountains that night.

494 It was at Vang Vieng that Dupont had planned to slip away. His
● 725 resolution was only slightly shaken when it was announced that the
6069 whole convoy would stay in the village overnight, owing to the presence of a small force of Viet-Minh, which the infantry would have to clear out, in a village fifteen kilometres further along the

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

road; but as all the men were thoroughly tired this operation would be postponed till early next morning. Dupont was determined not to stay in Vang Vieng, but even he seemed to think twice about deliberately disobeying the convoy-commander's orders, and when he finally did so it was done in gentle stages, rather than in one flagrant act of insubordination. The excuse given for this phobia about Vang Vieng was that all the sleeping space would be taken up and we should find nowhere to stretch out comfortably.

We were still filthy from our travels; sweat-soaked and covered in bright yellow dust, through which the perspiration trickled down regular courses. As part of his campaign Dupont suggested that we should have a meal first and after that get permission from the convoy-commander to go for a bathe in a river, twelve kilometres down the road, where we should still be three kilometres short of the village with the Viet-Minh. Dupont described this river as if it had magical curative properties. It came out of a cave not far away, he said, and the water was icy cold. This course being agreed upon, we went to the usual Chinese eating-house run by one Sour Hak. Taken by surprise by our invasion, Sour Hak found himself short of food. However, as these villages are completely cut off during the six months' rainy season, there are always standbys for emergency. Reaching to the top of the cupboard he found a hunk of venison *boucané*, dusted it off and set it before us. This meat, prepared in a manner similar to that employed by the Argentine gauchos, was black, fine grained in texture as cheese, odourless and tasted slightly of liquorice. According to the usages of life in the bush, strips were cut off it with one's clasp knife. Fortunately, Sour Hak was found, quite mysteriously, to have a stock of first-rate Burgundy; doubtlessly bought in the belief that it was Algerian. Dupont's sudden optimism was only lowered by Sour Hak's refusal at any price to sell a green parakeet, which had flown in one day and attached itself to the house. Since tasting civilization nothing could persuade this bird to use its wings again, although like a true Laotian it enjoyed being taken for a ride on a bicycle. Dupont's

of Ayuthya. /45/ And even before it disappeared it had been 175*
supplanted by Vientiane, which was built some ten kilometers 633
upstream, unless the two cities formed a single immense one or 648*
unless the first one moved without changing its name at first 631

Capture of Phaï-Nam (Vientiane) Whatever the case may be, 643*
the center of resistance against Fa-Ngoun was then called "Phaï- 721
Nam" (thorny bamboos) because of the impenetrable vegetable 175*
belt which defended it like veritable ramparts. It resisted re- 725
peated assaults and Fa-Ngoun was able to get the better of it only 633
by using a ruse. He had gold and silver projectiles shot at the 631
bamboo enclosure and then simulated a retreat. The besieged
army, seeing the royal troops fall back, thought that their delivery
was at hand and came out to pick up the precious projectiles. Then
the assailants suddenly returned to the charge and entered the city
without difficulty (1). Phaya-Phao had to make his submission.

1. These tactics are celebrated in several Thaï legends to explain the capture of a stronghold.

He received his pardon and was kept on as governor of the principality.

In memory of this episode, the city was baptized /46/ "Vien-Kham" which signifies "gold enclosure." This was later corrupted to "Vientiane" (sandalwood enclosure) (1)

1. There is permanent confusion in the Laotian chronicles between the Vien-Kham on the banks of the Mékong and the Vien-Kham in Tran-Ninh.

Formation of the kingdom of Lan-Xang (1353). Fa-Ngoun, 643*
henceforth the uncontested master of a vast kingdom, gave it a 175*
strong organization and ruled over it as a despot. 642

He summoned an Oupahat or second king to him to assist him
in his political duties and instituted a Council of ministers chosen /646/
from the princes of royal blood and arranged in a hierarchy according to their respective ranks and attributions. But he would suffer no infringement on his own authority, neither at court or in the provinces. He took terrible reprisals against the vassals who did not obey his orders blindly, and replaced nearly all of them in succession with mere governors as the fancy took him.

7: Thompson--367-368 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175, 726, 728

"The fuse which set off the accumulating grievances against Siam was the suicide of the French consul at Luang-Prabang, worn out by his struggles with the Siamese. His death shocked the Chamber of Deputies into voting unanimously for action, which had also the Commercial Syndicate's backing and Pavie's documentation on which to act. The military campaign which followed in 1893 drove all the Siamese from the east bank of the Mekong, from Cambodia to Khemmaret. These operations against Siam centred around three points, but the most important was the naval demonstration at Pak Nam. A treaty was subsequently concluded on the basis of the ultimatum which called [368] for evacuation of the Mekong's left bank and indemnity for Siamese aggression. Siam found to her sorrow that too much faith had been placed in English backing and France's indifference and preoccupation with Tonkin. If in carrying out the evacuation clause Siam forced wholesale deportations of the Laotians to her territory it was the final manifestation of her drang nach Osten."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

the greatest artistic interest. I asked the headman if it would be 796
possible to take any, as the bonze was crumpling and smashing them 782
vigorously with his broom. But the chief shook his head regretfully. 532
Buddhism had degenerated in these remote provinces and was 285
swamped with re-emergent spirit cults. These objects had been dedicated to the *phi*[*] and would have to be burnt in a ritual fire. The *phi* would also receive the burnt essence, I noticed, of a large, very obscene, and no doubt magically valuable picture.

At about this time when the bonze was treading underfoot the 669
village's artistic output of several months, a party of Issarak or Viet- 726
Minh, timing their action to coincide with the convoy's arrival at 731
Moung Kassy, had set fire to the forest just south of the post. A steady breeze was blowing from that quarter, and the fire, started over a width of about a mile and fanning out as it advanced, moved slowly towards the fort.

Coming up over the river bank it took us some time to realize what was happening. There was a haze; but then there was always a haze in Laos, although by this time of day it should have been clearing and not thickening. And then we heard the crackling, punctuated with the sharp pops, which might have been distant rifle fire, but which were the explosions of thick stems of bamboo. Looking up then we saw the curtain of smoke hanging over Muong Kassy, white at the top, and black at its base and streaked occasionally by lance-points of flame, which were still two miles away.

We ran to where the car was parked, started it and tried to drive down the road towards the fire. Dupont was as pleased with it as July 14th. In about fifty yards we got tangled up with the convoy and had to leave the car on the side of the road and run on. The fire was advancing on a ragged front and was as irresistible as a volcano. Black smoke was being blown before it so that at first the flames were out of sight; but when they came through they were two hundred feet high – twice the height of the tallest tree. It went forward in zigzagging rushes; eating its way quickly through the bamboo

*[i.e., spirits. — Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

669 thickets, which went up like oil wells. A lane of fire had broken
726 right out of the general advance and its spear-point was wandering
731 up over the hill-side, already level with the fort. Large clumps of green forest were being left behind or encircled and then consumed at leisure as the fire went through the bamboo. It caught at the lianas, too, and went up a tree from top to bottom in shrivelling streamers – just like Christmas decorations catching fire. The noise of the exploding bamboos was becoming deafening and the sky was covered in a cloud through which black ash streamed up like flotsam carried on flood-waters. I noticed, though, that only the tops of some of the trees had caught on the other side of the road.

Orders were given to prepare to evacuate the fort. There was a great deal of ammunition and thousands of gallons of petrol, stored in cans, and the soldiers were swarming like ants stacking it in the road and loading the lorries. Confusion developed and matured into chaos, largely caused by the arrival of half the convoy, which blocked the road and prevented the lorries being driven out of the fort. Before an evacuation could be made the convoy had to be moved on through the village, but half the drivers couldn't be found. They had wandered off to look at the fire and taken their starting keys with them.

In the meanwhile the Laotians and Chinese rushing out of their houses with their beds and bedding, and piling their stocks of groceries between the wheels of the cars had made rapid movement impossible, even when the drivers could be rounded up. One family was actually at work taking their house down.

And then as an hour passed in struggling tumult with the convoy at last bludgeoned on through the village and safely parked on the other side, and hundreds of crates and cans loaded on to the lorries, the wind veered and the main front of the fire went by, about half a mile away. A few offshoots coming in our direction burned feebly for a while among the bamboos, and it was all over.

which we have now reached they were in full struggle 648*
against the Chams. The diversion of the king of 175*
Sukhothaï was therefore inopportune and vexing, and so 643*
King Triet-Hoàng was preparing to cross the Cordillera
and have done with this new enemy when death overtook
him and prevented him from carrying out his plan. "As
for the king of Sukhothaï, we do not know the reason why
he stopped his attacks." Cf. G. Maspero, op. cit. /Un
empire colonial français: l'Indochine/, p. 110.

Souvanna-Kham-Phong was therefore a vassal of Siam when, about 1320-1330, he drove his son Thao-Phi-Fa out of his States for having seduced one of his concubines, Nang-Ok-Khong.

FA-NGOUN (1316-1374), KING 1353-1373.

The exile, who was taken under escort on a raft as far as 643*
Khône, took refuge with the king of Cambodia who gave him a 648*
warm welcome. He brought with him his eldest son, Fa-Ngoun, 175*
who was brought up at the court of Angkor /42/ and was given
the Kmer princess Nang-Yot-Kèo in marriage when he reached
his majority.

The king Paramathakhemaraja continued to endure the merciless struggle which the Thaïs of the Ménam had started against his predecessors more than a century before. After they were forced to evacuate the basin of the Ménam, and as a con- 643*
sequence all of western Laos, the Kmer kings were to find them- 175*
selves directly threatened in their capital by the founding of 726
Ayuthya not far from Angkor. Paramathakhemaraja therefore 648*
gave Fa-Ngoun and his father an army of ten thousand warriors to 721
reconquer the region of Muong-Swa, hoping thereby to restore his influence there and to rely on it in the future in order to put a halt to the Siamese in Ayuthya.

Expedition of the "ten thousand." Phi-Fa and Fa-Ngoun set forth. They overthrew the troops of the prince of Bassac who tried to bar their way and put to flight the prince of "Nam-Boun" (doubtless Cammon-Kamkeut), who was terrified at the mere rumor of their exploits, without striking a single blow. When they reached Paksane they encountered Thao-Thiem-Kham-Gno, the heir apparent of Xieng-Khouang. The latter had been condemned to death by his father because he too had /43/ seduced

643* one of his father's wives. He was now wandering about haphazardly
175* and implored their protection.
726
648* Capture of Xieng-Khouang. Fearful lest there should be an alliance
721 between Souvanna-Kham-Phong and the king of Tran-Ninh (whose reinforcements might take them from the rear in their direct march on Muong-Swa), they agreed to support the rebel. They went up the Nam-Nhiep and lay siege to Xieng-Khouang which they took by assault and whose king was put to death and replaced by Kham-Gno who acknowledged himself their vassal.

Capture of Xieng-Thong (Luang-Prabang). Reinforced by a Phoueun contingent, they then moved forward towards Xieng-Dong-Xieng-Thong. Their troops were divided into two armies, and one of these, under the command of Fa-Ngoun, entered the valley of the Nam-Khane. The other, under Phi-Fa, went down the Nam-Suong,
721 but the latter was stricken with cholera and died on the march at Hat-
643* Thoi. When he reached Dane-Khoua, Fa-Ngoun demanded that his
726 grandfather, Kham-Phong, abdicate in his favor. The latter was
175* highly indignant and moved to attack his grandson, whom he en-
648* countered at Pak-Ming. His troops were defeated and had to retreat
/762/ in disorder, /44/ his capital was captured and the old sovereign, "mad with shame and grief," hanged himself in his palace at Xieng-Thong.
726 At the age of thirty-seven Fa-Ngoun proclaimed himself king of
643* "Lan-Xang" and at once demanded submission of all the Thaï princes
175* of the Mékong. Without awaiting their "reactions" he set out to make
631 his authority accepted, and in a sort of triumphal march received the submission of all the chieftains of the northern muongs as far as the limits of the kingdoms of Xieng-Maï (Lan-Na) and Xieng-Houng (Sip-Song-Panas). He met with greater resistance in the south and had to enter into a struggle to the death against Phaya-Phao, prince of Vientiane, who had taken the leadership of the opposition.
175* The discovery by Georges Maspero in 1902, in the vicinity of the
633 present-day administrative capital of French Laos, of steles of Kmer
648* origin amidst the ruins of twenty-eight pagodas, makes it possible to
631 suppose that the first capital of the land was Say-Fong, that "dead city" stifled by the forest. In the time of its splendor it was the advanced citadel of Cambodian hegemony in Thaï territory, but its importance declined quite rapidly, doubtless with the first blows struck against the suzerainty of Angkor by the kings of Sukhothaï and

to send him a young white elephant captured by the Khas, after 721
having promised explicitly to deliver it to him through the inter- 643*
mediary of Boutevong, the king of Tran-Ninh (1). But in reality 175*

1. According to a popular tale, the history of this offering was a complete invention by Boutevong and the king of Annam had this prince's head cut off as a punishment for his lie. The son and successor of Boutevong is then supposed to have perfidiously told the Oupahat Kone-Kèo that Lê-Thanh-Tôn only wanted the claws and a few hairs from the sacred animal. Kone-Kèo sent these relics in a golden coffer, but the king of the Phoueuns replaced the claws and hairs with elephant excrement. The king of Annam was convinced that the king of Lan-Xang wished to do him a mortal wrong and sent "six immense armies" against Luang-Prabang.

the king of Annam had been making sizeable preparations for a whole year and had made sure that Tiakaphat's vassals who governed the frontier provinces would either cooperate or remain benevolent neutrals.

/66/ Siege and capture of the capital (1479). In 1479 Lê- 726
Thanh-Tôn placed his armies under General Phoua-Khouang-Soun, 643*
who installed himself firmly in Xieng-Khouang in order to cut off 175*
all aid to Lan-Xang. Then he had his troops execute a convergent march. They crossed the various passes of the Annamitic Chain and advanced in compact masses towards Muong-Swa, which they besieged.

The Oupahat Kone-Kèo took command of the Laotian troops without delay, assisted by the generals Mun-Luong, Mun-Bouone and Mun-La. He placed a strong cover over the approaches to the capital but could not prevent the Annamite soldiers from penetrating it. Then the struggle became desperate, with the warriors of Lan-Xang defending their city house by house while "the priests prayed in the temples and the women wept in the streets" (1). Kone-Kèo

1. Ibid. (legend).

and his lieutenants were killed near the royal palace of Xieng-Thong. Their death was the signal of the rout and the old king Tiakaphat fled in haste with his family, followed by the remains

726 of his army, the survivors of which crossed the river by swimming.
643*
175*

/67/ The "restoration." -- Victory of Pak Phoun. He halted at Xieng-Khane (1). In the general confusion his second son Thène-

1. To the south of Luang-Prabang, on the right bank of the Mekong, today in Siamese territory.

Kham, a worthy descendant of Fa-Ngoun, did not lose his head. He hastily regrouped the fugitives, armed the inhabitants of the region, reformed a nearly homogeneous army as well as could be expected and, since he knew that the Annamites had been greatly weakened by a dearly bought victory, set out boldly to meet them. The Laotians fought with the strength of despair and defeated the invaders at Pak-Phoun. Exploiting this success, Thène-Kham went in hot pursuit and forced them to recross the Mékong in full disorder at the level of Pak-Nane. Lan-Xang was saved. The generalissimo Phoua-Khouang-Soun had to evacuate Tran-Ninh and died in Annamite territory--it is said that he was struck by lightning in the course of a violent storm.

But these grave events had broken the physical resistance of King Tiakaphat, who died at Xieng-Khane at the age of sixty-five, "the third day of the crescent moon of the fifth month" of year 841 (1479 A. D.) (2), leaving fourteen /68/ legitimate children of which eight

/805/ 2. The Laotian year is lunar, beginning towards the middle of April. Every three years an extra month is inserted which doubles the eighth month. The numbering of the years is based on a great cycle of sixty years and on two others of ten and eight years. The Laotian era began in 638 A. D. In 1900 it entered the second year of its 22nd cycle and it was then year 1262 (Pi-Xuet-Tho-Sok). Year 841 in which King Tiakaphat died therefore corresponds to 638 + 841 = 1479 of the Christian era.

were sons and six daughters.

THÈNE-KHAM (SOUVANNA-BAN-LANG) (1445), KING 1479-1486.

727 Thène-Kham had actually held the power ever since the death
643* of his elder brother, and the situation was therefore unchanged when
175* he mounted the throne in 1479.

643* act during the opportunity presented by the disorders in Xieng-Mai,
648* which he skilfully aggravated, and decided to /78/ strike his first
175* blow against Ayuthya which he rightly considered to be the least resistant of the two kingdoms. In 1555 he rapidly descended the course of the Menam, overthrew the Siamese in an irresistible march, seized Ayuthya and returned to Burma triumphant, followed by an immense horde of captives.

Setthathirath, whose relations with Ayuthya had remained strained, made the mistake of lying quiet. He was soon able to measure all the consequences of his inaction. As soon as he returned to his capital (Ava), the Burmese king probed the sore spot of Xieng-Mai's dynastic intrigues and placed a "national" pretender, Mekou, on the throne. Setthathirath could not accept this nomination, and despite the advice of his followers who dreaded the outcome of the affair he set out in 1558 at the head of his troops to punish the usurper.

Expedition of Xieng-Khong (1558-1559).

● 726 Battle was joined along the bank of the Mekong near Hat-Soi,
643* where the Laotians defeated Mekou's soldiers and forced them to fall
648* back on their capital in disorder. But before Setthathirath had time
175* to catch up with them, Bureng-Naung entered Xieng-Mai with his Burmese. The latter sent a messenger to the king of /79/ Lan-Xang, who had halted at Xieng-Khong (1), informing him that Lan-Na was

1. On the right bank of the Mekong, opposite Houeisai.

a dependency of the Burmese State and that he proposed to entrust its government to one of his own sons. Setthathirath replied that Xieng-Mai was part of the heritage of his father Phothisarath and that he himself had been crowned in one of the pagodas of the capital. To his great surprise, Bureng-Naung seemed to give in to his reasons and invited him to come and resume possession of the kingdom which belonged to him. Scenting a trap prepared to capture his person, and not feeling sufficiently strong to battle the Burmese conqueror successfully, Setthathirath hastily embarked on the Mekong and regained Luang-Prabang (1559).

Bureng-Naung then had King Mekou crowned a second time in the capacity of vassal prince, surrounded him with advisors of his choosing and left Xieng-Mai after he had set up guard posts on the frontiers of Lan-Xang and Ayuthya.

When he returned to his States, Setthathirath endeavored to 726
win over permanently to his cause the chieftains of Lakhone, 643*
Xieng-Khong, Xieng-Hai, /80/ Muong-Pray and Muong-Nan who 648*
had not supported Bureng-Naung, and when he was sure of their 175*
support he advanced as far as Xieng-Sen. But there he soon learned
that the governor of Xieng-Hai had been taken prisoner by the
Burmese and that his sister Nang-Kalay had been treacherously ab-
ducted. In spite of his anger, he judged it prudent to withdraw in
the company of his allies, who left their governments in the hands
of Bureng-Naung's lieutenants.

Treaty of alliance with Ayuthya (1560). In order to oppose the 728
common danger, he took the first steps towards reconciliation with 643*
the king of Ayuthya, to whom he proposed a treaty of alliance. 648*
The Siamese, who were rebuilding the ruins of their capital with 175*
courage but not without disquietude, joyfully accepted and their
prince gave one of his daughters to Setthathirath. A frontier
pyramid was built on the watershed between the basin of the Mekong
and that of the river of Nan which flows down to the Menam. Sol-
emnly surrounded by their courts, the two kings swore reciprocal
friendship and assistance: "May the ties that bind us be prolonged
from father to son down to our grandchildren and great-grandchil-
dren; may quarrels be unknown between us and peace continue to
reign /An unpaged photograph is inserted between pp. 80 and 81:
"The That-Luong at Vientiane."--Translator/ /81/ until the day
when the sun and the moon fall to the surface of the earth" (1).

1. Cf. Lefevre-Pontalis, La lutte des Thaïs contre les
Birmans au seizieme siecle.

Vientiane, capital of Lan-Xang (1563). In order to avoid any 643*
surprise by the common enemy as well as to maintain the connec- 648*
tion with Ayuthya, Setthathirath left Luang-Prabang permanently 175*
and transferred the capital of Lan-Xang to Vientiane.
He was the true founder of this city which owes to him the 633
splendor with which it shone during all of the seventeenth century 643*
and part of the eighteenth. He first surrounded it with solid bas- 175*
tion fortifications (2), then in the center near the river built the 172

2. From the vestiges which still remained around 1900 be- /712/
fore the canal was dug and the circular boulevard laid out,

The roof, the greater part of which still existed when Pavie 175*
went to Vientiane, has since collapsed and the two colossal statues 172
of Buddha which sit on the abandoned altar remain exposed to the 346
elements. Even as it is this grandiose ruin is wonderfully allied to 532
the natural vegetation which holds it in its grasp and one cannot, without some emotion, evoke before it the past splendor of the kingdom of Lan-Xang.

But the capital accomplishment of Setthitharath is the That-Luong, located about two kilometers away from the city. It is /341/
doubtless also the masterpiece of this Laotian architecture which has no powers of endurance but which cannot be denied grace and elegance. Miraculously spared by the Siamese at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the That-Luong was overthrown in 1873 by the Yunnanese pirates and partly restored, in rather a clumsy manner, in 1897-1898.

This pyramidal edifice, called the "plume of the world" by its founder, was the "reliquary of the kingdom" and is still a highly frequented center of pilgrimage. A stele commemorating its erection bears /85/ the date 1566, and according to legend the original 'that' was built about the eleventh century on one of Buddha's hairs.

The first enclosure, which has today crumbled away, is almost confused with the large group of ruined temples which surrounds it. It was formed by an open cloister which was colored with frescoes and in which the faithful and the priests assembled. The second enclosure is formed by a ledge along which runs a garland of bulging ornaments. "One would be tempted to call them the petals of a gigantic lotus bloom on the point of opening. Heavy pedestals covered with inscriptions support thirty-four slender pinnacles. Leaning on these pedestals as on buttresses, the mass on which the pyramid is set begins to deploy its curves and the pyramid itself springs from a sheaf of broad leaves, like the stem of a plant. . . . It once sparkled with gold applied on a lead base, shreds of which can still be seen" (1).

1. De Carne, ibid. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois. Paris, 1872./, quoted by Aymonier, Voyage dans le Laos. See below, Laotian Architecture, p. 124.

First Burmese invasion (1563-1565). Solidly entrenched in his 643*
new capital, Setthathirath waited to see what the turn of events 648*
would be. /86/ He did not have long to wait, for Bureng-Naung 726
175*

643* could not tolerate the Thai alliance without giving up the prestige of
648* his victories of 1555. By 1563 he had judged that the rapid recovery of
726 the Siamese was a threat to his power, and when the rains ceased in
175* November he assembled his army, penetrated into Xieng-Mai territory, forced the king of Ayuthya to abdicate, led him away in captivity and sent his lieutenants against Lan-Xang. One of these was the Siamese prince Sang-Kao, a traitor to his country. Setthathirath put two armies into the field which took the offensive and at first gained several victories -- one at Pak-Houi where Sang-Kao was crushed and one at Muong-Kem, but they then had to fall back before the Burmese horde which swept up to the walls of Vientiane. The Burmese generals deliberated too long over the best means of capturing the city, and when they did decide to act it was too late, for Settathirath had disappeared. The capital was seized and the Oupahat (1)

1. Neither the Annals of Lan-Xang nor those of Xieng-Mai enable us to identify the Oupahat or second king who was left at Vientiane by Setthathirath. This gap is all the more surprising in that this first dignitary of the court was to reign ten years later. The Laotian chronicles indicate only that he was Setthathirath's brother-in-law, and continue to designate him by his title of Oupahat even during the period of his reign. His merit as a sovereign was, moreover, somewhat questionable, as may be seen in what follows, and it may be that the first writers of the Annals kept silent intentionally about a prince who was imposed by Burma and who was regarded by many as a usurper. All kinds of suppositions are possible. Perhaps he was one of the two younger brothers of Setthathirath who tried to accomplish the schism of 1547 and who are not once mentioned in the Annals after the unity of the kingdom was restored in 1548.

was captured together with three of the /87/ king's wives, (1) their

1. Setthathirath had allied himself by marriage with most
/595/ of the neighboring kings -- Xieng-Mai, Annam, Ayuthya. He had also married daughters of several vassals.

daughters and some twenty concubines, but after a week's rest the Burmese had to go in pursuit of the Laotian army. They caught up with it after two day's march and defeated it after a bloody combat

in the course of which Setthathirath, faithful to his tactics, suc- 643*
ceeded in escaping once again. Since the rainy season was ap- 648*
proaching and the Burmese were without provisions, they had to go 726
back towards Vientiane where they expected to be able to spend 175*
the winter. But they were so harrassed all along the road by the detachments which Setthathirath sent out on their heels that they regained Burma in all haste with their prisoners (August 1565).

"In sum Bureng-Naung's efforts, in spite of splendid victories, remained without /88/ any final result. There were those who /723/
criticized the king of Lan-Xang for his way of waging war, but the latter knew the defensive resources which his vast country offered, covered as it was with forests and very sparsely cultivated. By constant elusion and by harrying the enemy when they advanced too far he did what very great captains have done under similar circumstances, and it would have been a great imprudence on his part to risk the salvation of the Thai race in formal battles" (1).

1. Cf. Lefevre-Pontalis, op. cit. /"La lutte des Thais contre les Birmans au seizieme siecle." Revue indochinoise, 1914, Vol. XXII, Nos. 7-8./

Campaign of 1568-1569. The king of Burma thought that if he turned his arms against Ayuthya once more he would be more successful (2). The young Siamese prince Phra-Naret sent word to

2. The former king of Ayuthya, taken prisoner by Bureng-Naung, had entered a monastery in Ava and had played his /557/
role so well that he had been allowed to go on a pilgrimage to Ayuthya. He at once threw off his frock and actively seconded his son in preparing their resistance.

Setthathirath, who hastily sent him reinforcements (1568), but the Laotians fell into an ambush prepared with the assistance of a Siamese turncoat named Oya-Ram and had to return home with all speed. The Siamese had to give up their anticipated revenge, but fortunately for them the /89/ Burmese army was anxious to deal with Setthathirath and did not linger in the region of Ayuthya, but moved towards the Mekong and Vientiane by forced marches.

Second Burmese invasion (1569-1570). The Laotian army was waiting for it at the river crossing and tried in vain to prevent it

643* from crossing on a bridge of rafts. They had to fall back on the capi-
648* tal, which Bureng-Naung came in person to besiege. Setthathirath,
726 however, had not waited for his arrival before he escaped yet again,
175* and the Burmese were soon in the grip of famine and disease. It was April (1570) already, and this war without battles was assuming a tragic air at the approach of the rainy season. With rage in his heart, the conqueror of Ava decided to beat a retreat and had to count himself fortunate in being able to hang on to Lan-Na without being otherwise disturbed.

Thus Lan-Xang emerged whole from this terrible crisis, and owed its salvation to its king who had so impressed the Burmese by his tactics that the latter no longer dared show themselves on his frontiers for several years (1).

1. Cf. Lefevre-Pontalis, op. cit. /"La lutte des Thais contre les Birmans au seizieme siecle." Revue indochinoise, 1914, Vol. XXII, Nos. 7-8./

643* /90/ Campaign of Attopeu (1571). For his part, Setthathirath had
648* regained so much confidence that he went off to war in the south of
175* his States without concerning himself further over Bureng-Naung.

Ever since Fa-Ngoun his forefathers had exercised a purely nominal authority over the region of "Ong-Kham" (Attopeu, Saravane and Bassac). The Kha chieftains of these regions, whose humor was infinitely more fierce than that of their counterparts in the north, lived in what was to all practical purposes independence, and at the false news of the death of one of them Setthathirath set out to reconnoiter these remote territories. Instead of a dead man he came up against a living one who put up a determined resistance. Feeling ill, he wished to return to Vientiane, but one day he wandered a little way off from his camp and did not reappear, and disorder spread through his army (1).

1. Cf. ibid. /P. Lefevre-Pontalis, "La lutte des Thais contre les Birmans au seizième siècle." Revue indochinoise, 1914, Vol. XXII, Nos. 7-8./ G. Maspero, in his Indochine /Un empire colonial français: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./ notes (p. 116) that the "petty king" of Vientiane, "Phya Siddha," who was extremely warlike, fell upon Cambodia unexpectedly in 1571. "Paramaraja defeated his land troops which were marching on Angkor and his fleet which was

coming down the great river, and in the following 643*
he repressed with no less vigor a new attempt on the 648*
part of this ambitious prince." We have been un- 175*
able to find any confirmation of this expedition in
the Laotian chronicles.

General Sene-Soulintha took command /91/ of the troops and 643*
brought them back to the capital, where he had difficulty in ex- 669
plaining the king's disappearance. Since the ministers and the 175*
queen, who had just brought a son named Nokeo-Koumane into the
world, affected not to believe him, he had the palace surrounded
and the prime minister Tian-Ta-Simmarath, the governor of
Vientiane, assassinated together with his partisans and proclaimed
himself regent (1).

1. The Annals state that the chief bonzes preached conciliation and succeeded in avoiding the conflict for three months.

SENE-SOULINTHA (1511), REGENT (1571-1575).

Nothing could have been more favorable to the plans of the 643*
king of Burma than the disappearance of Setthathirath, and espe- 648*
cially these court quarrels which he resolved to exploit without de- 175*
lay. To the highly questionable regent he opposed the rights to
the crown of the former Oupahat, whom he had kept at Ava as a
hostage since 1565. But his envoys were ignominiously massacred,
"a fact which shows to what a degree people in Lan-Xang still
thought they could scorn the Burmese provocations." In order to
avenge this outrage Bureng-Naung sent out an expedition which /726/
was weakly /92/ led by contingents from Xieng-Mai and even
from Siam, and which ended in complete failure. Then he multi-
plied his intrigues and worked behind discontented persons who
naively imagined that with their old Oupahat there would no longer
be anything to fear from Burma.

In spite of the opposition which he encountered, the regent held 643*
his power in Vientiane for four years. Sixty-one years old, he was 554
the son of a simple village chieftain whom King Phothisarath had 175*
singled out for his intelligence and bravery. Setthathirath had em-
ployed his skill in Xieng-Mai, where he had proved his military
talent against the Burmese and the pretenders to the throne of Lan-
Na. Promoted to the rank of general and governor of Muong-Sai,

643* he had subsequently taken an active part in all the expeditions. In
554 the present circumstances he therefore seemed to be the man for the
175* job, but his obscure origin constituted an insurmountable obstacle to his recognition as head of the government by the immense majority of the population, who were unswervingly attached to their dynasty.

643* Third Burmese invasion (1574-1575). He tried to break the opposi-
648* tion by a reign of terror and had many rebels pitilessly executed on
175* /93/ his own authority. Then Bureng-Naung, exasperated, went on the march towards the autumn of 1574, and the Burmese army reappeared under the walls of the capital of Lan-Xang for the third time in less than a dozen years.

726 Sene-Soulintha thought that he should adopt the tactics which had
643* succeeded so well for Setthathirath, and tried to draw the enemy into
648* the forest. But the situation was no longer the same as it was in the
175* time when all the Laotians stood behind their legitimate sovereign. He took only a few partisans with him in his flight and Bureng-Naung was careful not to pursue him. The Burmese king entered the stronghold without difficulty, placed his protege on the throne, put a garrison at his disposition, consolidated the ramparts and returned tranquilly to Ava with the young Nokeo-Koumane whom he took along as a hostage. There he soon learned that the regent had fallen into the power of the Oupahat, who was sending him to him with all haste. Bureng-Naung received him with distinction and allowed him to live in complete liberty (1).

1. Cf. Lefevre-Pontalis, op. cit. /"La lutte des Thaïs contre les Birmans au seizième siècle." Revue indochinoise, 1914, Vol. XXII, Nos. 7-8./

MAHA-OUPAHAT, KING 1575-1579.

648* Lan-Xang was finally subject to the law of the /94/ Burmese con-
175* queror (1). After the Shan States, after Lan-Na and Ayutha, it
643*
/651/

1. The tribute of vassaldom was ten elephants and twelve kilograms of gold each year. (Ibid.)

succumbed in its turn because it had not been able to avoid dynastic dissensions. Nevertheless, this brilliant period of Burmese hegemony in the Indo-Chinese peninsula scarcely extended beyond the end of the sixteenth century. Bureng-Naung was to die in 1581 after a most

648* Destruction of Ayuthya (1767). "The uncapturable" and splended
175* capital, the residence of thirty-four successive kings, was taken on /153/ April 7, 1767, then burnt and completely destroyed. The old Siamese king Ekathat had fled. He was discovered in the forest in his death agony and died as he reached the Burmese camp. Mangra's generals left only a garrison of three thousand men on the spot, and returned home with more than thirty thousand captives, the whole royal family and twelve hundred cannons (1).

1. Among these prisoners was Mgr. Bigot with his Christians.

It seemed that Siam was to be wiped off the map of the earth when Phia-Tak, a resolute man who was governor of Raheng and the son of a Chinese immigrant and his Siamese wife, regrouped the remnants of the scattered forces and withdrew into the mountains of Nakhon Najok where he first put up a fierce resistance to all the Burmese attacks and then succeeded in escaping and going as far as Cambodia to recruit all the men of goodwill who were inspired by his ardor and his faith.

Founding of Bangkok by Phia-Tak (1767). When he had formed a real army by this means, he marched on the ruins of Ayuthya, exterminated the Burmese detachment in a surprise attack, caused the crown to be offered to him, and established his capital at Thanabury, which was on the right bank of the Menam level with Bangkok, around the forts /154/ which had once been built by the Frenchmen of Louis XIV. From that point he harried without respite the enemy troops occupying Siamese territory, and in less than two years succeeded in throwing the Burmese back beyond Xieng-Mai.

175* The Siege of Vientiane by the king of Luang-Prabang and the
648* Burmese Aid (1771). This remarkable revival must have caused the
726 greatest worry to the king of Vientiane, for he, like his father, had certainly cast his lot in with the invaders. In the absence of explicit documentary evidence, proof of this can be found in the appeal which he made to the Burmese when the king of Luang-Prabang attached him suddenly in 1771 and besieged him in his city. His neutrality during the hostilities had unquestionably been more than benevolent, if we consider the haste with which King Mangra immediately sent him reinforcements of five thousand men who sacked Luang-Prabang,

freed Vientiane and cut Intha-Som's troops to pieces in the plain of Muong-Kassy (1). 175* 648* 726

1. See below, "Luang-Prabang -- Inta-Shom," p. 195.

Meanwhile Phia-Tak's successes were becoming more assured. The Burmese counterattacks, always repulsed, were growing progressively weaker, and soon /155/ Siam regained enough confidence in its strength to send men into Cambodia to defend its positions against the progress of the Annamites.

In 1774 Luang-Prabang solicited its protection. The king of Vientiane was henceforth cut off from his allies, and by virtue of this fact was to find himself in an extremely delicate situation. In view of all this, we are at a loss to explain his refusal when Phia-Tak asked for the hand of one of his daughters in marriage.

The Siamese invasion and suzerainty (1778). This, at least, is the Laotian version of the dispute which arose in 1778 and which was to result in war. Certain Siamese documents also claim that Ong-Boun had Phra-Vor, one of his former ministers who had placed himself under the protection of the king of Siam through the intermediary of the governor of Bassac, assassinated in the region of Oubone (1). In either case, it was a grave imprudence and a

1. Cf. His Royal Highness Phanuphantuvongswardja, "Repression de la revolte de Vientiane," an item published in the collection The Vajiravudh Library, Bangkok, 1926.

perilous offense against a leader of armies who had been going from one victory to the next for the last ten years. The result was not long in coming, and Phia-Tak /156/ sent General Chulalok to punish the king of Vientiane.

Two large columns invaded the principality. One of them was twenty thousand men strong and came by land, and the other contained about ten thousand men and came by the Mekong. The latter, which was reinforced by a Cambodian contingent, set out from Kompong-Soai and came up the river in pirogues (1). It

1. Cf. Moura, Histoire du Cambodge.

175* easily drove back the Laotian detachments which were sent to
648* meet it and rejoined the main column in the vicinity of Vientiane
726 itself.

The siege of the city lasted four months, and when the Siamese entered the city Ong-Boun had fled with Chao-In, one of his sons (2).

2. According to Prince Damrong, Ong-Boun hid at Kham-Keut. According to His Royal Highness Phanuphanthavongswardja he took refuge in Annam. /Prince Damrong, Guerres siamo-birmanes, Bangkok, 1920. His Royal Highness Phanuphantuvongswardja, Repression de la revolte de Vientiane, Bangkok, 1926. /

Chulalok took possession of the territory in the name of his sovereign, left a military occupation force, gave its administration to a governor who settled in the royal palace, and then regained
/778/ Thanabury taking Ong-Boun's children with him and carrying off the Prabang and the Prakeo.

642 Interregnum (1778-1782). Four years passed during which
175* Vientiane lived /157/ in direct dependency on the Siamese government. At Bangkok, in the meantime, Phia-Tak was attracting attention by eccentricities which soon alienated the whole court. Finally this rude warrior went insane, disorders broke loose and General Chakkri, who was on duty in Cambodia, hastily returned to bring the rebels back into obedience. He strengthened the throne to his own profit, for he mounted it under the name of Phra-Phuti-Chao-Luong (June 1, 1782) (1).

1. *This king, who is also called Rama the First, was the* founder of the present dynasty. He transferred the seat of his government from the right bank of the Menam to the left bank, where he laid the first foundations of modem Bangkok.

648* Submission of Ong-Boun. Ong-Boun gained knowledge of these
175* events in his exile. He also learned that his sons had been kindly treated by the new sovereign, and he then decided to make his submission. The king of Siam displayed clemency, gave the aged prince permission to end his days in his old capital, and gave the government of the principality to his eldest son Chao-Nan.

115: Le Boulanger--100 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

CHAO-NAN, KING 1782-1792.

The Siamese governor yielded his place to Chao-Nan, who re- 648*
turned to Vientiane bringing back /158/ the Prabang but not the 175*
Prakeo.

There was no incident to mark the first years of his reign (1).

1. According to Pavie's translators, Vientiane was "sacked" 000
by the Annamites in 1790. At this period, however, the Tay-Son and the Nguyen were engaged in a stubborn struggle around Saigon and Qui-Nhon, and it is therefore highly unlikely that they should have had the leisure or the opportunity to open a campaign in Laos. If there was an invasion it was probably only a local scuffle exaggerated out of all proportion by the chroniclers of Luang-Prabang. Furthermore, the latter abstain from any kind of commentary.

but in 1791 Chao-Nan was informed of the dynastic troubles which divided Luang-Prabang, which had been without a king since the death of Tiao-Vong, and could not resist a desire to profit thereby and invade the kingdom.

Expedition of Luang-Prabang (1791). He besieged the capital, 726
took it by assault (2), annexed the Houa-Phan and returned home 175*
643*

2. See below, pp. 198-200.

triumphant escorted by numerous prisoners.

Siam had followed a policy of non-intervention, but scarcely had Chao-Nan regained Vientiane when he was summoned to Bangkok, deposed and replaced by his young brother Chao-In.

CHAO-IN, KING 1792-1805.

Aided by his younger brother, the Oupahat Chao-Anou, /159/ 643*
the new king governed as a loyal and submissive tributary, and 648*
even participated in one of the last Siamese expeditions against the 175*
Burmese in the region of Xieng-Sen. In the course of these operations Chao-Anou, who was in command of the Laotian contingent, distinguished himself by his military capacity and on his return was congratulated by King Phra-Phuthi-Chao-Luong.

643* British fleet was going to threaten Bangkok (2), he suddenly cast
648*
175*

2. In fact, Captain Burney's mission was to obtain, by peaceful means, a trade treaty which would open the port of Bangkok to the British.

off his mask and declared war.

648* Opening of hostilities against Siam (1826). The pretext invoked
175* has remained rather obscure and the Siamese accounts pass over the
721 matter in silence, merely accusing Anou of ingratitude and ambition (3). According to a Laotian version, Anou /167/ had sent a

3. Cf. H.R.H. Phanuphanthuvongswardja, op. cit. /Repression de la revolte de Vientiane, Bangkok, 1926./

number of his subjects to the Bangkok government to work at building roads. The labor draft had been judged too small, his delegate had replied arrogantly to the observations of the Siamese, and when the king of Vientiane was informed of the incident he deliberately opened hostilities.

648 March on Korat and Bangkok. Whatever the case may be, the
175* first operations were unleashed with lightning-like rapidity. Three
726 armies were sent against Bangkok, one leaving from Oubone and led
by Chao-Ngo, the second concentrated at Roi-Et and led by the Oupahat Tissa, and the third under the command of Anou himself, seconded by his sons Chao-Po and Chao-Ngao, and with Khorat as its objective.

These troops encountered but insignificant resistance (1) and

1. Anou is said to have safeguarded his rapid march by telling the population that he was hastening to the aid of the king of Siam, who was being attacked by the British. Cf. ibid.

news of the invasion had scarcely reached Bangkok when Anou, already established in Khorat, sent his advance guard to threaten Sraboury, which was three days' march from the capital.

/168/ Great was the disturbance among the Siamese, who dug trenches in all haste to protect their city. A first contingent was levied, and in a lucky sortie on "the Saturday of the fourth month of the waning moon" it succeeded in throwing the Laotian advance

guard back to Khorat. This success gave king Phra-Chao-Prasat- 648
Thong time to raise and equip a large army which he placed under 175*
the command of General Phia-Bodin. The latter advanced to- 726
wards Khorat with the greater part of his troops and was preparing
to enter into battle when he learned that Anou was beating a re-
treat.

Failure at Samrit. Indeed, Anou had just suffered a failure in the plain of Samrit where one of his detachments escorting captives had been surprised, encircled and destroyed by a small Siamese force. Greatly impressed -- whether rightly or wrongly -- by this setback, he decided to fall back towards the north. Then Phia-Bodin organized the repression of the revolt systematically. While his lieutenants stormed the entrenched camp of Oubone and captured Chao-Ngo, who had been betrayed by his cousin Chao-Houy, in Bassac, he himself placed the various Muongs of the northeast under military occupation and prudently marched in the direction of Vientiane /169/ (sixth month of the waxing moon of the year 1827) (1).

1. Chronique siamoise, op. cit.

Battle of Nong-Boua-Lamphou (1827). Anou fell back almost to the Mekong and covered his capital with all his forces, which he massed on the right bank of the river. The Siamese army caught up with him at Nong-Boua-Lamphou where his troops were soon swamped and could not prevent Phia-Bodin from establishing himself in Thong-Sompoi and preparing to cross the Mekong. There the Laotians fought desperately and prevented the crossing for seven days, but they finally had to yield to the thrust of Phia-Bodin who was receiving new reinforcements constantly. Disaster was the result.

Flight of Anou. Demoralized, Anou waited only until the enemy had crossed the water. He fled with his family and a few followers, delivering up his city to the fury of the Siamese general who had boasted that he would destroy Vientiane from top to bottom in accordance with his king's orders.

He wandered haphazardly for several days in the impenetrable forests which covered /170/ his land. His companions were the first to recover and worked to revive his courage. They assembled

726 a few vestiges of his scattered troops and urged him to ask all his
648* neighbors for aid in order to make a supreme effort.
175* He addressed himself first to the king of Xieng-Mai, who gave him an out-and-out refusal. The king of Luang-Prabang offered him platonic consolation and a few officers whom he was never to receive. The emperor of Annam promised him an army, but without specifying any date or place of concentration. As for the king of Xieng-Khouang he preserved a prudent silence.

643* Chao-Noi, king of Xieng-Khouang. This latter, Chao-Noi, who
175* was to play a major role in the years which followed, has left the memory of a detestable prince. To be sure, he was confronted with a tragic situation and one fraught with difficulties which little by little caught him up in a close net from which he could not extricate himself, but he did nothing to force the hand of destiny and showed himself to be, if not cowardly, at least hesitant and without political sense at a time when events demanded decisiveness and courage.

He had succeeded, in 1791 at the age of twelve, his /171/ father Chao-Xieng who was a brother of Xom-Phou (1). He had soon freed

1. See above, p. 149,

/429/ himself from the guardianship of the counselor Phou-Ho-Xieng-Di whom the dignitaries of his kingdom had given him, and had at once manifested a brutal despotism towards his unhappy subjects whom he overburdened with taxes and vexations (repeated levies of first grade materials for the reconstruction of his palace, unjustified drafts of soldiers and continual abductions of children, for to expensive tastes he joined a passion for women).

/662/ Phou-Ho-Xieng-Di had dared to complain to King Anou, and the latter had summoned Chao-Noi to Vientiane, but there the clever fellow had charmed his suzerain with his talents as a horseman, by training a horse which was reputed to be unmanageable. He had returned to Xieng-Khouang laden with presents and honors and had lost no time in having his childhood mentor assassinated.

648* The results of the Siamese campaign of 1827 were not such as to
175* displease him, for hatred for Vientiane was a tradition in his family. At first he therefore turned a deaf ear to the appeals of the wandering king. In a second message, after Anou had called on him to fulfill his duties as a vassal, he announced that two thousand men were being sent, /172/ although he ordered them not to arrive "until after

727 ruins, for the city had been given over to fire and bloodshed. The
175* Siamese had deported six thousand families to the right bank of the Mekong, had taken all the elephants and removed four hundred warhorses. They had not, however, been able to lay hands on /174/ the royal treasures, which had been carefully hidden. Phia-Bodin had then left for Bangkok leaving matters in the hands of Phia-Papha and driving towards the Menam terrified throngs of men, women and children who were followed by long files of carts filled with plunder and statues taken from the overturned temples (1).

1. Including the Prabang, carried off for the second time.

645 Since Phia-Papha had only a small force at his disposal, he left
175* Vientiane, crossed the river, dispatched a messenger to his master and settled in Thabo to await the turn of events.

721 Battle of Makheng. According to a Siamese version, the Annamite
175* "commissioners" accompanying Anou interceded in his behalf and obtained his pardon. In this version, the king of Vientiane was given permission to settle in the city again, but then had all the Siamese who were there massacred by surprise, immediately sent out his troops in pursuit of Phia-Papha and was again defeated in the vicinity of Makheng (2).

2. Cf. Phanuphanthuvongswardja, op. cit. /Repression de la revolte de Vientiane, Bangkok, 1926./

726 In the meantime the king of Siam, at the news of the rebel's re-
643* turn, had sent out a new army 20,000 men strong which reached
175* /175/ the banks of the river in forced marches. Then Anou realized that struggle was impossible, and so as not to bring down further misfortunes on his subjects he resolved to go to China. He left by the valley of the Nam-Song with only one of his wives and 120 devoted partisans (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique." Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./

648* Chao-Noi delivers up Anou (1831). The Siamese general sus-
175* pected that he had made his way towards Tran-Ninh and sent orders

175* a completely disinterested vanquisher who is supposed to have renounced the throne in favor of his eldest son Sotika-Koumane. Yet this Intha-Prom is nowhere to be found either in the archives of the royal palace or the genealogies of the court families. To be sure, the Annals make no mention of the exact date of Intha-Som's death, but they agree that the crown passed to his successor Sotika-Koumane in 1776 and then to Tiao-Vong in 1781. The reign of Intha-Som is considerably lengthened thereby, but not in any improbable fashion. Whatever the case may be, this prince was still living in 1750 because his son Tiao-Vong was born in the following year.

648* Burmese invasion (1753). A more serious danger was threatening
175* Luang-Prabang. Alompra, the conqueror of the Pegouans and of Lan-Na, had begun to reconstruct Bureng-Naung's great Burmese empire, and with the support of the king of Vientiane turned his armies against /195/ the principality in 1753. His lieutenant Po-Nanor crushed Intha-Som's army, penetrated into Luang-Prabang and returned to Alompra's camp with many hostages, including the very young prince Tiao-Vong (1). The latter remained a captive

1. Cf. Chronology of Pavie's translators.

for twelve years, and profiting by disorders which broke out in 1765 on Burma's Chinese frontier he succeeded in fleeing with six hundred Laotians and returned to his own land.

At Alompra's death Intha-Som tried unsuccessfully to free himself from Burmese domination by joining his resistance efforts with those of the king of Xieng-Mai (2). He was finally delivered only

2. Cf. Prince Damrong, Guerres siamo-birmanes, 23rd war (1763-1764).

after the fall of Ayuthya by the Siamese victories of 1768 and 1769. He then resolved to seek vengeance against the king of Vientiane, made long preparations for his expedition and appeared under the walls of Ong-Boun's capital in 1771.

726 Siege of Vientiane. The city put up a valiant defense, and he
175* had to invest it and undertake a siege according to rule. Ong-Boun

had enough time to send for aid to the Burmese, who marched on 726
Luang-Prabang in the number of five thousand, captured the city 175*
a second time and descended /196/ on Vientiane by the land route. The besieging army broke camp in haste and went to meet the Burmese reinforcements by way of the long, rocky pass which then marked the frontier between the two principalities.

Battle of Muong-Kassy. A heated battle was joined in the plain of Muong-Kassy, and the struggle had been going on for two weeks when Ong-Boun reached the spot with his garrison. Caught between two fires, Intha-Som's soldiers had to capitulate.

It does not seem that this defeat had, at least immediately, the dire consequences which might have been dreaded for Luang-Prabang. The Burmese simply went home again, for they were not yet rid of the Siamese who were harassing them even as far as Xieng Mai, and when left to its own resources Vientiane was in no position to profit by its victory in order to impose its law on the vanquished.

Alliance with Siam (1774). After his fortunate escape Intha- 648*
Som hastened to make advances to the new king of Siam who had 175*
just established his capital in Bangkok. Phya-Tak received them favorably and sent out an embassy in 1774 to form /197/ an alliance with the king of Luang-Prabang against any return offensive on the part of the Burmese.

SOTIKA-KOUMANE, KING 1776-1781.

Siamese suzerainty (1778). This alliance was confirmed upon the accession to the throne of Sotika-Koumane, Intha-Som's son and successor, but in 1778 after the fictorious war waged by Siam against Vientiane the king of Luang-Prabang was forced to accept the new Siamese conditions which were equivalent to an acknowledgement of suzerainty by the principality.

Sotika-Koumane reigned for scarcely five years, for his /643/'
younger brother Tiao-Vong forced him to abdicate in his favor in 1781.

TIAO-VONG (1751), KING 1781-1787.

Tiao-Vong endeavored to keep up the old alliances with 648*
neighboring States. He particularly strengthened the excellent 175*
relations which Luang-Prabang had always had with the Sip-Song- 643*

648* Panas, and married a princess of Muong-La in 1782. In the same
175* year he sent out an embassy to take the decennial tribute to Pekin.
643* /198/ He died prematurely in 1787 without leaving any posterity.

Interregnum, 1787-1791. Tiao-Vong's brothers could not agree
648* on a successor, and for four years Luang-Prabang was without a
721 king.
175* Ong-Boun's son Chao-Nan profited by this in order to invade the principality. In the face of this danger Anourout, the second son of Thene-Kham and Intha-Som, assumed power and organized the resistance. Although the Annals make no mention thereof, he probably had to appeal to the Siamese alliance, and even if the king of Bangkok did not intervene directly he at least took action, in the common interest, against the perpetual incursions of the Burmese into his own territory. It may well be that the Siamese avoided taking any side, feeling that a new war would weaken both principalities and could only serve their own ends.

ANOUROUT, KING 1791-1817.

726 Siege and capture of Luang-Prabang by Chao-Nan, king of
175* Vientiane (1791). When besieged by the Vientiane troops Luang-Prabang /199/ put up a fierce resistance and succumbed only because of treachery on the part of Tiao-Vong's widow.

We may assume that the latter was dissatisfied over her brother-in-law's accession to the throne and gave ear to Chao-Nan's proposals regarding the family dissensions.

Popular tradition has preserved several accounts of this war which differ as regards the circumstances under which Luang-Prabang was captured. According to one version, "shots were fired from within and from without, but without meeting." The people of Vientiane finally grew short of food and made ready to raise the siege. It was then that Chao-Nan is supposed to have sent "Anourout's sister" (his sister-in-law, to be precise) a note in which he promised to marry her if she would have one of the city gates opened for him. "It depends only on you," he wrote her, "for me to be a conqueror and for you to become queen of a reconstituted Lan-Xang." Seduced by this proposal, the princess is supposed to have placed a trusted servant at the Pak-Man gate and sent word to Chao-Nan that he could enter. "She put her letter in a bamboo tube which she filled with powder, and sent her device into the enemy camp. The addressee received the epistle, got the keys within three /200/ days, took Luang-Prabang and married the princess."

Another version states, on the contrary, that there was no 726
treason and no marriage and that the gate was merely forced dur- 175*
ing an attack.

Whatever the case may be, Chao-Nan's troops entered the city, massacred a large number of inhabitants and took many families in captivity to Vientiane. Anourout had enough time to flee and to take refuge in Siam.

Loss of the Houa-Phan. Chao-Nan imposed his conditions on 648*
Luang-Prabang, but he did not dare to push his conquest as far as 175*
an annexation which the suzerain of the Menam would not have tolerated. He was content with annexing the cantons of the Houa-Phan and with forbidding all relations between the principality and Tran-Ninh (1).

1. Chao-Nan was not destined to enjoy his victory for long. We have seen elsewhere (p. 158) the fate held in store for him by Siam, which deposed him and assigned him Bangkok as his residence.

Anourout was held in Bangkok until 1793 and was liberated by 643*
the Siamese only after the intervention of the emperor of China. 175*
He rebuilt the ruins of his capital and constructed several pagodas, notably the Wat-Mai. Old and impotent, he abdicated in 1817 in favor of his /201/ son Mantha-Thourath and died two years later.

MANTHA-THOURATH (1775), KING 1817-1836.

Relations with Vientiane and Bangkok. Three years after his 648*
accession to the throne Mantha-Thourath received two envoys from 175*
Vientiane, Mun-Heua-Kham and Phalatsay, who proposed a secret treaty of friendship. King Anou, who was impatiently enduring his Siamese guardianship, suggested that they should forget past quarrels and unite their strength against the suzerain of the West whose power was increasing in an alarming fashion. Mantha-Thourath accepted the two racing pirogues which the two ambassadors /431/
brought him in behalf of their master, but was somewhat timorous and refused to enter into any agreement (1). The following year

1. One of these pirogues has been preserved in the Tioun-Khong pagoda.

563 Sisania or Chao-un-Vico passed through the village streets.
175* The teller of this tale added naively that they did not like it at all." (Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896. /).

175* /243/ A second column was led by an incapable and cowardly
563 leader (1) and came to terms in a treacherous way with the Hos,
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1. Phra-Phanom, a cousin of Chao-Hung who was in the pay of Siam. (Cf. ibid. /de Pelacot, "Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896. /.)

who organized themselves strongly in their lair and began a systematic pillage of the surrounding territory. Then Chao-Hung asked for aid from the king of Luang-Prabang and the emperor of Annam. Tu-Duc sent twelve hundred men, while Oun-Kham sent two hundred, himself took command of 400 Phoueuns and marched resolutely on Bandon. But he committed the error of attacking in scattered order, without a unified command. The Hos sustained the siege for forty-eight hours, then became aware of the lack of unison among the allied leaders and on the third day made a sortie during which Chao-Hung was killed. His death threw his troops into disorder and marked the end of their resistance (2).

2. The Annamites regained Vinh in the number of only seven hundred (Cf. ibid. /de Pelacot, "Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896. /).

Xieng-Kham and Xieng-Khouang were immediately occupied by the Red Flags and all of Tran-Ninh was invaded and devastated, most of the villages burned, and the populace requisitioned and tortured with nameless atrocities. To such an extent was this true that after a few months the pirates had /244/ brought about an absolute vacuum. Finding nothing more to pillage, they had the idea of extracting ransom money from Luang-Prabang and had already set out on their way when a "bad omen" suddenly made them turn about and directed them towards Vientiane and Nongkhay.

Siamese intervention (1872). They encountered no resistance in this depopulated region, the few inhabitants fled terrorized into the forests at the mere rumor of their approach. They entered

Anou's old capital without difficulty and fortified themselves there, 726
completing the destruction of its ruins in their search for the royal 175*
treasures (1), and from there sent rapid incursions into the present- 563

1. They tore down the central minaret of the That-Luong.

day muong of Borikhane.

The governor of Nongkhay, blackaded in his city which was 648*
thronged with fugitives, joined his cries of alarm to the appeal 726
which the king of Luang-Prabang had sent to Bangkok, and the 175*
Siamese government dispatched an army which first succeeded in 563
driving the Hos northward and then launched a flank attack on them by detaching eight hundred men and sending them to reinforce the forces which King Oun-Kham had mobilized. But the campaign which had been so forcefully begun soon softened in the face of the pirates' counterthrusts, /245/ for the latter had shut themselves into nearly impregnable fortresses. Pressed to make an end of it and to save face, the Siamese leaders came to terms with them and gave them permission to remain in the land in return for vague recognition of the suzerainty of Bangkok. As for the surviving inhabitants of the circumscriptions which had been purged of Hos, /727/
they were "severely blamed for having fled before the enemy" and driven along the Mekong with their flocks. "10,600, men, women and children departed. The exodus of these poor folk across this land of famine was a pitiful spectacle. Most of them died along the way, and a few were able to flee. Only six thousand reached Siam" (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./

Luang-Prabang had been miraculously spared, but anarchy of 579
the utmost violence was unleased at the very gates of the princi- 563
pality. The "Yellow Flags" invaded the Sip-Song-Chau-Thai, 727
whose leader Cam-Sinh had joined forces with the "Black Flags" 175*
of Ong-Liu (2), while the Meos and the Khas stirred up trouble in

2. Lum-Vinh-Phuoc, encamped at Lao-Kay.

their turn -- seemingly at first merely in self-defense against the Hos, then as a means of existence in the general confusion -- by

115: Le Boulanger--163 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(20th Cent.) Laotians AM8

Departure of the Siamese troops for Bangkok (May 1887). *175
The latter had left for Bangkok five days previously with all their 648*
troops taking with them the leaders of the conquered land, the 726
hostages from the Ho bands, the eldest sons of the king and of the Oupahat, thirty young people from the royal family or who were sons of first mandarins, and several high officials.

Their precipitate withdrawal under such critical circumstances had caused a violent eruption among the populace, who credited and passed on the most alarming rumors. It was whispered that the bands' objective was the deliverance of Cam-Sinh's sons who had been treacherously carried off by the Chao-Meun, placed in chains at his order and sent to Bangkok, that a terrible revenge was to be feared from their elder brother Cam-Oun, called Deo-van-Tri by the /265/ Annamites, whose insurmountable energy was well-known and who commanded the Black Flags in the pay of his father, the great chieftain of the Black River, and that even if Deo-van-Tri was not an enemy of Luang-Prabang where he had lived during his youth (1), no one could say what extremes his wrath

1. See above, pp. 213 and 247.

against the Siamese might take, and, what was more, his soldiers were nothing but cruel and thieving Hos who had no respect for anything... These fears became more definite each day, it was soon confirmed that the bands were coming down the Nam-Ou, and uneasiness degenerated into profound anxiety in the indefensible city without a garrison, without any leaders except old men, and behind its walls which had been crumbling ever since their destruction long ago by the people of Vientiane.

Sack of Luang-Prabang by Deo-van-Tri (June 1887). Pavie offered the king his services and his advice, but the situation of the Luong-Pitsanoulep was becoming highly embarrassing and he refused them quite brutally. The inevitable then happened. On June 7 Deo-van-Tri landed at Xieng-Thong with six hundred pirates, installed his forces in the pagoda which he knew well because he had once studied there, asked for his brothers, and demanded that the /266/ royal treasure be handed over. On the 10th he grew tired of parleying without any results and abandoned the city to his men, who plundered, set fires and massacred those who could not flee... . Pavie was greatly worried at the first gunshot and sent

648* Keo, one of his Cambodians, for news. The latter reached the
175* palace at the very moment when the pirates were invading it. The
726 good servant saw the old monarch walk stumblingly towards his gilded throne so that he could die there in a worthy manner. He caught hold of him and almost forcibly dragged him to the bank, and under the fusillade which felled several of those who had followed hoisted him onto a pirogue and rejoined his master's boat at full speed. Pavie was surrounded by the stricken Kaluong, the queen brandishing a sword and fixed in a quasi-hieratic attitude and the Satou of the Wat-Mai who lay at full length, his thigh pierced by a bullet, amidst many other wounded persons who had been taken in as they passed.

"What an indescribable scene!" Pavie noted in his journal on the day after the tragedy. "The Mekong is carrying the population of a city which has been swelled, in the panic, by more than a hundred villages, all fleeing before six hundred poor guns. .

"His voice broken by emotion, the old prince took my hand, pointed to Keo and said:

"'Without him I should be dead. Thank you for sending him'" (1).

1. Mission Pavie, ibid. /"Geographie et Voyages," Vol. VI/, p. 91

Flight of the king and sojourn at Paklay (June-August 1887). In the meantime the Hos, who were mainly preoccupied with plundering, seemed to give up pursuit of the pirogues, which silently went downriver in the raging rain. It was the lamentable exodus of a whole populace abandoned to the caprices of the current and the dangerous eddies of the river. In the evening they stopped at Pak-Nan. Pavie bandaged the wounded, and rafts were hastily built by the light of a fire which suddenly sprang up and whose flames devoured the houses along the bank. On the following day they passed the Keng-Luong, the "royal rapids" which swallowed up a number of unfortunates who were riding in frail boats. On the 13th they reached Paklay, whose inhabitants were "in the woods or gone to seek asylum with the Khas in the mountains."

Pavie at once dealt with his correspondence and entrusted it to Keo, who left at post-haste for the Menam and Bangkok. When the Kaluong was "put ashore he lost his head" and thought only of setting forth again, believing at each moment that he saw the Hos appearing

on the horizon, but the king did not wish to sow /267/ panic any 175*
further in the still peaceful villages to the South and declared that 726
he would not go any further, but would await the news which the 648*
last of the fugitives could not fail to bring. Indeed, one of his goldsmiths who was miraculously spared soon arrived and related that the bands had set out again on the 13th for Pak-Ou, leaving nothing but a dense cloud of smoke behind them. The pagodas were still intact but all the princes' houses had been plundered and destroyed and the second king had been killed (1).

1. Souvanna-Phouma. See note p. 202 and p. 249.

At this news Oun-Kham heaped bitter reproaches on the Siamese, whom he accused "of having occupied his kingdom when all was well and of having abandoned it in the hour of danger." Addressing himself to the Kaluong, he finally dared to tell him his whole thoughts:

"I have had to flee almost naked I have on me the clothes given me by M. Pavie, to whom I owe the fact that I am still alive. You are the one who prevented me from hearing him as soon as he arrived. Why did I not do so, despite your bad counsels! I am placing myself in his hands and will do what he decides."

Pavie decided to wait at Paklay for the results of Keo's mission. 175*
He cared for the king, who had fallen ill after so many emotions and misfortunes, /269/ and lavished his devotion on his friend the Satou of the Wat-Mai whose leg was becoming stiff and on seventeen wounded Laotians who were the last fugitives from the massacre. Through the Satou he became acquainted with the royal manuscripts, which were found intact in the pagoda of Wat-Mai (1). Aided by

1 One of the Satou's brothers brought them from Luang-Prabang on July 10 (Mission Pavie, ibid. /"Geographie et Voyages," Vol VI/, p. 126.)

his Cambodian translators Ngin and Som he learned therein the history of Lan-Xang "which was a great and long independent State, sometimes suzerain of Siam, whose vassaldom scarcely goes back more than a century." Oun-Kham slowly recovered and was filled with gratitude for his savior's inexhaustible kindness He offered, despite "his weakened memory," to complete the documentation.

"Question me," he said, "and I will answer... . Our country

149: Reinach--1 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

[1] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER I

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THE POLITICAL STATUS OF LAOS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO THE CAPTURE OF VIEN-TIANE IN 1827

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the territories situated in the basin of the Mékong River were designated by the name of Laos or Lao, and from the political point of view formed two autonomous States.

Their autonomy was much more apparent than real, and existed in fact only for the internal administration of the two kingdoms. As far as their foreign relations went, they were tributaries of the more powerful nations which surrounded them.

The kingdom of Luang-Prabang (or Lan-Xang--of the million elephants) was the northernmost of the two and bordered on Yunnan, Tonkin, Annam, Vien-Tiane (or Vieng-Chang), the Burmese States [2] (or Sib-Song-Pahn-Na) and the You-Eun States (or Lao-Xieng). It was supposed to provide China, Annam and Siam, either annually or every three years, with tribute consisting of certain valuable products and of precious metals, and called "Gold and silver flowers."

The other, or kingdom of Vien-Tiane, was the southernmost and was bordered on the north by Luang-Prabang, on the east by Annam, on the south by Cambodia and on the west by Siam. It was the tributary of Annam and Siam in the same right and under the same conditions as the first.

This state of affairs was profoundly modified in the beginning and middle of the nineteenth century by various events of capital importance.

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At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth the Thai kingdom, or Siam, had often appealed to the Laotian princes for help in repulsing Burmese invasions or repressing the insurrections of Ngiéous, Shans and You-Eûns which were frequent at this time. The prince's devotion was ill rewarded. Around 1825, in fact, when the kingdom of Vien-Tiane seemed to want to shake off Siamese suzerainty, it saw its territory invaded by Siamese armies. After two years of war the land had been dismembered, depopulated

Colonial 175

and stripped of its livestock and elephants, which were taken to the Ménam valley, and had been fully conquered by the Thai sovereign. 648

Siam then created the hereditary fief of Tiama-Sak (Bassac) in the southeast of the former kingdom and placed a cousin of the king of Vien-Tiane over it in order to reward him for his double treachery towards the king and towards his brother, the prince of Oubone, both of whom he had delivered up to the Siamese general Phiéa-Le-Bô-Dyn, vanquisher of the Laotians. 726

Of the former kingdom of Vien-Tiane Siam made a Siamese province bearing the name Lao-Pou-Eûn and, completely ignoring Annam's rights, it had its troops occupy the basin of the Sé-Bang-Hien in the Phu of Kam-Lô, which was situated on the left bank of the Mékong.

[3] SIAM'S ENCROACHMENTS TO THE EAST
GROUNDS FOR FRENCH INTERVENTION IN THE MÉKONG BASIN
ARRANGEMENT OF MARCH 27, 1889

Siamese expansion was not limited to these conquests. Thanks to a skilful policy, it was awarded the provinces of Méiou-Prey and Tonlé-Répou, located on both banks of the Mékong, by Cambodia about 1840. Following their annexation Siam reigned as master over the whole basin of the river from the province of Outhaï-Thani-Si-Pak-Lay (Luang-Prabang) to Siemboc, that is to say, from the eighteenth to the thirteenth parallel. 175 648

But the establishment of the French in Cochinchina placed an obstacle in the way of Siamese ambitions and of any plans for conquest which they may have nurtured. Since Cambodia was the hinterland of our new possession we were led to intervene in its foreign relations and finally guarantee it a stable political situation. Here a word of praise may well be said for Admiral de La Grandière who, by his diplomatic skill and his steadfastness, was able in 1863 to impose a treaty on King Norodom which counterbalanced another Siamo-Kmer agreement of the same year and placed the kingdom of Cambodia under a French protectorate. (1)

(1) See Appendix I.

This accord was far from being satisfactory to Siam, for the introduction of a great European nation in the Far East, on the banks

149: Reinach--4 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8 175
Colonial

Thus the agreement of July 14, 1870, regulated fishing conditions 648
on the Great Lake [Grand Lac] (3). In 1882 it was decided to set up [206]

(3) See Appendix III.

a telegraph line between Bangkok and Prom-Penh (4). And finally, [439]

(4) See Appendix IV.

on May 23, 1883, an agreement was reached which regulated the commerce and sale of French wines and spirits in Siam (5).

(5) See Appendix V.

This fine state of affairs soon took a turn for the worse at the time of the Tonkin expedition.

The agents of Great Britain in Siam were afraid that our penetration into the valley of the Red River and into Upper Laos [5] [Illustration] [6] [Blank page] [7] would hinder British plans for commercial establishments in Yunnan and would prevent British predominance in the two Kouang. Since they were bent on preserving their influence in this region, they induced the Siamese sovereign to act first on the Chinese frontiers, where he was to bar our progress, and then in Laos with Annam as the objective, in the hope that he might create difficulties for us and perhaps succeed in concluding some form of alliance against us.

The king's pride was flattered by his foreign advisers. Feeling that he was to play the part of the sovereign of a "great nation," he abandoned his prudent reserve, no longer kept the balance equal between the rival nations, and began his adventurous course. These were his first steps towards great disappointments, and also towards territorial losses such as those resulting from the treaty of 1893 and the London convention of 1896.

Circumstances at the time, moreover, seemed to favor Siam's action and even to excuse its behavior in some measure.

The invasion of Laos by the Hôs (1) enabled the sovereign of 648
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(1) Chinese bandits from Yunnan.

Colonial

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Siam to preserve an appearance of neutrality, and even of cordiality, towards us.

It gave him the opportunity to pose as the defender of Annam's vassals and of the subjects of his most honorable vassal the king of Luang-Prabang. When the time came King Chulahlong-Khorn would thus be able to profit skilfully, and according to the circumstances, from the advantages which he had gained in order to transform an ill-founded vassaldom over Luang-Prabang into an absolute possession and, thanks to our difficulties, to impose the law of greater might all the way to the Annamitic Chain.

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The Hô invasion, which extended all the way to Nong-Khay across the Sib-Song-Chau-Thaï, the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc, Tran-Ninh and Vien-Tiane, was never seriously opposed by the Siamese no matter what they may say. Their pretended action did, however, enable the king to keep Vien-Tiane and to drive the Chinese bandits out of Laotian territory.

[8] The whole affair may have created some momentary illusion, but the actual fact was that Chulahlong-Khorn's troops, except for a few rare and unimportant skirmishes, merely followed the Hôs as they returned towards Yunnan and abandoned the territories which they had invaded after they had sacked them.

Profiting by inattention on the part of France and Annam, which were occupied [Illustration here] elsewhere, and on the fallacious pretext that it was protecting the provinces which had been devastated by the Hôs and was preventing them from returning in the future, Siam covertly established itself as master in the land.

In the meantime the Chinese bandits, after leaving Vien-Tiane and Tran-Ninh, invaded the kingdom of Luang-Prabang. The latter still paid tribute to Siam, in the form of "Gold and silver flowers," yet it had remained free of direct domination and enjoyed an autonomy comparable to [Map, unpaged, inserted between pp. 8 and 9] [9] that of Vien-Tiane before its conquest, and paid an honorary bounty to China and Annam.

Still on the pretext of driving out the Hôs, the Siamese troops entered the territory of Luang-Prabang and established themselves there as in a conquered land. Their general was given the title of royal commissioner. He administered the country, recruited troops, levied [Illustration here] taxes and behaved exactly as if the country belonged to him (1885).

648 surrounded itself with official advisers from that nations.

175 In a short time, and with remarkable rapidity, it organized an army and navy which were trained and commanded by European officers. It reinforced all its detachments in Laos, levied additional troops, and after providing supplies of arms and munitions it constructed forts. In a word, it prepared for war. It announced to the people that all these steps had been taken in order to "drive out the French and extend the Thai kingdom into Annam."

726 The 1889 arrangement establishing a status quo was then violated
175 Siamese troops and commissioners advanced towards the Annamitic Chain and crossed it at several points, particularly at Hatraf and Ai-Lao, and thus reached a point only forty kilometers from Hué. In the course of their forward march various incidents occurred which obliged the French Government to abandon the reserve which it had heretofore maintained when confronted with the intrigues of the court of Bangkok. At last it made ready to act vigorously.

175 In January 1892 the greater number of the members of [14]
648 the Pavie mission had returned to France. Only three of them had remained in Laos, two in Luang-Prabang and one in Stung-Treng.

439 It was at this time that the French Syndicate of Upper Laos, which had become the French Syndicate of Laos and had doubled its capital, sent out a new six-man mission as well as a large stock of merchandise. Its purpose was to reoccupy the old trading posts in Luang-Prabang and Nong-Khay and to found new ones at Bassac, Outhène and Xieng-Hong in a line along the Mékong. Its activity would thus extend from Cambodia to Yunnan. The Syndicate's new mission was to support and strengthen the commercial interests already in existence in the Mékong basin. It also placed vigilant agents in all the posts who would be able to keep an eye on the maneuvers of the Siamese and instil confidence in the people by showing them that in spite of Siam's threats and warlike preparations we should not abandon them. The Laotians were thus conscious of our support at a time when their invaders were becoming harsher and more arrogant and were threatening to extract reprisals from them as a punishment for having placed their trust in us and solicited our protection.

In these critical circumstances the Government decided to place a consul general in Bangkok so as to render France's political action in Siam more effective. It chose M. Pavie to occupy this high post,

149: Reinach--14 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

I fear that our agents all too often lack this genuine consciousness. (Hear! Hear!) 175 648

Once that we had decided to intervene in Indo-China, operations were begun at three different points: in the region of Ai-Lao, in Cammon and in the north of Cambodia.

Our agents remained isolated in the Mékong valley.

Those of Luang-Prabang, who had taken refuge in the buildings of the old consulate on the right bank of the Mékong, were proscribed, blockaded and besieged. Threats of death were made against all natives who should enter into contact with them or serve them in any way whatever.

Our commercial agent in Outhène was expelled by order of the viceroy of Nong-Khay, and his merchandise was first confiscated and then almost all sold by the Siamese. The agent in Bassac escaped similar treatment thanks only to the goodwill of Prince Prit-Chit, the viceroy of Oubone and a friend of France, and they were content merely to keep a close watch on him. He was guarded so closely that he could neither send nor receive correspondence or merchandise.

The instructions given out by M. de Lanessan, the Governor General of Indo-China, for the campaign which was beginning were quite clear. He directed that open battle should be avoided imsofar as possible. He said that we must seek to gain the sympathies of the inhabitants and always prefer diplomacy and peaceful means to uncertain military engagements. In order to attain this end, the Governor General recommended the use of native troops commanded by inspectors of the militia and placed under the higher authority of a few chosen residents. 648 175 726

It was in this capacity that Messrs. Luce, Dufrénil and Bastard took part in the operations.

One column, with Muong-Phin as its objective, was placed under the command of M. Dufrénil, the vice-resident in Dong-Hoi, who was assisted by M. Garnier, an inspector of militia. Following the instructions [21] of the Governor General, that is to say without entering open combat, this force reached Muong-Phin after a rapid march, which it entered on May 14, 1893. On the 26th of the same month it reached the Mékong opposite Kemmarat.

In these parts there was a veritable rout of the Siamese, who

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were reduced to circulating rumors of the imminent arrival of sizeable reinforcements which would come and reoccupy the regions out of which we were driving them.

In the meantime another column, commanded by Inspector Grosgurin and under the general direction of M. Luce, the resident in Nghé-An, was operating in the region of Cammon.

Greater difficulties confronted us there. The region had been organized (1) by the Siamese commissioner Phrayot. The latter

(1) In accordance with the treaty of March 27, 1889.

joined with the two neighboring commissioners of Nong-Khay and Outhène, and with their help was able to surround M. Grosgurin in Keng-Kiêt, which was the last step of the French column before the Mékong. The small force was massacred by the Siamese and its leader, who was stricken with fever and helpless, was killed point-blank without being able to defend himself (June).

After this ambush M. Luce, who could not obtain the reinforcements which he requested and who was also suffering from violent accesses of fever, returned to Saigon and left his command in the hands of Inspector Soler. The latter was valiantly seconded by Chief Guardsman Huguet, and completely routed the Laotians in an engagement at Na-Khat.

Phrayot, whose authority had been greatly shaken by this setback, fell back to the right bank of the Mékong and was unfortunately able to take a large part of the left bank's population with him.

Another series of operations was in course in the north of Cambodia, under the direction of M. Bastard, vice-resident in Cambodia.

In a rapid march a company of Annamite riflemen under the command of Captain Thoreux occupied Stung-Treng (April 1) and then Khône (April 5), which the Siamese commissioner and small garrison abandoned in haste.

[22] M. Bastard then returned to Saigon to give an account of the results of his mission. Captain Thoreux left a detachment on the island of Khône and returned almost alone in the direction of Stung-Treng, where he was to set up a supply service. As he was moving along the right bank of the river he was taken prisoner by a small Siamese force. He was led away to Oubone, where Prince Prit-Chit, who was, as we have seen, quite favorably disposed towards the

French, did not make his captivity too hard for him.

Reinforcements arrived from Oubone, and in May the Siamese tried to retake Khône. Their plan failed, thanks to two companies brought in by Captain Adam de Villiers. The blockade of the island was lifted and the month of July was spent in capturing the whole group of islands, particularly Dom-Som which had been fortified.

When confronted with these simultaneous actions the Siamese became greatly alarmed. It was to be feared in Bangkok that the populace, which was hostile to our influence and might also be aroused by certain court officials, might extract reprisals from the Europeans who lived in the capital. Under these circumstances, and perhaps also so as to take advantage of an unsettled situation, Britain resolved to reinforce its forces in Bangkok.

It was the assassination of Inspector Grosgurin which obliged us, despite our peaceful intentions, to enter into open warfare with Siam. This ambush indeed called for immediate reparations.

Up to that point the chancelleries had not intervened and the operations had taken place, so to speak, without the diplomats' knowledge. The Keng-Kiet incident precipitated the course of events.

M. Le Myre de Vilers, who was returning to Cochinchina, was sent to ask the Court of Bangkok for an explanation, and Admiral Humann, the commander-in-chief of the Far Eastern Squadron, received orders to sail to the Gulf of Siam.

On July 12 the Inconstant and the Comète, preceded by the steamship J.-B. Say of the Cochinchinese River Merchant Fleet which was making its regular voyage, advanced towards the bar of the Ménam. As it was about to cross the pass of Pak-Nam in accordance with the rules [23] [Illustration] [24] [Blank page] [Unpaged map inserted between pp. 24 and 25] [25] of the port of Bangkok (Article 15 of the treaty of August 15, 1856 (1)), the J.-B. Say was

(1) See Appendix IX.

shot at and sunk, for a projectile hit a vital spot. In the face of such cowardly aggression Admiral Humann was forced to respond. The two gunboats crossed the bar and, passing under the fire of the Siamese batteries of Pak-Nam and Phra-Chula, went up the Ménam to Bangkok where they cast anchor that same evening.

175 726 "Our seamen," as M. Flourens put it, "had cut their way through the barrages, the torpedos and the obstacles of all kinds which the Siamese Government had laid out in order to shield, behind a barrier which it believed insurmountable, the brazen despicableness of its incessant provocations."

175 728 648 The news aroused indignation as soon as it became known in France, and in its session of July 18 the Chamber authorized the Foreign Minister to deliver the following ultimatum to the Siamese Government:

1. Recognition of French rights to the left bank of the Mékong and to its islands.

2. Evacuation of the Siamese outposts established on the left bank of the Mékong, within the space of one month.

3. Satisfaction for the aggressions committed.

4. Punishment of the guilty.

5. An indemnity of two millions for damages caused.

6. Deposit of the sum of three millions as security, or payment of the tax revenues from the provinces of Battambang and Siem-Reap (2).

(2) See Appendix IXa.

Siam refused at first to accept these conditions, and on July 22 offered to cede the left bank as far as the 18th parallel, thus wishing to keep Vien-Tiane, Luang-Prabang, Tran-Ninh, the Hua-Pahn, Muong-Poukha, Xieng-Khong, Muong-Sing, the two Muong-Hou and the Pahn-Na on the left bank. It was counting, and with some reason, on the support of Great Britain.

Lord Roseberry and Ed. Grey tried, but in vain, to arouse [26] opinion in London and to provoke diplomatic intervention. The Foreign Office refused categorically. Discouraged by this sudden abandonment and intimidated by the resolute attitude of the French Government (1), the king of Siam accepted the conditions which had

(1) In accordance with the Department's instructions, M. Pavie had struck his flag and left Bangkok on July 26 aboard the Inconstant.

been offered without further ado. M. Le Myre de Vilers was named Ambassador Extraordinary and arrived to conclude a treaty with the Court of Siam which should be based on the ultimatum. Signed on

Kha

563 their prisoners among the Djarais. This state of affairs cannot go on
567 [106] indefinitely, and after settling the question of the Djarais which is more urgent, it will be necessary for Annam and Laos to pacify these tribes by a common agreement.

563 4. Rognao, Bahnar, Goelar and Habau Khas. These tribes, over
797 whom the missionaries exercise moral authority and many of whose villages are Catholic, can be regarded as pacified even though they do not pay any tribute. I have previously explained why it would not be politic, in my opinion, to require tribute in this region as of the present time.

These tribes, which are entirely located in Laotian territory, are quite tranquil but in continual dread of undertakings by their Djarai neighbors.

563 5. The great Djarai tribe, which is by far the most important and most numerous in the estimation of the missionaries. It is said to include nearly 150,000 inhabitants and is the finest racial type which I have seen in all the Kha region.

Many villages are subject to our authority and pay the head tax. Others, such as those which I found in the valley of the Fzi and on the Sesane, obey our orders, keep the roads in repair, receive traders and travelers with perfect hospitality and will pay tribute whenever we wish.

563 But there are two groups which are absolutely rebellious to our
[619] penetration. These are: 1) the groups of villages of Pley-Qho and
[643] Pley-Denang immediately south of the mission; and 2), somewhat further to the south, the group of the Sadetes whose two chieftains,
579 the kings of water and fire, inhabit the points which are marked on the map as Pa-Tao-Ia and Pa-Tao-Ngo.

The first of these groups has continuously committed hostile
563 acts against us. They are the ones who attacked the convoy of M.
668 Navelle when this official came to visit the mission, who have constantly attacked convoys on the road from Ang-Ke to Kon-Toum,
726 who more recently robbed a Laotian hunter of merchandise valued at more than 1,000 piasters and pierced him with sword thrusts, and, finally, who attacked M. Lacouture and killed one of his guides. These villages are dreaded by all their neighbors. It was they against whom Meyréna (1) marched, but his success was not sufficiently

(1) Since I have been led to pronounce the name of the man who dreamed of creating a Cedang kingdom, I should say a few words regarding this adventure which seems to me to have been greatly exaggerated.

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I shall not dwell on all the personalities implicated in the matter, for I have neither the right nor the means to define the responsibilities incurred, but shall simply say that his authority has never been recognized by the Khas in any effective fashion. In a gathering held in the common house of Kon-Hoirin and at which the representatives of some twenty Cedang villages were present, he appeared in the guise of one who had come to lead them in their defense against attacks by their neighbors and to command them against the enemy Djarais (the tribes of Pley-Qho and Pley-Denang, to be exact). His proposal was naturally accepted, and was also given sanction by some semblance of an expedition against the Djarais. When the Cedangs did not take all the booty and especially all the prisoners that they had anticipated, they broke off relations with Meyréna. What is more, when Father Vialleton, the director of the Catholic mission of the Bahnars and a man of extremely subtle mind, subsequently realized what the situation was, he did not want to enter into open conflict with Meyréna but was content to set up a confederation of the Bahnar, Rognac and Goelar tribes, a confederation which had the Kha chieftain of the village of Kon-Toum at its head, but which was under the moral and actual leadership of Father Vialleton. This master stroke, the only purpose of which had been to prevent Meyréna's authority from prevailing over these tribes, dealt the death blow to the kingdom of which he had dreamed and he was obliged to leave the country.

Such, in all its simplicity, is the truth of this adventure when disengaged from all the little incidents of a more or less humorous nature which occurred at the time.

followed up. It is [107] now necessary that this den of bandits should disappear or surrender. The hatred which they have aroused against themselves is so great that during my inspection tour all the neighboring tribes, including the Cedangs, asked permission to join forces with me and march against them immediately. I had to promise that satisfaction would be given them.

When this group has disappeared or surrendered, all the hesitant factions of Djarais, Salangs and Halangs-Doang will make their submission once and for all.

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As for the second group, that of the Sadetes, the question is a ticklish one. The two Sadete kings are unquestionably the religious leaders of all the Kha tribes south of the Cedangs. According to the

Laotians AM8
Kha
Meo

619 traditions and the annals which I have been able to consult, they are
643 the descendants of the last kings of the land before the Cham invasion.
[648 The kings of Cambodia have had to appeal to them for help on one
175] or two critical occasions, and it was in return for services rendered
that the king of Cambodia, up until recent times, used to send them
563 presents every year (annual tribute, according to them, payment of
which stopped only five years ago).

[726] They have never been willing to recognize our authority. The
king of Pa-Tao-la, who is situated on the Laotian side, twice attacked
the Government Commissioners of Stung-Treng when the latter were
making a tour of inspection in this region, first in December 1894
and a second time in January 1897. They were given a severe lesson
this second time, for the village was entirely destroyed and they
suffered many losses. The Sadete Loum (the Master of water) settled
on the Annamite side alongside the Master of fire after the affair,
and since that time has given no further orders to our faithful Djarais.

[108]

APPENDIX XIX
NOTE ON THE MEOS

563 The Meo has a savage and distrustful character. He does not
609 like the presence of foreigners, or even of people of his own race.
Clinging to the side of a mountain, and always as high up as
possible, he asks only to be allowed to live in peace in his wild soli-
tude and bodes no ill to anyone provided he is left alone and independe

433 He is a great hunter of wild beasts and large game. More in-
241 dustrious than the Thais, he makes all his farming implements him-
self (picks and shovels), as well as his wooden baskets and mills for
grinding maize and paddy. He raises fine poultry, pigs, oxen, goats
231 and horses with particular care and success. If he stays in one place
for any length of time he also produces, in addition to the maize
and rice which form the basis of his food supply and the opium which
he smokes, very fine eggplants, gourds, sweet potatoes and non-
sweetened batatas very much like the common potato, sorrel, green
beans and all the French vegetables whose seeds are given him. On
his heights he cultivates the fruit trees which merely vegetate in
the plains, such as the peach tree, and the peaches which he harvests
can compete without any fear with those of our own country.

516 The Meo climbs like a cat. Over sheer paths, up ladders com-
417 posed of a single bamboo pole standing upright in which notches are
cut at regular intervals which are large enough for two toes, the Meo

567 upbringing and sentiments rejected the idea of such slavery, and
177 without giving in gracefully, for some of them stood to lose large capital investments, they accepted without question the principle of emancipation of slaves by capture. A few attempted to use subterfuge and tried to pass off slaves who were really slaves by capture as
[675] slaves for debt. Fortunately every contract among the Laotian people, whatever it be, is a written one, and examination of these contracts was sufficient to foil all their ruses.

At the present time it may be said that this question has been solved. There are no longer any but voluntary slaves who like their life under their masters and, although free, want to stay there. Nearly all of them, moreover, are provided with a certification of liberation which their masters have forced them to request so that they, the masters, will not be accused later of keeping slaves by force.

Full justice must be given to the Laotian authorities who, although the first to suffer from this measure, have freely aided us in our task.

The reports by the government commissioners have noted the
[126] good consequences of the measure. One of its first results was to bring a stop to the inter-tribal warfare among the Khas; warfare whose origin, if not its sole purpose, almost always lay in the capture of human cattle demanded by recognized slave traders [158] who were established in the land--they were mainly Burmese--and who had deliveries to make.

567 As regards slaves for debt, the question is a much more delicate one, for here we are confronted by a voluntary and for the most part uninteresting form of slavery.

In Laos, all crimes and misdemeanors must be paid for. This is the origin of nearly all debts, among the well-to-do as well as among the poorer classes. Among the latter, sentences for stealing buffalo or rice are usually involved, and among the well-to-do sentences for adultery or judicial decisions resulting from unsuccessful speculations. When sentence has been pronounced, money must be found immediately in order to avoid prison. If the borrower can offer security for payment the necessary sum is lent to him at annual interest rates which vary, depending on the province, from ten to twenty percent.

If the borrower is a poor man, he offers his person in payment of the interest and then becomes not the slave, but the servant in a house.

His status is not comparable to that of a slave by capture. Whereas the latter is a veritable beast of burden, often badly mistreated, obliged to work only for his master and to provide himself for his food and clothing, the slave for debts, on the other hand, is fed and

10: d'Orleans--268 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 609, 727, 177.72 Siam
636.72

"At first they refuse to let us have any provisions, and as we are now without food I am reduced to extreme measures. The villagers assert that they have neither fowls nor eggs in the place.

'If you do not rear poultry,' I reply, 'we may consider that all we find are wild birds,' and I tell the interpreter to open a hen-house and take out two chickens, offering fifteen pence for them, which is, of course, accepted. When the owners have once examined the coins, sounded them and found them good, they regain confidence and bring us some eggs. Their distrust arises from the proceedings of the Siamese soldiers, who, as they travel, requisition everything they require without any payment; the villagers thought that we might do the same, but now they realize that we are honest people."

10: d'Orleans--294-295 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 648, 727

"As soon as they have established themselves anywhere, the Siamese at once endeavour to combat rival influences, winning over allies underhand and terrorizing those who, seeing no other chance of succour, are compelled to accept their friendship. In 1872 they entered upon the district of Traninh and depopulated part of it, while from Luang Prabang they sent agents on to our territory in the region of [295] Son La. They also took natives who were under our protection from Song Ma and made them march thirty days to drink in secret 'the water of the oath' at a pagoda outside the town, and they are now eager to seize the rich table-lands of the Ponôn. Thus in 1891 ten Annamite chiefs who had been sent into this region by the French Resident at Vinh, with interpreters in our service, were, against the faith of treaties, arrested and sent to Bangkok by order of the Siamese colonel commanding at Luang Prabang, the interpreters beaten, and our flag torn to rags. Only a few days ago an officer put up a proclamation in the town threatening with death all friends of the French, and, in order to obtain reparation for this insult M. Massie was obliged to make a personal business of it and talk of calling the colonel out. So much for the influence possessed by our agents!

The young chiefs, powerless to maintain their autonomy, prefer making a complete surrender to their new masters; and I recently learned that the king had sent for Thais from Theng, that is to say our subjects, who had been transported to the confines of Luang Prabang, and had promised to pay them for cultivating the soil, if they would

10: d'Orleans--294-295 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-2
116, 648, 727

undertake not to quit his kingdom; because Siam may succeed in extending its power and spoliating its neighbours, we must not conclude that it is in good odour with its neighbours--very much the contrary."

73: Hammer--240 S-4 (no date) 1951 Laotians
116, 642, 648, 727, 177.64 France
636.64

"In Laos, as in Vietnam, the Chinese occupation had provided a protective screen behind which a nationalist regime had consolidated itself in power. A Free Laotian movement forced the abdication of King Sisavong Vong, set up its own more representative government, and then brought him back to the throne as the constitutional leader of an independent country. Only after the Chinese withdrew could the French return to Laos, and the Chinese troops were in no haste to leave. China did not withdraw the last of its troops from Indochina until midsummer of 1946. The French promised Laos, as they had Cambodia, to restore the areas taken by Thailand in 1941; (8) and in both countries they

8. On November 17, 1946 the French signed an agreement to this effect with Thailand in regard to both Laotian and Cambodian territory.

played upon the fear of Vietnamese and Thai aggression. On August 27, 1946 they signed an agreement with Laos (recognizing the union of the country under Sisavong Vong, formerly king only of Luang Prabang) much like that with Cambodia, by which they restored the prewar protectorate in modifiedbut not radically changed form."

726 of his army, the survivors of which crossed the river by swimming.
643*
175* /67/ The "restoration." -- Victory of Pak Phoun. He halted at Xieng-Khane (1). In the general confusion his second son Thène-

1. To the south of Luang-Prabang, on the right bank of the Mekong, today in Siamese territory.

Kham, a worthy descendant of Fa-Ngoun, did not lose his head. He hastily regrouped the fugitives, armed the inhabitants of the region, reformed a nearly homogeneous army as well as could be expected and, since he knew that the Annamites had been greatly weakened by a dearly bought victory, set out boldly to meet them. The Laotians fought with the strength of despair and defeated the invaders at Pak-Phoun. Exploiting this success, Thène-Kham went in hot pursuit and forced them to recross the Mékong in full disorder at the level of Pak-Nane. Lan-Xang was saved. The generalissimo Phoua-Khouang-Soun had to evacuate Tran-Ninh and died in Annamite territory--it is said that he was struck by lightning in the course of a violent storm.

But these grave events had broken the physical resistance of King Tiakaphat, who died at Xieng-Khane at the age of sixty-five, "the third day of the crescent moon of the fifth month" of year 841 (1479 A.D.) (2), leaving fourteen /68/ legitimate children of which eight

/805/ 2. The Laotian year is lunar, beginning towards the middle of April. Every three years an extra month is inserted which doubles the eighth month. The numbering of the years is based on a great cycle of sixty years and on two others of ten and eight years. The Laotian era began in 638 A.D. In 1900 it entered the second year of its 22nd cycle and it was then year 1262 (Pi-Xuet-Tho-Sok). Year 841 in which King Tiakaphat died therefore corresponds to 638 + 841 = 1479 of the Christian era.

were ons and six daughters.

THÈNE-KHAM (SOUVANNA-BAN-LANG) (1445), KING 1479-1486.

727 Thène-Kham had actually held the power ever since the death
643* of his elder brother, and the situation was therefore unchanged when
175* he mounted the throne in 1479.

His first concern was with repairing the disasters of the in- 727
vasion, which were immense. The capital had been sacked and 643*
the people had fled into the forests. The fruits of a long century 175*
of peace had been almost completely destroyed, and everything had to be begun anew. For their part, the Annamites had suffered irreparable losses. The chronicles of Auguste Pavie say that when the king of Annam learned of the results of the expedition he "had a great grief because all those who had set out for the war (and /69/ had not come back) were the leaders and best people in the country." He deeply regretted having disobeyed the orders of their common ancestor Khoun-Borom (1) and forbade that in the future

1. Legend here agrees with certain philologists in attributing 197
Thaï origins to the Annamite race. (Cf. above, p. 23, note 1.)

"war should be waged against brothers."

This commentary is Laotian, and it cannot be shown that the 727
Annamites judged the adventure in so highly philosophic a manner. 175*
Whatever the case, this bloody struggle did not have any after-effects. It left no rancor in the heart of the fundamentally peaceful and carefree people of Lan-Xang, who were only too happy to have escaped a mortal danger and to be able to resume their nonchalant life singing. The court itself, shaken by intrigues and passions which were unknown to the common people, never had any idea of reprisals and resumed relations which rapidly became excellent again with the court of Annam.

What is more, the solid armature of the kingdom forged by the great princes of the preceding century hastened the recovery of the country, which had partly regained its former prosperity and its /70/ preeminent position among the Thaï principalities when King Thène-Kham died prematurely in his palace of Xieng-Thong in 1486.

LA-SÈNE-THAÏ (1463), KING 1486-1496.

His brother La-Sène-Thaï succeeded him and devoted the ten 643*
years of his reign to perfecting the work undertaken both at home 648*
and abroad. He particularly strengthened the ties of family and 175*
friendship which bound him to the king of Ayuthya and furthered trade exchanges between his subjects and their cousins on the Ménam (transit points were settled by common agreement for trading

the battle." 648*

Anou was then at Mahassay visiting one of his sons who was 175*
governor of the province, and he placed his last hope in the aid promised by the emperor of Annam. He waited for more than a year, but the Siamese finally discovered his retreat, ravaged Camon which they emptied of its inhabitants, and almost captured Anou himself. He had just time enough to cross the Annamitic Chain at the ridge of Hatrai and to take refuge in Hue.

Anou with the emperor of Annam (1828). The emperor Minh-Mang was somewhat embarrassed by the unexpected arrival of his vassal in his own palace. Gia-Long's son was at that time greatly preoccupied by a revolt which was being fomented in Cochinchina (1)

1. It was to break out in 1832 under the command of Le-Van-Khoi upon the death of Marshal Le-Van-Duyet, the comrade of Gia-Long in his struggle and a great friend of the French, whose tomb Minh-Mang had profaned.

and was not anxious to enter into an open struggle with Bangkok. He had just received a letter from the king of Siam, who was not unaware of the troubled situation in the southern provinces and who had expressed himself as follows: "We have successfully /173/ terminated a war against Vientiane. If Your Majesty were to form the resolve of sustaining Chao-Anou, we should be under a necessity of invading your states and dealing with you. We would further point out that the king of Vientiane, our tributary in the same right as that of Annam, refused obedience to us and declared war on us first."

The last attempt at resistance. Minh-Mang nonetheless welcomed the fugitive with apparent warmth and placed ten thousand men at his disposition.

Anou took the route which Ong-Hue had once followed through Vinh, the valley of the Song-Ca, Cua-Rao, Thado and Xieng-Khouang, but this army had received its orders so well that the greater part thereof abandoned him along the way on various pretexts.

Destruction of Vientiane. Having drained his full cup of bitter- 727
ness, Anou reached the walls of Vientiane to find only smoking 175*

727 ruins, for the city had been given over to fire and bloodshed. The
175* Siamese had deported six thousand families to the right bank of the Mekong, had taken all the elephants and removed four hundred warhorses. They had not, however, been able to lay hands on /174/ the royal treasures, which had been carefully hidden. Phia-Bodin had then left for Bangkok leaving matters in the hands of Phia-Papha and driving towards the Menam terrified throngs of men, women and children who were followed by long files of carts filled with plunder and statues taken from the overturned temples (1).

1. Including the Prabang, carried off for the second time.

645 Since Phia-Papha had only a small force at his disposal, he left
175* Vientiane, crossed the river, dispatched a messenger to his master and settled in Thabo to await the turn of events.

721 Battle of Makheng. According to a Siamese version, the Annamite
175* "commissioners" accompanying Anou interceded in his behalf and obtained his pardon. In this version, the king of Vientiane was given permission to settle in the city again, but then had all the Siamese who were there massacred by surprise, immediately sent out his troops in pursuit of Phia-Papha and was again defeated in the vicinity of Makheng (2).

2. Cf. Phanuphanthuvongswardja, op. cit. /Repression de la revolte de Vientiane, Bangkok, 1926. /

726 In the meantime the king of Siam, at the news of the rebel's re-
643* turn, had sent out a new army 20,000 men strong which reached
175* /175/ the banks of the river in forced marches. Then Anou realized that struggle was impossible, and so as not to bring down further misfortunes on his subjects he resolved to go to China. He left by the valley of the Nam-Song with only one of his wives and 120 devoted partisans (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique." Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896. /

648* Chao-Noi delivers up Anou (1831). The Siamese general sus-
175* pected that he had made his way towards Tran-Ninh and sent orders

to Chao-Noi to deliver the fugitive up to him as soon as he entered 648*
Chao-Noi's States. 175*

The only alternative was an unpleasant one for the king of Xieng-Khouang, who doubtless regretted, although somewhat tardily, that he had not given more support to his neighbor when there was perhaps still time. To give Anou up would be to expose himself to reprisals from their common suzerain the emperor of Annam, while to conceal his presence in his domain was surely to draw down the immediate wrath of Siam.

Captivity and death of Anou (1831-1835). Losing his head, he 727
met the most immediate threat by arresting Anou and holding him 643*
prisoner in /176/ Muong-Soui until the arrival of the Siamese en- 175*
voy, a Lu chieftain named Chao-Nan (1). The vanquished king

1. Up until the end of the eighteenth century the Lus formed /563/
an important group in the kingdom of Xieng-Kheng. Their /636/
chieftain, the Chao-Fa, who was then a tributary of Burma, had his residence at Muong-Sing. After Phia-Tak's victories over the Burmese, certain Lu families served the Siamese while others dispersed in the mountains of Luang-Prabang and Xieng-Mai and the Chao-Fa settled in Muong-You to remain under the protection of the king of Burma. See below, Chapter VIII, p. 331 (question of the Sip-Song-Panas), and 355.

was put in golden chains and sent on a richly caparisoned elephant to Bangkok, where he found a luxurious prison which had been prepared to receive him (1831). He remained there for four years and died in circumstances which have remained mysterious (2).

2. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique." Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./ Some accounts claim that he poisoned himself. Mgr. Pallegoix relates that he was placed in an iron cage and exposed to the insults of the populace, and that he succumbed to the bad treatment which he had to endure.

Destruction of the kingdom of Vientiane. Siam made an ordi- 727
nary Siamese province out of the old kingdom of Vientiane, a kind 175*
of military frontier land which it called "Lao Phoueun." It would /642/

727 be true to say that Phia-Bodin's soldiers left only "the land, the
175* water and the wild beasts of the forest." In accomplishing this
/642/ methodical devastation the Siamese had /177/ pursued a double goal: to repopulate their own territories which the Burmese had razed in the same way fifty years before, and to make sure that Annam would have no interest, in the future, in a region which had been emptied of its inhabitants (1). They completed the organiza-

1. Only a few remote muongs bordering on the mountains of Annam were spared, and their governors hastened to ask protection from the powerful neighboring emperor.

tion of their conquest by creating the hereditary fief of Bassac in the south and offering it to Chao-Houy as a reward for his treachery (2).

2. Chao-Houy reigned for thirteen years and died in 1840 at the age of sixty-three. (Annals of Bassac.)

648* The end of Chao-Noi (1832). Several of Anou's sons, however,
175* (whose names have come down to us: Chao-Phoui, Chao-Xang, Chao-Khi, Chao-Men and Chao-Nou) had been able to reach Hue where they had denounced Chao-Noi's conduct to Minh-Mang. The latter at once summoned the king of Xieng-Khouang to his court.

Chao-Noi realized that the painful hour of explanations had come. This made him all the more anxious to seek evasions, and in his place he sent the governor of Muong-Sen to whom he entrusted rich gifts in the hope of cozening his suzerain. All in vain. The emperor was furious. /178/ He had the delegate thrown into prison and sent a detachment of 1200 men under the command of a general to find Chao-Noi himself. The prince of Tran-Ninh had to resign himself to his departure with all his family, and he appeared before Minh-Mang who brought him to task most severely:

"How could you forget that King Anou was my vassal, and why did you give him up to Siam?"

Chao-Noi knew that his case had been judged in advance and that he was not risking anything, so he did not disguise his thoughts but replied rather insolently:

"I did not deliver up Chao-Anou. The Siamese army pursued him and took him prisoner. You are not ignorant of the fact that the king of Siam threatened anyone who should give support to Vientiane with his vengeance, and you yourself did not aid him.

Anou's old capital without difficulty and fortified themselves there, 726
completing the destruction of its ruins in their search for the royal 175*
treasures (1), and from there sent rapid incusrions into the present- 563

1. They tore down the central minaret of the That-Luong.

day muong of Borikhane.

The governor of Nongkhay, blackaded in his city which was 648*
thronged with fugitives, joined his cries of alarm to the appeal 726
which the king of Luang-Prabang had sent to Bangkok, and the 175*
Siamese government dispatched an army which first succeeded in 563
driving the Hos northward and then launched a flank attack on them by detaching eight hundred men and sending them to reinforce the forces which King Oun-Kham had mobilized. But the campaign which had been so forcefully begun soon softened in the face of the pirates' counterthrusts, /245/ for the latter had shut themselves into nearly impregnable fortresses. Pressed to make an end of it and to save face, the Siamese leaders came to terms with them and gave them permission to remain in the land in return for vague recognition of the suzerainty of Bangkok. As for the surviving inhabitants of the circumscriptions which had been purged of Hos, /727/
they were "severely blamed for having fled before the enemy" and driven along the Mekong with their flocks. "10,600, men, women and children departed. The exodus of these poor folk across this land of famine was a pitiful spectacle. Most of them died along the way, and a few were able to flee. Only six thousand reached Siam" (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./

Luang-Prabang had been miraculously spared, but anarchy of 579
the utmost violence was unleased at the very gates of the princi- 563
pality. The "Yellow Flags" invaded the Sip-Song-Chau-Thai, 727
whose leader Cam-Sinh had joined forces with the "Black Flags" 175*
of Ong-Liu (2), while the Meos and the Khas stirred up trouble in

2. Luu-Vinh-Phuoc, encamped at Lao-Kay.

their turn -- seemingly at first merely in self-defense against the Hos, then as a means of existence in the general confusion -- by

579 ravaging the region of Dien-Bien-/246/ Phu as far as Muong-Ngoi.
563 King Oun-Kham was growing old and carefree and felt incapable,
727 when left entirely to his own resources, of calming the mortal dis-
175* quietude of his people. Thus Siamese agents, the number of whom
/648/* was constantly on the increase, were welcomed all along the Upper Mekong as the only protectors from whom effective aid could be expected.

636 Relations with the cantons of the Black River. The man Cam-
175* Sinh, who was of Chinese origin himself, was nevertheless a friend of the princes of Luang-Prabang, but he was then too preoccupied with driving the invaders out of his own domains to lend any support to his neighbor.

His remote ancestors were military mandarins in Quang-Si and had settled three hundred years previously in Muong-Lai, which they had pacified in behalf of the king of Anna. Their authority extended around Lai-Chau as far as Yunnan in the north and Muong Theng in the south (Dien-Bien-Phu, the legendary cradle of the Laotian race). At this time they had reached a peaceful agreement
/728/ with the kings of Lan-Xang, most likely Nokeo-Koumane or Thammi-Karath who had just /247/ shaken off the Burmese yoke (1) and who

1. See above, pp. 97 and 100.

were glad to give them charge of the "white" and "black" Thais of the region in exchange for a triennial payment of thirty-three taels of silver "and one horse" (2). Relations had subsequently become

2. Cf. the Chronicle of Muong-Lai given by Deo-van-Tri to Auguste Pavie in 1894.

completely friendly and trusting to such a degree that when Cam-Sinh was in conflict with several of his relatives around 1850 he had not hesitated to place two of his children, one of whom was Deo-van-Tri, in Souka-Seum's hands (3).

3. See above, p. 213, note.

669 Revolt of the Khas of Muong-Ngoi (1876). It was not until 1876,
175* after he had temporarily driven back the Yellow Flags, that he was
563 able to send any reinforcements to Oun-Kham to sustain the struggle

648* A few weeks later his eldest son Kham-Souk was given permission to
175* return to his own land and left with a small armed force led by Louang Datzakorn, which preceded the Phya Surrissak's new army as an advance guard.

At the end of November Pavie was back in Luang-Prabang, and while he awaited news of the advance of the Pernot column which had left Lao-kay in the direction of Lai and Theng he settled temporarily with the Satou of the Wat-Mai. There he effortlessly resumed his close relations with the "good inhabitants" who all knew him and showed "so clearly that they thought him at home in the bonzery that one might have thought he had been living there for
727 years." The "enchanting city" was born again out of its ashes, en-
369 tirely new houses arouse out of the debris, the market took shape again and the girls who sold their wares there came back /274/ each day in greater numbers -- Laotian and Lu women from the country, timid Kha women from the nearby forest and girls from Luang-Prabang whom Pavie could identify by "the ease of their gestures and attitude, by their greater flexibility and distinction, by their sweet and familiar civility and by their coquettishness with its ingenuous charm." This "lovable people" began to live again in the aftermath of its misfortune with a rare carefreeness, as if it were unconscious of the present's uncertainties and in spite of the future's threats. "And each evening, by the light of the stars, troops of decisive young women and turbulent and laughing girls assembled in various spots and followed the khene players, singing until dawn..."

648* Although capable of appreciating all the poetry of this carefree
175* revival, Pavie was nonetheless anxious to set out and at long last make contact with the cantons of the highlands. He soon grew impatient at not receiving any precise information concerning the advance of the columns, of which he knew only that Colonel Pernot's forces had been concentrated in Phong-Tho and that the Oudri detachment had set out in the direction of Son-La. Moreover, the unusual length of time which Bangkok was taking to send him the three promised "commissioners" rightly made him suspect secret maneuvers on the part /275/ of the Siamese agents who had remained in the Twelve Cantons after the withdrawal of the Chao-Meun's expeditionary force.

648* edition), Paris, 1911./, p. 9.
175*
654 the name French Syndicate of Upper Laos, which placed a first ship-
/439/ ment of fifteen tons of merchandise at the expedition's disposal.

Pavie set sail again on November 17 for /293/ Bangkok, where he stayed for only two weeks, just long enough to make contact again with our representative in Siam and to reopen negotiations with the Siamese foreign minister, who was specially appointed for the purpose by King Chulalongkorn.

On January 23, 1890 he reached Hanoi and rejoined his old and his new companions (including, among the latter, the embassy attache Lefevre-Pontalis, the vice-consul Lugan, the trader Macey, Professor Counillon, the Postal Commissioner de Coulgeans, the naturalist Le Dantec and the officers Riviere, Friquegnon, de Malglaive, Dugast and Cogniard). He divided them into several groups of operators who scattered on February 3 throughout Tran-Ninh, Cammon and the region of Stung-Treng, while he himself set out for Luang-Prabang with a last group of "fervent disciples," where he arranged to meet all the members of the mission six months later so that they could coordinate their first labors over the winter months.

Duly provided, through the intermediary of Governor General Piquet, with the authority of the king of Cambodia and that of the emperor of Annam for settling questions of frontier delimitation, and with a passport from the Chinese government /294/ which would eventually allow him to explore the Yunnanese frontiers, he first
/624/ went to Muong-Lai where Deo-van-Tri was waiting for him. Faithful to his promise, now that all his brothers had all been freed Cam-Sinh's son awaited his arrival so that he could offer himself to the French authorities, "placing all his pride in giving himself up to that man who had restored calm to his land" (1).

1. Cf. Mission Pavie, "Geographie et Voyages," Vol. II, p. 12.

Pavie had an enchanted voyage. Although the magnificent valley of the Black River no longer held for him the powerful attraction of the unknown, still he felt a profound joy as he daily noted the changes for the better which had occurred since his last trip among
/727/ these peoples. "The influence of Pennequin (who had accompanied
/178/ him with Vacle and Lefevre-Pontalis) was there, clearly marked at each step... no more Flags in the well-known colors, all had

149: Reinach--6 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial 648 175

Such overt acts were the certain prelude to a more complete annexation, and finally shook off our torpor and quickened our vigilance.

Since the king of Annam, our new protégé, had rights over this region which were equal and in several cases superior to those of Siam, our intervention became necessary. It resulted in the treaty of May 7, 1886 (1).

(1) See Appendix VI.

[10] So that the treaty should not remain mere words, the Government of the French Republic sent M. Pavie (1) on a geographical and 175 727 654

(1) Now minister plenipotentiary.

political mission in Upper Laos and named him consul in Luang-Prabang, but without Siam's exequatur.

The work of this first mission provided precious information on all the regions invaded by the Hôs and later occupied by the Siamese.

With the help of Commander Pennequin (2), our valiant consul

(2) Now brigadier general; former interim governor general of Madagascar.

succeeded in driving the last bandits back to China and made the advance outposts which had been established by the Siamese withdraw to the far limits of the Mékong basin. Turning this situation to their profit, and now strong in the knowledge which they had acquired, our diplomats concluded with the court of Bangkok, so as to be able to face any difficult eventuality in the future, as well as to give us time for reflection, the arrangement of March 27, 1889, by the terms of which Siam agreed to respect the status quo (3).

(3) "By the terms of this agreement the Siamese troops were to halt their eastward march, and then evacuate the region of Cammon. A Siamese 'Kha-luong' was allowed to remain in this province for the time being, and we obtained the right to construct a military post at Napé." E. Picanon, 1900, Le Laos français. [648]

161 and a few plateaus of small extent which are the only spots suited to
311 farming and, in consequence, suited to settlements by human groups.

The uneven disposition of the country is the first cause of the low population density. It is not the only one.

161 For more than a century the Hôs and the Siamese have taken
175 turns in sacking the country, especially the northern part. Their methods differed, but the final result was the same. The former massacred the inhabitants after burning the villages, and forced those
• 727 who had escaped famine and torture to go and settle in another region. The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical fashion, and
648 depopulated the [125] land by making the inhabitants, livestock and elephants cross over to the right bank of the Mékong and oftentimes then taking them as far as the valley of the Ménam.

Fortunately this state of affairs, which prevailed when we took possession of Laos, is far from being immutable and there is every hope that the causes which gave birth to this forced departure will never again occur. The French occupation has safeguarded the population against the return of the old invasions, and in the same way the equity and justice of our administration make it possible for the natives to count on interior tranquillity and on the products of their labor.

Great efforts have also been made by our consuls in Siam and our administrators in Laos towards repopulating the country, and appreciable results have already been achieved in this direction. Thus by virtue of the agreement appended to the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, two thousand families including a minimum of eight thousand individuals of both sexes and a great deal of livestock who had previously been taken to Siam were able to return and settle on the left bank of the Mékong, the land of their origin.

168 Nothing, moreover, would stand in the way of an appeal to the other parts of Indo-China to repopulate Laos. The deltas, for example, are overflowing with people and their industrious population is so dense that the part of the land which is cultivable is by far too limited for each individual.

By offering these people a few advantages, especially in the beginning, it would be easy to attract them to Laos. By dint of hard work they would doubtless find existence comparatively easy there instead of being reduced, as they are today in certain regions, to a difficult struggle for survival.

Cochinchina, and this is quite a lucrative trade.

231 178 The following are the main points in Laos where the raising of oxen would have a good chance of success, in view of the nature of the soil and the forage plants which grow there:

1. Northern Laos. Valleys of the upper Nam-Tha; plain of Muong-Sing; plains of the Mekong and of the Nam-Hou in the province of Luang-Prabang; valleys of the Nam-Het and of the upper Song-Ca; plains of Tran-Ninh (2); plains between the Mekong, the Nam-Tone

[175 727] (2) Tran-Ninh used to be the greatest livestock region in Laos as recently as thirty some years ago, and all the buffalo and oxen needed in nearby regions came from there. The occupation of the region by the Hos and its pitiless depopulation by the Siamese completely halted this form of industry. It is beginning to be reborn with the peace and order which we have brought to this region, and the herds are reforming. Exports have already begun again in the last year.

Livestock is the principal form of wealth of the region, and could yield high profits to a European company which had sufficient capital at its disposition to engage in large-scale breeding. [113] (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, December 1900. Report of the Superior Resident on Tran-Ninh.)

and the Nam-Ngum, in the province of Vien-Tiane.

[405] 2. Southern Laos. Plain of Tha-Khek and basin of Mahasay, in the province of Cammon; plains of the Mekong, valleys of the Se-Bang-Hien and of its tributaries in the province of Song-Khone; plains between the Se-Set and the Sedone, valley of the Se-Katam, slope of Pou-Pai-Mai, in the province of Saravane; valleys of the Bla (1), of the Poko and of the Ayoun, in the province of

(1) The raising of oxen might be greatly increased here. In all the villages, especially the Catholic villages, I saw superb herds containing animals with every fine point. If breeding is not more extensive here, this is because the prices offered at Ang-Ke are not greatly higher than those at which the animals are sold in the region, since the Khas use large numbers of them to supplant buffaloes in their superstitious ceremonies. [113] (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, December 1899. Notes by the Superior Commandant of Lower Laos on the eastern region of Lower Laos.)

7: Thompson--367-368 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175, 726, 728

"The fuse which set off the accumulating grievances against Siam was the suicide of the French consul at Luang-Prabang, worn out by his struggles with the Siamese. His death shocked the Chamber of Deputies into voting unanimously for action, which had also the Commercial Syndicate's backing and Pavie's documentation on which to act. The military campaign which followed in 1893 drove all the Siamese from the east bank of the Mekong, from Cambodia to Khemmaret. These operations against Siam centred around three points, but the most important was the naval demonstration at Pak Nam. A treaty was subsequently concluded on the basis of the ultimatum which called [368] for evacuation of the Mekong's left bank and indemnity for Siamese aggression. Siam found to her sorrow that too much faith had been placed in English backing and France's indifference and preoccupation with Tonkin. If in carrying out the evacuation clause Siam forced wholesale deportations of the Laotians to her territory it was the final manifestation of her drang nach Osten."

68: Mouhot--85-86 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
Siam
116, 131, 728, 631, 162, 177.63
636.63

"A great number of the inhabitants of this province [HD: i.e. Saraburi, in Siam] are natives of Laos, and are principally captives brought from Vien Chang after the insurrection there. The provinces of Boatioume and Petchaboune are peopled by Siamese, for Laos proper only commences at M'Lôm. Boatioume, Petchaboune, Sôm, and some other provinces in the north and east, are governed by Siamese mandarins of rank more or less elevated; that is to say, several of them have the power of life and death, and are [86]then considered as viceroys. The most distant provinces belong to the empire of Siam, and form a part of it."

648* These perpetual struggles tired out the people of Lan-Xang, even
175* though this last campaign against Ayuthya might be justified as a
643* diversionary operation designed to disengage Cambodia (1).

1. The first pillage of Angkor by the Siamese occurred in 1357.

175* The death of Queen Nang-Yot-Keo in 1368, who exerted a power-
643* ful influence for good over Fa-Ngoun, marked the beginning of a new period of multiple excesses. The king's comrades in arms oppressed the people without any restraint, while Fa-Ngoun let things take their course, finding repose from his expeditions in unchecked pleasure and not respecting any woman among his subjects, not even his ministers' wives. In the end the latter could no longer endure him, and under the pressure of general discontent dared to depose him in 1373 and exile him to Muong-Nan, where he died in the following year at the age of fifty-eight.

Fa-Ngoun was the warrior king par excellence, always under arms. Without fear, if not /51/ without reproach, and imagining himself invulnerable after so many victories, he subjected by force or solely by his reputation all that was not Annamite or Cambodian in the Indo-Chinese peninsula. This great prince was the true founder of "Lan-Xang" unity He was a curious and paradoxical figure, and quite unexpected in the history of a people who were partial to order and tranquillity, whose pseudo-feudal regime was highly paternalistic, and who from this time on were to manifest characteristics of gentleness, nonchalance and gaiety which left them without resources against adversity.

648* SAM-SÈNE-THAÏ (OUN-HUEUN) (1356), KING 1373-1416.
643*

728 To the king of war succeeded the monarch of peace.

175* Oun-Hueun, the son of Phaya-Fa Ngoun, was seventeen years old when his father was deposed. He mounted the throne upon the departure of the exile and married Nang-Keo-Yopha, who had been promised to Fa-Ngoun as a hostage by the king of Ayuthya. He intervened peacefully in the affairs of Tran-Ninh in order to enthrone the son and then the grandson of Kham-Gno, to whom he returned the two wives who had been detained in Xieng-Thong ever since the last /52/ campaign of his father. He came out of a Burmese attack

victorious (1), and this expedition, which would seem to have 648*
643*

1. With the help of Trân-Ninh. 728
175*

been imposed on him, is the only campaign which is related during his long forty-three year reign.

According to the Annals he strictly observed the Buddhist teach- 643*
ing and followed, in a more docile manner than his father had 175*
done, the pious counsels of Pha-Maha-Pasaman-Thala-Tiao, his /645
spiritual director, "and so his kingdom knew a long period of 792/
peace and prosperity." He was a great builder of temples, and erected the pagodas of Manorom, Ouposot (with a library which was given the manuscripts which had been brought from Angkor), and Xieng-Kang which was built in memory of his daughter, the young princess Sivayaka, who died of smallpox at the age of twelve.

The Three Hundred Thousand Thaïs. In 1376 he gave orders 161
for a general census of the inhabitants of Lang-Xang. The results 175*
gave 300,000 "registered" Thaïs, not counting women, children, 654
bonzes, foreigners, slaves and Khas (2), and Oun-Hueun took /53/

2. The number of registered non-Thaïs was about 400,000.

/C.A.M. Translator's note. Page 53 is devoted to a map: "Lan-Xang and surrounding regions at the death of Fa-Ngoun (1374)". /
as his reigning name Phaya-Sam-Sène-Thaï, the King of the Three Hundred Thousand Thaïs.

Social Organization. These folk then constituted a society 631
grouped by families and divided into Nobles and Commoners. The 565
Nobles were given certain privileges and helped to administer the 175*
kingdom, from the dignitaries who were princes of royal blood down to the simple officials who were responsible for collecting taxes, for assembling labor drafts, for transporting goods, etc.

In the provinces the heads of circumscriptions (Muongs) were elected either from the Nobles or from the Commoners, but the choice of the electors generally fell on the son or some relative of the person who was to be replaced, unless there were some unworthiness or notorious incapability.

When he returned to his States, Setthathirath endeavored to 726
win over permanently to his cause the chieftains of Lakhone, 643*
Xieng-Khong, Xieng-Hai, /80/ Muong-Pray and Muong-Nan who 648*
had not supported Bureng-Naung, and when he was sure of their 175*
support he advanced as far as Xieng-Sen. But there he soon learned
that the governor of Xieng-Hai had been taken prisoner by the
Burmese and that his sister Nang-Kalay had been treacherously ab-
ducted. In spite of his anger, he judged it prudent to withdraw in
the company of his allies, who left their governments in the hands
of Bureng-Naung's lieutenants.

Treaty of alliance with Ayuthya (1560). In order to oppose the 728
common danger, he took the first steps towards reconciliation with 643*
the king of Ayuthya, to whom he proposed a treaty of alliance. 648*
The Siamese, who were rebuilding the ruins of their capital with 175*
courage but not without disquietude, joyfully accepted and their
prince gave one of his daughters to Setthathirath. A frontier
pyramid was built on the watershed between the basin of the Mekong
and that of the river of Nan which flows down to the Menam. Sol-
emnly surrounded by their courts, the two kings swore reciprocal
friendship and assistance: "May the ties that bind us be prolonged
from father to son down to our grandchildren and great-grandchil-
dren; may quarrels be unknown between us and peace continue to
reign /An unpaged photograph is inserted between pp. 80 and 81:
"The That-Luong at Vientiane."--Translator/ /81/ until the day
when the sun and the moon fall to the surface of the earth" (1).

1. Cf. Lefevre-Pontalis, La lutte des Thaïs contre les
Birmans au seizieme siecle.

Vientiane, capital of Lan-Xang (1563). In order to avoid any 643*
surprise by the common enemy as well as to maintain the connec- 648*
tion with Ayuthya, Setthathirath left Luang-Prabang permanently 175*
and transferred the capital of Lan-Xang to Vientiane.

He was the true founder of this city which owes to him the 633
splendor with which it shone during all of the seventeenth century 643*
and part of the eighteenth. He first surrounded it with solid bas- 175*
tion fortifications (2), then in the center near the river built the 172

2. From the vestiges which still remained around 1900 be- /712/
fore the canal was dug and the circular boulevard laid out,

648* attitude, which was by tums hostile and benevolent with
175* respect to Nguyen-Anh, was less incoherent than might be supposed. Inspired by the evident desire to play the role of arbiter in Annam's affairs, it would react in accordance with circumstances. Thus after having taken umbrage at the foreign aid which the prince received after 1788, the court of Bangkok later sent him sizeable reinforcements whose ranks were swelled by Laotian mountaineers (Cf. ibid., p. 114) and who came to take part in the siege of Qui-Nhon (1801).

When the Tay-Son had been defeated and Nguyen-Anh, under the name of Gia-Long, had become the leader of a powerful empire united under his authority, he had responded in 1810 to the appeal by Cambodia when it was again invaded by Siam. He had sent troops before whom the Siamese had withdrawn without fight-
/728/ ing, and by the treaty of Ba-Lich had established a kind of protectorate over the kingdom (1813).

/209/ His successor Minh-Manh had encountered Siam in the violent insurrection of Khoi in Cochinchina (1832). After "extinguishing it in blood" he had attacked Anou's vanquisher, the old general Bodin, who had profited by the circumstances in order to dispossess the Cambodian king Neac-Ang-Chan. He had forced him to beat a retreat (1835) and in the following year when Ang-Chan died the emperor of Annam had divided Cambodia into thirty-three provinces which were linked administratively with Cochinchina. As was his wont, Bodin had devastated and depopulated the land as he left.

SOUKA-SEUM, KING OF LUANG-PRABANG 1798. KING 1836-1850.

175* Things had gone thus far when Mantha-Thourath, king of Luang-Prabang, died. His eldest son Souka-Seum whom he had chosen to succeed him had been residing in Bangkok for some ten years (1).

1. See above, p. 202.

He was held there as a hostage and did not receive the investiture from Siam until 1839.

What took place in the principality during his absence? We do not know, and no chronicle /210/ has so far confirmed Schreiner's astounding account of a prince of Luang-Prabang who, while Tonkin

579 ravaging the region of Dien-Bien-/246/ Phu as far as Muong-Ngoi.
563 King Oun-Kham was growing old and carefree and felt incapable,
727 when left entirely to his own resources, of calming the mortal dis-
175* quietude of his people. Thus Siamese agents, the number of whom
/648/* was constantly on the increase, were welcomed all along the Upper Mekong as the only protectors from whom effective aid could be expected.

636 Relations with the cantons of the Black River. The man Cam-
175* Sinh, who was of Chinese origin himself, was nevertheless a friend of the princes of Luang-Prabang, but he was then too preoccupied with driving the invaders out of his own domains to lend any support to his neighbor.

His remote ancestors were military mandarins in Quang-Si and had settled three hundred years previously in Muong-Lai, which they had pacified in behalf of the king of Anna. Their authority extended around Lai-Chau as far as Yunnan in the north and Muong Theng in the south (Dien-Bien-Phu, the legendary cradle of the Laotian race). At this time they had reached a peaceful agreement
●/728/ with the kings of Lan-Xang, most likely Nokeo-Koumane or Thammi-Karath who had just /247/ shaken off the Burmese yoke (1) and who

1. See above, pp. 97 and 100.

were glad to give them charge of the "white" and "black" Thais of the region in exchange for a triennial payment of thirty-three taels of silver "and one horse" (2). Relations had subsequently become

2. Cf. the Chronicle of Muong-Lai given by Deo-van-Tri to Auguste Pavie in 1894.

completely friendly and trusting to such a degree that when Cam-Sinh was in conflict with several of his relatives around 1850 he had not hesitated to place two of his children, one of whom was Deo-van-Tri, in Souka-Seum's hands (3).

3. See above, p. 213, note.

669 Revolt of the Khas of Muong-Ngoi (1876). It was not until 1876,
175* after he had temporarily driven back the Yellow Flags, that he was
563 able to send any reinforcements to Oun-Kham to sustain the struggle

175 "Our seamen," as M. Flourens put it, "had cut their way through
726 the barrages, the torpedos and the obstacles of all kinds which the Siamese Government had laid out in order to shield, behind a barrier which it believed insurmountable, the brazen despicableness of its incessant provocations."

175 The news aroused indignation as soon as it became known in France, and in its session of July 18 the Chamber authorized the
• 728 Foreign Minister to deliver the following ultimatum to the Siamese Government:

648 1. Recognition of French rights to the left bank of the Mékong and to its islands.

2. Evacuation of the Siamese outposts established on the left bank of the Mékong, within the space of one month.

3. Satisfaction for the aggressions committed.

4. Punishment of the guilty.

5. An indemnity of two millions for damages caused.

6. Deposit of the sum of three millions as security, or payment of the tax revenues from the provinces of Battambang and Siem-Reap (2).

(2) See Appendix IXa.

Siam refused at first to accept these conditions, and on July 22 offered to cede the left bank as far as the 18th parallel, thus wishing to keep Vien-Tiane, Luang-Prabang, Tran-Ninh, the Hua-Pahn, Muong-Poukha, Xieng-Khong, Muong-Sing, the two Muong-Hou and the Pahn-Na on the left bank. It was counting, and with some reason, on the support of Great Britain.

Lord Roseberry and Ed. Grey tried, but in vain, to arouse [26] opinion in London and to provoke diplomatic intervention. The Foreign Office refused categorically. Discouraged by this sudden abandonment and intimidated by the resolute attitude of the French Government (1), the king of Siam accepted the conditions which had

(1) In accordance with the Department's instructions, M. Pavie had struck his flag and left Bangkok on July 26 aboard the Inconstant.

been offered without further ado. M. Le Myre de Vilers was named Ambassador Extraordinary and arrived to conclude a treaty with the Court of Siam which should be based on the ultimatum. Signed on

149: Reinach--18 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial
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October 3, 1893, in Bangkok, it was ratified by the French parliament in January 1894.

The following are the clauses of the treaty (2):

(2) See Appendix X.

Treaty concluded in Bangkok on October 3, 1893, between the government of the French Republic and the government of His Majesty the king of Siam, in order to bring an end to the disputes which have arisen between the two lands and strengthen friendly relations.

The President of the French Republic and H.M. the king of Siam, wishing to bring an end to the disputes which have arisen in recent times between the two States and to strengthen the friendly relations which have existed between France and Siam for centuries past, have named as their plenipotentiaries:

The President of the French Republic,

M. Charles Marie Le Myre de Vilers, Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor and of the White Elephant, Minister plenipotentiary of the 1st class, deputy;

And H.M. the king of Siam, His Royal Highness Prince Devawongse Varoprakar, knight of the order of Maha Chakrkri, grand officer of the Legion of Honor, etc., minister of Foreign Affairs; who, after communicating their full powers to one another and having recognized them as in good and due form, have agreed to the following articles:

ARTICLE I. The Siamese Government renounces all claim to all of the territories on the left bank of the Mékong and to the islands in this river.

ARTICLE 2. The Siamese Government agrees not to maintain or circulate ships or armed vessels on the waters of the Great Lake [Grand Lac], the Mékong or their tributaries within the limits specified in the following article.

ARTICLE 3. The Siamese Government shall not construct any fortified outpost or military establishment in the provinces of Battambang and Siem-Reap or within a radius of twenty-five kilometers from the right bank of the Mékong.

ARTICLE 4. In the zones specified in Article 3, police duty shall be carried out, according to [27] custom, by the local authorities with only such contingents as are strictly necessary. No regular or

648 irregular armed force shall be maintained there.

•728 ARTICLE 5. The Siamese Government agrees to open negotiations with the French Government, within a period of six months, with a view to drawing up regulations governing customs and trade in the territories specified in Article 3, and to revising the treaty of 1856.

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Until such an agreement has been reached, no customs duties shall be established in the zone specified in Article 3. Reciprocity shall continue to be accorded by the French Government to the products of the aforesaid zone.

ARTICLE 6. Since the development of navigation along the Mékong may necessitate certain construction projects on the right bank, or the establishment of boat relays and depots for wood and coal, the Siamese Government agrees to provide, at the request of the French Government, all necessary facilities for this purpose.

ARTICLE 7. French citizens, subjects and nationals may circulate and engage in trade freely in the territories specified in Article 3, when provided with a pass issued by the French authorities. Reciprocity shall be accorded to the inhabitants of the aforesaid zones.

ARTICLE 8. The French Government reserves the right to establish consulates wherever it deems suitable in the interest of its nationals, and particularly at Korat and Muong-Nan.

ARTICLE 9. In case of any difficulties in interpretation, the French text alone shall be deemed valid.

ARTICLE 10. The present treaty must be ratified within a period of four months dating from the day of its signing.

In faith of which the below-named respective plenipotentiaries have signed the present treaty in duplicate and have affixed their seals thereto.

Done at the palace of Vallabha, in Bangkok, October 3, 1893.

(Signed) Le Myre de Vilers
(Signed) Devawongse Varoprakar

An agreement of which the following is the text was joined to the preceding treaty:

149: Reinach--20 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

AGREEMENT

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The plenipotentiaries have determined, in the present agreement, the different measures and steps involved in carrying out the peace treaty signed this day, and the ultimatum accepted on last August 5.

ARTICLE 1. The last Siamese military posts on the left bank [28] of the Mékong shall be evacuated within the maximum space of one month dating from September 5.

ARTICLE 2. All fortifications in the zone specified in Article 3 of the treaty dated this day shall be razed.

ARTICLE 3. The authors of the attempts on Tong-Xieng-Kham and Kammoun shall be judged by the Siamese authorities. A representative of France shall be present at the judgment and shall see to it that the penalties pronounced are carried out.

The French Government reserves the right to judge whether the sentences are sufficient and, if need arise, to demand a new trial before a mixed tribunal whose composition it shall determine.

ARTICLE 4. The Siamese Government shall place at the disposition of the Minister of France in Bangkok or of the French frontier authorities all French, Annamite and Laotian subjects of the left bank and the Cambodians who are being detained on any grounds whatsoever. It shall in no way impede the return to the left bank of former inhabitants of this region.

ARTICLE 5. The Ban-Bien of Tong-Xieng-Kham and his retinue shall be brought to the French Legation by a delegate of the Foreign Minister, as well as the weapons and the French flag seized by the Siamese authorities.

ARTICLE 6. The French Government shall continue to occupy Chantaboun(1) until such time as the provisions of the present Agreement have been carried out, particularly the complete evacuation

(1) We are still there in 1901.

and pacification both of the left bank and the zones specified in Article 3 of the treaty dated this day.

In faith of which the respective plenipotentiaries have signed the present agreement and affixed their seals thereto.

149; Reinach--21 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

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Done in duplicate at the palace of Vallabha, in Bangkok, October 3, 1893.

(Signed) Le Myre de Vilers.
(Signed) Devawongse Varoprakar.

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It became perfectly apparent, after the signing of the treaty and the additional agreement, that these two acts were nothing but palliatives. Only the out-and-out annexation of Siam, in addition to the fact that it would have greatly enlarged our colonial empire, would have enabled us to hold the British and the Germans, who were our commercial rivals, in check.

For a long time the Siamese had been saying, "The day when we are forced to evacuate we shall leave nothing but the land, the water and the wild beasts of the forests." And, as a matter of fact, [29] they had applied this maxim almost to the letter in 1827 and 1840 when, out of fear of Annamite reprisals on the left bank, they had forced people and livestock to follow them over to the right bank and all the way to the Ménam valley. This procedure was altogether too simple for them not to have had the idea of trying it again in 1893. Time was the only thing they lacked to carry out their sinister plan, but they left us only a depopulated and devastated land, keeping for themselves the Laos of the right bank and the rich provinces of Angkor and Battambang, that is to say the well-populated and fertile territories which had never suffered, as the present-day Laos, several invasions in less than a century.

The hesitancy of the court of Bangkok when the ultimatum was delivered, as well as its attempts to keep the territories of the left bank of the Mékong above the 18th parallel, were once more a clear indication of British interference. Although not apparent, British influence had never ceased to make itself felt in the course of all these negotiations. The goal of this hidden influence was to preserve British preponderance in the Pahn-Na and, since Britain was already master of the kingdom of Ava, to facilitate the achievement of its plans for a railway towards S'sémao and Yunnan-Sen.

It was nevertheless forced to come out into the open, and demanded that a neutral zone or sort of buffer state be established between the British and French territories along the Upper Mékong. It aimed at preventing us from occupying territory which had been

10: d'Orleans--332 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 202, 346, 731, 793

"After leaving Ouate Mai, we ascend the small hill which commands a fine view of the town, about 350 feet above, and upon the summit of which are several small buildings and a gilt belfry in which is hung a tam tam about three feet in length. Several men keep guard over it and beat it to let the bonzes know when it is the hour for study, or else an alarm bell in case of fire. There is a grand view from here, as the city is at our feet, half hidden among the cocoa trees, one part, which was burnt last year and has been rebuilt, being less wooded than the others."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

the greatest artistic interest. I asked the headman if it would be 796
possible to take any, as the bonze was crumpling and smashing them 782
vigorously with his broom. But the chief shook his head regretfully. 532
Buddhism had degenerated in these remote provinces and was 285
swamped with re-emergent spirit cults. These objects had been dedicated to the *phi*[1] and would have to be burnt in a ritual fire. The *phi* would also receive the burnt essence, I noticed, of a large, very obscene, and no doubt magically valuable picture.

At about this time when the bonze was treading underfoot the 669
village's artistic output of several months, a party of Issarak or Viet- 726
Minh, timing their action to coincide with the convoy's arrival at 731
Moung Kassy, had set fire to the forest just south of the post. A steady breeze was blowing from that quarter, and the fire, started over a width of about a mile and fanning out as it advanced, moved slowly towards the fort.

Coming up over the river bank it took us some time to realize what was happening. There was a haze; but then there was always a haze in Laos, although by this time of day it should have been clearing and not thickening. And then we heard the crackling, punctuated with the sharp pops, which might have been distant rifle fire, but which were the explosions of thick stems of bamboo. Looking up then we saw the curtain of smoke hanging over Muong Kassy, white at the top, and black at its base and streaked occasionally by lance-points of flame, which were still two miles away.

We ran to where the car was parked, started it and tried to drive down the road towards the fire. Dupont was as pleased with it as July 14th. In about fifty yards we got tangled up with the convoy and had to leave the car on the side of the road and run on. The fire was advancing on a ragged front and was as irresistible as a volcano. Black smoke was being blown before it so that at first the flames were out of sight; but when they came through they were two hundred feet high — twice the height of the tallest tree. It went forward in zigzagging rushes; eating its way quickly through the bamboo

[1] [i.e., spirits. — Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

669 thickets, which went up like oil wells. A lane of fire had broken
726 right out of the general advance and its spear-point was wandering
731 up over the hill-side, already level with the fort. Large clumps of green forest were being left behind or encircled and then consumed at leisure as the fire went through the bamboo. It caught at the lianas, too, and went up a tree from top to bottom in shrivelling streamers – just like Christmas decorations catching fire. The noise of the exploding bamboos was becoming deafening and the sky was covered in a cloud through which black ash streamed up like flotsam carried on flood-waters. I noticed, though, that only the tops of some of the trees had caught on the other side of the road.

Orders were given to prepare to evacuate the fort. There was a great deal of ammunition and thousands of gallons of petrol, stored in cans, and the soldiers were swarming like ants stacking it in the road and loading the lorries. Confusion developed and matured into chaos, largely caused by the arrival of half the convoy, which blocked the road and prevented the lorries being driven out of the fort. Before an evacuation could be made the convoy had to be moved on through the village, but half the drivers couldn't be found. They had wandered off to look at the fire and taken their starting keys with them.

In the meanwhile the Laotians and Chinese rushing out of their houses with their beds and bedding, and piling their stocks of groceries between the wheels of the cars had made rapid movement impossible, even when the drivers could be rounded up. One family was actually at work taking their house down.

And then as an hour passed in struggling tumult with the convoy at last bludgeoned on through the village and safely parked on the other side, and hundreds of crates and cans loaded on to the lorries, the wind veered and the main front of the fire went by, about half a mile away. A few offshoots coming in our direction burned feebly for a while among the bamboos, and it was all over.

to get something which is above the head of someone else. A polite 576
person realizes that it is very impolite to touch the head of another /826/
person, even that of his closest friend. To hit someone over the head with the mak kok is a very grave offense. The mak kok, which signifies olive, is a fist formed in such a manner that the middle finger sticks out beyond the other fingers. To point out an object with one's foot is the gesture of a very crude person. A polite person always avails himself of the index finger of his right hand to point out something to someone.

On a visit. --When one arrives at the house of a Laotian 574
one walks very softly and greets in the Laotian manner. If the owner 576
of the house /973/ extends his hand, one should greet him in the European manner. Once in the living room one must wait till one is told "Sit down" before sitting down. The polite person asks his guest to sit down immediately after the exchange of greetings.

When you enter the house of a European, never walk in stealthily the way you do with a Laotian. The European would think that you had come to stab him. You should walk in such a way that he can hear you, without, at the same time, stamping on the floor with all your strength because you would, in so doing, frighten the master of the house. Before entering, you must knock on the door quite forcefully; then you must wait till you are told: "Come in!" or till someone comes to open the door for you. The Laotian visitor does not dare knock on the door for fear of committing an impoliteness, but he coughs outside the door.

In the living room the master of the house has arranged all the furniture in a certain way. When you are invited to sit down, /353/
you should do so without moving the chair that is designated to you. If you are offered a cigarette, you may refuse politely if you do not not smoke. If you do smoke, you should accept it. You will notice that there are ash-trays in the room. Use them. Do not drop the ashes from your cigarette on the table, the chair or on the floor.

To receive something from a superior, the polite Laotian extends his right hand supported by his left hand.

Visiting the sick. --When one of our acquaintances has fallen 734
sick, we must inquire about him by paying him a visit. If one is prevented from doing so by something important, one can have a

734 friend take one's place.

Laotians when they pay a visit to a sick person, prattle noisily,
574 ask the sick person a great number of unnecessary questions, and
576 sometimes tell him stories to cheer him up. This custom must stop. The patient, who is tired, needs rest. The visit one pays him should not last longer than ten minutes.

574 Condolence visit.--The Laotian ceremony connected with
576 the condolence visit is the opposite of the Western ceremony. The
764 The visitor, instead of appearing sad before the family of the deceased, is gay and smiling.

In order to give you an idea of what goes on in a house in which a death has taken place among the Laotians, I shall content myself by citing here certain passages from my article, "The custom
764 of funeral ceremonies in the land of Laos" (1): "Those who believe
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576 1. In Kinnary, No. 4, November, 1946.

in the existence of the phi place a tray of food intended for the deceased near the coffin. Furthermore they place, at the head of the coffin, a sword marked with a cross with chalk, together with a superstitious formula in order to prevent the phi from stealing the coffin away from the deceased. The coffin has to be watched over day and night. The watchers talk, play certain games, or engage in any other diversion. /274/

/825/ "In the course of this watch cats are also prevented from prowling around the coffin. A cat which were to jump across would provoke the resurrection of the dead person, according to what certain people say.

"The house in which the person has died is called heuan di (happy house). There one works, sings, dances, and plays. From it can be heard the sound of orchestras and shouts of joy. Such spectacles have something disconcerting about them to the eyes of strangers. Nevertheless, one should not regard this behavior as a sign of irreverence towards the deceased person. Despite its smiling appearance, the family of the deceased suffers profoundly. It abstains from violent shedding of tears and from public lamentations because it considers a discreet grief more dignified and the sense one has of death in this way a nobler one."

/779/ It would be difficult not to respect this tradition which stems

10: d'Orleans--332 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 735, 788

"The temples are public, and they who have no family home are entitled to sleep in them, while upon week days the people come to make offerings of flowers, and perform libations with water, listening to the advice given them by the priests, while the women tell their beads, and signify that they have got through them by blowing through a sea shell."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

241 sufficient for his requirements. If there are six members of the
461 family, six standard, equal sized portions of land will be cultivated.
511 If a child is born into the family another piece of land is cleared and
792 worked. When a member of the family dies, whether it be a baby or the grandfather, cultivation of his portion will be stopped. Just enough is produced for the family to eat and to provide a small surplus sold in the market – *with the bonze's approval* – to buy occasional strict necessities, like a silk shawl and a bicycle for the
735 daughter. There is no social insurance and there are no poor. The
556 old and the sick are supported by the young, or, where they are
792 left without able-bodied providers, by the community, and the
771 bonzes give instructions for the necessary land to be placed under cultivation for them. The accumulation of wealth which is not to be used for definite, approved purposes, causes a man to lose prestige among his neighbours, just, as in the West, the process is reversed. The main difference, it seems, between Buddhism in Indo-China, and Christianity – apart from any question as to their relative merits – is that, whether we admire it or not, the former is largely put into practice.

It is a stimulating reflection that the Western millionaire, obsessed for the sake of social distinction with the amassing of enormous possessions – little of which he can personally consume – would attain the same ends of personal celebrity under a Laotian Buddhistic order of things by his priestly austerities – by embracing the most abject and prestige-conferring form of poverty.

181 For this reason perhaps the local Evangelist missionary and his
771 wife have made no converts. Like all who have lived among the
785 Laotians they are charmed with them – although, of course,
797 disappointed at their blindness. They also deplore their immorality.

In the matter of converts the Evangelists have been no more unsuccessful than their Portuguese, Spanish and French forerunners. The Laotians having little capacity for abstractions, either in their

346 Pagodas are always built on ground which has been perfectly leveled, is quite extensive and is surrounded by a wooden palisade or brick wall of elbow height.

[485] Within the pagoda enclosures there are bonzeries and dependent structures to serve as quarters for the bonzes, schools for their pupils and hostelries for travelers.

735 The construction and upkeep of pagodas are entirely dependent on the generous liberality of the faithful. Thus these edifices can be used
346 as a criterion for discovering both the state of prosperity of a region and the religious faith of its inhabitants.

[778] As used to be the case for our churches, Laotian pagodas and even their enclosures are, according to the customs of the land, sanctuaries which confer immunity against legal prosecution for certain crimes and misdemeanors.

[527] It is also in the enclosure and sometimes under the cloisters and verandas of the pagodas that the inhabitants gather on the legal holidays, and also private holidays, which are known as "Ngans".

844 Childbirth. Dr. Estrade describes the delivery of a woman of southern Laos as follows. The preliminaries, the operation itself and post-delivery procedure are the same, with only slight differences in detail, in northern Laos, and we may therefore quote Dr. Estrade's description as applicable to all of Laos in general.

"Childbirth never takes place in the house inhabited by the pregnant woman or her direct relatives, but always in the home of a neighbor or distant relative who gives hospitality to the patient until she is up and about again. The duration of pregnancy is counted in moons, as in all calculations of time, the moon being the essential element for the Laotian in the measurement of time and the occurrence of a great many phenomena. When a woman reaches the last moon
777 of her pregnancy she takes certain precautions all tending to delay
821 delivery until the first phase of the new moon, since births during the last phases are signs of misfortune [189] such as the death of the child, deformity, etc. These prejudices have such force that parents are
[782] careless in caring for any child born during the last phases of the moon, and in such a case all of their effort goes into prayers, offerings to the bonzes and the making of votive offerings (1)

(1) This assertion should not, however, be taken too literally or in any general sense. This is a prejudice which is kept up by the bonzes in their own self-interest, and is easy to see through. (Author's note.)

flowers, pompoms and multicolored cotton streamers. Thick wax candles are stuck to the uprights, into which coins, gold nuggets, gold leaf and precious stones are sunk.

The wax is destined for worship purposes and the other offerings will be used for the upkeep of pagodas or for ornamenting sacred statues. The bonzes are not forgotten, for on the platform of the "Pha-Sate," either between the uprights or in special baskets ad hoc, there are articles of clothing, bedclothes, kettles, talaps, betel accessories, etc.

The day preceding the delivery of the "Tone-Pheung" to the pagoda is spent in making all kinds of preparations--cooking food, making betel quids, cigarettes, cakes and other necessary items [223] for the morrow's celebration. In the evening there is a kind of rehearsal for the "Ngan" in which the singers and musicians practice until an extremely late hour while the mothers and married women continue to work in the presence of the young men and girls talking merrily.

On the morning of the day when the "Tone-Pheung" is to be presented to the pagoda the bonzes are invited to a copious feast which continues long after their departure among relatives, friends and neighbors. The bonzes come back in the afternoon to bless the "Tone-Pheung" and to say certain prayers. Then, towards five in the afternoon, the procession forms and five or six bearers, depending on the weight, take the stretcher supporting the offering and raise it to their shoulders. The men follow first after the procession, and then the women, and the latter carry lighted wax candles in their hands. Musicians bring up the rear, and the whole crowd moves toward the pagoda by the longest route. There the "Pha-Sate" or the "Tone-Pheung" is taken around the enclosure three times and finally put down at the entrance to the pagoda. Those present place their candles in a special holder at the foot of the great statue of Buddha, and then withdraw while the bonzes recite prayers in the presence of whoever is making the offering and his relatives.

The guests then return to the home of their host, where the celebration goes on all night and sometimes even lasts into the following day.

The bonzes remove the wax from the "Pha-Sate" and use it to make candles for worship purposes. The flowers are placed at the feet of Buddha, and the coins and precious stones are put aside.

He[1] must never look at a woman. However a few old women are 792
seen in the pagoda. These are the devotees. They are dressed in 785
white, their heads are completely shaved, and they lead a life of
observance and asceticism which is as rigorous as that of the monks. 562
They render small services to the bonzes, decorate the altar, etc.,
but they live outside the enclosure of the pagoda.

Laotian Buddhism.

In a recent pamphlet, His Excellency Thao Nhouy Abhay, former 779
Minister of National Culture and Education, wrote: "In its intrinsic 795
substance Buddhism is deeply tolerant, but ours [26] has truly become
not austere enough." Therefore he proposes some necessary reforms
which would quickly raise the intellectual and moral level of the
bonzes in Laos. There are two sects in Laos: the Mahanikay and the [792]
Thammayut. The only difference between the two is the way in
which they consider that monastic rule should be observed. Nothing
distinguishes them in appearance except the color of the monastic
robe of the Mahanikay, which is brownish-ochre almost chestnut.
The king is the chief of the Buddhist clergy. As for the believer 643
who regularly observes his religious duties, he is satisfied with little [735]
and gives much in alms. Buddhist tales and particularly Laotian
texts, among them the Pannasajataka (Ha Sip Xat), quote all the
merits acquired for future lives by those who give alms and, above
all, feed the bonzes.

Religious Literature.

The basis of the religious literature of Laos is the Buddhist 779
Tripitaka. These "Three Baskets" contain the integral "word of the 538
Buddha."

The basket [corbeille] of Vinaya (Vinayapitaka) is the rule of monastic life. It consists of five sections: Patimokkha, Mahavagga, Coullavagga, Souttavibhanga and Parivara. The Patimokkha is meant to be read in public (particularly on the feasts of the eighth month), on the periodic days of confession. The Mahavagga and the Coullavagga give the list of daily obligations, illustrated by examples drawn from the life of the Buddha. The Souttavibhanga is really a commentary on the Patimokkha; finally the Parivara is both a revision and a catechism.

The Basket of the Soutta (Souttapitaka) contains an enormous amount of preaching and of edifying tales. Among others, the famous Dhammapada, a treasury of the sayings of the Buddha and the Jatakas are to be found in this basket.

[27] The third basket is that of Abhidharma and consists of seven

1 [i.e., a bonze -- Analyst]

796 1. To have had carnal relations with anyone, even an animal.
2. To have stolen the property of others.
3. To have killed.
792 4. To have falsely usurped spiritual perfections, and with the intention of personal profit.

783 Then follows a list of lesser sins. When the enumeration is completed, the reader addresses the monks, repeating three times the following question:

"Now, I ask the reverend ones: Are you free of these sins? And for the second time: Are you pure? And for the third time I ask: Are you pure?" If everyone is silent, the reader says: "The reverend Ones are free of these sins, therefore they are silent, that is how I understand it."

In this way are catalogued in more than two hundred paragraphs, without much order, the precepts dealing with the daily life of the monks, their housing, their food and drink. No detail however irrelevant or insignificant is omitted.

In Laos as in Cambodia "during the entire rainy season, a taper of the Vassa must burn in each pagoda. This consists of a more or less richly carved, painted, wooden cylinder into which is poured virgin wax around a wick" (E. Porée-Maspéro). Before going into retreat, the bonzes are given garments, then the people form a procession and enter the pagodas where they deposit their taper.

196 [43] Ho Khao Padap Dinh--the Feast of the Dead of the Ninth Month

773 This feast is celebrated on the fifteenth day of the waning moon of the ninth month and is accompanied by offerings to the bonzes.

735 A Jataka (Sadhitissaraja) taken from the Ha Sip Xat tells us the benefits acquired by celebrating this feast.

"Two poor devout Buddhist woodcutters sold the produce of their labor and bought two large urns. Into them they put some rice, a few pieces of sugar cane, two bowls, four bananas, some meat and fish, and some delicacies. They offered all this to a bonze on the day of the feast of the dead and vowed to be born again in a better state. As a result of this act of charity they were born again into a royal family. The husband became king and his wife queen. The Buddha then said to those who were listening to this story: "When an act of charity is done for the feast of the dead, one attains three blisses: the terrestrial bliss of being king, the celestial bliss of becoming Indra and finally the supreme bliss of Nirvana."

173: Deydier--28 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

Ho Khao Slak--The Feast of the Tenth Month. 796. 735

This feast is similar to that taking place in Cambodia at the same period. Offerings are made to the bonzes by casting lots. The name of the bonze is written on small tickets which are mixed up in a cup. Each donor offers his present to the monk whose name he has drawn.

The Feasts of the Eleventh Month. 792

The Buddhist Lent finishes on the fifteenth day of the crescent moon of the eleventh month. In each pagoda the bonzes recite the Patimokkha, then confess their sins before leaving the [44] community to go either on a pilgrimage or into a rustic retreat for the period of the dry season. 796

The Offering of Kanthin. During this feast the ceremony of Kanthin takes place. This consists in offering to the bonzes garments, bedding, etc.... 796 735

"When the Buddha was in the Jetavana at Savatthi, some monks came to find him. They were caught by the beginning of Lent and were obliged to stop on their way. When they set out again after the fifteenth day of the crescent moon of the eleventh month, they arrived covered with mud. The Buddha therefore authorized them to accept the gift of garments at the end of Lent." [773]

The Kanthin can only be accepted by a group of at least five bonzes, but the material may not be borrowed of a third or offered on demand. Those who receive a Kanthin must sew its pieces themselves. (Cf. the Laotian bonze).

The Feast of the Waters.

Other feasts correspond to these purely Buddhist ones. The day before the race of the dugouts the faithful throw into the river small illuminated boats of bamboo or banana wood. Originally lamps were used, consisting of a piece of string dipped in oil, and held up by a banana leaf. This cord was woven at one end im the shape of crows' feet, in memory of the Jataka of the "White Crow." 796 773

"A female crow had made its nest at the top of a tree. On the night of a storm the bird died, and its five eggs were carried away by the current. They were gathered by five animals, a hen, an otter, a turtle, a cow, a serpent and gave birth to fiwe buddhas. These buddhas often thought [45] of their mother who was in the heaven of the Tavatimca. She came down to earth in the form of

63 [292] PROVINCE OF VIEN-TIANE

635

Area: 20,000 square kilometers.

161 Population: 22 Europeans including 4 merchants; 50,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 205

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages	Registered persons
Vien-Tiane	222	11,500 (?)
Pat-Choum	54	
Borikane	41	
Tourakhome	185	

Vien-Tiane (capital):

Seat of the Superior Residency

Population:

21 Europeans, 2,700 natives.

Post occupied by the Native Guard:

Vien-Tiane.....1 inspector, 1 chief guardsman.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Vien-Tiane.....Complete office.
Pat-Choum.....Secondary office.

Health service:

[743] 1 infirmary with 1 colonial physician.

149; Reinach--84 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

164
744

Europeans are usually immune to attacks by Asiatic cholera and only rarely suffer from its effects.

Smallpox is endemic in Laos. Very few persons above [113] a certain age have escaped this terrible disease, and nearly all the natives bear more or less apparent marks thereof. In the last two years vaccination has been widespread among the Laotian populations and has immunized children and the adults not stricken.

Tubes of vaccine serum are sent to all the provinces of Laos by the Pasteur Institute of Saigon. [Illustration here] Fresh batches are sent every two weeks so that the serum will retain its effectiveness. Since vaccination tours would absorb almost all the time of the three colonial physicians in Laos because of the extent of the country and the slowness of communication, the commissioners who are heads of provinces have trained mandarins as student vaccinators. The latter are supplied with inoculation needles [plumes "vaccinostyles"] and "serum" which is renewed as need arises, and practice vaccination in the interior of the provinces, where they themselves train other pupils. In sum, mutual vaccination is the rule (1).

(1) In Laos as in Cambodia, vaccination is making constant progress.

Lower Laos may be regarded as being almost completely free of smallpox epidemics. It is more difficult to protect Upper Laos. By way of the Mékong the tubes of vaccine sent out by the Pasteur Institute of Saigon used to take eighty days to reach Luang-Prabang, and because of this long delay the vaccine, which only retains its properties for about seventy days, used to lose all its effectiveness by the time it reached its destination. Nowadays the Institute sends the tubes by way of Tonkin (Black River as far as Lai-Chau and from Lai-Chau to Luang-Prabang by tram), and the percentage of successes obtained has considerably increased.

(Report of the Superior Resident.)

164

[114] There are also three other afflictions endemic in Laos. These are rheumatic pains, purulent ophthalmia and various skin disorders. The rheumatic pains, which cause the death of a number of individuals every year, generally appear in August and September, that is to say at the end of the period when the ricefields are plowed

243 164

and prepared. This affliction is doubtless due to the Laotian peasants' prolonged stay in the hot and nauseating mud of the ricefields.

Cases of purulent ophthalmia make their appearance between December and March and, in addition to a special predisposition of the race to this disease, its cause must be attributed to the many air currents and drafts which find their way between the walls of houses during the season of great winds.

This affliction, which affects mainly children and adolescents, is aggravated by uncleanliness and by the use of already contaminated bandages. Even the most serious cases of ophthalmia disappear, often within a few days, when treated with boric acid solution or zinc sulphate applied by means of antiseptic cotton wool or gauze.

The skin disorders are leprosy, alopecia, frambesia, prurigo, a variety of watery skin disorders and types of pityriasis, and stubborn sores caused by wounds by sharp weapons, tools or splinters.

At the beginning of 1900 Dr. Janselme of the Saint-Louis Hospital went on a mission in Laos the purpose of which was to diagnose and identify the existing skin disorders as well as to study treatments which might be applied.

[115] Goiter is also quite widespread among the mountainfolk, especially among those who drink water which has flowed over calcareous rock or serpentine. One sees men, women and even children afflicted with monstrous double and triple goiters, the volume of which often exceeds that of a man's head.

Syphilis is also prevalent in Laos. It was imported by Siamese soldiers and is widespread only in the regions where they stayed most. Sufficient proof of this fact is seen in its absence in the regions inhabited by the Khas.

744

Ever since our settlement in Laos the health service has maintained a strict surveillance and its dispensaries have cared for sick persons of both sexes (1).

(1) There are three field infirmaries in Laos directed by Colonial physicians and located at Khong, Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang. Unfortunately, the reports sent by these physicians to the head of the health service have not been published.

000 advised for persons who suffer from any weakness in any of these organs.

132 Although situated in the tropical zone, Laos has regions where a climate like that of Europe prevails during several months of the 529 year and where Europeans who were fatigued by their stay in the low plains or hot valleys might go each year to recover and regain strength and vigor.

We may mention, among other regions, the plateau of the Bolovens, which is recommended by Dr. Harmand, but especially the plateau of Tran-Ninh and the high valleys of the Hua-Pahn.

In Tran-Ninh and the Hua-Pahn, particularly from November to March, that is to say over a period of five months, the thermometer falls as low as nearly 2° and rarely rises above 25°.

[122] The morning, the late afternoon and evening, and the night are delicious on these plateaus, while the middle of the day is quite similar to springtime in the south of France. The air is healthy and dry, walking is pleasant and the views varied.

There are already European groups in Xieng-Khouang and Muong-Son, since these are province capitals. A few supplementary buildings would be enough to turn them into sanatoriums, without aiming at all that the word implies in the way of equipment, but merely at the establishment of rest spots where officials and colonists from other regions could spend a few months or weeks of healthful vacation time.

5. HEALTH SERVICE

• 744 Health service in Laos is in the hands of three colony physicians who direct infirmaries located at Khong, Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang.

In each of these infirmaries consultation and hospitalization services are provided for Europeans, civil guards, Annamite and Laotian interpreters and scholars, and for native employees.

The costs are partly paid out of receipts from payments made by the colonists and native employees for each day of treatment and, in Luang-Prabang, out of a levy on the Royal Treasury.

The Khong infirmary is equipped with an ice machine which supplies the needs of the medical service and those of the Europeans in the region, in return for a fee. The Vien-Tiane infirmary was to have received one in 1900, and it is to be hoped that Luang-Prabang will soon be similarly equipped.

Gifts from the family serve as payment for the bonzes. When the prayers are over, flowers and wax candles are added to the gifts. The body is then raised on the shoulders of four pallbearers of good-will and taken to the cemetery, where there are a few ablutions and where the bonzes recite the last prayers before the burial. 764 792

When all is done the persons present take turns throwing branches, earth and stone into the grave, in the belief that these things will preserve the deceased from contact with wet soil and the teeth of animals. The grave, comparatively shallow, is dug two sok (.9 meter) deep for adults and a half sok (.65 meter) deep for children and adolescents. When the cavity has been filled with earth and well tamped down with the feet, the persons present withdraw and all is over forever.

No worship will be practiced for this tomb, and it will soon disappear under a thick blanket of vegetation. Relatives sometimes return, however, after a rainfall if the ground happens to have settled slightly on the very spot of the grave. They then fill up the tomb and build a sort of tumulus above it with flat stones or heavy round rocks.

The custom of throwing into running water the bodies of persons who had died as a result of certain diseases, generally of an epidemic character, used to be practiced in Laos before our arrival there. The inhabitants had no concern for the fatal consequences which such a procedure might have on public health. Since our arrival in the land an absolute prohibition has been issued against throwing any corpse into the watercourses. Nowadays the people are content merely with simulating this custom and with interring bodies after a pretended immersion. 766 744

[202] When the family of the deceased is wealthy or even well-to-do, cremation is the standard procedure. This ceremony is not performed immediately after death is pronounced, but may often be postponed for more than a month either to enable relatives to come from a distance, or to await the settlement of a pending lawsuit, or else the arrival of the fire sent by the sovereign if the deceased is a prince, an official or a man of a certain rank. Wealthy families postpone the date of cremation out of ostentation, for the interval between death and cremation is supposed to be filled with feasts, celebrations and amusements of all kinds which are put on almost continuously for the bonzes, relatives, friends, neighbors and [554] 764

642

have any elected councils or parliamentary representation. Today it constitutes one of the five states in the Indo-Chinese union. 631

A consequence of the unification of Laos was its division into provinces and the incorporation of its officials, who had heretofore been a staff apart, in the ranks of the Indo-China Civil Service. 631

The government commissioners have therefore become civil service administrators.

Today each of the fourteen provinces of Laos is placed under the authority of an Administrator, and the latter is seconded by a civil service clerk. 635

Native guard. In Laos there are no detachments of the troops stationed in Indo-China, but only a native civil guard [278] composed partly of Annamites and partly of Laotians. It constitutes a police force which is distributed in detachments of varying size under the command of inspectors and chief guardsmen. It is entirely at the disposition of the administrators who are heads of provinces. This native guard numbers twenty-seven inspectors and chief guardsmen and 850 men, of which 320 are volunteer Annamite enlisted men recruited in Annam and Tonkin, and 530 are natives recruited from all the races of Laos. It may be called on to lend its support, if the need arise, to the native authorities who are responsible for maintaining order and security in their respective territories. Peace and order are so perfect in Laos, however, that one can go about freely without an escort. 701

The treasury service. The treasury service in Laos is headed by a bursar who holds the title of "Chief Bursar of the Treasury Service in Laos." He handles all matters dealing with receipts, expenditures and treasury operations in Laos in the same forms and according to the same rules as the other bursars who are heads of services in Indo-China. 652

He is assisted by a deputy bursar.

These two agents reside in Vien-Tiane.

Medical service. This service includes three colonial physicians on detachment in Laos who are in charge of the infirmaries at Luang-Prabang, Vien-Tiane (formerly at Pak-Hin-Boun) and Khong. They care for all sick persons, whether European or native, as has been noted above (1). 744

(1) See Chapter III, Health Service.

23: Franck--308 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 301, 751

"This cord decoration is something peculiar to Luang Prabang. The commissaire wore them also, as did his baby son; possibly his charming lady did too, though I am not sure that mere women are worthy of them. Cords are put about the wrists amid elaborate ceremonies and must be worn for at least seven days if they are to be effective in preserving the wearer from evil. The king himself had come to tie those about the wrists of the commissaire's newly born son and heir and thereby assure it constant good luck through all the menaces to health among European infants living in the tropics."

563 It is thus that the Missionaries, for example, whose resources
262 are extremely limited and do not enable them to use imported food-stuffs, remain in the land for many long years without any great damage to their health. It goes without saying that one should avoid overindulgence in food, and especially in alcoholic beverages. Drinking iced tea at and between meals gives excellent results, but then it is well to take a small quantity of pure wine. Coffee is an indispensable tonic and stimulant for aiding digestion and fighting off the heaviness which generally manifests itself after meals.

000 One should avoid long siestas immediately after the noonday meal. Newcomers will do well not to succomb to this damaging habit, which slows digestion, softens the organism and in the long run robs the brain of its lucidity and vigor. It is preferable to move about a bit immediately after meals on the verandas or in the rooms of the house. Billiards provide excellent exercise in this case.

Around two o'clock, when digestion is complete and before business is resumed, a cold shower is extremely hygienic. [120] According to one's tastes and temperament one may take a shower bath, pour water over oneself with the help of a basin held in the hand, or bathe in a tub with a large sponge.

In the evening after sunset it is well to take a little exercise in the form of horseback riding, bicycling, tennis, etc. But one should avoid going too far and becoming tired, since all that is needed is enough effort to maintain the suppleness and elasticity of the muscles. After such exercise one should take a quick shower or tub bath, then, if desired, a small glass of generous or tonic wine such as quinquina, cola, coca, Désiles wine, etc.

One should avoid all the so-called alcoholic aperitifs, which necessitate the use of a great deal of water and ice, for they cause overabundant perspiration and, by filling the stomach, retard the secretion of the gastric juices. It is precisely this secretion which gives the sensation of appetite.

164 In the matter of general preventive hygiene, a great many
757 persons will do well to follow the regimen outlined below. Every day one should take a few centigrams of salts of quinine, hydrobromide, bihydrobromide, sulfate, etc. If excessive fatigue is anticipated as a consequence of prolonged exposure to the sun, a long march or a stay in the forest, one should take a larger dose of quinine. The dose may be as large, depending on temperament and experience, as one gram for the sulphate and fifty centigrams for the hydrobromide.

This preventive measure is recommended by Laveran, who discovered the haematozoon of paludism, and is followed by a great many persons. It has always yielded excellent results, even among the natives who are also subject to the fever (1). 164 757

(1) According to a report by the Superior Resident in Laos, in which mention is made of a note by M. Morin, the government commissioner in Vien-Tiane, there is a kind of liana in this province which is quite common in the region and which the Laotians call Khua-Khao-hô. 278

This liana, which the Siamese call Bora-phet, is no other, according to the dictionary by Pallegoix, than the Cocculus verrucosus of the Menispermaceae family.

The taste of the sap which it contains, when newly cut, is particularly bitter. When dried the liana itself retains a very pronounced taste of quinine.

Native doctors use it in various preparations for treating obstinate fevers and jaundice in its various forms.

At the same time as the Khao-hô, pieces of heartwood from two hardwood trees are generally used. We have been unable to discover their exact names, but the active medicinal agent, according to the natives, is primarily Cocculus verrucosus (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, August 1, 1900). [113]

[121] The daily ingestion of a small quantity of quinine keeps the blood in a toxic state for fever-bearing microbes, and it must be constantly saturated if one wishes to prevent their invasion and growth. 757

Some persons also get along very well on a treatment which consists in taking a purgation of sodium or magnesium sulphate, or else an emetic of ipecacuanha, every three months (April, July, October and January).

Whenever a feeling of torpor, stiffness in the nape of the neck or the shivers which are the forerunners of fever manifest themselves, one and a half to two grams of ipeca and one gram of quinine, after vomiting has stopped, will overcome the illness and reduce the attack to its most benign form.

In sum, one can keep in excellent health in Laos, by following these few recommendations, if one has a good stomach, solid insides and an intact liver. A stay in this country can therefore not be 000

149: Reinach--139 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

357

Houses are generally situated in the middle of an enclosure which serves as a garden, and where coconut palms, betel palms and other fruit trees are planted.

276

Use of tobacco and betel. The Laotians use tobacco, which they grow and prepare quite skilfully, in the form of conical cigarettes which are rolled in dried banana leaves. They also mix it with their betel quids. Everybody smokes--men, women and children. It is not unusual to see children four years old, completely naked, puffing clouds of smoke from a cigarette which is enormous in comparison to their little fingers.

Like a great many other peoples of Asia, Laotians chew "betel." As we know this type of quid is composed of a leaf of "piper betel" which is smeared with slaked lime and on which is placed tobacco, a piece of betel nut or some "sisiet" bark (or [185] the extract from this bark, called catechu). It is then rolled and placed in the mouth between the cheek and the gums.

Chewing betel causes abundant salivation, blood red in color, which makes quite an impression at first sight but to which one gradually becomes accustomed.

It is claimed that chewing betel is not a mere habit, but that it has several useful effects on the organism. It is supposed to keep one from being thirsty and to be an astringent and tonic, somewhat like cola or coca.

302
751

Teeth lacquer. So as to preserve the enamel of their teeth from the corrosive action of the lime and from other acidulous elements contained in the betel nut, the Laotians have the custom of lacquering their teeth black. To accomplish this they rub them with the sap of certain hardwood trees, which they obtain through partial combustion of the wood and condensation of the smoke on an iron spatula. A kind of sticky black coating is thereby produced, which dries rapidly and is made to adhere to the teeth by means of alum.

276

Opium. The use of opium is quite widespread in Laos, and unfortunately its effects do not help to diminish the natural apathy of the race.

304

Tattoos. It is customary for men to be tattooed from beneath the knee to the upper part of the thigh. For this reason the Laotians of the left bank of the Mékong are called "white bellies" in opposition to the Youns of the other bank, whose tattoos cover the stomach and abdomen and who are known as "black bellies." The tattoos are

149: Reinach--142 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[151] • 844

"When a woman feels her first pains she abstains from taking baths and swallows quantities of salt and spiced drinks. She summo a midwife and fastens a cotton thread from the bonzery around the latter's wrists. This precaution might be called the 'sanctification of hands.'

"The midwife comes to stay in the house of her client until after delivery. She is given the choicest food and commands the utmost respect. She may wash her hands only with water which has been perfumed (by means of a variety of mint). Finally, when labor pains begin, the woman sits down with her legs folded and spread wide apart. Her underskirt must be pulled down over her legs and taken in sharply at the waist by a belt. This last precaution is taken so that during the mother's efforts to deliver the child it will not go upwards towards her thorax. The midwife remains in front of the parturient woman, while relatives, friends or, more often, young men hold the woman up and try to divert her with extremely licentious remarks. Some of the young men bring musical instruments, and others bring phalli to which they address such witty reproaches that the patient, despite her pain, responds with an outburst of laughter. There is gambling, drinking and singing, and during all this time the work goes on and the woman gives birth in the midst of the gaiety.

[522]

"No one sees the actual delivery, not even relatives. Only the midwife passes her hands under the skirt and watches attentively so as to intervene if necessary. The child is taken from the mother on a mat, the midwife draws it gently towards her and makes ready to cut the umbilical cord. The latter is cut between two ligatures made with cotton threads, and the actual section made on a weaver's shuttle with a knife which may be more or less ornate depending on the state of the family's fortune (2). The foetal part (about eight

(2) In northern Laos the cord is cut on a cylinder of green bamboo, closed at one end by a joint. The knife is a strip of bamboo cut at a sharp angle so that the siliceous bark forms the cutting edge. All iron or steel instruments are strictly forbidden. (Author's note.)

[412]

centimeters in length) is rolled in leaves of an astringent variety and folded back on the abdomen. The child is then rubbed with slightly spiced oil.

846

wax candles decorated with flowers, cigarettes and a sum of money. (Author's note) 431

the family from the hands of her patient.

"Two or three days after her confinement ends the mother must go to the pagoda and give a few presents to the bonzes, who give her in return a few cotton threads which she fastens to her wrists" (4). [751] [792]

(4) Dr. Estrade, 1895. Dictionnaire et Guide franco-laotien. [113]

Cases of dystocia and other childbearing difficulties are very rare in Laos, thanks to the physiological law which decrees that childbirth shall occur all the more naturally insofar as one comes closer to the primitive type and as one's body has not been deformed either by certain professional attitudes or by artifices of dress. [191] But when any difficulty of this type does occur the Laotian midwives are extremely skilful. Their hands take the place of the steel instruments in our gynecological and surgical arsenal, and their results are usually successful both for mother and child. 844

When the newly delivered mother is allowed to get up there occur traditional feasts and celebrations, the brilliance of which varies with the status of the young mother's parents. It is generally during these happy gatherings that the bonzes or sorcerers choose the name which the newborn child is to bear. They usually base their choice on some peculiarity of the coloring or eyes, or on a phase of the moon. The name will be replaced by another if the child falls sick, for in this case, as they say, the old name was unpleasing to his "This," that is to say to his personal tutelary spirits. [554] 846 527 551

Infanticide. Scarcely any cases of infanticide can be cited in Laos, and abortions are extremely rare or at least very well hidden. For when cases do occur it is among members of a class which, because of the rank it holds, is anxious to conceal its faults from the mass of the people. 847 [554]

In popular belief abortion, whether voluntary or natural, is regarded as a punishment of heaven or as a case of aberration which cannot fail to draw down the utmost scorn on the guilty parties and their accomplices.

Marriage. Marriage in Laos is made ready for long in advance, thanks to the liberty which young people of both sexes enjoy. The latter meet one another at every celebration and can communicate 584

But that is another story...

The belief in the phi and an excessive credulity results in Laotians being often the victims of charlatans who are severely punished by the Laotian code. Luck-bringing amulets are also very widespread. But this belief in the inhabitants of the invisible world is most apparent in childbirth and in profane ceremonies. 683 757

RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES AND FESTIVALS

The Calendar

The Laotian calendar belongs to the lunar-solar system. Its elements are borrowed principally from the Indian calendar. As in all the other countries of Indochina the Laotians use the cycle of the 12 animals (Rat, Ox, Tiger, Hare, Dragon, Serpent, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Cock, Dog, Pig). 805

The era most commonly used in Laos is that of Cullasakaraj (little era) beginning in A. D. 638, the next most used is the Buddhasakaraj (Buddhist era beginning in 544 B. C.). Finally the Mahasakaraj (great era) is found in ancient inscriptions. At the present time only the Christian era is used officially.

The months.

The Laotian months are alternately of 20 and 30 days. Sometimes their Indian name is used, but most often their number is used. Their names are as follows:

No.	Laotian	Pali	
1.	deuan Tieng	Magasira	December-January
2.	- Gni	Phussa	January-February
3.	- Sam	Magha	February-March
4.	- Si	Phagguna	March-April
5.	- Ha	Citta	April-May
6.	- Hoc	Visakha	May-June
7.	- Chet	Jettha	June-July
8.	- Pet	Asadha	July-August
9.	- Kao	Savana	August-September
10.	- Sip	Potthapada	September-October
11.	- Sip Et	Assayuja	October-November
12.	- Sip Song	Kattika	November-December

764 coffin is placed on a truck. The bonzes are at the head of the procession, then the widow and the children dressed in white as a sign of mourning.

[60] The coffin is placed on the pyre. All those attending, holding a lighted candle or resinous torch, go to the pyre in single file, and throw the brands into the fire. It is forbidden to light a torch by lending one's light or by borrowing that of a neighbor. During this time the family must throw offerings to the crowd: pieces of banana branches, lemons, etc., into which have been introduced coins mixed with grilled rice. The cotton thread, called fay mongkhou, which [751] had surrounded the house in order to chase away sorrow, illness, the phi, etc., is removed at the end of the ceremony.

On the third day the bones are fetched away. The bonzes are [187] invited, but before touching the ashes, they must be examined to see [775] if they have left any imprints either animal or human, in order to know in what form the dead man will be reborn. The bones are gathered with wooden pincers and then placed in an urn. A statue in a vaguely human form is erected of wet cinders. The urn and the offerings are surrounded by a cotton thread, then the bonzes recite a prayer and this closes the ceremony. The urn will be placed in a pagoda or buried by the family who will erect a that. A little later, to commemorate the death of the departed, the family will dig a hole in the pagoda or near the that, and in it plant a long bamboo at the end of which is fastened a cotton banner laminated with small bamboo sticks. A tray of offerings is brought, which had been placed at the foot of the bamboo pole while it was being set up, and which is held by the relatives and friends of the dead man. Before this, offerings of food had been wrapped in a banana leaf. Once the bamboo is set up, water is poured all around on the earth which is holding it up, in the hope that the merits of this action will reach the other world. Then the whole family [61] squats down around the pole and with joined hands recites prayers.

The Laotian House.

342 It is built on piles and has a veranda. The roof is curved slightly inwards. A long stake holding the water jar is sunk in the ground near the veranda outside the house. The floor is of bamboo or of thin wide boards. The wall and ceiling are of bamboo panels, or of boards, or of mud. There are two principal doors and few windows. A partition going from the inner beam of the front gable separates the house lengthwise in two parts, most often of equal size. One is divided into

342 bedrooms separated from each other by partitions or curtains, the
[178] other is the communal room. In the space between the inner and outer beam, and not limited by the longitudinal partition, is the altar on which there are always one or several buddhas. It is placed on the side of the bedrooms, on the "soung" side of the dwelling, that is on the side opposite the entrance. The dimensions of the dwellings vary between six and twenty-four meters long by four to nine meters wide.

342 The houses are most often open to the east or to the north. They may also overlook what is passing by in the streets or the paths and,
823 as the case may be, the whole length of the river. For there is a superstition which forbids building "across the current," which is considered as unconquerable and invincible, and it would be dangerous to defy it.

343 The outhouses consist of an adjoining kitchen and a granary, a few meters removed from the principal dwelling. Near this granary
[252] is found the picturesque rice pestle (khok khao) which the women work with their feet.

343 [62] All the villagers participate in building the house. When the propitious day and moment have been determined, the owner feeds
476 everybody the whole time the house is being built.

Tattooing

301 Every self-respecting Laotian must be tattooed. The absence of
885 tattooing is a sign of mental and moral, therefore of social, inferiority.
562 As a general rule, however, the Laotian woman is not tattooed. This custom is found only among the women of Youan, Kha or Lu.

The Laotian is tattooed chiefly on his thighs, forearms and chest.
301 The tattooing on the thighs is so close together that from a distance a tattooed man looks as if he were wearing close-fitting blue shorts. The Laotians are called "white bellies" as opposed to those who are tattooed down to the navel and are then called black bellies. The colors used for tattooing are indigo blue, red, and black made from a mixture of lampblack diluted with buffalo gall.

[751] Those who have been tattooed are convinced that the signs they wear give them certain supernatural powers, particularly making them invulnerable to bullets and snake bites. During the events of 1941 Siamese soldiers were found wearing white cotton vests covered with cabalistic signs closely related to tattooing. These are a kind of removable tattooing intended to protect those who are wearing them.

301 The use of these magic shirts is also known in Cambodia. The designs
262 usually consist of flowers, geometric figures, tools, flowers, vegetable
751 branches, and of animals. Sometimes pictures drawn from Buddhist iconography can be recognized.

[174] Apparently the origin of tattooing is to be found in totemism. By
301 analyzing the Laotian tattooing designs, [63] it has been possible to recognize traces of sun worship, as well as the mythological role of the dog. But at the present time Laotians seem only to value tattooing as an artistic ornament.

The Divining Rod.

787 Among the curios which the tourist looks for in Laos, the most
823 easily found is a carved bamboo cane. Immediately below the head,
825 which is often of chased silver, there is a sort of checkered diagram made up of twenty-five little squares. Below this divining diagram are found, in succession from top to bottom, a zebu, a horse, a rakshasha or ogre, a tiger, a buffalo, a deer, an elephant. These animals correspond respectively to the days of the week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

It should be noted that, except for the buffalo and the deer, the others are the symbolical animals of the zodiac and correspond to the different cardinal points.

The Laotians consult these figures at different actions of their lives: choice of a wedding day, the hour for burial, etc. The diagram is used to calculate the hour, and the animals indicate the cardinal point which should be followed.

This cane is also found among the Man.

[64] THE NEW YEAR AND THE FEASTS OF THE FIFTH MONTH

527 The Laotian New Year always takes place between the 6th day
805 of the crescent moon of the 5th month and the 5th day of the crescent moon of the 6th month. The very core of the feast includes three days: the last day of the past year, the intermediate day and the New Year's day, properly so-called. The most picturesque ceremonies are those of Luang Prabang, for there tradition has been best preserved.

527 The programme of the feasts begins with a procession of royal elephants. Their heads ornamented with red and black painted designs, their drivers dressed in red tunics with yellow lapels, on their backs, the fifteen elephants go to the pagodas of Xieng Tong, Vat

173: Deydier--61 H,B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

[144]

Fig. IV. The Rasi. Attaching the cotton threads to the wrist of the host (phouk Khene) (Cl. Service Presse Information).

10: d'Orleans--314 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 753, 771, 787, 828

"The great development of the Buddhist creed does not prevent superstitions of another order from being prevalent among the multitude, superstitions the trace of which is easily followed at the great festivals that always appertain to ancient traditions or to the dread of evil spirits. Diseases are regarded in the light of persons, and when the cholera made its appearance here last year, one of the mandarins went round the town at the head of a squad of soldiers who executed discharges of musketry at the gates to drive away the enemy. But the native chief was not rewarded for his zeal, as two days after, as the story goes, the cholera appeared to him in a dream and reproached him for trying to drive it away, saying that in coming to Luang Prabang it was simply doing its duty. As a punishment for his conduct, the cholera announced to him his approaching death, and when the mandarin woke up he was so terrified by the dream that he fell ill and died three days afterwards."

68: Mouhot--95-96 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 776, 753, 778

"[HD: At Khao-Khoc, Siam. See category 116, p. 90] The Laotian is as superstitious as the Cambodian, and perhaps more so than the Siamese. If a person falls ill of a fever, or, indeed, is ever so slightly indisposed, they believe it to be owing to a demon who has entered his body. If any matter in which they are engaged goes wrong, or an accident happens when hunting, fishing, or cutting wood, it is the fault of the demon. In their houses they carefully preserve some object, generally a simple piece of wood, or some parasitic plant, whose form they fancy bears a resemblance to some part of the human [96] body; and this is constituted their household god, and prevents evil spirits from entering, or, at least, causes them speedily to depart."

68: Mouhot--120-121 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
778, 753

"[HD: The head mandarin of Chaiapume, a town in territory that is now central Siam] provided me with other elephants for a visit to some ruins existing about 3 leagues north of the town, at the foot of a mountain. The superstitious Laotians say that [121] these ruins contain gold, but that every one who has sought for it has been struck with madness."

"There are not only the spirits, ghosts and demons themselves, but there are also their servants in human shape, there are sorceresses and there are witches, and these last can, and do, change themselves into tapeworms, gnawing at your guts until you die, so the moment that you must know that you have a witch-tapeworm inside you, you must send for the wise man, who will pinch and prick you until the bewitched tapeworm crawls out in fear. There are also what are known as hereditary or innocent witches, poor women who have not acquired but have only inherited their dread arts; such innocents can be cured, it seems, and are more to be pitied than reviled.

But there was no quarter shown to wizards. If a man was marked as a wizard he must emigrate or be slain. And we may take it that in a rather 'primitive' and static and isolated community, a 'wizard' was often no more than a queer fellow who thought for himself and did not like the way of life of the majority, had different tastes in meat and drink, did not care for sports, dances and festivals, possibly was sexually aberrant, in fact the sort of scoundrel who must be suppressed if society is to be kept decent and reasonably conservative. In some communities such deviant members are more lucky and are straightway hailed as shamans or medicine-men. But the Laotians just did not like wizards at all. Before the French got to interfering with good old customs, there was an ordeal for wizards and their accusers. Two pots of boiling coconut oil were set up. Into one pot went the sorcerer and into the other his denouncer. Whoever got out of his pot first was cracked over the head and disposed of.

So, underneath all the easy-going, good nature of the Laotians lie, when the conventions are outraged, some definite reactions of a rather violent kind. One wonders what has happened to these reactions now that they cannot be released in a right and proper and traditional way. For, if we can say that the Laotians have little or no religion, in the sense of a way of life or a moral discipline, they are filled and informed with beliefs."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 A M1 Indochina
Moi AM9
M'nong

and we were down to the nursing-mothers, who, removing their 273
babies from the breast and passing them to onlookers, tripped lightly 574
towards us. Although the rice-alcohol, with its queer burnt-cereal
taste, was weaker than usual, my friends said, it was beginning to take
effect. The Moïs had slipped into an easy-going joviality and the [832]
nursing-mothers received some mild familiarities, for which they
exchanged good-natured slaps. Their capacity for alcohol, though,
was greater than that of the elder ladies, and they were not to be
deceived by a mere pretence of drinking on our part. Calling for
beakers they sucked up the alcohol, spat libations, syphoned off
liquor until the beakers were filled, and presented them to us.
Taking stock of the situation we saw that we had drunk our way to
within two nursing-mothers of those perfect young representatives
of the Polynesian race, the chief's daughters, who flung us occa-
sional glances from between sweeping lashes. But we were all
flagging, dizzy with the alcohol and the stunning reverberation of
the gongs. And the morning was wearing on. It would have
been difficult to imagine our condition by the time we had
drunk our way down to an interesting social level. The Moïs
encouraged us with smiles and gestures, but we could do no
more.

It was at a village in the vicinity of Buon Dieo, where two years 683
previously an extraordinary affair had taken place. A family of 695
eight persons were suspected of magic practices to the detriment of 754
the village. According to local custom a representative was chosen 755
as accuser and a trial by ordeal arranged. This consisted of the 776
villagers' champion and the head of the accused family plunging 787
their heads under water, the first to withdraw his head, in this case
the accused, being held to have lost the day. According to the
rulings of customary law governing this rather unusual case the
charged persons were found to be possessed by certain minor
demons, located in each case in a bodily organ. The general
attitude thus was a sympathetic one. The prisoners were regarded

776 "The Laotians also believe that there are people who are possessed
771 by the demon or who have [151] the evil eye. They call them 'Phi-
791 pop.' When a person or family in a village is so regarded by the other inhabitants, they are forced to move and to go and live in one of the villages composed exclusively of Phi-pop" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

The boatmen and folk who dwell along the watercourses also believe in the existence of certain particular beings, as for example the Siren or "Nguoc." The siren, whom some people claim to have seen (?), is said to have the form of a snake with paws and an enormous head surmounted by a red, saw-toothed crest. It is supposed to have seven nostrils in a single nose, and a mouth provided with several rows of teeth. The scales which cover it and the lobes of its tail are said to be able to clash against one another and make a great deal of noise.

791 In times of public calamity, the "Tho-Nguoc" assumes a human voice and announces important events or cataclysms to come.

•754 The "Phi-pop," to whom we have referred above, have, according
683 to popular belief, the power of casting spells and causing the death of animals and even persons by means of their incantations, their practices or their glance. The natives say that they can reduce a buffalo hide to the size of a grain of rice and thus make a person swallow it. Once in the stomach the hide is supposed to regain its natural volume and cause the death of the person who has swallowed it by making the stomach burst after intolerable suffering. It goes without saying that the "Phi-pop" who is the cause of the evil can, in return for certain gifts, arrest the suffering and deliver the patient before death overtakes him. A person who believes he has swallowed a buffalo hide falls prey to a kind of madness and commits all sorts of extravagances, to such a point that his neighbors try to get him out of the village and get rid of him, for he has become a "Phi-pop" in his turn. People claim that there is only one way to find out if a man is possessed, and that is to throw him into the water with his feet and hands tied. If he floats he is not possessed, but if [152] the opposite proves to be the case--and this is what invariably happens--then a "Phi-pop" is really present and his disappearance is regarded as a blessing.

776 of one or several spirits who are reincarnated in one possessed. This
796 person enables the villagers and those living in the same quarter to
787 know the course of the new year and, if necessary, to improve it by means of gifts and prayers. During this time the village is forbidden to strangers (Lévy).

776 A series of particularly dangerous phi is also known; these are
the Phi Phetu (Sk: Preta), that is the wandering souls of people who
725 have died in an abnormal way, by accident, suicide, childbirth for a woman, etc. These souls cannot be born again. They remain present in order to torment human beings. The Phi Houa Kout are
776 the headless phi, the Phi Khon Long are those who carry the coffins,
754 the Phi Pop have the power of entering into the body of a living human being. The unfortunate person then has the evil eye and is expelled from the village. In the region of Savannakhet, there is a village of victims of the Phi Pop which was created by a Protestant mission, in order to rescue these poor creatures who would otherwise die of hunger, for they are forbidden to enter any village.

The Phi Phong are the spirits of human beings who have studied the formulas to acquire magic powers but have not conformed strictly to certain rites prescribed by their studies. They are bloodthirsty and go out at night by the light of the fire [32] which issues from their nostrils along the banks of rivers and streams, and of ponds, to catch fish and toads. If one meets a Phi Phong, one must flee for he can spit in one's face, and then one may become a Phi Phong oneself.

776 The Phi Kong Koi lives in the mountains and has the shape of a monkey. During his existence on earth he was the servant of a Vietnamese. One day, having been too badly treated, he decided to escape. But in order not to be caught, he camouflaged his footprints by putting his heels in front and his toes behind. The Vietnamese, deceived by this trick, went off in the opposite direction
[198] and never found him. In our days when the Laotians want to chase away the Phi Kong Koi, the speak Vietnamese to each other. But if one is traveling in the mountains, one must refrain from lighting a fire or cooking any fish or meat or crabs, for the odor attracts the phi who wants to come and eat. His victim would have his intestines split open. The approach of the phi is always preceded by a violent storm and a torrential rain. There are said to be a great many Phi King Koi in the region of Samneua.

There is, however, another kind of Phi. This one seems to have a particular hatred for archaeologists. These are the phis who inhabit sculptures or the tumuli which are found in the bush [en brousse]. But that is another story...

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 A M1 Indochina
Moi AM9
M'nong

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69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

acknowledge in the street a lady with whom one happens to be on 584
particularly good terms. These things in Laos are fraught with an 576
etiquette which is the legacy of a highly organized society not too
far gone in decay.

The charm of Vientiane lies in the life and the customs of the 346
people. Unless one is an amateur of pagoda architecture there is 531
little else to be seen. The Laotians have preferred to work in wood,
rather than stone, and their art, confined chiefly to the decoration by
religious artists of the doors, pillars and interiors of pagodas,
quickly perishes in such a climate.

Outside the town there is a great, grey, half-decayed *stupa*, built 771
as a tomb for a hair of the Buddha. It is surrounded by a cloister, 755
containing perhaps a thousand Buddha images; a collection of 778
which the people of Vientiane are very proud. But even here,
where the religion is practised in its purest form, there is a little
degeneration, a little backsliding from the lofty philosophic conception; and the taint of magic practices shows itself. Selecting one of
the numerous images as a personal tutelary divinity, the devotee
subjects it to a kind of bribery similar to that sometimes practised
in Southern Europe with images of the saints. In this case the image's
chief function is healing, and when the sufferer recovers from any
complaint he hastens to the pagoda to apply gold-leaf to the part of
the Buddha corresponding to that where he has felt the pain in his
own body. I was interested to deduce from this practice that the
people of Vientiane are much plagued by headaches – perhaps [164]
those which accompany malaria.

Standing in a corner of the sanctuary was an ancient ithyphallic 778
statue, an old Hindu divinity, no doubt, which had been worn 789
smooth in the appropriate parts by the feminine adoration of a 892
thousand years. I was told that the women of the French colony
who wish for a child frequently emulate their husbands' pose of
Laos-ization by coming here secretly to pay their respects. I 000
wondered whether this clandestine tribute might not be extended

149: Reinach--114 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

as a blessing. 791

One fact worthy of note is that the "Phi-pop"--men, women and even adolescents--are extremely intelligent folk with lively eyes and full of a strong will and energy. They know [Illustration here] a host of recipes and therapeutic formulas which have been handed down to them by their parents. They might be described as bonesetters or people who have medicine as a sideline, and who act on weak minds and nervous temperaments by the power of suggestion. "Phi-pop" women and girls are usually quite pretty. 755 156

One of the methods most widely used to gain the favor of the "Phis" is to play deafening music. 755

"It is not at all unusual to hear diabolic and uninterrupted music in a Laotian house for several days and nights running. In this house there is a person who is seriously ill. All the noise is designed to frighten or to assuage the spirit in the sick person's body and to persuade or force it to [153] leave the body of the invalid. The sick person generally succumbs under the waves of this curative but noisy harmony" (1). 533

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.] [113]

Religion of the Thais. They have neither pagodas nor bonzes, but practice ancestor worship and have a great veneration for the "Spirits or Genii," to whom they make offerings on all occasions. 771 769

In the first room of the house there stands a bamboo altar. The "Spirits" or "Phis" of dead forbears are supposed to inhabit this altar, which is composed of two different levels, the highest one for the male Phis and the other for the female Phis. At its foot there is an opening covered with an elliptical wooden ornament shaped like a mouth. It is there, on this "ancestors' mouth," that the head of the family places offerings and prayers, especially when a member of the family is sick. In principal an animal is never killed without some scrap of food or a few drops of blood being offered to the ancestors' mouth.

"Spirits, whether genii or demons, are everywhere--in the sky, on earth, in the forests, in the water. They are the object of a widespread cult over which individuals who might be described as 776 793 755

776 lay priests preside. These lay priests, or rather these servants of the
793 Spirits, correspond to the Guardians of the Genii in the Buddhist religion. Usually they exercise their ministry only when one of
755 their countrymen falls sick or dies.

"In case of a serious illness the servant of the Spirits goes to the sick person's house, goes to his side and recites a few prayers. Then he takes a bowl of uncooked rice on which he stands an egg with the smallest end upwards. With his right hand the officiant drops a certain number of grains of rice on the point of the egg, performing this operation three times in all. If the same number of grains of rice remain on the point of the egg each time, this means that a "Spirit" has entered the sick person's body.

787 "By means of similar maneuvers, the Spirit is then questioned to find out what he wants to eat. Depending on the answer, a buffalo, an ox or a pig may be killed. The designated animal is slaughtered and then scorched without being skinned so as to destroy the hairs which cover it. The entrails are taken out and carefully washed [154] in running water, then replaced in the animal's body. The victim is taken to the altar of the Spirits, which is located outside the village, and placed with its head towards the altar. Then prayers are said asking the Spirit to cure the sick person. When the ceremony is over the animal is taken back to the village, where it is cut into pieces and divided among all the inhabitants. The invalid rarely gets well.

"There are also sorcerers and witches among the Thais, who are consulted in circumstances of lesser importance.

[775] "The Thais believe in metempsychosis, although their ideas on the subject are not very clear" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

771 Religion of the Khas. Among the Khas, even those who practice
782 Buddhism, the only existing religion is a religion of "Phis" which is similar to the Thai belief in "Spirits, Genii and Demons." The
776 outer manifestations of this cult consist of offerings of rice, flowers and fruit, but never include sacrifices of animals. Small shelters which affect the form of an ordinary house are built at the entrance to villages to receive propitiatory offerings destined for the "Phi".

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"symbol" and the last vestige of an ancient usage, for the rockets can only set a few handfuls of straw afire. The wives and children of the deceased, all in great mourning costume, that is to say entirely clothed in white cotton goods, came and prostrated themselves before the Governor of the province, presented him with a platter of flowers and wax candles and asked him whether the King, "the master of life," had given permission for the cremation to take place and whether, for this purpose, he had sent "fire" from Luang-Prabang.

The Governor gave the fire to the dead man's relatives and then, in giving permission to cremate, he delivered an address which may be translated as follows:

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[212] "The Tiao-Muong of Pak-Lay has been a good and just man during his life. He has never committed perjury. We may hope, together with his numerous family, that his Phi (soul) will be taken by the Thévada (angels) to the Spaces and there be presented to the holy Buddhas, Phra-Pouthi-Tiao, Phra-Tama-Tiao and Phra-Sang-Kha-Tiao, who will take him with them to Paradise to stay for a while. Then, at the time of rebirth, his Phi will again be incarnated in the body of a just, good and happy man who will have all the goods which are to be desired and a numerous progeniture."
[Illustration here]

764

The songs and music stopped during this speech, but they began again with new zest when the Governor of the province approached the pyre and set fire to the four corners. He was immediately followed and imitated by the family, the bonzes, the officials and the spectators. All without exception insisted on contributing fire, either with wax candles, resinous torches, dry bamboo or firebrands, or else with whole boxes of matches [213] or even with mere handfuls of dry grass which they had uprooted.

A thick, suffocating black smoke reeking of kerosene and resin rose up and enveloped the catafalque, and then a few tongues of flame shot forth. The evening wind was beginning to be felt and cleared the smoke somewhat. The flames grew hotter and finally hid the catafalque. A backward rush began, for the heat was far too intense and forced the spectators to move away from the [Illustration here] pyre. Only a few men armed with green bamboo poles remained nearby, seared by the fire but attentive and anxious, for someone had to see whether the coffin would lean to the right side, that is to say in the direction of Luang-Prabang, the residence of the King from whence "the fire" came. With a sudden crackling

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include all the local genii one comes across in Indochina, either under the name of Neak Ta in Cambodia, or Phi in Laos, to mention only two countries. The cult of the Phi is still very much alive in Laos, although it has long been contested by the Buddhist clergy and forbidden by an edict of Phothisarath in 1527. 771 776

[30] But there are several classes of phi. First of all there are the universal phi, those are the ones which Buddhist tradition has attempted to assimilate for better or worse. 776

The book of Khun Bolom says precisely that the Phi Fa (Phi of heaven) and the Phi Then are in reality Indra, and the guardians of the four worlds. The Phi Sua Muon are Nang Tholani (Dharani, goddess of the earth) and Nang Mekhala (Manimekhala, deity of the sea). Finally there is the Phi Then Ten (Visvakarman, the builder).

The local protecting genii of the kingdom of Lan Xan are the fifteen Nagaraja (Praya Nak) who are the genii of water, living in the river rapids, at the confluence of rivers, on the rocks on the river banks or in caves. Their natural form is that of a serpent, but they can also take on human form.

Then follow the familiar genii, the wandering phi (Phi Pho), and the phi of dwellings (Phi Heuan). The Phi Heuan are honored at the time of marriage, and the Laotian code prescribes the indemnities which must be paid to please the Phi. There are also the phi of parents [or relatives--Translator] (Phi Me). These are often confused with the preceding ones. Their cult is celebrated either inside the house, or outside in a small shelter built for this purpose. This little structure is usually built leaning against a tree; sometimes it contains a small statuette or a stone, or even nothing. In that case one finds only a few grains of glutinous rice, and one or two small sticks of incense in a horn made of a banana leaf. This little house is the home of the Phi. He watches the living from the beyond and manifests himself every time a member of the family behaves badly. His intervention is most often known by a sudden and serious illness. One must then try to find out what has displeased the phi. For this one goes to the "sorcerer" and he will indicate [31] the sacrifice which must be made to the phi to appease his anger." [671] [788 778] 755

There exist also village phi to whom honor and offerings are due at the time of every ritual or local ceremony, particularly about the seventh month. Coinciding with a sort of pause in the ordinary activity of the Laotian, a pause which is regulated by a change in season, return of the rains and the rise of the Mekong waters, the feasts of the "months of the spirits" are centered around the evocation 776 796 787

173: Deydier--31 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

775 According to the normal cycle of rebirths, when they have ended their stay in Heaven and are on the point of returning to earth, they themselves choose their future parents.

All the thirty-two souls go and haunt the water jar of the adopted household. After the third night, at the moment when the future father comes for a drink, they insinuate themselves into the folds of the belt of his sarong. After remaining there for three nights they will enter the maternal womb by the natural passages at the time of conjugal intercourse.

755 782 When one of these wandering souls leaves the body in order to divert himself, the man becomes ill. In order to [49] cure him, the soul must be called back, and then the Sou Khouan is performed.

When the Sou Khouan is considered necessary, the master of the house goes and consults an achar (pronounced: atiar = sk. acarya), an aged bonze, for the choice of the ceremonial days and hours, where this achar will officiate.

When the prescribed moment arrives, the pha khouan (tray containing offerings) must be ready. In the center of the tray is a goblet artistically decorated with small flowering branches on which are attached tiny candles and white cotton threads about twenty centimeters long. Around this goblet are arranged a boiled hen's egg called khay khouan (egg offered to the spirits), some pellets of glutinous rice, cakes, and ripe bananas.

The tray and goblet may be of wood, copper or silver, the richest appearing at weddings. Instead of a single goblet, several of different sizes can be placed one on top of the other to form a pyramid, and be decorated with flowers, candles and cotton threads.

In addition to the eatables already mentioned, one can also place on the tray a ngeun fac (ancient silver coin in the shape of a parallelepiped weighing 225 grams) or some other precious object.

Next to this tray is placed a small one on which is set a yellow-clawed cock which has been plucked, drawn and boiled. This is the khay khouan (the cock offered to souls). In addition one can add the head and viscera of a boiled pig.

[273] The whole is completed with a bottle of [rice] alcohol and some glasses. In the olden days, the alcohol was contained in a small natural gourd, and the cups [50] were made of bamboo or wood. But rich people had porcelain utensils imported from China. The alcohol can be replaced by a jar of fermented glutinous rice, the liquid extract of which is drunk by sucking it through bamboo tubes dipped into the bottom of the jar.

23: Franck--340 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 136, 757

"This region is noted for its leeches, especially during the rainy season that was now descending upon us. On that rainy Sunday afternoon the feet of my Kha were all bleeding, and were covered with the scars of what were evidently old leech-bites. These pets snatch upon the passer-by from the bushes overhanging the narrow trails, particularly after a shower; they get in somehow, even though one is not barefooted, soak the traveler's legs and socks in blood before he knows they are there, and he may be all day or all night in getting the flow stopped. In the middle of this third afternoon, chancing to pass a hand over an ankle, I felt a disgustingly soft lump under one of my high socks. Suddenly feeling the other leg with misgiving, I found it had two such unwelcome guests. Not far beyond we halted at a lonely little rest-house in the bush, and while the men rested and washed their feet, some of them put lumps of tobacco, such as they used in their long slim pipes, and other jungle leaves, on the three wounds; but at least one of them did not entirely stop bleeding until the next day."

149: Reinach--154 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

The members of the family and the local officials went ahead with the ablutions and last toilet of the deceased. They wrapped the body in a shroud of white cotton material, and it was then placed temporarily on a mattress surrounded by green branches, flowers and a large number of yellow wax candles which were kept constantly lit and replaced as necessary. 764

A shed was built in the garden of the house to serve as a kitchen, for it would be necessary to prepare various foods--rice, cakes, etc.--both day and night without any respite. This food would be offered to all comers--relatives, friends, neighbors and even passersby--up to the day of cremation.

Visitors soon began to stream in, and no one arrived with empty hands. Everyone brought an offering proportionate to his means. Some brought a bouquet of flowers or some fruit, others brought pieces of cotton cloth, wax, firewood, rice, pork or buffalo meat, brandy, fish, etc.

Grief took up very little of the time of the dead person's relatives and friends, for the latter quickly busied themselves with keeping their guests occupied, treating them well and being in several places at once so that the guests would lack for nothing. No sadness, moreover, was to be seen among the visitors who arrived in great hordes to profit by the windfall and take part in the funeral feasts now being prepared. 761 764

[204] In their Pythagorean philosophy, the Laotians regard death much as any other of the vital functions which normally participates in transformations of matter, as for example conception and birth. In addition to this they are fervent disciples of Epicurus without realizing it, and love life in all its forms for the pleasures which, in spite of its brief span, it holds for individuals who can limit their needs and moderate their desires. Although they dread death during their years of youth and virility, this is not because they are afraid of it but mainly because they see in it an end to the many pleasures of life. What is more, they are old hands at finding pretexts for enjoying such pleasures and at discovering all possible propitious occasions for organized rejoicing.

Funeral ceremonies are celebrations in the same way as marriages, assumptions of garments, births, cutting children's hair and the other public festivals which occur regularly each year at fixed times. In Laos everything ends in libations, songs and feasts, with unfettered merriment and a profusion of flowers and cloth materials whose 764 527

Finally a silver or gold coin is placed in its mouth and he is told that 764
earthly goods are vain and that this little thing that is pushed with difficulty between his teeth is all that the dead can take with him to the tomb. Here we find an ancient belief which the Catapatha Brahmana mentions: gold is placed in the mouths of the dead because this metal is immortal and in this way immortality can be attained. This custom is found not only in classical antiquity, but also in Japan, and China, and in the major part of eastern Asia.

After the body is put in its coffin, the latter is set on banana 764
trunks, for as this wood has no core, so man from now on has no 761
substance. The house has become heuan di, the happy house. The bonzes come and recite prayers over the dead which tell of the vanity of life.

"The body which the soul has left is nothing. Soon it will be as useless on earth as a dead tree.

/59/ "Life is an ephemeral thing. Birth and death follow each other without cease according to a normal ritual. After being born, one must disappear. Happiness is to enter Nirvana."

During the entire vigil (ngan) boys and girls are together; they 764
sing, dance, drink, play. However in a corner near the bier is placed a tray filled with food for the departed.

The dead body may be kept indefinitely at the house; there is no law which forbids it. However at the present time the tendency is more and more to follow the western method. In the country, seven days after his death, the deceased is carried into a cabin erected for him in a corner of his rice field. Every day his widow and children come and keep his temporary mausoleum in good order. Every week, on the 8th, 14th and 15th days of the crescent or waning moon, they repeat their offerings to the bonzes until the fourth month, the usual date for the ceremonies marking the dry season and the work in the rice fields which has just been completed. Then an enormous pavilion is built, and under its roof work is started on erecting the men (cenotaph) and decorating it as well as the coffin. Before this work starts, the coffin has been open and the dead man's face has been washed with coconut water, symbol of purity.

The style of the coffin and the men varies according to the locality. Its decoration also varies, but often consists only of sheets of gold paper stuck onto lacquer and representing vegetable motifs, flowers and deities. In important burials, the coffin is mounted on two enormous birds drawn by means of white cotton cord by the people present. This is done less and less, especially at Vientiane where the

10: d'Orleans--292 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
762

"...An invasion of Annamite troops in the seventeenth century which led to the suicide of the sovereign of Luang Prabang. (1)

1. The legend has it that the king, when on the point of being made prisoner, had himself attached to the trunk of an elephant and the animal taken down into the river. A pagoda was erected in memory of the drowned ruler."

643* one of his father's wives. He was now wandering about haphazardly
175* and implored their protection.
726
648* Capture of Xieng-Khouang. Fearful lest there should be an alliance
721 between Souvanna-Kham-Phong and the king of Tran-Ninh (whose reinforcements might take them from the rear in their direct march on Muong-Swa), they agreed to support the rebel. They went up the Nam-Nhiep and lay siege to Xieng-Khouang which they took by assault and whose king was put to death and replaced by Kham-Gno who acknowledged himself their vassal.

Capture of Xieng-Thong (Luang-Prabang). Reinforced by a Phoueun contingent, they then moved forward towards Xieng-Dong-Xieng-Thong. Their troops were divided into two armies, and one of these, under the command of Fa-Ngoun, entered the valley of the Nam-Khane. The other, under Phi-Fa, went down the Nam-Suong,
721 but the latter was stricken with cholera and died on the march at Hat-
643* Thoi. When he reached Dane-Khoua, Fa-Ngoun demanded that his
726 grandfather, Kham-Phong, abdicate in his favor. The latter was
175* highly indignant and moved to attack his grandson, whom he en-
648* countered at Pak-Ming. His troops were defeated and had to retreat
/762/ in disorder, /44/ his capital was captured and the old sovereign, "mad with shame and grief," hanged himself in his palace at Xieng-Thong.
726 At the age of thirty-seven Fa-Ngoun proclaimed himself king of
643* "Lan-Xang" and at once demanded submission of all the Thaï princes
175* of the Mékong. Without awaiting their "reactions" he set out to make
631 his authority accepted, and in a sort of triumphal march received the submission of all the chieftains of the northern muongs as far as the limits of the kingdoms of Xieng-Maï (Lan-Na) and Xieng-Houng (Sip-Song-Panas). He met with greater resistance in the south and had to enter into a struggle to the death against Phaya-Phao, prince of Vientiane, who had taken the leadership of the opposition.
175* The discovery by Georges Maspero in 1902, in the vicinity of the
633 present-day administrative capital of French Laos, of steles of Kmer
648* origin amidst the ruins of twenty-eight pagodas, makes it possible to
631 suppose that the first capital of the land was Say-Fong, that "dead city" stifled by the forest. In the time of its splendor it was the advanced citadel of Cambodian hegemony in Thaï territory, but its importance declined quite rapidly, doubtless with the first blows struck against the suzerainty of Angkor by the kings of Sukhothaï and

10: d'Orleans--275 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 609, 764

"In the evening some natives come and beg us not to enter the village near which we have halted, for a man has died there, and the funeral is being celebrated by a great feast, at which a good deal of tchoum tchoum will be drunk; our presence would be a constraint upon the guests."

10: d'Orleans--276 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 563, 583, 591, 764, 793 Ethnic subgroups

"Marriages are easily made amongst the Khamouks; the young man's parents give sixty rupees to the girl's father and mother. After the marriage feast, the bridegroom sleeps one night in his father-in-law's house, then takes his wife home with him.

The dead are buried and not burnt; there is no priest, no religious ceremonies, but the master of the house cuts a fowl's throat and the mourners rub their knees with his blood. The men generally follow one stage in the bonzeries. (1) After a few months

1. I question whether this information does not apply more to the Laotians.

they are little bonze or Siang, then grand bonze or Tit ; a man who has not made one stage is Ba."

10: d'Orleans--319 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 563, 583, 591, 764 Ethnic subgroups

[LSS: Among the Meo of Luang Prabang] "The marriages are arranged by the parents, a young girl being rated at 36 rupees and taken, as soon as she is married, to the house of her husband. The bodies of the defunct are interred three days after death."

23: Franck--277 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 764

" I had not seen a grave for days; the Laosians dispose of their dead like real Buddhists; the Miao pile heaps of stone over their corpses."

25: Brodrick--100 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 535, 764, 782

"...the funerals in the Laos are gay ceremonies. When a man dies his body is covered in perfume-soaked sawdust piled into a hardwood coffin--the Laos is a land of fine, hard-grained woods--and the whole is placed upon a catafalque near the house. The bier is watched day and night by youths and maidens who sing songs, improvise poems, crack jokes, make love, and play musical instruments, while, from time to time, but not too often, the Buddhist monks come and read sutras of the Good Law. Cremation is not so strictly observed as in Cambodia, but most bodies are burned, at least in the towns and larger villages. After the incineration comes the Feast of the Appeasement of the Spirits. A covered altar is set up near the dead man's house, and on the altar are offerings to the manes or ghosts, offerings of frangipani flowers, of rice, of betel, of alcohol and of swords. And all night long, the women dance archaic-sounding , rhythmic measures to the tunes strummed out by an orchestra."

moreover, the object of the utmost scorn on the part of the whole 548
population, and their houses are relegated to points outside the muong, that is to say outside the city.

No such practice exists in rural areas, and if a few girls grant 836
their lovers great intimacies it is in the hope--a hope which is almost always realized--that marriage will be the result.

Death, burial, cremation. In principle, Laotians are supposed 764
to cremate their dead. In this they are obedient to the ancient traditions which specified this ceremony, but since cremation is a 766
costly practice poor people are simply buried.

In certain cases, as in deaths resulting from dysentery epidemics, from childbirth, from suicide, etc., the bodies are thrown into the river or its tributaries.

Laotians have no cemeteries enclosed by walls or barriers. A corner of the forest near the muong or village is reserved for this use and serves as a last resting place for those of the inhabitants who cannot be cremated or should not be thrown into the water. There, at the foot of the trees and in their shade, repose those adults and adolescents whose families did not even have means to buy the ritual cremation firewood, and also the children who never underwent the operation of "cutting the forelock" (1).

(1) This operation takes place at the age of thirteen and marks the transition from childhood to adolescence. It is the sign of nubility. [881]

When it is to be buried, the body of the dead person is placed in 764
a sort of coffin made of ax-hewn planks which are usually poorly joined and covered with colored paper burdened with ornamentation. 792
Sometimes a mat is used, in simpler fashion, or else lattices made of split and crushed bamboo stalks like those which form the floors of houses. The whole is tied together with rattan or with bamboo bark.

This is the lot of destiny's outcasts. After a few family ceremonies and a feast given in the dead person's home [201]--the magnitude of which ceremonies and feast vary depending on the dead person's station in life and his family's resources--the bonzes, accompanied by a few pupils, come and recite the funeral orisons.

The bonzes are not supposed to look at the body during their prayers, and they hold up a screen called Talapat to hide their faces.

Gifts from the family serve as payment for the bonzes. When the prayers are over, flowers and wax candles are added to the gifts. The body is then raised on the shoulders of four pallbearers of good-will and taken to the cemetery, where there are a few ablutions and where the bonzes recite the last prayers before the burial. 764 792

When all is done the persons present take turns throwing branches, earth and stone into the grave, in the belief that these things will preserve the deceased from contact with wet soil and the teeth of animals. The grave, comparatively shallow, is dug two sok (.9 meter) deep for adults and a half sok (.65 meter) deep for children and adolescents. When the cavity has been filled with earth and well tamped down with the feet, the persons present withdraw and all is over forever.

No worship will be practiced for this tomb, and it will soon disappear under a thick blanket of vegetation. Relatives sometimes return, however, after a rainfall if the ground happens to have settled slightly on the very spot of the grave. They then fill up the tomb and build a sort of tumulus above it with flat stones or heavy round rocks.

The custom of throwing into running water the bodies of persons who had died as a result of certain diseases, generally of an epidemic character, used to be practiced in Laos before our arrival there. The inhabitants had no concern for the fatal consequences which such a procedure might have on public health. Since our arrival in the land an absolute prohibition has been issued against throwing any corpse into the watercourses. Nowadays the people are content merely with simulating this custom and with interring bodies after a pretended immersion. 766 744

[202] When the family of the deceased is wealthy or even well-to-do, cremation is the standard procedure. This ceremony is not performed immediately after death is pronounced, but may often be postponed for more than a month either to enable relatives to come from a distance, or to await the settlement of a pending lawsuit, or else the arrival of the fire sent by the sovereign if the deceased is a prince, an official or a man of a certain rank. Wealthy families postpone the date of cremation out of ostentation, for the interval between death and cremation is supposed to be filled with feasts, celebrations and amusements of all kinds which are put on almost continuously for the bonzes, relatives, friends, neighbors and [554] 764

764 passersby and which entail great expenditures.

The procedure in cremating bodies is practically the same throughout all of Laos, except for a few matters of detail peculiar to certain tribes and localities.

After death the body undergoes several preliminary operations, these being the ablutions, placing the funeral offering destined for the genii of the beyond in the dead person's mouth, drying the body and depositing it in the bier. The Laotian funeral offering recalls the ancient Egyptian custom which survived among the Greeks and Romans under the name of obolus for Charon. In Laos this is a coin--a tical or a rupee--or a strip of silver or gold rolled into a cylinder on which the bonzes have used a sharp instrument to engrave certain sacred formulas and the word Arahang twice repeated, which in mystical language signifies worthy of honor, saint, exempt from all carnal desire, etc.

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If cremation is to be postponed for any length of time the body is dessicated by means of mercury, which is introduced through the mouth so as to clean out the viscera completely, empty the intestine and prevent putrefaction. The procedure is completed by fumigating with aromatic plants and bark before the body is deposited in the bier. When the latter ceremony is over, the joints of the coffin are carefully luted with a special paste. Then until the time of cremation the casket is placed on a rather high catafalque which is covered with a roof and situated either in a [203] pagoda, in the dead person's home or in that of one of his close relatives.

There follows below the description of a funeral ceremony, all the phases of which were witnessed by the author. It will enable the reader to gain quite an exact idea of what cremation is like in Laos.

As soon as the death was made known, the bonzes from both pagodas of the Muong (1) came to the dead person's house in order to

(1) Here we refer to the Muong of Pak-Lay, capital of the province of Outhai-Thani (kingdom of Luang-Prabang). The deceased was the Tiao-Muong or head of this province, and was more than eighty years old when he died.

recite the litanies prescribed by the rites, and to see that a wall of the house was knocked down on the side of the rising sun. A bamboo staircase was built the entire width of the opening to give access to the room in which the body was to be displayed.

149: Reinach--154 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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The members of the family and the local officials went ahead with the ablutions and last toilet of the deceased. They wrapped the body in a shroud of white cotton material, and it was then placed temporarily on a mattress surrounded by green branches, flowers and a large number of yellow wax candles which were kept constantly lit and replaced as necessary.

A shed was built in the garden of the house to serve as a kitchen, for it would be necessary to prepare various foods--rice, cakes, etc.--both day and night without any respite. This food would be offered to all comers--relatives, friends, neighbors and even passersby--up to the day of cremation.

Visitors soon began to stream in, and no one arrived with empty hands. Everyone brought an offering proportionate to his means. Some brought a bouquet of flowers or some fruit, others brought pieces of cotton cloth, wax, firewood, rice, pork or buffalo meat, brandy, fish, etc.

Grief took up very little of the time of the dead person's relatives and friends, for the latter quickly busied themselves with keeping their guests occupied, treating them well and being in several places at once so that the guests would lack for nothing. No sadness, moreover, was to be seen among the visitors who arrived in great hordes to profit by the windfall and take part in the funeral feasts now being prepared.

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[204] In their Pythagorean philosophy, the Laotians regard death much as any other of the vital functions which normally participates in transformations of matter, as for example conception and birth. In addition to this they are fervent disciples of Epicurus without realizing it, and love life in all its forms for the pleasures which, in spite of its brief span, it holds for individuals who can limit their needs and moderate their desires. Although they dread death during their years of youth and virility, this is not because they are afraid of it but mainly because they see in it an end to the many pleasures of life. What is more, they are old hands at finding pretexts for enjoying such pleasures and at discovering all possible propitious occasions for organized rejoicing.

Funeral ceremonies are celebrations in the same way as marriages, assumptions of garments, births, cutting children's hair and the other public festivals which occur regularly each year at fixed times. In Laos everything ends in libations, songs and feasts, with unfettered merriment and a profusion of flowers and cloth materials whose

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colors are bright and harmonious. It is during these days of rejoicing that the first amorous intrigues often spring up between young people which, generally speaking, end in marriage.

Preparations for the funeral celebration went on, and dusk had not yet fallen when music and singing began to be heard and plates of food were passed around, as well as jars full of rice brandy.

Immediately after the death, men went to the forest to select the dead, but not decaying, tree whose trunk was to serve for making the coffin. Others prepared the pedestal on which it was to be placed and the roof which would surmount it.

The coffin was finally finished. Trapezoidal in shape, with the base uppermost, it rested on a wooden pedestal decorated with carvings. The roof placed above it was copied from the roofs of pagodas. The frame was made of bamboo lattice covered with glued calico, and the whole was ornamented with gold paper cutouts, streamers and multicolored cotton floss.

[205] The body was sealed in its coffin, where it rested on a bed of aromatic branches and leaves. It was fully dressed and surrounded by bedclothes. A sliding cover was dovetailed into place, and all joints sealed with an indestructible caulking compound made from lime, clay, albumen and paddy husks. [Illustration alongside text here]

The catafalque stood in the middle of the room, one of the walls of which had been removed, as we have seen. It was surrounded by flowers, green branches, lighted candles and stick incense perfumed with powdered benzoin.

In the course of the next four days the province bonzes and officials arrived, and all recited the ritual prayers in Pali around the catafalque without understanding anything of what they said but scrupulously observing the consecrated rhythm and intonation.

In the meantime a funeral pyre had been built on the sandy bank of the Mékong, left bare by the low waters, using about three [206] steres of dry wood which had been impregnated with resin, wood oil and kerosene.

Solidly held in place at the side by six heavy stakes of green wood, the pyre was surmounted by a high canopy or rectangular pavilion, the roof of which rose in tiers and was covered with flowered cotton cloth and decorated with gold paper garlands, cutouts and many-colored streamers.

This pavilion, supported by four posts decorated in the same taste, would presently serve to shelter the coffin.

149: Reinach--155a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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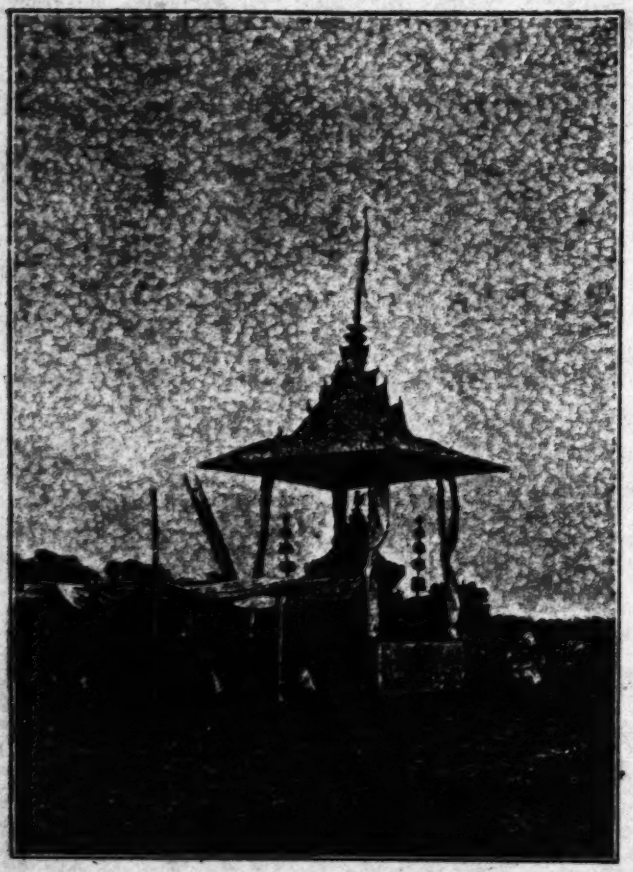

Fig. 51 /p. 205/ Catafalque ready for cremation, in Nong-Khay.

149; Reinach--156 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Ever since the death, singers and improvisers of both sexes accompanied by volunteer musicians had recounted the merits, qualities and exploits of the deceased at great length and with emphasis before a numerous audience which remained attentive and never grew tired. They boasted of his good deeds, listed his particular habits and tastes and enumerated his many children and grandchildren.

They dwelled with great satisfaction on the intimacies which he had taken with the fair sex up to quite an advanced age, and in support of their remarks showed brightly illuminated drawings painted on long streamers of glazed calico. These drawings, as much by the truth of the attitudes shown as by their outrageous realism, were the joy of the spectators. Both children and adults roared with laughter as they listened to the highly spicy commentary of the improvisers.

A curious fact was that this exhibition did not occasion any obscene or even suggestive gesture on the part of the audience.

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The bonzes, who are the only art students in this country, are the ones who color these pictures. If published in our own land, the latter would certainly call down all the rigor of the law on their author.

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The day of cremation finally came, and the funeral proper began.

One of the sons of the deceased first set free two pairs of partridges and turtledoves, pet birds which he had had. The poor creatures were unaccustomed to flight and refused to leave their cage, but then beat their wings and clumsily escaped to a perch a few meters above ground on one of the trees [207] in the garden. A trail of ashes was spread all around the fence surrounding the house of the deceased in order, as popular belief has it, to prevent his spirit from escaping into the nearby region and tormenting the living.

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A solid bamboo stretcher which twelve hardy men would carry on their shoulders was placed on the ground to await the catafalque. Attendance was heavy, and people of all ages came from a distance. They wore their holiday clothes with vivid, light and iridescent colors. They wore flowers in their ears and hair and carried multicolored streamers, wax candles and sticks of incense in their hands.

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The members of the family, the officials of the Muong and the bonzes were also there in force.

The catafalque was carried from the house by hand and put down on the stretcher, which the porters then raised to their shoulders. At its base, near the feet of the deceased, was fastened a strip of calico

764 some forty meters long folded across its width until it was the size of a man's hand (with thumb and little finger spread). The strip was unrolled ahead of the coffin and was held by the youngest of the dead person's sons, who led the mourning. Then the bonzes, relatives, officials and best friends of the deceased took positions on each side and held on to the strip with one hand, as we would hold on to pall-bearers' cords. Thus constituted, the procession set off ahead of the coffin, drawing it along in a manner of speaking.

Tom-toms, gongs, cymbals, clarinets and the Laotian organ were heard during the processional, as well as songs and improvisations. When it reached the funeral pyre the procession circled it three times and deposited the coffin on it.

The spectators then took up positions under sheltering bushes, in shady spots or even in full sunlight, depending on their rank. All was in readiness to light the fire, which was to be provided by the Governor of the province, a delegate of the king of Luang-Prabang who is the "master of life" (1), for the deceased was a high official.

[643] (1) The king of Luang-Prabang bears the title Tiao-Tsi-Vit, master of life.

[208] One important rite still remained to be performed: the last ablutions of water and brandy on the face, chest and hands of the body.

Then men climbed up on the pyre and removed the canopy of the catafalque, leaving the bamboo frame showing through the torn wrapping. They broke the lid of the coffin into splinters with great ax blows and thus exposed the body of the deceased, which exuded such a strong odor that all the spectators on the leeward side fell back.

The final toilet took place at this time. The men who do this work absorb such quantities of brandy to drive off miasmas and stimulate their own courage that their gestures and merriment, at such a time and place, would seem to us to be out of place. But here things are not seen in the same light, and the gesticulations of all these folk armed with axes and various containers and their grotesque attitudes around the open coffin merely stimulate the spectators' joy. The songs and music had not ceased, and wrestling matches and animal combats were about to take place. The wrestlers took the measure of one another and came to grips with their hands flat open, while the

764 526 527

boxers pummeled one another with their fists. Their hands were smeared with a mixture of oil and soot so that they would leave a mark wherever they hit. The tilters were hot and eager, but did not greatly hurt one another, for their chief effort was to attract attention by means of gestures and plastic attitudes which would impress the girls and women with their supple, nervous and muscular bodies, shining like bronze under the sun because of the sweat which the effort of fighting brought on. 764 526 527

Combats between buffaloes followed these amusements, then cocks were brought on and the whole audience crowded around. Passions rose to a fever pitch in the whole mass of spectators, who had been imbibing brandy freely. Ironic clamors rained down on the men who had let themselves be beaten and whose faces were smeared with black on their return, while enthusiastic shouts greeted the victors. In spite of all the excitement, the sun, the heat and the brandy, the whole mass of people remained quite moderate and the festivities [209] [Illustration] [210] [Blank page] [211] always kept a gay and gracious air. The enthusiasm for the fighters, the shouts and the bravos only lasted for a moment, and all of them, both lucky and unlucky, were sponged, given drink and cherished with equal solicitude so that they soon forgot their momentary rivalry. 764 527 273

Children of both sexes then approached the pyre. They had all fastened their sampots and skirts in view of what was to happen next. Sacks were brought which were full of copper coins, to which a few silver coins had been added. Members of the family of the deceased then climbed up on the pyre and threw this small change broadcast into the horde of children. An indescribable tumult followed, accompanied by sharp cries. There was quarreling and fighting, and many little pairs of hands could be seen grabbing for the same copper coins. All of them would have liked to get the few white coins. 764 857

The parents and older people watched the coin hunt, which reminded them of the time when they were children and at the same time reminded them of the name of a dead man whose family had been generous to them once in similar circumstances.

Now all the ritual ceremonies had been accomplished and it remained only to proceed to the last one: setting fire to the pyre. 764

Stiff lengths of rattan were attached to the four corners of the catafalque and fastened to the ground with stakes. Rockets slid along the lengths of rattan, and when the time came they would shoot up and supposedly light the pyre. In reality this is only a

149: Reinach--158a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

764

Fig. 52 /p.209/ Preparing for a cremation.

"symbol" and the last vestige of an ancient usage, for the rockets can only set a few handfuls of straw afire. The wives and children of the deceased, all in great mourning costume, that is to say entirely clothed in white cotton goods, came and prostrated themselves before the Governor of the province, presented him with a platter of flowers and wax candles and asked him whether the King, "the master of life," had given permission for the cremation to take place and whether, for this purpose, he had sent "fire" from Luang-Prabang. 764

The Governor gave the fire to the dead man's relatives and then, in giving permission to cremate, he delivered an address which may be translated as follows:

[212] "The Tiao-Muong of Pak-Lay has been a good and just man during his life. He has never committed perjury. We may hope, together with his numerous family, that his Phi (soul) will be taken by the Thévada (angels) to the Spaces and there be presented to the holy Buddhas, Phra-Pouthi-Tiao, Phra-Tama-Tiao and Phra-Sang-Kha-Tiao, who will take him with them to Paradise to stay for a while. Then, at the time of rebirth, his Phi will again be incarnated in the body of a just, good and happy man who will have all the goods which are to be desired and a numerous progeniture." 764 755

[Illustration here]

The songs and music stopped during this speech, but they began again with new zest when the Governor of the province approached the pyre and set fire to the four corners. He was immediately followed and imitated by the family, the bonzes, the officials and the spectators. All without exception insisted on contributing fire, either with wax candles, resinous torches, dry bamboo or firebrands, or else with whole boxes of matches [213] or even with mere handfuls of dry grass which they had uprooted. 764

A thick, suffocating black smoke reeking of kerosene and resin rose up and enveloped the catafalque, and then a few tongues of flame shot forth. The evening wind was beginning to be felt and cleared the smoke somewhat. The flames grew hotter and finally hid the catafalque. A backward rush began, for the heat was far too intense and forced the spectators to move away from the [Illustration here] pyre. Only a few men armed with green bamboo poles remained nearby, seared by the fire but attentive and anxious, for someone had to see whether the coffin would lean to the right side, that is to say in the direction of Luang-Prabang, the residence of the King from whence "the fire" came. With a sudden crackling 764 787

764

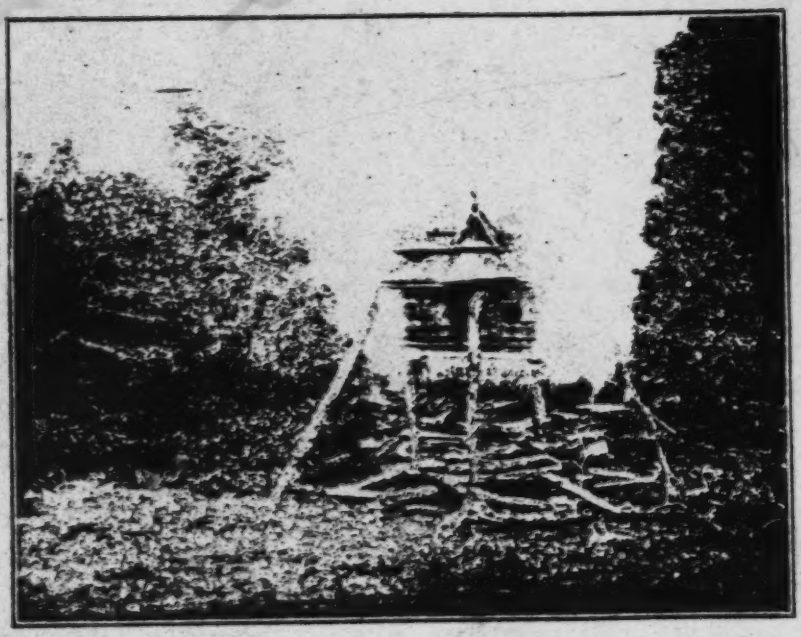

Fig. 53 /p. 212/ A cremation.

764

Fig. 54 /p. 213/ After a cremation.

764 the fire collapsed. In a great shower of sparks, in the middle of a
787 long blue flame, the coffin tottered and fortunately leaned to the right side. The dead man's spirit was satisfied, and it was also an excellent omen for the prosperity of the Muong.

764 [214] Now the pyre, the catafalque, the coffin, the corpse and all were nothing more than an immense live fire, an incandescent mass which projected bizarre flashes on the motley crowd and gave to it, in the evening twilight beside the great river, a phantasmagorical air.

From time to time one of the posts of the canopy could be seen in the center of the fire, rising towards the sky like a gigantic torch. The coffin toppled, and for the space of a second the corpse seemed to appear grimacing and twisting in the middle of the flames, like a salamander.

The whole fire fell in, and the crackling noises lessened. Two or three tongues of flame shot out here and there, only to be extinguished immediately. The coals finished burning themselves out, and soon nothing was left of the pyre and of the whole edifice, so bizarrely decorated, but a pile of gray ashes in the middle of which a few whitish and incompletely burned bone fragments could still be seen. With night the last gleams of the pyre disappeared, the last coals went out and the only light remaining was that of the twinkling stars.

Early the next day the bonzes went to the spot where the pyre had stood. They collected the ashes which had been cooled by dew during the night and then, after throwing a few handfuls to the four winds, they used the rest to draw a crude human face on the ground. The few whitish bones which were still left and which crumbled at the touch were collected and placed in a jar of ordinary earth, which would be buried in the enclosure of a pagoda at the foot of a sacred "ficus."

[565] Later on, since the deceased had been well-to-do and his family was wealthy, the latter would be helped by the people of the province to build a brick pyramid called "That" inside the pagoda enclosure.

A few ashes in an urn and, in some, the memory of a great celebration and a few good meals...and that is all that remained of the man who had long been a great leader in his province.

533 Music. "Instrumental music holds a place of honor in Laos.
534 The instruments are few in number, and are of Malayan and Chinese origin.

586 the Laotians." (Le Laos français.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

• 764 Deaths, Funerals. Everything takes place among the Thais
769 as among the Laotians. The poor are buried, while well-to-do people are cremated in great pomp. Celebrations take place at which animals are sacrificed, there is a great deal to eat and quantities of rice brandy and rice beer are consumed. But here there is ancestor worship, and so the altar of the "Phis" of the house and the body itself receive offerings as long as the funeral feasts last.

After cremation, which, as in India, is practiced on a raised pyre at the bottom of a pit dug in the ground, the ashes and burnt bones are sealed in a jar with a few silver coins placed there to pay for the dead person's food during his wanderings through "space."

The jar is buried on the site of the pyre. Then [237] [Illustration] [238] [Blank page] [239] the mattresses, bolster and pillow of the deceased are placed on top, as well as food and a drinking vase full of water. All of his clothes are fastened to poles planted fan-wise on one side of the tomb. Sometimes a fence closes off the site of the tomb.

In some regions the jar containing the remains and ashes of the deceased is buried in a hidden place in the mountains, known only to the dead person's closest relatives.

This procedure, which is not a ritual one, is doubtless intended to place the mortal remains beyond the reach of any profaners of sepulchres who might be attracted by the temptation of the few coins mixed with the ashes.

Finally, a little house is often built over the tomb which is supposed to represent the dwelling place of the deceased.

527 Games, Celebrations, Festivals. Like their Laotian brothers, the Thais are great lovers of celebrations. The chief holiday, one which is celebrated in May or June every year and during which all work ceases for four days, is that of the dead or Boun-Phi-Tai.

782 Animal sacrifices are made to the different genii, and are
769 accompanied by prayers in honor of the dead. The favor of each genie or "Phi" spirit is gained by sacrificing a particular animal, as a dog for the "Phi" of tigers, chickens and pigs for the "Phis" of the mountains, a goat for those which watch over the roads leading to watercourses, and buffalo and oxen, finally, for the "Phis" of the

Tribal Tai

whole match, instead of keeping their legs rigid and remaining on 535
the same line, the opponents turn constantly around a central point and raise each leg in turn, the knee bent. This exercise, in which all four limbs work at once and which requires a sure eye and rapid execution, is surely one of the most graceful in existence when it is performed with the facile ease and supreme elegance of the Lus.

"Lu dancing has that particular character of morbidness which one finds among most Mohammedan peoples and also in Spain. The men (for the men are the ones who dance) imprint on their feet only those movements which are indispensable for making the body pivot and facilitating slow, undulating movements by the hips, torso and arms. The dancers are accompanied by tom-toms and kettledrums, and they sigh out lingering, voluptuous chants which harmonize well with their movements. These are veritable harem dances, or such as dancing girls might perform." (Le Laos français.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

We have already seen what the religion of the Lus is like, and 771
need add only that their bonzes are highly respected and that the pagodas are much frequented by the children and young people. Thus 212
the number of scholars is higher among the Lus than among the Laotians. Many women even know how to read and write.

The Lus do not cremate their dead, but bury them, even at a 764
very shallow depth, after wrapping the bodies in a mat or a piece of cloth. The bonzes recite a few prayers over the grave when it has been filled, and in return for this service usually receive an object of some value which belonged to the deceased.

[250] The tombs are not kept up.

The Youns. The natives called Youns are Laotians who have 619
settled on the right bank of the Mekong, in the basin of the Upper Menam and in the territories of Xieng-Hai, Xieng-Khong and Xieng- 304
Sen. There are, however, Youns living in French Laos where they have mixed with the other Laotians. [Illustration alongside text here]

The Youns may be distinguished from their fellow Laotians by the extent to which they are tattooed. Whereas a Laotian will only be tattooed from the bend of the knee to the waist, a Youn will be tattooed from the calf of the leg to the chest. This has caused the inhabitants of the right bank to be baptized "Black Bellies" (Lao-Phoung-Dam), while those of the left bank are called Lao-Phoung-Khao or "White Bellies."

Kha

586 684 and to the family of his accomplice. In a case of flagrante delicto, however, he has the right to kill the guilty parties.

[462] Kha women, when married, are renowned for their austerity, and their conduct is usually exemplary. Moreover, they are very soon disfigured by precocious and repeated childbearing, as well as by the difficult work which they do, and after two or three years of marriage the poor women are no longer tempting to anyone.

•764 Deaths. Cremation is not practiced by the Khas. They bury their dead in as summary a fashion as the Lus, and for a few days bring food to the freshly filled grave. Then the latter is abandoned.

When a chief or a rich man is to be buried, the body is placed in a coffin hewn from a tree trunk.

181 Character. Like all oppressed peoples, the Khas are reserved and timid. They are afraid of innovations and new faces. But in intimate gatherings with their own people they are just as merry and love music, dances, celebrations and festivals just as much as the other peoples of Laos.

535 536 Music and dancing. They know certain dances imitated from the Lus, pantomimes (1) which resemble the I-Ke of the Burmese,

(1) They also have the habit of performing scenes in pantomime, rather like extremely primitive ballets. We shall describe one such scene:

"A group of girls, guarded by two respectable men, are pursuing the pleasures of dancing. A rogue comes up and tries to make off with one of the girls. After a few unsuccessful attempts he succeeds in eluding the guards' vigilance, jumps forward to seize the girl on whom he has designs, and clasps her in his arms. But his happiness is too much for him and he falls senseless at the feet of the girl he wanted to abduct." (Le Laos français.) - [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

and [255] singsong legends in which the r's and k's roll out in terrible fashion. They also have songs which they accompany on flutes, clarinets and single-stringed violins. Some tribes have xylophones, these being instruments composed of bamboo tubes of [Illustration here] different thickness and length, each of which produces a tone varying with its size. It will be seen that by striking with a [256] stick of wood on these tubes, a combination of more or less harmonious sounds will

533

734 friend take one's place.

Laotians when they pay a visit to a sick person, prattle noisily,
574 ask the sick person a great number of unnecessary questions, and
576 sometimes tell him stories to cheer him up. This custom must stop. The patient, who is tired, needs rest. The visit one pays him should not last longer than ten minutes.

574 Condolence visit.--The Laotian ceremony connected with
576 the condolence visit is the opposite of the Western ceremony. The
764 The visitor, instead of appearing sad before the family of the deceased, is gay and smiling.

In order to give you an idea of what goes on in a house in which a death has taken place among the Laotians, I shall content myself by citing here certain passages from my article, "The custom
764 of funeral ceremonies in the land of Laos" (1): "Those who believe
574
576 1. In Kinnary, No. 4, November, 1946.

in the existence of the phi place a tray of food intended for the deceased near the coffin. Furthermore they place, at the head of the coffin, a sword marked with a cross with chalk, together with a superstitious formula in order to prevent the phi from stealing the coffin away from the deceased. The coffin has to be watched over day and night. The watchers talk, play certain games, or engage in any other diversion. /274/

/825/ "In the course of this watch cats are also prevented from prowling around the coffin. A cat which were to jump across would provoke the resurrection of the dead person, according to what certain people say.

"The house in which the person has died is called heuan di (happy house). There one works, sings, dances, and plays. From it can be heard the sound of orchestras and shouts of joy. Such spectacles have something disconcerting about them to the eyes of strangers. Nevertheless, one should not regard this behavior as a sign of irreverence towards the deceased person. Despite its smiling appearance, the family of the deceased suffers profoundly. It abstains from violent shedding of tears and from public lamentations because it considers a discreet grief more dignified and the sense one has of death in this way a nobler one."

/779/ It would be difficult not to respect this tradition which stems

from the Buddhist religion; but there is reason, in my opinion, for 764
banishing all that is in the domain of superstition. 574

European custom, in contrast, permits the person in mourning 576
not to receive the visitor in the house of the deceased because he is
too afflicted. In this case the visitor leaves a card with a few words 000
of condolence.

If the person in mourning comes to receive the visitor, the latter should assume a sad air and he must not speak of the dead person first. This visit is paid out of sympathy for the family which is in mourning. It should not last too long because grief requires solitude.

Duties of the visitor. --On this subject I advise the adoption of the French custom:

The visitor dresses properly and in a correct manner. If he is wearing a coat and a hat, and carrying an umbrella and a cane, he puts them off before knocking on the door. He greets the lady and the master of the house before the other persons who are present. If the latter are too numerous he is not obligated to shake hands with everybody. It will be enough if he nods his head a couple of times to the right and to the left.

He takes his leave by shaking hands with the lady and the master of the house. In order to salute the other people present he performs the same movements as at his entry. If the number of people present is too large he may skillfully slip away; that is what is called loi vat angkit in Laotian ("to take French leave").

Duties of the host. --Here again my preference is for Western customs:

The host, when he sees his guests coming, appears before them to welcome them. After the exchange of greetings he designates the seats and invites everyone to sit down. When everybody is seated, somebody enters; he extends his hand and everybody rises to greet him. A lady does not get up to return the greeting except in the case of a personage of /975/ note or of a venerable old man.

The hostess and the host must appear affable and smiling during the whole time of the reception. When somebody takes his leave they accompany him to the door.

At a gathering. --At a gathering it is the duty of everyone to

173: Deydier--37 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

585 In front of the bride's house, guards make a sham defence of the gate of the house. The husband and his retinue can enter only by making a gift of money or alcohol. When he reaches the stairway of the house, the young man may only climb it after having his feet washed on a piece of stone covered with a banana leaf by the sisters or the women servants of the bride. He must pay for this service, then seat himself in front of the two ritual phakhouan next to his bride, who is already sitting there. The Sou Khouan of the wedding [801] resembles the bassi. However at the wedding there are only two phakhouan and everything in the ceremony must be in even numbers. They are, however, larger and better decorated than the ordinary phakhouan. The marriage is celebrated by two individuals officiating who recite sacramental formulas in duet. Then, after tying a large number of cotton threads around their wrists, the married couple prostrate themselves before each of the aged people and those who are present. They are then led to their room by a lady chosen from among the most virtuous.

Funerals

764 In Laos as in all Buddhist countries, the dead are burned. However, a distinction is made between two kinds of death, normal death
766 and accidental (drowning, suicide or violent death). The dead of the second category must be buried within twenty-four hours. The story is told of a peasant's wife who, having died in childbirth, was quickly cut up in pieces by the villagers who scattered them to the four winds so that she would not become a wandering soul capable of tormenting the living.

764 [58] When there is a death in a house, the body is bathed with tepid water, then with cold water. It is then perfumed and dressed. Two garments are put on it, one wrong side out, the other right side out. The former symbolizes death, the latter life, for the favorite garment of the dead person while alive was chosen. His hair is then combed and he is shackled with a white cotton thread, for he must not return to the world of the living. The same thread is used to wrap around his neck, to tie his two hands together, and his two feet together. This bond must not be cut, so a knot is made at each place where it is attached. This thread also shows man how illusory are the bonds which tie him to the world. Then the body is wrapped in [823] a shroud. It is laid parallel with the largest dimension of the house, [342] as opposed to the living who always lie in the direction of its width.

Finally a silver or gold coin is placed in its mouth and he is told that 764 earthly goods are vain and that this little thing that is pushed with difficulty between his teeth is all that the dead can take with him to the tomb. Here we find an ancient belief which the Catapatha Brahmana mentions: gold is placed in the mouths of the dead because this metal is immortal and in this way immortality can be attained. This custom is found not only in classical antiquity, but also in Japan, and China, and in the major part of eastern Asia.

After the body is put in its coffin, the latter is set on banana 764 trunks, for as this wood has no core, so man from now on has no 761 substance. The house has become heuan di, the happy house. The bonzes come and recite prayers over the dead which tell of the vanity of life.

"The body which the soul has left is nothing. Soon it will be as useless on earth as a dead tree.

/59/ "Life is an ephemeral thing. Birth and death follow each other without cease according to a normal ritual. After being born, one must disappear. Happiness is to enter Nirvana."

During the entire vigil (ngan) boys and girls are together; they 764 sing, dance, drink, play. However in a corner near the bier is placed a tray filled with food for the departed.

The dead body may be kept indefinitely at the house; there is no law which forbids it. However at the present time the tendency is more and more to follow the western method. In the country, seven days after his death, the deceased is carried into a cabin erected for him in a corner of his rice field. Every day his widow and children come and keep his temporary mausoleum in good order. Every week, on the 8th, 14th and 15th days of the crescent or waning moon, they repeat their offerings to the bonzes until the fourth month, the usual date for the ceremonies marking the dry season and the work in the rice fields which has just been completed. Then an enormous pavilion is built, and under its roof work is started on erecting the men (cenotaph) and decorating it as well as the coffin. Before this work starts, the coffin has been open and the dead man's face has been washed with coconut water, symbol of purity.

The style of the coffin and the men varies according to the locality. Its decoration also varies, but often consists only of sheets of gold paper stuck onto lacquer and representing vegetable motifs, flowers and deities. In important burials, the coffin is mounted on two enormous birds drawn by means of white cotton cord by the people present. This is done less and less, especially at Vientiane where the

764 coffin is placed on a truck. The bonzes are at the head of the procession, then the widow and the children dressed in white as a sign of mourning.

[60] The coffin is placed on the pyre. All those attending, holding a lighted candle or resinous torch, go to the pyre in single file, and throw the brands into the fire. It is forbidden to light a torch by lending one's light or by borrowing that of a neighbor. During this time the family must throw offerings to the crowd: pieces of banana branches, lemons, etc., into which have been introduced coins mixed with grilled rice. The cotton thread, called fay mongkhou, which [751] had surrounded the house in order to chase away sorrow, illness, the phi, etc., is removed at the end of the ceremony.

On the third day the bones are fetched away. The bonzes are [187] invited, but before touching the ashes, they must be examined to see [775] if they have left any imprints either animal or human, in order to know in what form the dead man will be reborn. The bones are gathered with wooden pincers and then placed in an urn. A statue in a vaguely human form is erected of wet cinders. The urn and the offerings are surrounded by a cotton thread, then the bonzes recite a prayer and this closes the ceremony. The urn will be placed in a pagoda or buried by the family who will erect a that. A little later, to commemorate the death of the departed, the family will dig a hole in the pagoda or near the that, and in it plant a long bamboo at the end of which is fastened a cotton banner laminated with small bamboo sticks. A tray of offerings is brought, which had been placed at the foot of the bamboo pole while it was being set up, and which is held by the relatives and friends of the dead man. Before this, offerings of food had been wrapped in a banana leaf. Once the bamboo is set up, water is poured all around on the earth which is holding it up, in the hope that the merits of this action will reach the other world. Then the whole family [61] squats down around the pole and with joined hands recites prayers.

The Laotian House.

342 It is built on piles and has a veranda. The roof is curved slightly inwards. A long stake holding the water jar is sunk in the ground near the veranda outside the house. The floor is of bamboo or of thin wide boards. The wall and ceiling are of bamboo panels, or of boards, or of mud. There are two principal doors and few windows. A partition going from the inner beam of the front gable separates the house lengthwise in two parts, most often of equal size. One is divided into

moreover, the object of the utmost scorn on the part of the whole 548
population, and their houses are relegated to points outside the muong, that is to say outside the city.

No such practice exists in rural areas, and if a few girls grant 836
their lovers great intimacies it is in the hope--a hope which is almost always realized--that marriage will be the result.

Death, burial, cremation. In principle, Laotians are supposed 764
to cremate their dead. In this they are obedient to the ancient traditions which specified this ceremony, but since cremation is a 766.
costly practice poor people are simply buried.

In certain cases, as in deaths resulting from dysentery epidemics, from childbirth, from suicide, etc., the bodies are thrown into the river or its tributaries.

Laotians have no cemeteries enclosed by walls or barriers. A corner of the forest near the muong or village is reserved for this use and serves as a last resting place for those of the inhabitants who cannot be cremated or should not be thrown into the water. There, at the foot of the trees and in their shade, repose those adults and adolescents whose families did not even have means to buy the ritual cremation firewood, and also the children who never underwent the operation of "cutting the forelock" (1).

(1) This operation takes place at the age of thirteen and marks the transition from childhood to adolescence. It is the sign of nubility. [881]

When it is to be buried, the body of the dead person is placed in 764
a sort of coffin made of ax-hewn planks which are usually poorly joined and covered with colored paper burdened with ornamentation. 792
Sometimes a mat is used, in simpler fashion, or else lattices made of split and crushed bamboo stalks like those which form the floors of houses. The whole is tied together with rattan or with bamboo bark.

This is the lot of destiny's outcasts. After a few family ceremonies and a feast given in the dead person's home [201]--the magnitude of which ceremonies and feast vary depending on the dead person's station in life and his family's resources--the bonzes, accompanied by a few pupils, come and recite the funeral orisons.

The bonzes are not supposed to look at the body during their prayers, and they hold up a screen called Talaptat to hide their faces.

Gifts from the family serve as payment for the bonzes. When the prayers are over, flowers and wax candles are added to the gifts. The body is then raised on the shoulders of four pallbearers of good-will and taken to the cemetery, where there are a few ablutions and where the bonzes recite the last prayers before the burial. 764 792

When all is done the persons present take turns throwing branches, earth and stone into the grave, in the belief that these things will preserve the deceased from contact with wet soil and the teeth of animals. The grave, comparatively shallow, is dug two sok (.9 meter) deep for adults and a half sok (.65 meter) deep for children and adolescents. When the cavity has been filled with earth and well tamped down with the feet, the persons present withdraw and all is over forever.

No worship will be practiced for this tomb, and it will soon disappear under a thick blanket of vegetation. Relatives sometimes return, however, after a rainfall if the ground happens to have settled slightly on the very spot of the grave. They then fill up the tomb and build a sort of tumulus above it with flat stones or heavy round rocks.

The custom of throwing into running water the bodies of persons who had died as a result of certain diseases, generally of an epidemic character, used to be practiced in Laos before our arrival there. The inhabitants had no concern for the fatal consequences which such a procedure might have on public health. Since our arrival in the land an absolute prohibition has been issued against throwing any corpse into the watercourses. Nowadays the people are content merely with simulating this custom and with interring bodies after a pretended immersion. 766 744

[202] When the family of the deceased is wealthy or even well-to-do, cremation is the standard procedure. This ceremony is not performed immediately after death is pronounced, but may often be postponed for more than a month either to enable relatives to come from a distance, or to await the settlement of a pending lawsuit, or else the arrival of the fire sent by the sovereign if the deceased is a prince, an official or a man of a certain rank. Wealthy families postpone the date of cremation out of ostentation, for the interval between death and cremation is supposed to be filled with feasts, celebrations and amusements of all kinds which are put on almost continuously for the bonzes, relatives, friends, neighbors and [554] 764

585 In front of the bride's house, guards make a sham defence of the gate of the house. The husband and his retinue can enter only by making a gift of money or alcohol. When he reaches the stairway of the house, the young man may only climb it after having his feet washed on a piece of stone covered with a banana leaf by the sisters or the women servants of the bride. He must pay for this service, then seat himself in front of the two ritual phakhouan next to his bride, who is already sitting there. The Sou Khouan of the wedding [801] resembles the bassi. However at the wedding there are only two phakhouan and everything in the ceremony must be in even numbers. They are, however, larger and better decorated than the ordinary phakhouan. The marriage is celebrated by two individuals officiating who recite sacramental formulas in duet. Then, after tying a large number of cotton threads around their wrists, the married couple prostrate themselves before each of the aged people and those who are present. They are then led to their room by a lady chosen from among the most virtuous.

Funerals

764 In Laos as in all Buddhist countries, the dead are burned. How-
766 ever, a distinction is made between two kinds of death, normal death and accidental (drowning, suicide or violent death). The dead of the second category must be buried within twenty-four hours. The story is told of a peasant's wife who, having died in childbirth, was quickly cut up in pieces by the villagers who scattered them to the four winds so that she would not become a wandering soul capable of tormenting the living.

764 [58] When there is a death in a house, the body is bathed with tepid water, then with cold water. It is then perfumed and dressed. Two garments are put on it, one wrong side out, the other right side out. The former symbolizes death, the latter life, for the favorite garment of the dead person while alive was chosen. His hair is then combed and he is shackled with a white cotton thread, for he must not return to the world of the living. The same thread is used to wrap around his neck, to tie his two hands together, and his two feet together. This bond must not be cut, so a knot is made at each place where it is attached. This thread also shows man how illusory are the bonds which tie him to the world. Then the body is wrapped in [823 342] a shroud. It is laid parallel with the largest dimension of the house, as opposed to the living who always lie in the direction of its width.

7: Thompson--372 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 769, 771, 775, 779

"Along with the first migrations from the North and West into Laos filtered the Vedic precepts and the laws of Manu. From 900 to 700 B.C. the more militant dogmas of Brahmanism began to appear, at the same time as the ancestral cult and innumerable auxiliary superstitions. About the thirteenth century Buddhism began to appear by different routes, but it is the Ceylonese variety, albeit profoundly modified, which has the largest number of Laotian followers. Chiefly because it rejects study and examination, this doctrine permits many superstitions to live side by side with it, embedded at varying depths in the popular consciousness. The kind of Buddhism practised by the Laotians and some Khas is almost entirely excempt from philosophic speculation. Bonzes recite prayers incomprehensible to themselves and to the people, but they must mark every social event. These ceremonies, a reverential attitude towards sacred places, a dash of animism, the ancestral cult, and a belief in Kharma, make up official Laotian religion. Some of this has been absorbed by the Yaos and Lus, Khas and Meos, each of whom has added their own assortment of superstitions. Laotian superstitions, too, are myriad. They attribute all evils to spirits--none other than their ancestors, who take delight in returning to earth expressly to torment their relatives. Hence the great power of sorcerers, who, incidentally, are rent by the greatest professional jealousy. All of this, with a smattering of Christian converts, form an ill-defined, uneasy pantheism, quite congenial to the Laotian soul."

25: Brodrick--96-97 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-3
116, 776, 769, 782, 823

"Although the people of the Laos are happy-go-lucky and carefree, and their mild and mitigated Little Vehicle Buddhism sits lightly upon them, the spirits are ever-present. Still, to this day, in a country where men are naturally, it seems, hospitable and open-handed, no stranger will be invited until the spirits have given their permission sought by offerings to them of five candles of pure beeswax, five frangipani flowers, five incense-sticks and a bottle of rice-alcohol.

All that happens to hurt man is the work of spirits. For 'primitive' men--and the Laotians, despite their real if rustic civilization, maintain many of the reactions and fundamental beliefs of 'primitives' --disaster, and the greatest of all disasters, death, is not 'normal' or 'natural.' In the Land of the Laos, the p'hi-lok or manes of the ancestors are jealous beings, easy to take offence and these p'hi or spirits and the ho or demons must receive propitiatory sacrifices. There is a similar underlying fear and faith in Cambodia but they are better hid. But in the Laos it may be said that all believe that ghosts come back at night in animal shape to plague the living. In animal shape. The archaic ideas which we tend to label rather too easily as 'totemistic' are all vaguely interwined with feelings rather than definable dogmas, feelings of some close relation between man and other animals.

With the p'hi-lok, who sow terror, and the p'hi phob, or evil spirits, are the numberless demons of the woods and the guardian genii of the wild. The forests are fearsome

places and best avoided. The old travellers told a terrible tale of the Forest of the King of [97] Fire, the Dong-Phaja-Fai, through which you had to climb to reach Korat, (1) and

1. Korat, of course, is in modern Siam, but it is in Laotian land. Mgr. Pellegoix's entertaining Description du Royaume de Siam was published in 1854.

the journey took five whole days. The awful name, alone, of this dread jungle spread terror, and countless wayfarers never came through the deep shades, since as Pellegoix relates, in an effort, doubtless, to rationalize the legends, here and there in this jungle, the earth contains 'mineral arsenic' whose dust the passer-by breathes and with it death.

If the Laotian goes into the jungle, ill may befall him, and surely will if he there spends the night. He may disappear for ever or he may be transported to an enchanted land wherein, for long years he may chase phantoms and illusions and if he manages, at last, to escape from this bewitched realm, when he reaches his hut he will not be recognized by his relations who, having mourned him as dead, have long ceased to think of him and will be most embarrassed and annoyed at his reappearance--or, if he shuns such adventures, he will emerge from the great woods as a sick man, the demons have struck him with malignant fever, dragging him to the grave in a few short days.

25: Brodrick--96-97 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-3
116, 776, ~~769,~~ 782, 823

Picanon told a curious tale of what he experienced, years ago, when he was living on Khone island, right in the south near the Khong cataracts and the Cambodian frontier. After a day of torrential showers and violent storms, in the evening as he was finishing his dinner in his house, two young women ran in upon him and threw themselves trembling at his feet imploring him for aid and for protection. Thinking that some brigand was after the women, Picanon reached for his gun and made to go out on to the veranda, but the girls sobbed to him not to venture forth alone for a p'hi had called to them and cursed them at the very moment they were passing the house. They tottered with him out of the windows and pointed to a bushy mango-tree in a rice-field nearby. On the tree was a bird, luminiferous in the moonlight. It flew screeching away as Picanon fired a charge of shot in its direction, and the women were reassured."

as a blessing.

One fact worthy of note is that the "Phi-pop"--men, women and even adolescents--are extremely intelligent folk with lively eyes and full of a strong will and energy. They know [Illustration here] a host of recipes and therapeutic formulas which have been handed down to them by their parents. They might be described as bonesetters or people who have medicine as a sideline, and who act on weak minds and nervous temperaments by the power of suggestion. "Phi-pop" women and girls are usually quite pretty. 791 755 156

One of the methods most widely used to gain the favor of the "Phis" is to play deafening music. 755

"It is not at all unusual to hear diabolic and uninterrupted music in a Laotian house for several days and nights running. In this house there is a person who is seriously ill. All the noise is designed to frighten or to assuage the spirit in the sick person's body and to persuade or force it to [153] leave the body of the invalid. The sick person generally succumbs under the waves of this curative but noisy harmony" (1). 533

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.] [113]

Religion of the Thais. They have neither pagodas nor bonzes, but practice ancestor worship and have a great veneration for the "Spirits or Genii," to whom they make offerings on all occasions. 771 769

In the first room of the house there stands a bamboo altar. The "Spirits" or "Phis" of dead forbears are supposed to inhabit this altar, which is composed of two different levels, the highest one for the male Phis and the other for the female Phis. At its foot there is an opening covered with an elliptical wooden ornament shaped like a mouth. It is there, on this "ancestors' mouth," that the head of the family places offerings and prayers, especially when a member of the family is sick. In principal an animal is never killed without some scrap of food or a few drops of blood being offered to the ancestors' mouth.

"Spirits, whether genii or demons, are everywhere--in the sky, on earth, in the forests, in the water. They are the object of a widespread cult over which individuals who might be described as 776 793 755

771 and to which is added the pantheism of the "Phis." Their general
779 doctrine, however, includes a belief in an "element which creates all things" and in a future life, the sanction of their dogmatic taboos and precepts, in a place of eternal beatitude which it is possible to inhabit here on earth and which is, at bottom, nothing else but the annihilation of being in the "Nirvana" of the Buddhists.

Among the Lus, even more so than in China and the Indies, the basis of this mystical and dreamlike religion which is so well suited to their temperament is an idea of the nothingness of things, the uselessness of effort and even of action. It is, in a word, the most complete pessimism and the annihilation of energy and will.

775 Various beliefs. 1. The following is an incantation or prayer
• 769 for [158] dying persons which gives a good picture of the system of the world and of the idea of metempsychosis:
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The sky and the earth are growing dark:
Come out, souls, and gain "space":
The spirits of the parts of the body are joined together
and form only one:
Listen to the law of Buddha:
We teach the road which leads to the kingdom of Buddha,
the kingdom of the rising sun.
The one soul, the union of the spirits of the body, knows
today that birth and death are alike:
What is birth?
Nothingness produces the generative breath.
The breath produces fire.
Fire produces water.
Water produces earth, mother of all beings.
Birth is produced by harmony and perfect equilibrium of
the elements.
What is death?
Death is a return to the beginning by the reversal of causes.
Earth masters water.
Water masters fire.
Fire masters air.
Air masters nothingness.
Nothingness always remains nothingness.
Nothingness is infinite.

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769
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Death is produced by a lack of harmony and equilibrium among the elements.
Sympathy of the spirits produces a man.
Antipathy of the spirits produces a saint.
He who understands this can transform his nature and reach a point where he knows neither birth nor suffering nor death.
He will not know desire or grief!
He who, as he draws his last breath, repents of all his faults in deed, intention and thought regains his original purity. His soul goes to paradise so that, after "time" has passed, it may again be incarnated at the epoch of "rebirth" in the body of a good, just and happy man.

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2. We shall now give an extract from the work of Captain Gosselin, who gives a good definition of the spirits or souls in Laotian beliefs which are particular to each human organ and faculty. His description will be found to agree with what we have said at the beginning of this chapter.

[159] "The existence of man consists in the union of several organs, the cooperation of which helps to regularize the mechanism of vital formation. Over each of these organs presides an immortal personality which is called the soul of the organ. These souls, which are thirty-two in number, are as follows:

"The soul of hair on the head; the soul of body hair; the soul of the fingernails; the soul of the teeth; the soul of the skin; the soul of the flesh; the soul of the nerves; the soul of the bones; the soul of the cartilages; the soul of the glands; the soul of the heart; the soul of the spleen; the soul of the peritoneum; the soul of the liver; the soul of the lungs; the soul of the large intestine; the soul of the small intestine; the soul of digested food; the soul of food to be digested; and the soul of the brain.

"These twenty organs are produced by the male substances, that is to say by the father. The twelve others originate from female substances, or the mother. They are:

"The soul of the bile; the soul of glutinous matter; the soul of the synovia; the soul of the blood; the soul of the sweat; the soul of

586 the Laotians." (Le Laos français.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

764 Deaths. Funerals. Everything takes place among the Thais
769 as among the Laotians. The poor are buried, while well-to-do people are cremated in great pomp. Celebrations take place at which animals are sacrificed, there is a great deal to eat and quantities of rice brandy and rice beer are consumed. But here there is ancestor worship, and so the altar of the "Phis" of the house and the body itself receive offerings as long as the funeral feasts last.

After cremation, which, as in India, is practiced on a raised pyre at the bottom of a pit dug in the ground, the ashes and burnt bones are sealed in a jar with a few silver coins placed there to pay for the dead person's food during his wanderings through "space."

The jar is buried on the site of the pyre. Then [237] [Illustration] [238] [Blank page] [239] the mattresses, bolster and pillow of the deceased are placed on top, as well as food and a drinking vase full of water. All of his clothes are fastened to poles planted fan-wise on one side of the tomb. Sometimes a fence closes off the site of the tomb.

In some regions the jar containing the remains and ashes of the deceased is buried in a hidden place in the mountains, known only to the dead person's closest relatives.

This procedure, which is not a ritual one, is doubtless intended to place the mortal remains beyond the reach of any profaners of sepulchres who might be attracted by the temptation of the few coins mixed with the ashes.

Finally, a little house is often built over the tomb which is supposed to represent the dwelling place of the deceased.

527 Games, Celebrations, Festivals. Like their Laotian brothers, the Thais are great lovers of celebrations. The chief holiday, one which is celebrated in May or June every year and during which all work ceases for four days, is that of the dead or Boun-Phi-Tai.

782 Animal sacrifices are made to the different genii, and are
769 accompanied by prayers in honor of the dead. The favor of each genie or "Phi" spirit is gained by sacrificing a particular animal, as a dog for the "Phi" of tigers, chickens and pigs for the "Phis" of the mountains, a goat for those which watch over the roads leading to watercourses, and buffalo and oxen, finally, for the "Phis" of the

149: Reinach--177 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

village and those of ancestors. Prayers for the dead are said, and 782
when they are over the head and feet of a goat, crude clay statuettes 769
representing two men, two buffalo and two oxen, and numeroux wax
candles are placed on a raft made of banana trees. The raft is
launched full into the current of a river while men collect on the
banks and fire salvos of shots and shoot off fireworks.

The musical instruments of the Thais are the "Kene" and [240] 534
a kind of clarinet with two tubes, reinforced by gongs and tom-toms.

Their songs are not at all noisy and are much more like mono- 538
tonous chants.

The Thais have a very characteristic game, and this is the game 524
of the "inexhaustible jar." A jar of rice beer is placed on the floor
of a house and five bamboo tubes stuck in it to serve as straws. Five 273
men take positions around the jar, and each of them puts a tube in
his mouth. Into each of the jars, and above a kind of porous stopper
made of pressed paddy husks, water is poured by means of an ox
horn with a hole in the end. At a given signal both men and women
begin to suck conscientiously while the contents of the ox horn are
poured into each jar three times in succession. The ones who empty
their jar first win, and the losers have to drink the contents of ten
horns of water poured over what is left of the beer in their jar.

The Thai beer does not have a bad taste, and its alcoholic
strength is equivalent to that of hard cider, which it closely resembles
in flavor. Although the additions of water decrease the beverage's
percentage of alcohol it nevertheless produces a slight intoxication,
due primarily to the speed with which it is sucked through the straw.
But the inebriety never degenerates into a quarrel, and provokes
nothing but laughter, songs and unadulterated merriment.

Who would believe that the Thais have the custom of throwing 527
"confetti"? Nothing is more true, however, for in the celebrations
at the end of harvest, which take place in December or January,
the merrymakers throw cotton seeds mixed with paddy, with husks,
and sometimes also with ashes.

Hill Tribes

Almost all are of low birth and are crude and illiterate. They have married Thai or Kha women and thereby founded a stock of halfbreeds. This race is destined to merge with the mass of the Laotians or Thai population and through successive crossings lose all distinctive characteristics. 619 563

The Meos. The Meos are also Yunnanese who have retained a degree of independence and have not been marked with the Chinese imprint like the Hos or adopted baggy clothes and the custom of wearing their hair only in a braid.

They are distributed in groups of a few families each of which live on the peaks of the mountains in northern Laos and the Sib-Song Chau-Thais. They can be divided into three great families--the blacks, the whites and the reds--which owe their names to the color of certain parts of the women's costume. Thus among the black and red Meos skirts or jackets are light blue in color, but the latter have a wide collar ornamented with black or red embroidery. Finally, a small turban with black and white checks or of red material, depending on the case, completes their garb. Among the white Meos, the women wear a skirt and jacket of unbleached cloth, with a white and blue embroidered collar. [361] 391

The men's clothing is light blue in all cases. It is composed of a broad pair of trousers which come down somewhat below the calf, where the legs are drawn tight, and of a short, tight-sleeved jacket which buttons down one side.

A turban winds around the head and covers their long hair, which may be rolled or braided. 301

The women's hair is parted and wound on the upper part of the nape of the neck in a coil. (1)

(1) See Appendix XIX.

The Meos practice ancestor worship primarily, like many Asian peoples. They have no pagodas or bonzes, but elders perform the office of priests and also administer justice. 769

[268] The Meos bury their dead, and make animal sacrifices on the occasion of births, marriages and deaths so as to gain the favor of the "Phis" or multiple and varied genii in whose existence and influence they believe.

Marriage is as simple as among the other peoples of Laos. [581]

Divorce may occur either through mutual consent or in the case of adultery. [586]

7: Thompson--372 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 769, 771, 775, 779

"Along with the first migrations from the North and West into Laos filtered the Vedic precepts and the laws of Manu. From 900 to 700 B.C. the more militant dogmas of Brahmanism began to appear, at the same time as the ancestral cult and innumerable auxiliary superstitions. About the thirteenth century Buddhism began to appear by different routes, but it is the Ceylonese variety, albeit profoundly modified, which has the largest number of Laotian followers. Chiefly because it rejects study and examination, this doctrine permits many superstitions to live side by side with it, embedded at varying depths in the popular consciousness. The kind of Buddhism practised by the Laotians and some Khas is almost entirely excempt from philosophic speculation. Bonzes recite prayers incomprehensible to themselves and to the people, but they must mark every social event. These ceremonies, a reverential attitude towards sacred places, a dash of animism, the ancestral cult, and a belief in Kharma, make up official Laotian religion. Some of this has been absorbed by the Yaos and Lus, Khas and Meos, each of whom has added their own assortment of superstitions. Laotian superstitions, too, are myriad. They attribute all evils to spirits--none other than their ancestors, who take delight in returning to earth expressly to torment their relatives. Hence the great power of sorcerers, who, incidentally, are rent by the greatest professional jealousy. All of this, with a smattering of Christian converts, form an ill-defined, uneasy pantheism, quite congenial to the Laotian soul."

10: d'Orleans--314 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 753, 771, 787, 828

"The great development of the Buddhist creed does not prevent superstitions of another order from being prevalent among the multitude, superstitions the trace of which is easily followed at the great festivals that always appertain to ancient traditions or to the dread of evil spirits. Diseases are regarded in the light of persons, and when the cholera made its appearance here last year, one of the mandarins went round the town at the head of a squad of soldiers who executed discharges of musketry at the gates to drive away the enemy. But the native chief was not rewarded for his zeal, as two days after, as the story goes, the cholera appeared to him in a dream and reproached him for trying to drive it away, saying that in coming to Luang Prabang it was simply doing its duty. As a punishment for his conduct, the cholera announced to him his approaching death, and when the mandarin woke up he was so terrified by the dream that he fell ill and died three days afterwards."

10: d'Orleans--314 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 771, 821

"In addition to the respect felt for spirits, it would seem as if the worship of nature and its forces is still preserved, for honour is paid to the moon, the women going about the streets shouting at each change of quarter. Guns and salvoes are also fired during the eclipses, at which periods the people say that 'the moon is eaten up,' without seeking for any other explanation of the phenomenon."

10: d'Orleans--316-319 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 101, 173, 197, 771, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"The Meos live upon the eastern frontier of the kingdom, close to the Pouons plateau. I never met any in the town, but I had an opportunity of [pages 317 and 318 contain illustration] [319] conversing with one who was employed by M. Counillon, the French consul. He was a man of small stature, but well proportioned, with very pale complexion and regular features, and he told me that the Meos originally came from China and could make themselves understood by the caravan-men from the Yunnam. I gathered from his expressions that the Meos dialect is very like that of Van Bou, the word Meos, being rather the Laos designation, while they call themselves Mongs. I do not know whether this name has any connection with that of the ancient empire of the Mongs and the Möns of Burmah, but, according to the man with whom I conversed, the tribes to which he belongs have no religious creeds, though there is a word in his language which denotes the Deity."

23: Franck--334 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 211, 609, 771 Ethnic subgroup

"In contrast to China, the only visible evidences of religious belief in these wilder parts of Luang Prabang kingdom are bamboo arrows and bits of woven wicker squares and the like, beside the trail here and there. These, the prince told me, were warnings, either that a trap of arrows had been set for wild animals somewhere on the path leading off into the brousse, or that a Kha village was engaged in formalities to which strangers were not invited. Docile as they are, the Kha have been known to kill even Frenchmen who have overlooked or persisted in disobeying these warnings. Hence little is known of the religion of this primitive tribe, except that it acknowledges innumerable genii, good and bad, and that there are many things the visitor must not do, many things taboo not only for the Kha themselves but for any one who enters their villages, because to do them would be to stir up the evil spirits to wreak vengeance on the villagers themselves."

23: Franck--343-344 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 771, 793

"The smallest village has a few Buddhist priests, the support of whom by giving them food seems to be almost the only religious practice of the lay inhabitants. The younger bonzes [344] make the rounds each morning with their begging-bowls before the sun is high, and now and then a man or woman kneels on the ground as a priest pauses to perform for a moment or two some hocus-pocus in reward for the charity, and then turns abruptly away, as if to imply that the giver has had his money's worth. Begging is not looked upon as in the West, but as something perfectly natural, so that neither giver nor receiver seems to feel he is doing anything out of the ordinary. If I may judge by my two princely companions, all Laosian Buddhists say their prayers before going to bed as religiously as any Christian, nay, as any true Mohammedan. But they were more like people thanking a kindly benefactor with unforced gratitude than like men praying out of dread of a punishing God, and the true Laosians at least showed little if any of the fear of demonology rampant among the super-superstitious Chinese. No doubt nature is so gentle with them that the religion of fear, the dread and consequent attempts at propitiation of innumerable evil forces always waiting to do them harm, does not grow up within them."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

acknowledge in the street a lady with whom one happens to be on 584
particularly good terms. These things in Laos are fraught with an 576
etiquette which is the legacy of a highly organized society not too far gone in decay.

The charm of Vientiane lies in the life and the customs of the 346
people. Unless one is an amateur of pagoda architecture there is 531
little else to be seen. The Laotians have preferred to work in wood, rather than stone, and their art, confined chiefly to the decoration by religious artists of the doors, pillars and interiors of pagodas, quickly perishes in such a climate.

Outside the town there is a great, grey, half-decayed *stupa*, built 771
as a tomb for a hair of the Buddha. It is surrounded by a cloister, 755
containing perhaps a thousand Buddha images; a collection of 778
which the people of Vientiane are very proud. But even here, where the religion is practised in its purest form, there is a little degeneration, a little backsliding from the lofty philosophic conception; and the taint of magic practices shows itself. Selecting one of the numerous images as a personal tutelary divinity, the devotee subjects it to a kind of bribery similar to that sometimes practised in Southern Europe with images of the saints. In this case the image's chief function is healing, and when the sufferer recovers from any complaint he hastens to the pagoda to apply gold-leaf to the part of the Buddha corresponding to that where he has felt the pain in his own body. I was interested to deduce from this practice that the people of Vientiane are much plagued by headaches – perhaps [164]
those which accompany malaria.

Standing in a corner of the sanctuary was an ancient ithyphallic 778
statue, an old Hindu divinity, no doubt, which had been worn 789
smooth in the appropriate parts by the feminine adoration of a 842
thousand years. I was told that the women of the French colony who wish for a child frequently emulate their husbands' pose of Laos-i-ation by coming here secretly to pay their respects. I 000
wondered whether this clandestine tribute might not be extended

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

000 eventually to the Buddhas to solicit their curative powers; and if so what we should learn from it about the prevalence of disease among Europeans.

217 The museum of Vientiane, which I visited in the hope of learning
532 something of the living art of the country, has also little more to
771 show than a collection of Buddhas. There is a tranquillity, a lack of compulsion in the Hinayanist Buddhism of Cambodia and Laos — so different from the neurotic deformation practised by the later Khmer kings — which is not propitious to the development of religious art. There was no violence or drama in the life of Buddha comparable to that of Christ, and the Indian Epics have been eschewed in Laos as improperly secular. It has been enough to carve Buddhas, and more Buddhas *ad infinitum*, seeking perhaps to multiply in this way the magic virtues which each image contains. The curator takes you round, explaining the characteristic postures — there are seven or eight — all of which can be appreciated in five minutes. After that there are minute differences of physique and physiognomy to be noted that reflect the influences of India, of Java, of Thibet or of Ceylon. That is all.

177 By the time the museums turn to the art of the people, the
532 grotesque animals in bamboo, the carved movable figures which
782 are obscene to European eyes — all of which become a pagan burnt-offering at the end of each *boun*[1] — it will be too late. The microphone is an infallible sign of what is to come. Nothing of this kind will survive the era of materialism, under whatever form it arrives.

253 These are the sights of Vientiane, but in addition there is a
825 spectacle which is popular with Europeans, who, remote, isolated, and living under difficulties, tend to shut themselves up within the protective social rituals of people in exile.

This spectacle is the slaughterhouse at work. I do not know whether or not it is illegal in Laotian law to kill animals, but certainly it is thought shameful, and the killing for Europeans is done at the dead of night on the outskirts of the town. The

[1] [Laotian religious festival. -- Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

241 sufficient for his requirements. If there are six members of the
461 family, six standard, equal sized portions of land will be cultivated.
511 If a child is born into the family another piece of land is cleared and
792 worked. When a member of the family dies, whether it be a baby or the grandfather, cultivation of his portion will be stopped. Just enough is produced for the family to eat and to provide a small surplus sold in the market – *with the bonze's approval* – to buy occasional strict necessities, like a silk shawl and a bicycle for the
735 daughter. There is no social insurance and there are no poor. The
556 old and the sick are supported by the young, or, where they are
792 left without able-bodied providers, by the community, and the
771 bonzes give instructions for the necessary land to be placed under cultivation for them. The accumulation of wealth which is not to be used for definite, approved purposes, causes a man to lose prestige among his neighbours, just, as in the West, the process is reversed. The main difference, it seems, between Buddhism in Indo-China, and Christianity – apart from any question as to their relative merits – is that, whether we admire it or not, the former is largely put into practice.

It is a stimulating reflection that the Western millionaire, obsessed for the sake of social distinction with the amassing of enormous possessions – little of which he can personally consume – would attain the same ends of personal celebrity under a Laotian Buddhistic order of things by his priestly austerities – by embracing the most abject and prestige-conferring form of poverty.

181 For this reason perhaps the local Evangelist missionary and his
771 wife have made no converts. Like all who have lived among the
785 Laotians they are charmed with them – although, of course,
797 disappointed at their blindness. They also deplore their immorality.

In the matter of converts the Evangelists have been no more unsuccessful than their Portuguese, Spanish and French forerunners. The Laotians having little capacity for abstractions, either in their

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Miao AE5

language or religion, cannot follow the subtlety of Western religious concepts. They have a passion for taking things *au pied de la lettre*. Being told that the basic commandment of Christianity as well as Buddhism is 'thou shalt not kill', they cannot swallow such reservations as capital punishment and 'the just war'; while casuistry repels them. Moreover, a bonze, the spiritual leader of the country people among whom he lives and works, occupies by virtue of his rigorous fulfilment of the principles of his religion, a position in their esteem accorded in the West, say, to a boxing champion. The Laotians have come to associate the prestige of sanctity with certain abstinences and uncomfortable practices. The bonze gives an example of utter renunciation which is awe-inspiring by comparison with the minor self-abnegations of the villagers. The Laotians, therefore, although tolerant in the extreme, are not impressed by the worth of a would-be spiritual leader who presents himself to them loaded with material possessions. And this negative attitude deepens into a certain aversion if, as usually happens, the holy men of the West spend most of their time hunting in a country where animals must be allowed to die of old age. I fear that where the austere Dominicans, and the Jesuits failed, there is little hope for the Evangelists.

However, the missionary was far from despondent. There were Meos in the mountains not far from Vientiane, and just as in the plateaux of Viet-Nam the Moïs had not rejected the Gospel, so here the primitive peoples of the mountains seemed promising material for evangelization. There would be no risk of jeopardizing conversion by hunting, among such hearty amateurs of open-air sports as the Meos, and if the missionary had more of this world's goods than they – well, that was a sure sign that his *ai* (or spirit), was stronger, and it would be a good thing to imitate him. Before the Meos could trouble themselves with renunciatory religions they would have to create a comfortable and abundant civilization for themselves. There was no chance of becoming sated with prosperity at the top of their mountains.

565 The common people, kind and carefree in character, roamed
175* over the country in all directions as easy-going masters, leaving
/462/ household tasks to the women and the work of the fields to dependents of an inferior race or to slaves. They were excellent boatmen and traders rather than farmers, so that they liked to perform the function of peddlers and served as a link between the multiple /55/ varieties of mankind which inhabited Lan-Xang.

567 Slavery existed--slaves could be obtained through capture, as
175* the result of debt or through trade--and brought high profits to those
563 who engaged in this traffic. In the region of Muong-Swa there was also a kind of serfdom which was applied to certain Kha tribes placed under the patronage of the king, the princes or the chief representatives of the nobility.

565 But if we consider the gentle and happy temperament of this
175* people whose good humor made up for everything, we are justified in believing that the relations between the various social levels must have been free of any harshness.

191 They spoke a dialect derived from the language which was imported into the basin of the Ménam by Rama Khamheng at the end of the thirteenth century and which was itself derived from the
771 graphs of India (1). They practiced orthodox Buddhism together
793
554

1. Cf. Mission Pavie, op. cit. /Études diverses, Vol. II, "Recherches sur l'Histoire du Cambodge du Laos et du Siam"/ Inscription of Sukhothaï translated by Father Schmitt, p. 192: "It was in (1287 A. D.) that the king Rama-Khameng summoned a teacher who created Thaï writing."

with the cult of the "Phi" or Genii which represented for them the beneficent or maleficent forces of Nature. The bonzes were of comparatively pure morals amidst these peoples for whom enjoyment and pleasure were, when /56/ all is considered, the true gods. Although they were fairly ignorant and recited their prayers in Pali
/782/ without understanding them, they did not lack a certain air of nobility. They also enjoyed a high regard and had as much favor as they could desire. The bonzeries[1] which were built near the pagodas were at once places of inviolable asylum, schools frequented by all the children of the village, and workshops where trades could be learned.

/[1] Buddhist Monasteries--Analyst./

pious king who justified the bonzes' prophecies by his deeds. He 643*
built a magnificent pagoda to the memory of his father, the
Wat-Visoun (2), the materials for which were requisitioned from 346
175*

2. The edifice which bears this name dates from the time of the king Zakarine (1898). The enormous "stupa" next to it, which covered rich treasures which have only recently come to light, is now in the process of being restored.

the vassals of the northern provinces. Legend has it that the raft
carrying the columns provided by the king of Tran-Ninh sank /539/
downstream from Pak-Vet, and the inhabitants of the region still
say today that they can be seen at certain times of the year beneath the waters of the Nam-Khane.

Edict against the cult of the "Phis." The king's great piety 771
and his mystical attachment to the /73/ dogmas of orthodix 175*
Buddhism made him intolerant of the Brahmanic practices which 643*
continued to be honored by the peoples of his States. In 1527 he
prohibited the cult of the Genii and decreed that all the temples
erected to the "Phis" should be demolished. A pagoda called
"Sisouvannathevalok" (1) was built on the very site of the sanctuary/778/

1. This pagoda was destroyed by a tornado in 1883. The king at that time, His Majesty Sisavang-Vong, had it rebuilt in 1905 on the original foundations.

of the tutelary Genie of the capital. But it was impossible, even
for the supreme chief of existences, to drive from the heads of
people as fatalistic as his subjects were the innumerable superstitions
which they attached to accidents, to diseases and to the phenomena
of sky, earth and water. Despite the royal ordinances the cult of
the "Phis," together with a belief in sorcerers and witches, persisted and still persists today.

Phothisarath was the first of the kings of Lan-Xang to leave his 663
Xieng-Thong palace and reside at Vientiane for many years. 175*

Thanks to its central location and its comparative nearness to 633
the kingdoms of Ayuthya and Annam, this city had grown extensively as a consequence of the development of trade. The
Kmers, who had been in full decline /74/ since the ruin of Angkor
by the kings of Ayuthya, no longer had any influence there. The

175* inhabitants and especially the songs and laughter of the beautiful
114 girls bedecked with flowers. . . . It nevertheless follows from his re-
/771 marks that Lan-Xang was then the veritable holy land of Buddhism
792/ and that it possessed the most highly venerated sanctuaries where priests from Siam and Cambodia "came to spend ten or twelve days to study and receive their grades."

439 For a long time now the rich traders of Holland had been sending
175* ships into the waters of the Indian Ocean in search of cloves, /106/ nutmeg, pepper, silk goods, gold dust and porcelain. In 1641 the mother country had made settlements in Java, Sumatra, Borneo, the Celebes and the Moluccas, and its flag was known as far as the seas of China and Japan. Several mercantile establishments had sent out "sub-traders" from Batavia to Siam and to Cambodia. In July 1641 the governor general of Java, Van Diemen, ordered a mission which was operating in Pnom-Penh on behalf of the East India Company to send out a caravan to "the land of gum lac and benzoin." Under the direction of Van Wustof and his assistants William de Gover and Hubert Boudewinsz, the caravan entered the Mekong. The voyage was a long and difficult one, and often dangerous where rapids had to be passed. These men left Phom-Penh on July 20 and reached Vientiane on November 3 after 106 days of effort. They brought a good-sized packet of cloth and cottonstuffs, a casket of emeralds set in rings and small gifts such as brightly colored sampots (?), mirrors which closed like a book, etc... (1).

1. Cf. Cabaton, Le Laos et les Neerlandais au dix-septieme siecle (1913).

A few kilometers out of Vientiane a /107/ messenger from the king came to find out what the foreigners' intentions were and was shown a letter from Van Diemen to the "sovereign of Laos." He was fully satisfied and took them to the outskirts of the city to dwellings which had been prepared for them on the banks of the river. On the following day, November 4, the merchandise and gifts were unloaded. On the 5th the Dutch were received by the king "a quarter of an hour's
/576/ march away from the capital." They knelt down most humbly, their feet bare, striking the ground three times with their foreheads and holding a large candle in each hand, and were welcomed in a tumultuous camp of soldiers, horses and elephants caparisoned with

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144
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2. The Khas (2) or descendants of the prehistoric aborigines.

(2) In Laos the word Kha means slave, individual of inferior and scornful condition, or else one who lives as a savage. The name, which was applied by the last invaders of Laos to the races which had preceded them there, has the same meaning as Moï in Annamite, Stieng or Peunong in Cambodian and Orang Oulou in Malay.

They mixed with newcomers to form a large variety of secondary tribes which, despite their common origin, differ from one another in type, language, dialect or idiom, mores, customs, dress, etc.

[771] [212] The Khas have no form of writing, except for the Khouènes and the Khmous who have been partly converted to Buddhism while their [127] fellows have clung to a crude fetishism in which belief in spirits (Phis) prevails.

[641] A few of these tribes have not yet submitted to our domination and do not pay any taxes.

The principal Kha tribes in Laos are the following:

a) In northern Laos. (The names below should be followed by the word Khas.)

1. PURE KHAS

Khouènes-Khao.	Koussoungs.	Bos.	Kouangs.
Khouènes-Dam.	Bits.	Sapouans.	Saks.
Lemets.	Phèng-Mis.	Kasèngs.	Mouçeus.
Leups.	Sos.	Tiols.	Khmous.
Lawas.	Siengs-Di.	Alous.	
Khos.	Giois.	Ouxas.	
Khouis.	Hock-Roï.	Panas.	

2. KHAS MIXED WITH LAOTIANS, THAIS, LUS AND YOUNS OR IN THE COURSE OF CHANGE

Oks.	Sos.	Phongs.	Phou-Thuongs.
Youngs.	Souès.	Laos-Niôs.	Phou-Oks.
Phou-Phays.	Sèks.	Phou-Thengs.	

197 In résumé, the study of the Thai language and its derivatives is an attractive one. The language is gentle, musical and euphonic, and is easy for us as well as for the other Latin peoples to pronounce.

It is considered to have many analogies with Malay and most of the Polynesian idioms.

Siamese, Youn and Lu have become localized in certain parts of Laos or have been set aside for special uses. Thus Youn, as we have seen, is the sacred language of Laos.

Lao, however, or the Laotian form of the Thai language, is quite widespread.

[146] In fact, outside of Laos this language is still spoken in Yunnan, in Tonkin, in the two Kouangs and, it would seem, as far away as Hainan.

4. RELIGIONS

174 In prehistoric times Laos must have been in the same situation as the other parts of the world, from the moral and religious point
771 of view. [Illustration here.]

In the age of polished stone, as in the bronze age, there were probably great similarities between the Orient and the Occident with respect to tools and weapons, and also with respect to speculative, religious and philosophical ideas.

This state of affairs continued for many centuries until the time
175 when, with the first peaceful migrations from the north and north-
771 west, Vedic precepts and a knowledge of the laws of Manou--laws which were moral, social and above all physiological--began to infiltrate the region. Later on, between 900 and 700 B.C., more militant invaders brought in the already age-old dogmas of Brahminism, together with ancestor worship and many superstitions.

Finally, after another period of fifteen to thirteen centuries, Buddhism made its appearance in Indo-China by two different routes, the south and the northwest.

These various doctrines were transformed as time passed and
771 underwent additions, diminutions and numerous changes both in form and content. Struggles, invasions and migrations and civil wars profoundly modified races and made their impression on minds, always leaving ineradicable traces on body and spirit.

It is because of these constant upheavals that we note in Laos today a great host of dogmas and practices which range all the way

from pantheism to Christianity, passing through polytheism, anthropomorphism, Brahminism, Buddhism and metempsychosis. 771

To be sure, the most widespread religion and the one which numbers the greatest number of faithful is Ceylon Buddhism in the form of the Hinayâna doctrine, that is to say the form which adheres to the letter of the scriptures without pretending to seek or discover the esoteric meaning of the words of the master Çakya Mouni. 795 779

It is precisely because this doctrine abjures all casuistry, all scholasticism and all free examination that it has allowed the superstitions of Brahminism and still others to coexist alongside it. These latter are still more or less deeply entrenched, depending on the region and on whether the moral influence of the Aryans has been more or less effective and beneficent in uplifting the populace.

Since, in general, the Buddhism of the Laotians and of the Kha tribes which practice it is, by virtue of its very doctrine, exempt from all free [148] examination and from all philosophical speculation, it is a latria cult manifesting itself in ritual recitations. These latter, moreover, are incomprehensible to the faithful and even to the bonzes. To these prayers are added ceremonies and outer marks of deference for sacred places, temples, idols, worship accessories and officiants. [Illustration alongside text here.] 779

Besides this mild form of Buddhism there are still traces--often very deep ones--of Brahminism and ancestor worship, of a kind of polytheism or cult of spirits which are either beneficent genii or terrible demons, of Pythagorism, of metempsychosis, and of a curious anthropo-spiritualist belief which attributes an individual soul to each of the parts of man's body, to his moral faculties, to his food and even to his excrement, as well as to the four elements--earth, air, water and fire.

This latter belief borders closely on metempsychosis, since it also holds that all souls are immortal and subsist throughout a series of successive existences in the form of various incarnations, in the bodies of men or animals, in plants or in minerals.

It cannot be denied that this doctrine is a highly moral one. Since each mutation or incarnation is a reward or a [149] punishment, there can be no doubt but that, in combination with the precepts of sociability, respect for others and gentleness which are contained in Hinayâna Buddhism, it has had great influence on the moral evolution and social conservation of the people of Laos as well as on their moral customs.

779 Buddhism is practiced by the Laotians, the Lus, the Youns and a few Thai tribes as well as by the Khouène and Khmou Khas.

771 The white, black, red and Neua Thais, and also the Phou-Thais, have generally adopted Brahminic ancestor worship. The Lolos, Méos, Lanène Yaos, etc. are also devotees of this cult, although they have somewhat modified it with certain superstitions.

The Khas of the various tribes profess a kind of ill-defined pantheism as well as the cult of genii, spirits of "Phis," which the other races also observe. Christianity, in both the Catholic and Protestant form, has been adopted by people of diverse origin who have gathered in Christian communities or formed scattered groups in the midst of populations with Asiatic beliefs.

Let us now try to define these various cults and to show how they are understood and by whom they are served.

Religion of the Laotians:

779 "The religion of the Laotians," says the Superior Resident, "is Buddhism. But since there were no Brahmins in Laos whose interest was to see the Brahminic Pantheon supreme, Buddha has kept his preponderant place in the pagodas, whereas in Ceylon and Nepal, the last Buddhist centers in the Indies, he has lost this place and been submerged under and confused with the more ancient gods of Brahminic origin.

[192] "Most of the Laotian bonzes are completely ignorant of the
779 dogmas of the religion which they blindly and deafly serve. One does meet highly learned ones, however, who seem to have a fairly clear idea of doctrine. Eternal nature, which has existed for all time and forms the essence of everything, is to be regarded as a bottomless nothingness and an incommensurable void. Sometimes however, through the fatal effect of desire, this void takes on an appearance. Thence comes all evil, and thence arises suffering. All the appearances which we call life, sickness, death, and separation from what we love, what we desire and [150] what we cannot have, are so many misfortunes. Now, desire is at the origin of all these misfortunes. Suppress desire and at the same time suffering is suppressed. The path to be followed is a simple one; destroy all desire; detach yourself from the things of this world, and try to raise yourself step by step to a higher state throughout all the successive lives which you are obliged to live in varied forms and which will be all the more excellent in the degree that all the acts, words and

779 thoughts of your previous life have been good. Thanks to these efforts you will pass successively, in your various incarnations, from the state of man to the state of holy man, then to that of saint and finally to that of Buddha or perfection, from which you will fall back into the mute and calm abyss, the void and eternal rest. Besides the constant effort of the will to raise itself, the good deeds which you accomplish will tend to the same purpose, whether they be deeds of action, of thought, of word or of intention.

"Anyone who, on the other hand, abandons himself to evil actions and makes no effort to raise himself gradually moves away from the state dreamed by Buddha, and his successive reincarnations occur in the opposite direction, descending into the bodies of animals which may be more or less maleficent and despicable.

"The above, however, are speculations to which the Laotian intelligence cannot rise. The Buddhist religion as practiced in Laos demands only a few outer signs of deference towards bonzes and holy places.

• 771 "Besides Buddhism, the Laotians have retained, or transformed
776 into a cult, certain Spirits or Genii whom they call Phis, the in-
782 numerable deities of the Brahminic Pantheon by which Buddhism was accompanied when it was imported into Laos and which have been reduced to a lesser stature.

"All the forces of nature, all that is capable of bringing disorder into life and every movement or phenomenon which the Laotian cannot explain is personified by a particular Genie or Spirit.

"The cult of these Phis may be summed up as follows: it is an interested exchange of gifts or sacrifices by men, in return for the goodwill, neutrality or help of the Phis. Oftentimes, when the Phi is not greatly dreaded, a bargain will be made with him which will be repaid after he has performed his part of the bargain. The cult of the Phis has a widespread following, and they have their lay priests who bear the title of guardians of the Genii.

"In addition to the cult of the Phis, which is nothing more nor
771 less than a form of polytheism, the Laotians are subject to rather
82 numerous superstitions.

"Thus if an eclipse of the moon occurs Laotians imagine that a tiger is trying to devour it, and everyone at once begins to take turns banging on gongs, firing shots and using every means to make as much noise as possible so as to frighten off the aforesaid tiger and prevent it from swallowing the nocturnal star.

776 "The Laotians also believe that there are people who are possessed
771 by the demon or who have [151] the evil eye. They call them 'Phi-
791 pop.' When a person or family in a village is so regarded by the other inhabitants, they are forced to move and to go and live in one of the villages composed exclusively of Phi-pop" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

The boatmen and folk who dwell along the watercourses also believe in the existence of certain particular beings, as for example the Siren or "Nguoc." The siren, whom some people claim to have seen (?), is said to have the form of a snake with paws and an enormous head surmounted by a red, saw-toothed crest. It is supposed to have seven nostrils in a single nose, and a mouth provided with several rows of teeth. The scales which cover it and the lobes of its tail are said to be able to clash against one another and make a great deal of noise.

791 In times of public calamity, the "Tho-Nguoc" assumes a human voice and announces important events or cataclysms to come.

754 The "Phi-pop," to whom we have referred above, have, according
683 to popular belief, the power of casting spells and causing the death of animals and even persons by means of their incantations, their practices or their glance. The natives say that they can reduce a buffalo hide to the size of a grain of rice and thus make a person swallow it. Once in the stomach the hide is supposed to regain its natural volume and cause the death of the person who has swallowed it by making the stomach burst after intolerable suffering. It goes without saying that the "Phi-pop" who is the cause of the evil can, in return for certain gifts, arrest the suffering and deliver the patient before death overtakes him. A person who believes he has swallowed a buffalo hide falls prey to a kind of madness and commits all sorts of extravagances, to such a point that his neighbors try to get him out of the village and get rid of him, for he has become a "Phi-pop" in his turn. People claim that there is only one way to find out if a man is possessed, and that is to throw him into the water with his feet and hands tied. If he floats he is not possessed, but if [152] the opposite proves to be the case--and this is what invariably happens--then a "Phi-pop" is really present and his disappearance is regarded as a blessing.

149: Reinach--114 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

as a blessing. 791

One fact worthy of note is that the "Phi-pop"--men, women and even adolescents--are extremely intelligent folk with lively eyes and full of a strong will and energy. They know [Illustration here] a host of recipes and therapeutic formulas which have been handed down to them by their parents. They might be described as bonesetters or people who have medicine as a sideline, and who act on weak minds and nervous temperaments by the power of suggestion. "Phi-pop" women and girls are usually quite pretty. 755 156

One of the methods most widely used to gain the favor of the "Phis" is to play deafening music. 755

"It is not at all unusual to hear diabolic and uninterrupted music in a Laotian house for several days and nights running. In this house there is a person who is seriously ill. All the noise is designed to frighten or to assuage the spirit in the sick person's body and to persuade or force it to [153] leave the body of the invalid. The sick person generally succumbs under the waves of this curative but noisy harmony" (1). 533

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.] [113]

Religion of the Thais. They have neither pagodas nor bonzes, but practice ancestor worship and have a great veneration for the "Spirits or Genii," to whom they make offerings on all occasions. 771 769

In the first room of the house there stands a bamboo altar. The "Spirits" or "Phis" of dead forbears are supposed to inhabit this altar, which is composed of two different levels, the highest one for the male Phis and the other for the female Phis. At its foot there is an opening covered with an elliptical wooden ornament shaped like a mouth. It is there, on this "ancestors' mouth," that the head of the family places offerings and prayers, especially when a member of the family is sick. In principal an animal is never killed without some scrap of food or a few drops of blood being offered to the ancestors' mouth.

"Spirits, whether genii or demons, are everywhere--in the sky, on earth, in the forests, in the water. They are the object of a widespread cult over which individuals who might be described as 776 793 755

Khas

776 lay priests preside. These lay priests, or rather these servants of the
793 Spirits, correspond to the Guardians of the Genii in the Buddhist religion. Usually they exercise their ministry only when one of
755 their countrymen falls sick or dies.

"In case of a serious illness the servant of the Spirits goes to the sick person's house, goes to his side and recites a few prayers. Then he takes a bowl of uncooked rice on which he stands an egg with the smallest end upwards. With his right hand the officiant drops a certain number of grains of rice on the point of the egg, performing this operation three times in all. If the same number of grains of rice remain on the point of the egg each time, this means that a "Spirit" has entered the sick person's body.

787 "By means of similar maneuvers, the Spirit is then questioned to find out what he wants to eat. Depending on the answer, a buffalo, an ox or a pig may be killed. The designated animal is slaughtered and then scorched without being skinned so as to destroy the hairs which cover it. The entrails are taken out and carefully washed [154] in running water, then replaced in the animal's body. The victim is taken to the altar of the Spirits, which is located outside the village, and placed with its head towards the altar. Then prayers are said asking the Spirit to cure the sick person. When the ceremony is over the animal is taken back to the village, where it is cut into pieces and divided among all the inhabitants. The invalid rarely gets well.

"There are also sorcerers and witches among the Thais, who are consulted in circumstances of lesser importance.

[775] "The Thais believe in metempsychosis, although their ideas on the subject are not very clear" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

• 771 Religion of the Khas. Among the Khas, even those who practice
782 Buddhism, the only existing religion is a religion of "Phis" which is similar to the Thai belief in "Spirits, Genii and Demons." The
776 outer manifestations of this cult consist of offerings of rice, flowers and fruit, but never include sacrifices of animals. Small shelters which affect the form of an ordinary house are built at the entrance to villages to receive propitiatory offerings destined for the "Phi".

the "Phi."

It is said that each of us has his good and his evil genie which 779
are engaged in a constant struggle, and that we are good or evil 776
according as the one or the other gains the upper hand. This is a
kind of symbolism of good and evil, but here the controlling and
guiding conscience is replaced by the influences of the moment,
the occasion, the circumstances and the milieu.

Each house also has its own "genie", reminiscent of the Roman 776
Lares, to which sacrifices and offerings are made on every possible 782
occasion.

The evil "Phis" are more dreaded and receive a great many more
offerings than the good "Phis," with whom no trouble need be taken.

In each village there is a sorcerer to explain the actions of the
"Phis" and teach the way to gain their favor. Although consultations
with them are not free of charge these sorcerers, who are called
Mo-hou-ha, Mo-Phi or Phi-pop depending on the province, are just
as [155] [Illustration] [156] [Blank page] [157] highly regarded as
the "Guardians of the Genii" of the Buddhist religion and, like them,
are exempt from servitude and taxes.

In times of epidemic all responsibility is attributed to the evil
"Phis", and in order to make them take flight the men of the villages
beat on the roofs of their houses with long bamboo poles until such
time as the "Phis" are supposed to have disappeared.

The Khas have retained a belief in metempsychosis which is 775
tinged with certain rather vague superstitions bearing on a future life
and some kind of resurrection. But this second existence is not
everyone's privilege, and will exist only insofar as one's life has
been a good one.

They also believe in the existence of a place of torment where
perjurers, murderers, etc. will remain for all eternity. To be sure,
they believe in a general way that a new life will begin and that
it will be a reward or a punishment for the individual's deeds in
his last incarnation. Thus a brave and good man will return as a
happy and respected chieftain. Others will be entitled only to an
animal existence, the importance of which in the scale of being will
be like a personification of their faults and merits. One odd fact is [562]
that women always want to return in the guise of a man.

Religion of the Lus. The religion practiced by the Lus is a 771
form of Buddhism which has been mitigated by certain local customs 779

771 and to which is added the pantheism of the "Phis." Their general
779 doctrine, however, includes a belief in an "element which creates all things" and in a future life, the sanction of their dogmatic taboos and precepts, in a place of eternal beatitude which it is possible to inhabit here on earth and which is, at bottom, nothing else but the annihilation of being in the "Nirvana" of the Buddhists.

Among the Lus, even more so than in China and the Indies, the basis of this mystical and dreamlike religion which is so well suited to their temperament is an idea of the nothingness of things, the uselessness of effort and even of action. It is, in a word, the most complete pessimism and the annihilation of energy and will.

775 Various beliefs. 1. The following is an incantation or prayer
769 for [158] dying persons which gives a good picture of the system of the world and of the idea of metempsychosis:

539

The sky and the earth are growing dark!
Come out, souls, and gain "space"!
The spirits of the parts of the body are joined together
and form only one!
Listen to the law of Buddha:
We teach the road which leads to the kingdom of Buddha,
the kingdom of the rising sun.
The one soul, the union of the spirits of the body, knows
today that birth and death are alike!
What is birth?
Nothingness produces the generative breath.
The breath produces fire.
Fire produces water.
Water produces earth, mother of all beings.
Birth is produced by harmony and perfect equilibrium of
the elements.
What is death?
Death is a return to the beginning by the reversal of causes.
Earth masters water.
Water masters fire.
Fire masters air.
Air masters nothingness.
Nothingness always remains nothingness.
Nothingness is infinite.

Tribal Tai

whole match, instead of keeping their legs rigid and remaining on 535
the same line, the opponents turn constantly around a central point and raise each leg in turn, the knee bent. This exercise, in which all four limbs work at once and which requires a sure eye and rapid execution, is surely one of the most graceful in existence when it is performed with the facile ease and supreme elegance of the Lus.

"Lu dancing has that particular character of morbidness which one finds among most Mohammedan peoples and also in Spain. The men (for the men are the ones who dance) imprint on their feet only those movements which are indispensable for making the body pivot and facilitating slow, undulating movements by the hips, torso and arms. The dancers are accompanied by tom-toms and kettledrums, and they sigh out lingering, voluptuous chants which harmonize well with their movements. These are veritable harem dances, or such as dancing girls might perform." (Le Laos français.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

We have already seen what the religion of the Lus is like, and 779
need add only that their bonzes are highly respected and that the pagodas are much frequented by the children and young people. Thus 212
the number of scholars is higher among the Lus than among the Laotians. Many women even know how to read and write.

The Lus do not cremate their dead, but bury them, even at a 764
very shallow depth, after wrapping the bodies in a mat or a piece of cloth. The bonzes recite a few prayers over the grave when it has been filled, and in return for this service usually receive an object of some value which belonged to the deceased.

[250] The tombs are not kept up.

The Youns. The natives called Youns are Laotians who have 619
settled on the right bank of the Mekong, in the basin of the Upper 304
Menam and in the territories of Xieng-Hai, Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen. There are, however, Youns living in French Laos where they have mixed with the other Laotians. [Illustration alongside text here]

The Youns may be distinguished from their fellow Laotians by the extent to which they are tattooed. Whereas a Laotian will only be tattooed from the bend of the knee to the waist, a Youn will be tattooed from the calf of the leg to the chest. This has caused the inhabitants of the right bank to be baptized "Black Bellies" (Lao-Phoung-Dam), while those of the left bank are called Lao-Phoung-Khao or "White Bellies."

562 rather, to the wife, that she be good and serviceable and that she sweeten the conjugal life.

A great mandarin who has chosen a life's companion, be she the offspring of a family from the common people or not, has raised her to his rank. She is therefore just as respectable, if not more so, as her husband, since the fair sex is, out of courtesy, more highly regarded than the stronger sex in all civilized countries.

We must therefore render the respect to Laotian women which is their due by the same title which makes it the due of Western women. It is necessary:

1. --that at gatherings the women should not sit on the floor while the men are seated in chairs.

2. --that at banquets the women be placed each one between two men;

3. --that the places of honor be reserved for the weaker sex;

4. --that the women be served before the men;

5. --that the man yield his seat to the woman in auditoriums, in vehicles of public conveyance, etc.

In a word, it is necessary that the man respect the woman and that he no longer look upon her as inferior to himself.

* * *

000 To conclude, in my opinion it would be preferable to modify and even to suppress certain of our customs and of our traditional ceremonies provided this modification does not run contrary to Buddhist rules. There would be occasion to regulate, notably, the funeral ceremony in Laos: for example in a funeral procession to prescribe orderly walking and the observance of silence; to prohibit smoking, the chewing of tobacco, and so forth.

771 Sometimes "tradition" and "superstition" are confused. I repeat, all that partakes of the domain of superstition must be banishe The Laotian is subject to a great number of superstitions, of which the following are some examples: /979/

784 It is forbidden, under certain pretexts:

--to have one's hair cut on Wednesday and to wash one's hair on Thursday because it is on these days, it is said, that Buddha had his hair cut and washed;

--to go on all fours in the deep forest, in order not to attract

daughter, Princess Nang Yot Keo. At an indeterminate date which must come between 1340 and 1350, he was given the command of an army destined to reconquer the kingdom of his fathers. According to the Laotian chronicle, the victorious advance of this army enabled Fa Ngoum to declare himself king of Lan Xan. He immediately demanded the submission of all the Thai princes of Mekong. The center of resistance to Fa Ngoum was Phai Nam (spiny bamboos) because of the impenetrable vegetable belt which protected it like veritable ramparts. Fa Ngoum seized it by means of the classical trick of ornamenting missiles with gold and silver, then pretending to retreat and then pouncing on the enemy at the moment when they had scattered to gather the precious metal. In memory of this episode, the town was baptized Vieng Kham which means "circled with gold" and which later became Vientiane, "circled with sandalwood." Fa Ngoum organized his kingdom with force and reigned as a despot. Complaints were made and the king of Cambodia advised him to be moderate. Fa Ngoum then requested that a mission be sent him from Cambodia consisting of religious and lettered men, and of artisans. This mission introduced the orthodox books of Buddhism and a statue of the Buddha (Prabang) which had been presented in the eleventh century to the Khmer sovereign by the king of Ceylon. Prabang thus became the safeguard of the kingdom.

175 [723] 103 175 641 177 779

Up until recent years this tradition led one to believe that the introduction of Buddhism into Laos dated from Fa Ngoum. The discovery of a certain number of Buddhist sculptures of Khmer manufacture of the twelfth century A. D., has destroyed this theory (see below: Introduction of Buddhism to Laos).

[172]

After a series of wars, Fa Ngoum died in 1373 at the age of fifty-eight. His successor Sam Sen Thai reigned from 1373 to 1416. He kept [16] peace in his kingdom and passed on to his successor a prosperous kingdom, well established and living in peace, and at the same time dreaded by its neighbors.

175

The fifteenth century saw a succession of sovereigns about whom history has nothing in particular to tell. Let us mention, however, a war with the emperor of Annam. The first part of the sixteenth century passes under the reign of King Phothisarath (1506-1547), a pious Buddhist. One of his most famous actions is the edict against the cult of Phis. Setthathirath came into power in 1548 after a war with the Burmese. His death was followed by a troubled period. The beginning of the seventeenth century is particularly obscure, but in 1637 a great king called Souligna Vongsa (1637-1694) ascended

[771]

779 "The prince heir to the throne Mugapakkha remained dumb until
538 he was thirteen years old. He recovers his speech at the moment when his father wants to bury him alive. He then explains his previous silence by showing that an inconsiderate word may be the cause of great torment in future existences for him who has uttered it." And the Sama Jataka:

"Sama who fed his father and mother, who were both blind, dies of a wound inflicted unintentionally by king Kusi who was deer hunting. As Sama is dying, he entrusts his murderer to break the news to his parents, who lament so painfully that Sakkha is moved and brings Sama back to life."

But of all, the most popular is unquestionably the Pha Vet, the Laotian name for the Vessantara Jataka. (Cf. below Boun Pha Vet).

There exists another series of Jatakas which rival the five hundred Jatakas in popularity. It is the Pannasajataka (Ha Sip Xat) or the fifty
[101] Jatakas. This very peculiar text is found in [29] all the literature of western Indochina, and was probably composed in Thai country. Versions exist in Burmese, Khmer, Siamese and Laotian. The Laotian rendition has the peculiarity of containing 27 out of 50 tales which are not found in any other version. These 27 stories are entirely original. They are at the moment in the process of being translated.

Finally the five hundred Laotian Jatakas form a convenient framework into which all kinds of stories in the current language have been inserted. Their study will doubtless prove a mine of information on local folklore.

THE PHI

771 We cannot conclude the chapter relating to the religion of Laos
776 without mentioning the cult of the Phi.

In his books "La Participation" and "L'Evolution humaine" the late lamented Jean Przyluski distinguished three successive phases of religion which, according to him, are related to an economic and social state.

When man is a collector of food, that is, when he lives from what he can gather or hunt or fish, his religion is vegetalism or totemism. When he becomes a producer, man's religion becomes agrarian, honoring the gods of vegetation, of the earth, the forests, etc., and particularly the protecting genie of the village. Finally, in the period of urban communities, universal gods appear.

While some reservations might be made on this classification, it does nevertheless offer a convenient framework in which we can

include all the local genii one comes across in Indochina, either under the name of Neak Ta in Cambodia, or Phi in Laos, to mention only two countries. The cult of the Phi is still very much alive in Laos, although it has long been contested by the Buddhist clergy and forbidden by an edict of Phothisarath in 1527.

[30] But there are several classes of phi. First of all there are the universal phi, those are the ones which Buddhist tradition has attempted to assimilate for better or worse.

The book of Khun Bolom says precisely that the Phi Fa (Phi of heaven) and the Phi Then are in reality Indra, and the guardians of the four worlds. The Phi Sua Muon are Nang Tholani (Dharani, goddess of the earth) and Nang Mekhala (Manimekhala, deity of the sea). Finally there is the Phi Then Ten (Visvakarman, the builder).

The local protecting genii of the kingdom of Lan Xan are the fifteen Nagaraja (Praya Nak) who are the genii of water, living in the river rapids, at the confluence of rivers, on the rocks on the river banks or in caves. Their natural form is that of a serpent, but they can also take on human form.

Then follow the familiar genii, the wandering phi (Phi Pho), and the phi of dwellings (Phi Heuan). The Phi Heuan are honored at the time of marriage, and the Laotian code prescribes the indemnities which must be paid to please the Phi. There are also the phi of parents [or relatives--Translator] (Phi Me). These are often confused with the preceding ones. Their cult is celebrated either inside the house, or outside in a small shelter built for this purpose. This little structure is usually built leaning against a tree; sometimes it contains a small statuette or a stone, or even nothing. In that case one finds only a few grains of glutinous rice, and one or two small sticks of incense in a horn made of a banana leaf. This little house is the home of the Phi. He watches the living from the beyond and manifests himself every time a member of the family behaves badly. His intervention is most often known by a sudden and serious illness. One must then try to find out what has displeased the phi. For this one goes to the "sorcerer" and he will indicate [31] the sacrifice which must be made to the phi to appease his anger."

There exist also village phi to whom honor and offerings are due at the time of every ritual or local ceremony, particularly about the seventh month. Coinciding with a sort of pause in the ordinary activity of the Laotian, a pause which is regulated by a change in season, return of the rains and the rise of the Mekong waters, the feasts of the "months of the spirits" are centered around the evocation

May, and Vat Visun to render homage to the protecting genii of the village and chase away the evil spirits. 527

During three days the Laotians do no cooking. Fish, turtles, birds, etc., are bought in the big market and then set free as a sign of penitence and redemption of sins committed either voluntarily or not against living beings during the past year. 782

Possibly there is here a survival of the origin of the cycle of animals. According to Finot, at a very remote period, the custom of curing sick children by letting an animal go free had arisen. When a child was saved in this manner, he was said to have been born from this animal because he owed it life. He was forbidden to kill it, and the year of the child's birth was given the same [65] name as the animal. It is thus that the cycle of twelve years was established. 825 771

In the dry beds of the Mekong and of the Nam Khan, small that made of sand are built. Each one wishes the other a long life, whose number of years will equal the number of grains of sand forming the that, and great prosperity, for ill-luck has fled with the last day of the past year, and the New Year should bring as many riches as there are grains of sand in the that. Often around the principal that, other much smaller ones are erected, their number corresponding to the age of the builder. They express the wish of the one who has built them that he will see many more years added to those he has already lived. Actually these little that around the central mound are a reproduction of Mount Merou surrounded by different worlds (Cf. the symbolism of the That Luang). 527 805

In the pagodas the statues of Buddha are taken down from the altars and placed in little wooden prasat. They are sprinkled with perfumed water which flows in the hang-lin (a kind of gutter of gilded wood whose extremities represent the head of an aquatic monster), for the year now ending must be completely exhausted, and a minute cleansing, both material and spiritual, must leave a strictly clear way for the New Year. In the streets the young girls sprinkle not only the bonzes whom they honor, but all the young men, to compensate for all the minor vexations they have endured from the men during the past year. The high dignitaries are not exempt from these showers of more or less clean water. Sometimes their faces are rubbed with lampblack or mud, when they have the ill luck of meeting a group of young girls. Do we have a survival of the theme of the svayamvara here (free choice of the man by the young girl)? [562]

[66] The day in between, the day before New Year's day, is one of complete rest. All the events which occur during this day will determine

10: d'Orleans--348 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 532, 527, 773, 796

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]
"The dances begin, and two men emerge from the pagoda enveloped in vast cloaks coming down to their heels which are meant to designate the skin of some wild animal, while they have on their heads a mask of black wood representing some monster with enormous eyes, large mouth with very sharp teeth, very long ears and a lower jaw which can be moved at will. Behind the head is a long mane of coarse hair, and we are told that they are known as Pi Konge, or devils with a cruel face, while the old bonze says that they are the chiefs of the tigers, or the Pi Sua (race of devils). The Siamese Colonel adds that in the Laos they are known as Pou Yen (from Pou, father) or Ya Yen (from Ya, mother), and there is a legend that men of this kind once lived in a large forest, and that though they inspired great terror two of them were captured, these monsters representing the captive pair. It is interesting to compare this native tradition with the assertion of several travellers that the Laos was formerly inhabited by a hairy race of men."

Thaïs of the Mékong The genesis of Thaï settlement in the 174
valley of the Mékong is infinitely more obscure. There is a com- 773
plete lack of documentary evidence if we overlook the Laotian legends which are indeed charming in their animation and naïveté but which do not offer any guarantee of authenticity or even, in most cases, of probability (2). We must nevertheless admit that

2. Cf. Mission Pavie, Études diverses, Vol. II, "Recherches sur l'Histoire du Cambodge du Laos et du Siam" (manuscripts translated by Auguste Pavie's Cambodians).

the wonderful tales of Muong-Theng's gourd and of the division of the earth between the sons of Khoun-Borom do not contradict our notions as to the expansion of the Thaï race in Indo-China, and that they constitute an obvious allusion to the arrival of the invaders in eastern Laos.

Here is the legend, of which there are several versions, in as 539
"denuded" and condensed a form as possible (3): 174
773

3. This legend of the gourds very probably takes its inspiration from the passage in the Ramayana which tells how "Loumati, the second wife of Sagara, gave birth to a green calabash. It broke, and sixty thousand sons came out of it. The nurses put this 'little' family out to grow in a bed of butter." (Ibid., Introduction, p. xxxvii.)

/31/ The king of Heaven Phya-Theng sent the sage Khoun-Borom to reign on earth with two divine wives, Nang-Et-Keng and Nang-Yoma-kara. Mounted on a white elephant with black ears and tusks which were curved, transparent and crossed, Khoun-Borom came down to the vast plateau of Muong-Theng (the land of angels, known today by the Annamite name Dien-Bien-Phu) in the spot called Na-Noï. There a gourd plant of prodigious dimensions had grown in the center of Kouva pond and had fastened onto a fig tree on the bank which was itself of unrivaled size and which helped the plant to support two enormous fruits. The celestial envoy had the gourds pierced, and out of them, in incalculable quantities, there at once came gold, silver, cloth, perfume, plant seeds, men, women, oxen, buffalo, pigs, dogs, chickens, ducks, etc., which spread throughout the world. And since his two wives had given him seven sons, Khoun-Borom

539. separated the peoples and divided them among his sons:
174 1. Khoun-Lo received Muong-Swa, the land of millions of ele-
773 phants and of white parasols (Lan-Xang-Hom-Khao);

2. Chet-Chuong received Muong-Phoueun (plateau of Tran-Ninh and valley of the Nam-Nhiep as far as the vicinity of Borikane);

/32/ 3. Nhi-Fa-Lane received Muong-Ho (Sip-Song-Panas, the land of the Twelve Thousand Ricefields);

4. Chu-Song received Prakan (the Thai regions of Upper Tonkin and of the Black River);

5. Saya-Phong received Muong-Nioun (Xieng-Mai or Lan-Na, the land of millions of ricefields);

6. Kham-In received Muong-Louvo (Siam or Lan-Piyea, the land of millions of granaries);

7. Louk-Poun, finally, received Hongsavadi (Pegou and Pagan).

Before sending them forth Khoun-Borom said to the seven kings who were his children: "You shall live peacefully and as good neighbors, the elder ones not quarreling with their younger brothers... Go forth, and remember that you were born of the same womb."

174 It is not impossible that this division, in spite of its fabulous
631 character, should mark the first stage of the history of the Thaïs in the Mékong valley, at a time which the legend does not indicate but which might belong to the second half of the thirteenth century. This date would indeed correspond approximately to an inscription of Rama-Khameng, king of Sukhothaï, "written in Cambodian characters on the four sides of a sandstone stele" and translated by Father Schmitt, in which are mentioned for the first time the names of Vientiane and Vien-Kham (Tran-Ninh) in /33/ the basin of the "Khong river" (1). But whereas the Thais of the Ménam had succeeded, in the course of relatively brief stages, in forming a compact Siamese kingdom which was rapidly freed from Kmer domination, the Thaïs of the Mékong remained divided for a much longer time.

1. Cf. Mission Pavie, ibid. /Études diverses, Vol II, "Recherches sur l'Histoire du Cambodge du Laos et du Siam" (manuscripts translated by Auguste Pavie's Cambodians)/, pp. 175ff., and G. Maspero, "Le Royaume de Vieng-Chan" (Revue indochinoise, 1904, pp. 497 and 498).

Having probably come from their land of origin through the secondary valleys of the Nam-Ta, the Nam Ou and the Nam-Ngun, they founded more or less rival principalities: Cri Cudhamanagari (Muong-Swa-Luang-Prabang); Muong Phoueun (Xieng-Kham, later

173: Deydier--23 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

796 Pha Vet is the Laotian name of the Vessantara Jataka which is
773 the story of the last former life of the Buddha.

"Prince Vessantara, a pious Buddhist, gave many alms. In his kingdom lived a white elephant who had the power to make rain fall at will. A Brahman from a neighboring country asked him for this elephant. The charitable prince made him a present of it. The people, who were displeased, went to find the king and ask him to exile the prince. The latter was sent into the forest with his family, but on his way to his rustic hermitage he met various people who begged alms of him. He gave away successively his wagon, his horses, his children. Finally he made a gift of his wife to the god Indra who, disguised as an ascetic, had [37] asked him for her in order to prove his generosity. Then Indra gave him back his wife, while the children were returned to the king their grandfather by a brahman. With the help of his grandson, the king was able to find the prince and his wife and bring them back to the kingdom where everything came to a happy ending. After his death Prince Vessantara became a Buddha."

It should be noted in connection with this story that, according to the Chinese pilgrim Hiuan-Tsang who visited India in the seventh century of our era, the town of Po-Lou-Cha (at the present day Shahbaz Garhi, a few tens of kilometers northeast of Peshawar) became in its time the place where the framework of Vessantara Jataka was supposed to be. Numerous Graeco-Buddhist bas-reliefs illustrating this legend have been discovered there.

796 Vixakha Bouxa--Feast of the Sixth Month.

On the fifteenth day of the crescent moon, the date of the birth, illumination and death of Buddha is celebrated. The series of legends purposing to explain this feast show its complexity. A thorough study is being made at the present time in order to determine its origin and true meaning. In the present state of the question, we will limit ourselves with all reservation to giving the different explanations which we have found in the manuscripts.

We are in the presence of a typical example of a feast of profane nature which the Buddhist tradition is attempting for better or worse to assimilate. According to the Laotian Buddhists, the rockets sent off during this feast are destined to light the funeral pyre which will consume the Buddha's bier. To be precise, no Buddhist text mentions this rite, and the Hit Sip Song Khong Sip Si makes no allusion to this ceremony.

173: Deydier--24 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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The different reasons for this feast must therefore be sought. First of all, it takes place at the end of [38] the dry season. It is the last rejoicing before the heavy work of the rice fields. Furthermore, its purpose is well determined, for it is intended to bring on the rains and to assure the fertility of the soil.

The principal element of this manifestation is the rocket. This is a long decorated bamboo which is supposed to represent the body of a Naga, one of its extremities being adorned with a Naga head. As for the multi-colored streamer hanging beneath, it symbolizes the rainbow. This theme, which is also found in Indochina, deserves to be studied in Laos before any comparison can be made. A passage of the history of Thao Kathanam gives us the reason for throwing up rockets in order to obtain rain:

"... the day Thao Kathanam was married to the daughter of the King of Champa there was a great feast. From the summit of Mount Gijjakuta, the Yaksa, Gandharva and Phi launched rockets to celebrate the event. For three days all the rockets rose to the sky where they reached the world of the Catulokapala (the four guardians of the world). The Then (genii) thought that the inhabitants of the earth were throwing fire in order to burn the muong Then. They were troubled by this and went to seek protection from the god Indra. Indra then instigated storms, rain and a devastating wind to destroy these balls of fire. The remains of the rockets fell to earth, caught on the trees and became parasitic plants. Since then, in order to obtain rain, rockets are launched towards the sky to frighten the Then."

But the throwing of rockets is also a competition, and the owner of the rocket which goes furthest is sure of a prosperous year. The Legend of Thao Phadeng and of Nang Ay of the country of the Nagas gives us the origin of this competition.

[39] "The son of the king of the Nagas was the rival of Thao Phadeng for the hand of Nang Ay. The father of Nang Ay did not know to whom to give his daughter, so he advised the two suitors to make some rockets. The one who would launch his rocket the furthest would become the husband of Nang Ay. Thao Phadeng won, but the son of the king of the Nagas would not accept his defeat and decided to obtain Nang Ay dead or alive." Then begins an amazing story in which there is no further question of rockets, and no element which might furnish an explanation.

In this way, the rain brought about by this hurling and competition of rockets will ensure a good harvest. Also to this first ceremony there is grafted a second which is the feast of fecundity.

796 1. To have had carnal relations with anyone, even an animal.
2. To have stolen the property of others.
3. To have killed.
792 4. To have falsely usurped spiritual perfections, and with the intention of personal profit.

783 Then follows a list of lesser sins. When the enumeration is completed, the reader addresses the monks, repeating three times the following question:

"Now, I ask the reverend ones: Are you free of these sins? And for the second time: Are you pure? And for the third time I ask: Are you pure?" If everyone is silent, the reader says: "The reverend Ones are free of these sins, therefore they are silent, that is how I understand it."

In this way are catalogued in more than two hundred paragraphs, without much order, the precepts dealing with the daily life of the monks, their housing, their food and drink. No detail however irrelevant or insignificant is omitted.

In Laos as in Cambodia "during the entire rainy season, a taper of the Vassa must burn in each pagoda. This consists of a more or less richly carved, painted, wooden cylinder into which is poured virgin wax around a wick" (E. Porée-Maspéro). Before going into retreat, the bonzes are given garments, then the people form a procession and enter the pagodas where they deposit their taper.

196 [43] Ho Khao Padap Dinh--the Feast of the Dead of the Ninth Month

773 This feast is celebrated on the fifteenth day of the waning moon of the ninth month and is accompanied by offerings to the bonzes.

735 A Jataka (Sadhitissaraja) taken from the Ha Sip Xat tells us the benefits acquired by celebrating this feast.

"Two poor devout Buddhist woodcutters sold the produce of their labor and bought two large urns. Into them they put some rice, a few pieces of sugar cane, two bowls, four bananas, some meat and fish, and some delicacies. They offered all this to a bonze on the day of the feast of the dead and vowed to be born again in a better state. As a result of this act of charity they were born again into a royal family. The husband became king and his wife queen. The Buddha then said to those who were listening to this story: "When an act of charity is done for the feast of the dead, one attains three blisses: the terrestrial bliss of being king, the celestial bliss of becoming Indra and finally the supreme bliss of Nirvana."

173: Deydier--28 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

Ho Khao Slak--The Feast of the Tenth Month. 796

This feast is similar to that taking place in Cambodia at the 735
same period. Offerings are made to the bonzes by casting lots. The name of the bonze is written on small tickets which are mixed up in a cup. Each donor offers his present to the monk whose name he has drawn.

The Feasts of the Eleventh Month. 792

The Buddhist Lent finishes on the fifteenth day of the crescent 796
moon of the eleventh month. In each pagoda the bonzes recite the Patimokkha, then confess their sins before leaving the [44] community to go either on a pilgrimage or into a rustic retreat for the period of the dry season.

The Offering of Kanthin. During this feast the 796
ceremony of Kanthin takes place. This consists in offering to the 735
bonzes garments, bedding, etc....

"When the Buddha was in the Jetavana at Savatthi, some monks [773]
came to find him. They were caught by the beginning of Lent and were obliged to stop on their way. When they set out again after the fifteenth day of the crescent moon of the eleventh month, they arrived covered with mud. The Buddha therefore authorized them to accept the gift of garments at the end of Lent."

The Kanthin can only be accepted by a group of at least five bonzes, but the material may not be borrowed of a third or offered on demand. Those who receive a Kanthin must sew its pieces themselves. (Cf. the Laotian bonze).

The Feast of the Waters.

Other feasts correspond to these purely Buddhist ones. The 796
day before the race of the dugouts the faithful throw into the river 773
small illuminated boats of bamboo or banana wood. Originally lamps were used, consisting of a piece of string dipped in oil, and held up by a banana leaf. This cord was woven at one end in the shape of crows' feet, in memory of the Jataka of the "White Crow."

"A female crow had made its nest at the top of a tree. On the night of a storm the bird died, and its five eggs were carried away by the current. They were gathered by five animals, a hen, an otter, a turtle, a cow, a serpent and gave birth to five buddhas. These buddhas often thought [45] of their mother who was in the heaven of the Tavatimca. She came down to earth in the form of

796 a hermit and said to them: "If you think of your mother, build little
773 illuminated boats and let them be carried away by the current on the *fifteenth day of the eleventh month.*"

This rite is common to all the Asiatic countries of the monsoon. It is found in Lower Burma where it is said to celebrate the victory of the monk Oupagoutta over Mara. It is also practised in Cambodia, southern China at Amoy, in Borneo and in Japan.

Actually we are dealing with what Sir J. Frazer called the expulsion of the emissary he-goat. "These little rafts loaded with offerings attracted the evil genii who had been in contact with the living during the rains. They are driven away on board these frail skiffs." The expulsion of the emissary goat is often accompanied by licentious scenes similar to those of ancient Saturnalia and Bacchanalia.

[526] The race of the dugouts was originally intended to bring about the fall of the waters, but apparently it seems that in Vientiane, in spite of offerings made to the Nagas of the Nam Passak, the original idea has been lost, and the dugout race has become simply a sporting event.

The Feasts of the Twelfth Month.

796 When King Asoka had completed the 84,000 shrines which he
1643 had built to contain the ashes of the Buddha, he made a great feast of the That on the fifteenth day of the crescent moon of the twelfth month. The feasts of the That Luang are celebrated in memory of this pious deed.

At Vientiane they are preceded by the feast of Vat Si Muong and conclude with those of the Vat Ong Tu [46] and Impeng (see appendix: Vientiane). They always involve the same ceremonial, circumambulation around the pagoda with small sticks of wax and incense, offerings to the bonzes, etc....

The day before the feast of That Luang, on the fourteenth day of the crescent moon, the Great Oath takes place. The king goes to the pagoda of Vat Ong Tu. All the high dignitaries and principal office-holders of the kingdom are present. The bonzes chant the ritual prayers. Two Kha guards in red tunics and green sampots, red berets with a pompon on their heads similar to the headdress worn by warriors represented at the Bayon of Angkor Thom, plunge the points of the sabres, guns and lances into four begging bowls containing lustral water. The master of ceremonies recites the oath written on palm leaves three times. Then the water in which the weapons have been dipped is distributed to the principal dignitaries who drink it.

527 the course of the year for good or for bad. On the day of the New
805 Year, a bassi is offered to His Majesty the King by the ministers and
igh dignitaries. Then a delegation of bonzes is admitted to the palace
where, after receiving the ritual offerings, they are sprinkled in a
cabin by His Majesty the King and members of the royal family.

Outside in the town the aspersions continue more than ever during
[643] the whole week. During these feasts the King goes in a dugout to the
grottoes of Xieng Men, opposite Luang Prabang, and to those of Pak Ou
where he sprinkles the statues there. Then he comes to make the
ritual aspersion of the Phra Bang, palladium of the kingdom, at the
pagoda of Vat May.

527 During these feasts of the New Year, the dance of the Phou
773 Gneu Gna Gneu takes place. These are legendary individuals con-
sidered the ancestors of the Laotians, whose story is as follows:

When Phou Lan Xong had pierced the gourd, the king of heaven sent his son Khoum Bolom to organize the country. While he was performing the mission entrusted to him by his father, a vine was seen to rise from the earth. It grew rapidly and soon covered the whole world with its shadow. Men ceased to see the sky and were deprived of light and heat. The king ordered this monstrous vine to be cut down, but nobody dared to risk doing this. Finally an aged couple [deux vieux époux] Phou Thao Gneu and Me Ngam, armed with a hatchet and preceding the son of heaven, come down to earth, announced that they were willing to undertake this perilous task. But they stipulated that after their death they would receive offerings and would be invoked at the beginning of meals and other business. Everybody [67] agreed to this. Then they attacked the vine with blows of the hatchet. At the end of three months and three days, the vine fell and crushed them in its fall, but the sun shone again on the world.

The agreement has been kept. Since that day the dance of the Phou Gneu Gna Gneu is one of the principal elements of the Laotian feast of the New Year.

527 The two dancers wear enormous cardboard masks. They listen
825 on their knees to prayers read aloud to them, while alongside of them
a lion waves its paws nonchalantly. This lion has rather a peculiar
role. Apparently it is another survival of the legend of the cycle of animals. Not having any toys to give their children, the first ancestors had the idea of modeling one year a rat, another year an ox, then a tiger, a hare, a dragon, etc. The name of each animal designated the year during which it was used as a toy. Finally these little figures became alive and became the ancestors of the present day species. At

the present time only the lion is kept, for apparently its role is no longer very well known. 527 825

[68] THE HARVEST FESTIVAL

This takes place after the harvest, during the first and second months, and is held in the open countryside. Its purpose is to glorify "the soul of rice." 527 243

It is not until the threshing has been completed and the rice piled up in heaps that the master of the harvest consults his neighbors and chooses with them the day of celebration. Light shelters must then be built on his field around the threshing area to accommodate the guests. On the top of the pile of paddy a sort of pulpit is erected from which the bonzes will recite their prayers.

On the morning of the feast day, the master of the house slaughte an ox from which is made the traditional lap, a dish consisting of raw meat and chopped up peppers mixed with various chopped up green vegetables the whole held together with a soup of pa dek. In the evening a court of love is held and the mo lam (professional singers) are also invited. At the end of this first night, the bonzes climb into the pulpit before daybreak to read the legend of Nang Kho Sop. [262] 527 773

"In the olden days a grain of rice was as big as a gourd. It was cut down with an axe. Then Nang Kho Sop (the soul of rice) became angry at this barbarous treatment and flew away. Since then this feast has been celebrated so that the soul will return."

The reading closes as day breaks, and offerings are made to the bonzes. At the close of the prayer, each one of the faithful, before rising, sprinkles a few drops of water on the ground so that Nang Thorani may bear witness to their alms and so that the goddess may not forget to count it among the merits he has acquired for his future lives.

[69] The owner takes a basket filled with boiled chicken, alcohol, sweet potatoes, and all kinds of tuberous roots. He goes by himself into his rice field and walks over it in every direction, at the same time calling the soul of rice to thank it for having made his fields bear fruit and to beg it to continue being equally generous to him in future years. He offers it all the food in the basket saying: Soul of Rice, here are tuberous roots for thee, here are buds of cabbage palm, and good alcohol made from thy grain. Soul of Rice, descend on us and preside over the feast I am giving in thy honor! 243 527

leafage, and arrange them in bundles. In the evening everyone returns in a procession to the town, and the wood which has been gathered is put out to dry in the courtyard of the pagoda. A month later, the wood is ready to burn, and another feast takes place at the pagoda. The day before all the women assemble to prepare the offerings of food for the bonzes. They take the wood cut the previous month to cook the ball of rice as big as one's fist on which oil and the contents of an egg are poured so as to form a light surrounding crust. The old people take advantage of this wood- [71] cutting and of its burning to hear additional sermons. The Hit Sip Song Khong Sip Si tell a legend of the origin of this feast, which takes place in memory of an old woman who met a bonze while going to gather wood in the forest. She offered him a ball of rice on which lay an egg. After having done this charitable deed, she was bitten by a snake and died. Since that day the Khao Chi is celebrated.

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[72] ANNUAL RITES OF THE FISHING OF THE PA BEUK

Every five years the fishing of the pa beuk takes place in five different places. This fish, belonging to the Siluridae family, has a long smooth silvery-white body, without any scales and may attain a weight of 200 kilograms. The five places are Ang (about 25 kilometers upstream from Vientiane) from the 13th to the 15th day of the crescent moon of the 3rd Laotian month, between January and February; at Luang Prabang (in the middle of the river opposite the town) from the 6th to the 7th Laotian months between May and June; at Nong Khieu (about 22 kilometers upstream from Paklay) on the 15th day of the crescent moon of the 3rd Laotian month (February); at Nong Theo (about 30 kilometers upstream from Paklay) between the 4th and 5th Laotian months, without any fixed date; at Ban Seo (about 27 kilometers upstream from Houei Sai) from the 6th to the 7th Laotian month, between May and June.

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In the section of the river at Vientiane, as early as the 9th day of the crescent moon, the Chao Muong of the province or his representative leaves the capital to organize the festival. He goes by small stages in a dugout as far as Ang, a sort of wide cove or creek favorable to pa beuk fishing. First the Chao Muong and his retinue stop at Ban Si Khay, "village of the lower orders" ["village de la crasse" may have the above meaning or it may mean "village of filth"--Translator] where lives the village genie who has a wide reputation, and who is continually worshipped by the sorcerers living to the north of the

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Death is produced by a lack of harmony and equilibrium among the elements.
Sympathy of the spirits produces a man.
Antipathy of the spirits produces a saint.
He who understands this can transform his nature and reach a point where he knows neither birth nor suffering nor death.
He will not know desire or grief!
He who, as he draws his last breath, repents of all his faults in deed, intention and thought regains his original purity. His soul goes to paradise so that, after "time" has passed, it may again be incarnated at the epoch of "rebirth" in the body of a good, just and happy man.

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2. We shall now give an extract from the work of Captain Gosselin, who gives a good definition of the spirits or souls in Laotian beliefs which are particular to each human organ and faculty. His description will be found to agree with what we have said at the beginning of this chapter.

[159] "The existence of man consists in the union of several organs, the cooperation of which helps to regularize the mechanism of vital formation. Over each of these organs presides an immortal personality which is called the soul of the organ. These souls, which are thirty-two in number, are as follows:

"The soul of hair on the head; the soul of body hair; the soul of the fingernails; the soul of the teeth; the soul of the skin; the soul of the flesh; the soul of the nerves; the soul of the bones; the soul of the cartilages; the soul of the glands; the soul of the heart; the soul of the spleen; the soul of the peritoneum; the soul of the liver; the soul of the lungs; the soul of the large intestine; the soul of the small intestine; the soul of digested food; the soul of food to be digested; and the soul of the brain.

"These twenty organs are produced by the male substances, that is to say by the father. The twelve others originate from female substances, or the mother. They are:

"The soul of the bile; the soul of glutinous matter; the soul of the synovia; the soul of the blood; the soul of the sweat; the soul of

774 foul-smelling matter; the soul of tears; the soul of liquid fat; the
827 soul of the saliva; the soul of matter secreted by the brain; the soul of the marrow; and the soul of the urine.

774 "The following must be added to the union of these organs for the formation of a man;

828 "Consciousness, name, individuality, image and the faculty of memory.

[822] "The four fundamental elements--earth, air, water and fire.

"And finally the five moral faculties:

"The faculty of distinguishing; the faculty of reflection; the faculty of judgment; the faculty of thought; and the ideal faculty of the soul, which is the source of love of the beautiful.

774 "Man is formed of all these diverse elements.

"Immediately after death all these souls or faculties fly off into
775 the air like a swarm of bees, separate from one another, and each one follows the path indicated by destiny. Of those which have done good on earth, some go directly to heaven and are used in the formation of an angel, while the others are reborn again in our world where they help in the creation of a man who is to lead a happy life full of wealth and honor. Those souls or faculties, on the other hand, which have contributed to evil actions appear before the Phaya-Nhom-Phi-Bane, the king of the nether regions, who judges them immediately and condemns them to tortures which may be more or less cruel depending on their degree of guilt.

"Once dispersed these souls can no longer recognize one another if they should meet again. On their way they meet other souls which are wandering like themselves and come from other parts of the world, and by their union, if God so ordains, they form the elements necessary to the birth of another man.

"The absence of memory and the complete forgetfulness of what has happened before their dispersion prevent the souls which are used in the vital mechanism of new births [160] from having any consciousness of their past existences. On the other hand, physical and moral resemblances between persons of different blood are due to the combining of souls which belonged to various individuals" (1).

(1) Captain Gosselin, op. cit. [Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900.]

7: Thompson--372 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 769, 771, 775, 779

"Along with the first migrations from the North and West into Laos filtered the Vedic precepts and the laws of Manu. From 900 to 700 B.C. the more militant dogmas of Brahmanism began to appear, at the same time as the ancestral cult and innumerable auxiliary superstitions. About the thirteenth century Buddhism began to appear by different routes, but it is the Ceylonese variety, albeit profoundly modified, which has the largest number of Laotian followers. Chiefly because it rejects study and examination, this doctrine permits many superstitions to live side by side with it, embedded at varying depths in the popular consciousness. The kind of Buddhism practised by the Laotians and some Khas is almost entirely excempt from philosophic speculation. Bonzes recite prayers incomprehensible to themselves and to the people, but they must mark every social event. These ceremonies, a reverential attitude towards sacred places, a dash of animism, the ancestral cult, and a belief in Kharma, make up official Laotian religion. Some of this has been absorbed by the Yaos and Lus, Khas and Meos, each of whom has added their own assortment of superstitions. Laotian superstitions, too, are myriad. They attribute all evils to spirits--none other than their ancestors, who take delight in returning to earth expressly to torment their relatives. Hence the great power of sorcerers, who, incidentally, are rent by the greatest professional jealousy. All of this, with a smattering of Christian converts, form an ill-defined, uneasy pantheism, quite congenial to the Laotian soul."

10: d'Orleans--276 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 563, 577, 775 Ethnic subgroups

"I do not know whether our boatmen [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] have followed any religious courses, but they do not seem to trouble themselves about the future. One of them first tells me that he does not know what will happen in the other life; then he adds that he believes he shall return to this world as a man, if he shows mercy during his lifetime, that is if he gives rice to the dogs and cats, or performs any other charitable actions;if not his soul will pass into the body of an animal."

10: d'Orleans--338 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 363, 775, 782

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "Between the palace and the river bank a broad street runs parallel to the market, and at frequent intervals are jars containing water, placed there by the inhabitants, who believe that in so doing they are making sure of a reward hereafter."

10: d'Orleans--366 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 577, 775

"They themselves know little; they believe that charitable people will be recompensed, taking on another individuality after death, and that the wicked will go to hell. 'There are, however, at Luang Prabang,' they add, 'some men who do not believe in hell, who do not give to the bonzes, who drink tchoum-tchoum, and who smoke opium.' "

776 lay priests preside. These lay priests, or rather these servants of the
793 Spirits, correspond to the Guardians of the Genii in the Buddhist religion. Usually they exercise their ministry only when one of
755 their countrymen falls sick or dies.

"In case of a serious illness the servant of the Spirits goes to the sick person's house, goes to his side and recites a few prayers. Then he takes a bowl of uncooked rice on which he stands an egg with the smallest end upwards. With his right hand the officiant drops a certain number of grains of rice on the point of the egg, performing this operation three times in all. If the same number of grains of rice remain on the point of the egg each time, this means that a "Spirit" has entered the sick person's body.

787 "By means of similar maneuvers, the Spirit is then questioned to find out what he wants to eat. Depending on the answer, a buffalo, an ox or a pig may be killed. The designated animal is slaughtered and then scorched without being skinned so as to destroy the hairs which cover it. The entrails are taken out and carefully washed [154] in running water, then replaced in the animal's body. The victim is taken to the altar of the Spirits, which is located outside the village, and placed with its head towards the altar. Then prayers are said asking the Spirit to cure the sick person. When the ceremony is over the animal is taken back to the village, where it is cut into pieces and divided among all the inhabitants. The invalid rarely gets well.

"There are also sorcerers and witches among the Thais, who are consulted in circumstances of lesser importance.

• [775] "The Thais believe in metempsychosis, although their ideas on the subject are not very clear" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos). "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

771 Religion of the Khas. Among the Khas, even those who practice
782 Buddhism, the only existing religion is a religion of "Phis" which is similar to the Thai belief in "Spirits, Genii and Demons." The
776 outer manifestations of this cult consist of offerings of rice, flowers and fruit, but never include sacrifices of animals. Small shelters which affect the form of an ordinary house are built at the entrance to villages to receive propitiatory offerings destined for the "Phi".

the "Phi."

It is said that each of us has his good and his evil genie which are engaged in a constant struggle, and that we are good or evil according as the one or the other gains the upper hand. This is a kind of symbolism of good and evil, but here the controlling and guiding conscience is replaced by the influences of the moment, the occasion, the circumstances and the milieu. 779 776

Each house also has its own "genie", reminiscent of the Roman Lares, to which sacrifices and offerings are made on every possible occasion. 776 782

The evil "Phis" are more dreaded and receive a great many more offerings than the good "Phis," with whom no trouble need be taken.

In each village there is a sorcerer to explain the actions of the "Phis" and teach the way to gain their favor. Although consultations with them are not free of charge these sorcerers, who are called Mo-hou-ha, Mo-Phi or Phi-pop depending on the province, are just as [155] [Illustration] [156] [Blank page] [157] highly regarded as the "Guardians of the Genii" of the Buddhist religion and, like them, are exempt from servitude and taxes.

In times of epidemic all responsibility is attributed to the evil "Phis", and in order to make them take flight the men of the villages beat on the roofs of their houses with long bamboo poles until such time as the "Phis" are supposed to have disappeared.

The Khas have retained a belief in metempsychosis which is tinged with certain rather vague superstitions bearing on a future life and some kind of resurrection. But this second existence is not everyone's privilege, and will exist only insofar as one's life has been a good one. 775

They also believe in the existence of a place of torment where perjurers, murderers, etc. will remain for all eternity. To be sure, they believe in a general way that a new life will begin and that it will be a reward or a punishment for the individual's deeds in his last incarnation. Thus a brave and good man will return as a happy and respected chieftain. Others will be entitled only to an animal existence, the importance of which in the scale of being will be like a personification of their faults and merits. One odd fact is that women always want to return in the guise of a man. [562]

Religion of the Lus. The religion practiced by the Lus is a form of Buddhism which has been mitigated by certain local customs 771 779

771 and to which is added the pantheism of the "Phis." Their general
779 doctrine, however, includes a belief in an "element which creates all things" and in a future life, the sanction of their dogmatic taboos and precepts, in a place of eternal beatitude which it is possible to inhabit here on earth and which is, at bottom, nothing else but the annihilation of being in the "Nirvana" of the Buddhists.

Among the Lus, even more so than in China and the Indies, the basis of this mystical and dreamlike religion which is so well suited to their temperament is an idea of the nothingness of things, the uselessness of effort and even of action. It is, in a word, the most complete pessimism and the annihilation of energy and will.

• 775 Various beliefs. 1. The following is an incantation or prayer
769 for [158] dying persons which gives a good picture of the system of the world and of the idea of metempsychosis:
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The sky and the earth are growing dark:
Come out, souls, and gain "space":
The spirits of the parts of the body are joined together
and form only one:
Listen to the law of Buddha:
We teach the road which leads to the kingdom of Buddha,
the kingdom of the rising sun.
The one soul, the union of the spirits of the body, knows
today that birth and death are alike:
What is birth?
Nothingness produces the generative breath.
The breath produces fire.
Fire produces water.
Water produces earth, mother of all beings.
Birth is produced by harmony and perfect equilibrium of
the elements.
What is death?
Death is a return to the beginning by the reversal of causes.
Earth masters water.
Water masters fire.
Fire masters air.
Air masters nothingness.
Nothingness always remains nothingness.
Nothingness is infinite.

149: Reinach--118 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Death is produced by a lack of harmony and equilibrium among the elements.
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Antipathy of the spirits produces a saint.
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He will not know desire or grief!
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775 the air like a swarm of bees, separate from one another, and each one follows the path indicated by destiny. Of those which have done good on earth, some go directly to heaven and are used in the formation of an angel, while the others are reborn again in our world where they help in the creation of a man who is to lead a happy life full of wealth and honor. Those souls or faculties, on the other hand, which have contributed to evil actions appear before the Phaya-Nhom-Phi-Bane, the king of the nether regions, who judges them immediately and condemns them to tortures which may be more or less cruel depending on their degree of guilt.

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(1) Captain Gosselin, op. cit. [Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900.]

149; Reinach--156 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Ever since the death, singers and improvisers of both sexes accompanied by volunteer musicians had recounted the merits, qualities and exploits of the deceased at great length and with emphasis before a numerous audience which remained attentive and never grew tired. They boasted of his good deeds, listed his particular habits and tastes and enumerated his many children and grandchildren.

They dwelled with great satisfaction on the intimacies which he had taken with the fair sex up to quite an advanced age, and in support of their remarks showed brightly illuminated drawings painted on long streamers of glazed calico. These drawings, as much by the truth of the attitudes shown as by their outrageous realism, were the joy of the spectators. Both children and adults roared with laughter as they listened to the highly spicy commentary of the improvisers.

A curious fact was that this exhibition did not occasion any obscene or even suggestive gesture on the part of the audience.

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The bonzes, who are the only art students in this country, are the ones who color these pictures. If published in our own land, the latter would certainly call down all the rigor of the law on their author.

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The day of cremation finally came, and the funeral proper began.

One of the sons of the deceased first set free two pairs of partridges and turtledoves, pet birds which he had had. The poor creatures were unaccustomed to flight and refused to leave their cage, but then beat their wings and clumsily escaped to a perch a few meters above ground on one of the trees [207] in the garden. A trail of ashes was spread all around the fence surrounding the house of the deceased in order, as popular belief has it, to prevent his spirit from escaping into the nearby region and tormenting the living.

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A solid bamboo stretcher which twelve hardy men would carry on their shoulders was placed on the ground to await the catafalque. Attendance was heavy, and people of all ages came from a distance. They wore their holiday clothes with vivid, light and iridescent colors. They wore flowers in their ears and hair and carried multicolored streamers, wax candles and sticks of incense in their hands.

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The members of the family, the officials of the Muong and the bonzes were also there in force.

The catafalque was carried from the house by hand and put down on the stretcher, which the porters then raised to their shoulders. At its base, near the feet of the deceased, was fastened a strip of calico

776 of one or several spirits who are reincarnated in one possessed. This
796 person enables the villagers and those living in the same quarter to
787 know the course of the new year and, if necessary, to improve it by means of gifts and prayers. During this time the village is forbidden to strangers (Lévy).

776 A series of particularly dangerous phi is also known; these are the Phi Phetu (Sk: Preta), that is the wandering souls of people who
• 775 have died in an abnormal way, by accident, suicide, childbirth for a woman, etc. These souls cannot be born again. They remain present in order to torment human beings. The Phi Houa Kout are
776 the headless phi, the Phi Khon Long are those who carry the coffins,
754 the Phi Pop have the power of entering into the body of a living human being. The unfortunate person then has the evil eye and is expelled from the village. In the region of Savannakhet, there is a village of victims of the Phi Pop which was created by a Protestant mission, in order to rescue these poor creatures who would otherwise die of hunger, for they are forbidden to enter any village.

The Phi Phong are the spirits of human beings who have studied the formulas to acquire magic powers but have not conformed strictly to certain rites prescribed by their studies. They are bloodthirsty and go out at night by the light of the fire [32] which issues from their nostrils along the banks of rivers and streams, and of ponds, to catch fish and toads. If one meets a Phi Phong, one must flee for he can spit in one's face, and then one may become a Phi Phong oneself.

776 The Phi Kong Koi lives in the mountains and has the shape of a monkey. During his existence on earth he was the servant of a Vietnamese. One day, having been too badly treated, he decided to escape. But in order not to be caught, he camouflaged his footprints by putting his heels in front and his toes behind. The Vietnamese, deceived by this trick, went off in the opposite direction
[198] and never found him. In our days when the Laotians want to chase away the Phi Kong Koi, the speak Vietnamese to each other. But if one is traveling in the mountains, one must refrain from lighting a fire or cooking any fish or meat or crabs, for the odor attracts the phi who wants to come and eat. His victim would have his intestines split open. The approach of the phi is always preceded by a violent storm and a torrential rain. There are said to be a great many Phi King Koi in the region of Samneua.

There is, however, another kind of Phi. This one seems to have a particular hatred for archaeologists. These are the phis who inhabit sculptures or the tumuli which are found in the bush [en brousse]. But that is another story...

173: Deydier--30 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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Then the royal retinue proceeds to the That Luang where the king must spend the night in a sala. He is accompanied by his ministers and in principle may not leave until they come and fetch him.

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On the morning of the fifteenth day, the king, carried by his guards, goes to make his offerings to the bonzes, and the whole day is devoted to public rejoicing, of which one form deserves to be mentioned. It is the game of the Thi khi.

Its origin, so far as we know at present, remains obscure. The Pra Lak Pra Lam tells us that Indra and Rama played Thi Khi together, and that since that day it has been played at Vientiane.

Let us observe that the game was unknown at Luang Prabang. It was imported from the south. Tradition required that it be played on horseback, when it was played like polo.

At the present time it is played on foot with a stick with the end bent over like a crosier and a ball the size [47] of a child's head and is similar to hockey. There are two opposing sides, the office-holders and the people. The latter should in principle win two victories out of three games. The game has no rules, there is no umpire and no limit to the ground played on. Sometimes the ball goes off into the shrubbery, and all the players go and look for it. Only a hypothetical line indicates the limit of the enemy side. [641]

The feasts of Vat Inpeng and of Vat Ong Tu merely repeat those of Vat Simuong and That Luang.

[48] THE SECULAR CEREMONIES

The Sou Khouan can be considered as the transition between the purely religious ceremonies and the secular feasts. [527 725]

Actually Sou Khouan means "call and reception of the soul." The Laotian has a profound belief in the transmigration of the soul. According to him, the human body is inhabited by thirty-two khouan (spirits) each of whom presides over the function of a member, an organ or an intellectual faculty.

When a human being dies, all of the thirty-two souls leave his body. According to the merits which have been acquired, they go either to the heaven of the gods, or to the province of the dead. Certain beings who have died in an abnormal manner, by suicide, drowning, etc., become wandering souls. They are to be feared, because they return to earth in order to torment the living, and one must make numerous sacrifices to them.

173: Deydier--31 H. B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

•775 According to the normal cycle of rebirths, when they have ended their stay in Heaven and are on the point of returning to earth, they themselves choose their future parents.

All the thirty-two souls go and haunt the water jar of the adopted household. After the third night, at the moment when the future father comes for a drink, they insinuate themselves into the folds of the belt of his sarong. After remaining there for three nights they will enter the maternal womb by the natural passages at the time of conjugal intercourse.

755 782 When one of these wandering souls leaves the body in order to divert himself, the man becomes ill. In order to [49] cure him, the soul must be called back, and then the Sou Khouan is performed.

When the Sou Khouan is considered necessary, the master of the house goes and consults an achar (pronounced: atiar = sk. acarya), an aged bonze, for the choice of the ceremonial days and hours, where this achar will officiate.

When the prescribed moment arrives, the pha khouan (tray containing offerings) must be ready. In the center of the tray is a goblet artistically decorated with small flowering branches on which are attached tiny candles and white cotton threads about twenty centimeters long. Around this goblet are arranged a boiled hen's egg called khay khouan (egg offered to the spirits), some pellets of glutinous rice, cakes, and ripe bananas.

The tray and goblet may be of wood, copper or silver, the richest appearing at weddings. Instead of a single goblet, several of different sizes can be placed one on top of the other to form a pyramid, and be decorated with flowers, candles and cotton threads.

In addition to the eatables already mentioned, one can also place on the tray a ngeun fac (ancient silver coin in the shape of a parallelepiped weighing 225 grams) or some other precious object.

Next to this tray is placed a small one on which is set a yellow-clawed cock which has been plucked, drawn and boiled. This is the khay khouan (the cock offered to souls). In addition one can add the head and viscera of a boiled pig.

[273] The whole is completed with a bottle of [rice] alcohol and some glasses. In the olden days, the alcohol was contained in a small natural gourd, and the cups [50] were made of bamboo or wood. But rich people had porcelain utensils imported from China. The alcohol can be replaced by a jar of fermented glutinous rice, the liquid extract of which is drunk by sucking it through bamboo tubes dipped into the bottom of the jar.

173: Deydier--32 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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[585]

The person whose absent spirits are to be recalled sits next to the pha khouan, on the other side of which is the achar master of ceremonies facing him.

In the case of a wedding, the bride and bridegroom each sits in front of his and her own pha khouan and achar, the young man being on the right of his affianced.

Those present, consisting of aged persons, notables, relatives, friends and acquaintances, sit around mostly behind the interested parties.

While the candles are lighted, the achar commences to recite the prayer.

After the litanies are ended, the oldest and most respected of the assembly begins a series of the phouk khene (fixing a thread to the wrist) starting with the achar. The latter extends his forearm horizontally, either his right or his left, bent at right angles and held near the elbow by the hand of another person in the gathering. The opposite hand must be held in the attitude of prayer in front of the face as if it were joined to the hand on the other side. The man who will tie the knot then grasps the white cotton thread by the middle, so that the two halves hang down. These he draws over the wrist which is held in both directions of the axis of the arm, in order to sweep away the kho, that is, the misfortunes sent as a punishment for former sins. Then he detaches from the extremity of each thread a little piece which he throws towards the setting sun, thus throwing the kho afar. He then takes the khay khouan, a [51] pellet of rice, a banana, and finally one of the precious objects contained in the pha khouan. These he places in the extended open hand to serve as an offering to the khouan, and brings the small tray containing the khay khouan closer in such a way that the back of this hand is in contact with that of the chicken. Finally, after tying the thread around the wrist, he grasps the loops of the knot between the thumb and the forefinger, and rolls them together for about a second, giving him time to finish the formula of good wishes which he has been murmuring since the beginning while accomplishing the gestures described above.

The symbolical knot tied to the wrist serves to hold the khouan who have just been attracted to it, and prevents them from wandering away again. One can take advantage of the opportunity to "tie the wrist" of anyone present, either as a sign of friendship or of hommage. [576] At the close of the ceremony, which comes to an end without any more formalities, everyone is invited to a meal offered for the occasion.

764 coffin is placed on a truck. The bonzes are at the head of the procession, then the widow and the children dressed in white as a sign of mourning.

[60] The coffin is placed on the pyre. All those attending, holding a lighted candle or resinous torch, go to the pyre in single file, and throw the brands into the fire. It is forbidden to light a torch by lending one's light or by borrowing that of a neighbor. During this time the family must throw offerings to the crowd: pieces of banana branches, lemons, etc., into which have been introduced coins mixed with grilled rice. The cotton thread, called fay mongkhou, which [751] had surrounded the house in order to chase away sorrow, illness, the phi, etc., is removed at the end of the ceremony.

On the third day the bones are fetched away. The bonzes are [187] invited, but before touching the ashes, they must be examined to see [775] if they have left any imprints either animal or human, in order to know in what form the dead man will be reborn. The bones are gathered with wooden pincers and then placed in an urn. A statue in a vaguely human form is erected of wet cinders. The urn and the offerings are surrounded by a cotton thread, then the bonzes recite a prayer and this closes the ceremony. The urn will be placed in a pagoda or buried by the family who will erect a that. A little later, to commemorate the death of the departed, the family will dig a hole in the pagoda or near the that, and in it plant a long bamboo at the end of which is fastened a cotton banner laminated with small bamboo sticks. A tray of offerings is brought, which had been placed at the foot of the bamboo pole while it was being set up, and which is held by the relatives and friends of the dead man. Before this, offerings of food had been wrapped in a banana leaf. Once the bamboo is set up, water is poured all around on the earth which is holding it up, in the hope that the merits of this action will reach the other world. Then the whole family [61] squats down around the pole and with joined hands recites prayers.

The Laotian House.

342 It is built on piles and has a veranda. The roof is curved slightly upwards. A long stake holding the water jar is sunk in the ground near the veranda outside the house. The floor is of bamboo or of thin wide boards. The wall and ceiling are of bamboo panels, or of boards, or of mud. There are two principal doors and few windows. A partition going from the inner beam of the front gable separates the house lengthwise in two parts, most often of equal size. One is divided into

10: d'Orleans--332-333 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 776, 826

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "We collect some bivalve fossils as we come down, half-way from the summit, being a covered terrace with a building, inside which is a bath-shaped cavity with five marks supposed to have been made [333] by the foot of Buddha when he traversed the Mekong. This is why it is called Pra bate (1) (foot of God).

1. Bate is the word used for the feet of deities or kings; tine for those of ordinary mortals."

25: Brodrick--96-97 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-3
116, 776, 769, 782, 823

"Although the people of the Laos are happy-go-lucky and carefree, and their mild and mitigated Little Vehicle Buddhism sits lightly upon them, the spirits are ever-present. Still, to this day, in a country where men are naturally, it seems, hospitable and open-handed, no stranger will be invited until the spirits have given their permission sought by offerings to them of five candles of pure beeswax, five frangipani flowers, five incense-sticks and a bottle of rice-alcohol.

All that happens to hurt man is the work of spirits. For 'primitive' men--and the Laotians, despite their real if rustic civilization, maintain many of the reactions and fundamental beliefs of 'primitives' --disaster, and the greatest of all disasters, death, is not 'normal' or 'natural.' In the Land of the Laos, the p'hi-lok or manes of the ancestors are jealous beings, easy to take offence and these p'hi or spirits and the ho or demons must receive propitiatory sacrifices. There is a similar underlying fear and faith in Cambodia but they are better hid. But in the Laos it may be said that all believe that ghosts come back at night in animal shape to plague the living. In animal shape. The archaic ideas which we tend to label rather too easily as 'totemistic' are all vaguely interwined with feelings rather than definable dogmas, feelings of some close relation between man and other animals.

With the p'hi-lok, who sow terror, and the p'hi phob, or evil spirits, are the numberless demons of the woods and the guardian genii of the wild. The forests are fearsome

places and best avoided. The old travellers told a terrible tale of the Forest of the King of [97] Fire, the Dong-Phaja-Fai, through which you had to climb to reach Korat, (1) and

1. Korat, of course, is in modern Siam, but it is in Laotian land. Mgr. Pellegoix's entertaining Description du Royaume de Siam was published in 1854.

the journey took five whole days. The awful name, alone, of this dread jungle spread terror, and countless wayfarers never came through the deep shades, since as Pellegoix relates, in an effort, doubtless, to rationalize the legends, here and there in this jungle, the earth contains 'mineral arsenic' whose dust the passer-by breathes and with it death.

If the Laotian goes into the jungle, ill may befall him, and surely will if he there spends the night. He may disappear for ever or he may be transported to an enchanted land wherein, for long years he may chase phantoms and illusions and if he manages, at last, to escape from this bewitched realm, when he reaches his hut he will not be recognized by his relations who, having mourned him as dead, have long ceased to think of him and will be most embarrassed and annoyed at his reappearance--or, if he shuns such adventures, he will emerge from the great woods as a sick man, the demons have struck him with malignant fever, dragging him to the grave in a few short days.

25: Brodrick--96-97 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-3
116, 776, 769, 782, 823

Picanon told a curious tale of what he experienced, years ago, when he was living on Khone island, right in the south near the Khong cataracts and the Cambodian frontier. After a day of torrential showers and violent storms, in the evening as he was finishing his dinner in his house, two young women ran in upon him and threw themselves trembling at his feet imploring him for aid and for protection. Thinking that some brigand was after the women, Picanon reached for his gun and made to go out on to the veranda, but the girls sobbed to him not to venture forth alone for a p'hi had called to them and cursed them at the very moment they were passing the house. They tottered with him out of the windows and pointed to a bushy mango-tree in a rice-field nearby. On the tree was a bird, luminiferous in the moonlight. It flew screeching away as Picanon fired a charge of shot in its direction, and the women were reassured."

68: Mouhot--95-96 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 776, 753, 778

"[HD: At Khao-Khoc, Siam. See category 116, p. 90] The Laotian is as superstitious as the Cambodian, and perhaps more so than the Siamese. If a person falls ill of a fever, or, indeed, is ever so slightly indisposed, they believe it to be owing to a demon who has entered his body. If any matter in which they are engaged goes wrong, or an accident happens when hunting, fishing, or cutting wood, it is the fault of the demon. In their houses they carefully preserve some object, generally a simple piece of wood, or some parasitic plant, whose form they fancy bears a resemblance to some part of the human [96] body; and this is constituted their household god, and prevents evil spirits from entering, or, at least, causes them speedily to depart."

68: Mouhot--99 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 776, 823, 789

"I am at the gates of the infernal regions, for so the Laotians and Siamese designate this forest, [HD: i.e. Dong Phya Phia, the forest of the 'King of Fire', between Khao-Khoc and Korat in Siam] and I have no spell to terrify the demons which inhabit it, neither tiger's teeth nor stunted stag-horn; nothing but my faith in and love for God. If I must die here, where so many other wanderers have left their bones, I shall be ready when my hour comes."

68: Mouhot--110 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 484, 776, 823, 579

"As for the Laotians, I have found them, although superstitious, very courageous, especially those who traverse this forest [HD: i.e. Dong Phya Phia, the forest of the 'King of Fire', between Khao-Khoc and Korat in Siam] eight or ten times a year. Some of them even venture to awake the 'King of Fire' by bringing down game or shooting at robbers: yet death , even in the best season, carries off one or two out of every ten who travel here. I think the number of those who fall victims to this terrible journey must be considerable in the rainy season, when every torrent overflows its bounds; the whole soil is soaked, the pathways nothing but bogs, and the rice-grounds covered with several feet of water. After five or six days' walking through all this, with feet in the mud, the body in a profuse perspiration, and breathing a fetid atmosphere, hot as a stove and reeking with putrid miasma, what wonder that many sink and die?"

68: Mouhot--112 N-5 (1858-61) 1864
116, 776, 823, 579

"Our guides are all Laotians from the neighbourhood
unremitting in his care and attention towards me. Every
for the night, levelling the ground and cutting down branc
and I am thus raised from the earth and protected from th
hard life, tramping in all seasons along these wretched r
morning and evening, to swallow a little rice, and having
tormented by ants, and exposed to the attacks of robbers,
constantly to be on their guard."

of Korat, and their leader is
evening he prepares my place
es which he covers with leaves,
e dew. These guides lead a
ads, having scarcely time,
out little sleep at nights,
against whom they have

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Moi AM9
M'nong

and we were down to the nursing-mothers, who, removing their 273
babies from the breast and passing them to onlookers, tripped lightly 574
towards us. Although the rice-alcohol, with its queer burnt-cereal
taste, was weaker than usual, my friends said, it was beginning to take
effect. The Moïs had slipped into an easy-going joviality and the [832]
nursing-mothers received some mild familiarities, for which they
exchanged good-natured slaps. Their capacity for alcohol, though,
was greater than that of the elder ladies, and they were not to be
deceived by a mere pretence of drinking on our part. Calling for
beakers they sucked up the alcohol, spat libations, syphoned off
liquor until the beakers were filled, and presented them to us.
Taking stock of the situation we saw that we had drunk our way to
within two nursing-mothers of those perfect young representatives
of the Polynesian race, the chief's daughters, who flung us occa-
sional glances from between sweeping lashes. But we were all
flagging, dizzy with the alcohol and the stunning reverberation of
the gongs. And the morning was wearing on. It would have
been difficult to imagine our condition by the time we had
drunk our way down to an interesting social level. The Moïs
encouraged us with smiles and gestures, but we could do no
more.

It was at a village in the vicinity of Buon Dieo, where two years 685
previously an extraordinary affair had taken place. A family of 695
eight persons were suspected of magic practices to the detriment of 754
the village. According to local custom a representative was chosen 755
as accuser and a trial by ordeal arranged. This consisted of the 776
villagers' champion and the head of the accused family plunging 787
their heads under water, the first to withdraw his head, in this case
the accused, being held to have lost the day. According to the
rulings of customary law governing this rather unusual case the
charged persons were found to be possessed by certain minor
demons, located in each case in a bodily organ. The general
attitude thus was a sympathetic one. The prisoners were regarded

149: Reinach--108 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

consonants. Vowels or diphthongs are also sometimes written before the consonant. 212 194

This system of accentuation is, however, not at all fixed, because of the lack of tonic accents. This is what explains the great number of synonyms, as far as spelling goes--synonyms which differ only in pronunciation. It is therefore essential to know the meaning of the sentence in order to give it the necessary accentuation and the proper intonation.

It is easy to write, but reading it is fraught with difficulty. To be sure, the orthography is not very complicated, and after a certain time one can manage to write it fairly correctly.

The same is not true of Siamese, and the fixed rules of tonality which it has make it possible, when one has a firm grasp of them, to read all texts without understanding anything.

The Youn language. The Youn language which is in current usage in all of western Laos, [145] that is to say in the basin of the upper Ménam and in part of the Laotian Shan States, is Lao which has been modified graphically by the introduction of certain forms borrowed from the alphabetic signs of the Burmese language. There is no doubt but that it is a compound of the Thai language and that which was brought to Laos by the Pégouans and the Burmese and which underwent profound modifications on contact with Buddhism. [177]

What seems to lend credence to this hypothesis is that the Youn alphabet is used almost exclusively in all parts of Laos for the sacred books and manuscripts of the pagodas. It is a kind of transition between Pali, which is too little known and little suited to expressing the sounds of the Thai language, and this latter language itself which is regarded as too vulgar. A somewhat modified Youn alphabet was then created, and was reserved for religious writings, both texts and copies. A knowledge of this special alphabet is, in Laos, the mark of a superior degree of education. 212 176

The Lu language. Like the preceding, the Lu language is complex and formed of the same elements. That is to say, it is due to the introduction of a Burmese graphic element into the already existing Thai element. In this way it has answered to new needs which resulted from the milieu and from social relations. 212 177

Thus the Lu language includes a certain number of Chinese, Kha and Burmese words which have been added to the original Thai mass.

The Lu alphabet includes twenty-six letters, twelve vowels and fourteen consonants.

779 thoughts of your previous life have been good. Thanks to these efforts you will pass successively, in your various incarnations, from the state of man to the state of holy man, then to that of saint and finally to that of Buddha or perfection, from which you will fall back into the mute and calm abyss, the void and eternal rest. Besides the constant effort of the will to raise itself, the good deeds which you accomplish will tend to the same purpose, whether they be deeds of action, of thought, of word or of intention.

"Anyone who, on the other hand, abandons himself to evil actions and makes no effort to raise himself gradually moves away from the state dreamed by Buddha, and his successive reincarnations occur in the opposite direction, descending into the bodies of animals which may be more or less maleficent and despicable.

"The above, however, are speculations to which the Laotian intelligence cannot rise. The Buddhist religion as practiced in Laos demands only a few outer signs of deference towards bonzes and holy places.

771 "Besides Buddhism, the Laotians have retained, or transformed
• 776 into a cult, certain Spirits or Genii whom they call Phis, the in-
782 numerable deities of the Brahminic Pantheon by which Buddhism was accompanied when it was imported into Laos and which have been reduced to a lesser stature.

"All the forces of nature, all that is capable of bringing disorder into life and every movement or phenomenon which the Laotian cannot explain is personified by a particular Genie or Spirit.

"The cult of these Phis may be summed up as follows: it is an interested exchange of gifts or sacrifices by men, in return for the goodwill, neutrality or help of the Phis. Oftentimes, when the Phi is not greatly dreaded, a bargain will be made with him which will be repaid after he has performed his part of the bargain. The cult of the Phis has a widespread following, and they have their lay priests who bear the title of guardians of the Genii.

"In addition to the cult of the Phis, which is nothing more nor
771 less than a form of polytheism, the Laotians are subject to rather
821 numerous superstitions.

"Thus if an eclipse of the moon occurs Laotians imagine that a tiger is trying to devour it, and everyone at once begins to take turns banging on gongs, firing shots and using every means to make as much noise as possible so as to frighten off the aforesaid tiger and prevent it from swallowing the nocturnal star.

149: Reinach--113 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

776 "The Laotians also believe that there are people who are possessed
771 by the demon or who have [151] the evil eye. They call them 'Phi-
791 pop.' When a person or family in a village is so regarded by the other inhabitants, they are forced to move and to go and live in one of the villages composed exclusively of Phi-pop" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

The boatmen and folk who dwell along the watercourses also believe in the existence of certain particular beings, as for example the Siren or "Nguoc." The siren, whom some people claim to have seen (?), is said to have the form of a snake with paws and an enormous head surmounted by a red, saw-toothed crest. It is supposed to have seven nostrils in a single nose, and a mouth provided with several rows of teeth. The scales which cover it and the lobes of its tail are said to be able to clash against one another and make a great deal of noise.

791 In times of public calamity, the "Tho-Nguoc" assumes a human voice and announces important events or cataclysms to come.

754 The "Phi-pop," to whom we have referred above, have, according
683 to popular belief, the power of casting spells and causing the death of animals and even persons by means of their incantations, their practices or their glance. The natives say that they can reduce a buffalo hide to the size of a grain of rice and thus make a person swallow it. Once in the stomach the hide is supposed to regain its natural volume and cause the death of the person who has swallowed it by making the stomach burst after intolerable suffering. It goes without saying that the "Phi-pop" who is the cause of the evil can, in return for certain gifts, arrest the suffering and deliver the patient before death overtakes him. A person who believes he has swallowed a buffalo hide falls prey to a kind of madness and commits all sorts of extravagances, to such a point that his neighbors try to get him out of the village and get rid of him, for he has become a "Phi-pop" in his turn. People claim that there is only one way to find out if a man is possessed, and that is to throw him into the water with his feet and hands tied. If he floats he is not possessed, but if [152] the opposite proves to be the case--and this is what invariably happens--then a "Phi-pop" is really present and his disappearance is regarded as a blessing.

149: Reinach--114 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

as a blessing.

One fact worthy of note is that the "Phi-pop"--men, women and even adolescents--are extremely intelligent folk with lively eyes and full of a strong will and energy. They know [Illustration here] a host of recipes and therapeutic formulas which have been handed down to them by their parents. They might be described as bonesetters or people who have medicine as a sideline, and who act on weak minds and nervous temperaments by the power of suggestion. "Phi-pop" women and girls are usually quite pretty. 791 755 156

One of the methods most widely used to gain the favor of the "Phis" is to play deafening music. 755

"It is not at all unusual to hear diabolic and uninterrupted music in a Laotian house for several days and nights running. In this house there is a person who is seriously ill. All the noise is designed to frighten or to assuage the spirit in the sick person's body and to persuade or force it to [153] leave the body of the invalid. The sick person generally succumbs under the waves of this curative but noisy harmony" (1). 533

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.] [113]

Religion of the Thais. They have neither pagodas nor bonzes, but practice ancestor worship and have a great veneration for the "Spirits or Genii," to whom they make offerings on all occasions. 771 769

In the first room of the house there stands a bamboo altar. The "Spirits" or "Phis" of dead forbears are supposed to inhabit this altar, which is composed of two different levels, the highest one for the male Phis and the other for the female Phis. At its foot there is an opening covered with an elliptical wooden ornament shaped like a mouth. It is there, on this "ancestors' mouth," that the head of the family places offerings and prayers, especially when a member of the family is sick. In principal an animal is never killed without some scrap of food or a few drops of blood being offered to the ancestors' mouth.

"Spirits, whether genii or demons, are everywhere--in the sky, on earth, in the forests, in the water. They are the object of a widespread cult over which individuals who might be described as 776 793 755

776 lay priests preside. These lay priests, or rather these servants of the
793 Spirits, correspond to the Guardians of the Genii in the Buddhist religion. Usually they exercise their ministry only when one of
755 their countrymen falls sick or dies.

"In case of a serious illness the servant of the Spirits goes to the sick person's house, goes to his side and recites a few prayers. Then he takes a bowl of uncooked rice on which he stands an egg with the smallest end upwards. With his right hand the officiant drops a certain number of grains of rice on the point of the egg, performing this operation three times in all. If the same number of grains of rice remain on the point of the egg each time, this means that a "Spirit" has entered the sick person's body.

787 "By means of similar maneuvers, the Spirit is then questioned to find out what he wants to eat. Depending on the answer, a buffalo, an ox or a pig may be killed. The designated animal is slaughtered and then scorched without being skinned so as to destroy the hairs which cover it. The entrails are taken out and carefully washed [154] in running water, then replaced in the animal's body. The victim is taken to the altar of the Spirits, which is located outside the village, and placed with its head towards the altar. Then prayers are said asking the Spirit to cure the sick person. When the ceremony is over the animal is taken back to the village, where it is cut into pieces and divided among all the inhabitants. The invalid rarely gets well.

"There are also sorcerers and witches among the Thais, who are consulted in circumstances of lesser importance.

[775] "The Thais believe in metempsychosis, although their ideas on the subject are not very clear" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

771 Religion of the Khas. Among the Khas, even those who practice
782 Buddhism, the only existing religion is a religion of "Phis" which is similar to the Thai belief in "Spirits, Genii and Demons." The
776 outer manifestations of this cult consist of offerings of rice, flowers and fruit, but never include sacrifices of animals. Small shelters which affect the form of an ordinary house are built at the entrance to villages to receive propitiatory offerings destined for the "Phi".

149: Reinach--116 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

the "Phi."

It is said that each of us has his good and his evil genie which are engaged in a constant struggle, and that we are good or evil according as the one or the other gains the upper hand. This is a kind of symbolism of good and evil, but here the controlling and guiding conscience is replaced by the influences of the moment, the occasion, the circumstances and the milieu. 779 776

Each house also has its own "genie", reminiscent of the Roman Lares, to which sacrifices and offerings are made on every possible occasion. 776 782

The evil "Phis" are more dreaded and receive a great many more offerings than the good "Phis," with whom no trouble need be taken.

In each village there is a sorcerer to explain the actions of the "Phis" and teach the way to gain their favor. Although consultations with them are not free of charge these sorcerers, who are called Mo-hou-ha, Mo-Phi or Phi-pop depending on the province, are just as [155] [Illustration] [156] [Blank page] [157] highly regarded as the "Guardians of the Genii" of the Buddhist religion and, like them, are exempt from servitude and taxes.

In times of epidemic all responsibility is attributed to the evil "Phis", and in order to make them take flight the men of the villages beat on the roofs of their houses with long bamboo poles until such time as the "Phis" are supposed to have disappeared.

The Khas have retained a belief in metempsychosis which is tinged with certain rather vague superstitions bearing on a future life and some kind of resurrection. But this second existence is not everyone's privilege, and will exist only insofar as one's life has been a good one. 775

They also believe in the existence of a place of torment where perjurers, murderers, etc. will remain for all eternity. To be sure, they believe in a general way that a new life will begin and that it will be a reward or a punishment for the individual's deeds in his last incarnation. Thus a brave and good man will return as a happy and respected chieftain. Others will be entitled only to an animal existence, the importance of which in the scale of being will be like a personification of their faults and merits. One odd fact is that women always want to return in the guise of a man. [562]

Religion of the Lus. The religion practiced by the Lus is a form of Buddhism which has been mitigated by certain local customs 771 779

779 "The prince heir to the throne Mugapakkha remained dumb until
538 he was thirteen years old. He recovers his speech at the moment when his father wants to bury him alive. He then explains his previous silence by showing that an inconsiderate word may be the cause of great torment in future existences for him who has uttered it." And the Sama Jataka:

"Sama who fed his father and mother, who were both blind, dies of a wound inflicted unintentionally by king Kusi who was deer hunting. As Sama is dying, he entrusts his murderer to break the news to his parents, who lament so painfully that Sakkha is moved and brings Sama back to life."

But of all, the most popular is unquestionably the Pha Vet, the Laotian name for the Vessantara Jataka. (Cf. below Boun Pha Vet).

There exists another series of Jatakas which rival the five hundred Jatakas in popularity. It is the Pannasajataka (Ha Sip Xat) or the fifty
[101] Jatakas. This very peculiar text is found in [29] all the literature of western Indochina, and was probably composed in Thai country. Versions exist in Burmese, Khmer, Siamese and Laotian. The Laotian rendition has the peculiarity of containing 27 out of 50 tales which are not found in any other version. These 27 stories are entirely original. They are at the moment in the process of being translated.

Finally the five hundred Laotian Jatakas form a convenient framework into which all kinds of stories in the current language have been inserted. Their study will doubtless prove a mine of information on local folklore.

THE PHI

771 We cannot conclude the chapter relating to the religion of Laos without mentioning the cult of the Phi.

776 In his books "La Participation" and "L'Evolution humaine" the late lamented Jean Przyluski distinguished three successive phases of religion which, according to him, are related to an economic and social state.

When man is a collector of food, that is, when he lives from what he can gather or hunt or fish, his religion is vegetalism or totemism. When he becomes a producer, man's religion becomes agrarian, honoring the gods of vegetation, of the earth, the forests, etc., and particularly the protecting genie of the village. Finally, in the period of urban communities, universal gods appear.

While some reservations might be made on this classification, it does nevertheless offer a convenient framework in which we can

include all the local genii one comes across in Indochina, either under the name of Neak Ta in Cambodia, or Phi in Laos, to mention only two countries. The cult of the Phi is still very much alive in Laos, although it has long been contested by the Buddhist clergy and forbidden by an edict of Phothisarath in 1527. 771 776

[30] But there are several classes of phi. First of all there are the universal phi, those are the ones which Buddhist tradition has attempted to assimilate for better or worse. 776

The book of Khun Bolom says precisely that the Phi Fa (Phi of heaven) and the Phi Then are in reality Indra, and the guardians of the four worlds. The Phi Sua Muon are Nang Tholani (Dharani, goddess of the earth) and Nang Mekhala (Manimekhala, deity of the sea). Finally there is the Phi Then Ten (Visvakarman, the builder).

The local protecting genii of the kingdom of Lan Xan are the fifteen Nagaraja (Praya Nak) who are the genii of water, living in the river rapids, at the confluence of rivers, on the rocks on the river banks or in caves. Their natural form is that of a serpent, but they can also take on human form.

Then follow the familiar genii, the wandering phi (Phi Pho), and the phi of dwellings (Phi Heuan). The Phi Heuan are honored at the time of marriage, and the Laotian code prescribes the indemnities which must be paid to please the Phi. There are also the phi of parents [or relatives--Translator] (Phi Me). These are often confused with the preceding ones. Their cult is celebrated either inside the house, or outside in a small shelter built for this purpose. This little structure is usually built leaning against a tree; sometimes it contains a small statuette or a stone, or even nothing. In that case one finds only a few grains of glutinous rice, and one or two small sticks of incense in a horn made of a banana leaf. This little house is the home of the Phi. He watches the living from the beyond and manifests himself every time a member of the family behaves badly. His intervention is most often known by a sudden and serious illness. One must then try to find out what has displeased the phi. For this one goes to the "sorcerer" and he will indicate [31] the sacrifice which must be made to the phi to appease his anger." [671] 788 778 755

There exist also village phi to whom honor and offerings are due at the time of every ritual or local ceremony, particularly about the seventh month. Coinciding with a sort of pause in the ordinary activity of the Laotian, a pause which is regulated by a change in season, return of the rains and the rise of the Mekong waters, the feasts of the "months of the spirits" are centered around the evocation 776 796 787

776 of one or several spirits who are reincarnated in one possessed. This
796 person enables the villagers and those living in the same quarter to
787 know the course of the new year and, if necessary, to improve it by means of gifts and prayers. During this time the village is forbidden to strangers (Lévy).

776 A series of particularly dangerous phi is also known; these are the Phi Phetu (Sk: Preta), that is the wandering souls of people who
775 have died in an abnormal way, by accident, suicide, childbirth for a woman, etc. These souls cannot be born again. They remain present in order to torment human beings. The Phi Houa Kout are
776 the headless phi, the Phi Khon Long are those who carry the coffins,
754 the Phi Pop have the power of entering into the body of a living human being. The unfortunate person then has the evil eye and is expelled from the village. In the region of Savannakhet, there is a village of victims of the Phi Pop which was created by a Protestant mission, in order to rescue these poor creatures who would otherwise die of hunger, for they are forbidden to enter any village.

The Phi Phong are the spirits of human beings who have studied the formulas to acquire magic powers but have not conformed strictly to certain rites prescribed by their studies. They are bloodthirsty and go out at night by the light of the fire [32] which issues from their nostrils along the banks of rivers and streams, and of ponds, to catch fish and toads. If one meets a Phi Phong, one must flee for he can spit in one's face, and then one may become a Phi Phong oneself.

776 The Phi Kong Koi lives in the mountains and has the shape of a monkey. During his existence on earth he was the servant of a Vietnamese. One day, having been too badly treated, he decided to escape. But in order not to be caught, he camouflaged his footprints by putting his heels in front and his toes behind. The Vietnamese, deceived by this trick, went off in the opposite direction
[198] and never found him. In our days when the Laotians want to chase away the Phi Kong Koi, the speak Vietnamese to each other. But if one is traveling in the mountains, one must refrain from lighting a fire or cooking any fish or meat or crabs, for the odor attracts the phi who wants to come and eat. His victim would have his intestines split open. The approach of the phi is always preceded by a violent storm and a torrential rain. There are said to be a great many Phi King Koi in the region of Samneua.

There is, however, another kind of Phi. This one seems to have a particular hatred for archaeologists. These are the phis who inhabit sculptures or the tumuli which are found in the bush [en brousse]. But that is another story...

10: d'Orleans--263-264 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 276, 301, 563, 777 Ethnic subgroups

"The boatmen [LSS: Kha from Laos] replace the waterpipe used on the Black River by the cigarette, which they put behind the ear after a few whiffs. They also chew betel. I remark that the majority of them wear a bracelet, made of two threads, on the right wrist. They tell us that it is a talisman--a kind of [264] luck charm, which is given to them when they leave their village to navigate or trade."

10: d'Orleans--321 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 438, 777, 831, 842

[LSS: in the market of Luang Prabang] "There are amulets, wild boar tusks, pyrites, and fossils rolled up in thin silver thread, some of these latter being supposed to possess the power of fecundation, while others are obscene."

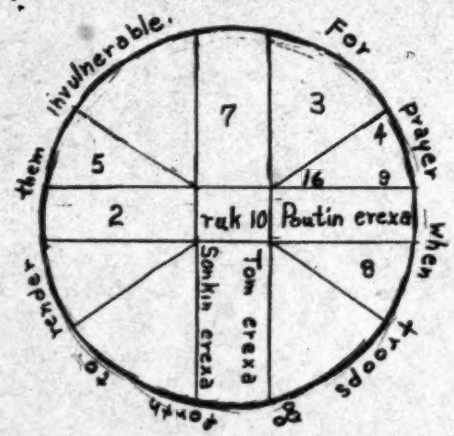
10: d'Orleans--338-339 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 777

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "There are several other pagodas at the far end of the town to be visited, including that of Ouate Sieng Tong, in which we notice a large banner on which are depicted a series of circles representing the march of Buddha. True believers can see upon these banners the footprints of the god, and these figures reproduced upon the coats of the soldiers are regarded as a talisman.

Among the accessory monuments in the courtyard is a small pyramid partly covered with blades of silver or copper and bearing a Laotian inscription, which, as the interpreter tells me, informs passers-by [339] that the bones of a mandarin named Tianone are laid to rest inside it, and the edifice is surrounded by pillars, surmounted by lotus flowers and looking very much like large asparagus."

10; d'Orleans--340-343 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 173, 346, 777, 782

"Behind the altar [LSS: of the pagoda of Ouate Uisoune in Luang Prabang] is a semi-circular black stone upon a wooden pedestal and covered with Laotian inscriptions. Upon one side of this stone, it is related how the king of Muong Hay (near Muong Yan), having come for a festival with the king of Luang Prabang, left in the pagoda images of Buddha and books made of palm branches about 1198. The date is 1198 after Tiaoman Ta, who is supposed to have lived sixty-six centuries ago, so that it is one difficult to verify. Upon the reverse is a cabalistic sign which, worn by a soldier on the [pages 341 and 342 contain illustration] [343] breast, renders him invulnerable. This sign is as follows:-



10: d'Orleans--340-343 T-3 (1891-92) 1894
116, 173, 346, 777, 782

The figures are in Laotian.
Ruk is an invocation to the gods.
Poutin erexa means (Pra god) pout, protect me.
Tom (in) erexa means (Teonda god) protect me.
Sonkin erexa means, bonzes protect me.
In this, as in the other temples are to be found the con
pit, the sunshades, the divinities which lay hands on the
the Buddhas with clasped hands (Pra Hopokoute), while i
recent construction are twenty rows of small gilt Buddha
against the wall."

uit for the holy water, the pul-
aithful, the adorned gods and
the adjoining pagoda of more
placed close beside one another

346 Pagodas are always built on ground which has been perfectly leveled, is quite extensive and is surrounded by a wooden palisade or brick wall of elbow height.

[485] Within the pagoda enclosures there are bonzeries and dependent structures to serve as quarters for the bonzes, schools for their pupils and hostelries for travelers.

735 The construction and upkeep of pagodas are entirely dependent on the generous liberality of the faithful. Thus these edifices can be used 346 as a criterion for discovering both the state of prosperity of a region and the religious faith of its inhabitants.

[778] As used to be the case for our churches, Laotian pagodas and even their enclosures are, according to the customs of the land, sanctuaries which confer immunity against legal prosecution for certain crimes and misdemeanors.

[52] It is also in the enclosure and sometimes under the cloisters and verandas of the pagodas that the inhabitants gather on the legal holidays, and also private holidays, which are known as "Ngans".

844 Childbirth. Dr. Estrade describes the delivery of a woman of southern Laos as follows. The preliminaries, the operation itself and post-delivery procedure are the same, with only slight differences in detail, in northern Laos, and we may therefore quote Dr. Estrade's description as applicable to all of Laos in general.

"Childbirth never takes place in the house inhabited by the pregnant woman or her direct relatives, but always in the home of a neighbor or distant relative who gives hospitality to the patient until she is up and about again. The duration of pregnancy is counted in moons, as in all calculations of time, the moon being the essential element for the Laotian in the measurement of time and the occurrence of a great many phenomena. When a woman reaches the last moon 777 of her pregnancy she takes certain precautions all tending to delay 821 delivery until the first phase of the new moon, since births during the last phases are signs of misfortune [189] such as the death of the child, [782] deformity, etc. These prejudices have such force that parents are careless in caring for any child born during the last phases of the moon, and in such a case all of their effort goes into prayers, offerings to the bonzes and the making of votive offerings (1)

(1) This assertion should not, however, be taken too literally or in any general sense. This is a prejudice which is kept up by the bonzes in their own self-interest, and is easy to see through. (Author's note.)

tigers; 784

--to eat lying down, for fear of turning into a snake; a story told to encourage children to hold themselve well while eating;

--to eat the liver and the gizzard of the chicken, for fear of becoming mad; a story to make children leave, to the adults, all that is good on a dish;

--to open one's strong-box or one's small box for locking up money, jewels or other valuable objects, during the night; wealthy persons who did not observe this rule would soon become poor;

--and finally, to put an end to this long enumeration, there is the interdict to a married couple to sleep in the same bed on the birthday of one of the marriage partners.

I leave you the trouble, Ladies and Gentlemen, to think about these beliefs.

Among us a wedding present consisting of jewels or of silver 784
plate may be of an uneven number. But where bank notes or objects /801/
of lesser importance are concerned, the number must always be even.

Certain superstitions come close to French superstitions. For 787
instance: a buzzing in the ears signifies: "Somebody is saying something bad about me somewhere." In Laos if someone drops his bowl of rice while eating, this has the same significance. The buzzing in the ears means that the phi (demon) asks you for the way but that you do not deign to answer. That is why you get a hard box on the ear. Then you must answer him: "Thang louang nok ban!" (Follow the great road which passes in front of the house). An itch in the ears means that it is going to rain.

Another French superstition which has passed into a proverb 777
is: "Lucky at cards (play), unlucky in love." Laotians are more fortunate, for they do not have this belief. Among us one can be lucky at play and at the same time lucky in love.

Pierre NGINN

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sebaceous scum of the fetus and so make the birth easier. She should 843
wash her hair from time to time with water in which she has soaked
an eel's tail [53] and some rice. She takes hold of the eel's tail to
tie her hair. This will result in the head of the fetus becoming
more slippery, and the birth will become easier.

If the pregnant woman has to protect herself from spirits, it must 843
not be forgotten that certain of her actions may be disastrous to those 777
around her. She must not enter a new house for fear of attracting ill
fortune to its owner. She must not attend a wedding for she would
bring ill luck to the new couple. The husband of the pregnant woman
loses a part of his khouan (see above). He also becomes unfortunate
in hunting and in games of chance.

The Delivery. This cannot take place in the house of the 844
woman brought to bed, otherwise the greatest misfortune would
descend on the owner of the building. Sometimes the parents have
a cabin built where the woman giving birth will spend the whole time
of her delivery.

When the woman feels the first pains, all objects that are fastened
or hooked on, such as earrings, are removed. She keeps only her
skirt on and remains sitting during the whole time of her labor.
Opposite her hangs a cord to which she holds on at the moment of
birth, for this position will facilitate the descent of the fetus. If
the birth is prolonged, decoctions and liniments are used to help the
operation.

At the time of expulsion, the newly born is left between the
legs of its mother until the delivery. It is only when the placenta
has emerged, that the cord is cut with a bamboo blade. If it were
cut with a steel blade, the child would run the risk of meeting a
violent death. The thread used for tying the cord on girls is taken
from a spinning wheel, so that later she will become a good spinner.
The placenta is usually buried under one of the stairways of the house
[54] otherwise the fertility of the parents would run the risk of drying
up.

After the Delivery. After the delivery, the woman who 846
has given birth sits on a bed of finely pulverized kitchen salt, so that
the after effects may be normal. Than she takes a hot bath and
changes her clothes. After that begins for her the You Kam "to sub-
mit to penitence."

She lies down on a low bed placed against a large clay hearth
of the same size as the bed, on which is a large caldron used to pre-
pare a decoction of aromatic or medicinal plants to be put into the
sitz baths and hot body affusions which she must have frequently.

"An hour's halt is sufficient, and we soon enter a wilder country. On our right stands a perpendicular calcareous cliff, and a series of strata appear vertically on the surface. A fissure between two of them, like the one already noticed at Sou La, also marks the entrance to a grotto. The Tham Pa Kouang (grotto of the great stag) is celebrated, and it well repays a visit. [273] A staircase about twenty yards high leads to it; on the right a ruined house which leans against the rock is occasionally used as a lodging by some priests; red devils with large heads, armed with sabres, are carved on both sides of the entrance. The first hall is spacious; it is fifteen yards high, and the natural irregularities have been respected and even turned to account; the walls are decorated with green moss, and the ceiling is made of large stalactites joined and rounded. Upon the ground, upon the steps, upon isolated stones and in the hollows, everywhere, in the midst of the greatest disorder, a people of gods of every shape and every size has found a home. Statuettes from one yard high, to one or two inches, of black or gilt wood, of marble, bronze, or copper; gods standing with their hands raised as though in benediction; stout Buddhas, with bare heads, squatting down, their arms folded across their stomach, their shoulders often covered with a piece of stuff arranged like a cape; bonzes, saints, prophets and their servants, showing the same type as the idols of Siam. The whole Buddhist Olympia is united here, and when the idols are carefully examined, one believes that traces may be found amongst them of all religions and of all nations; here something from Greece, there a reminiscence of Egyptian art, while

further on a marble head ornamented by a raised diadem, reminds one of the Khiner monuments. All these gods lie about everywhere, turned in every direction, hidden or fallen, often covered with dust; there is not a corner without its deity, and niches are often cut by the hand of man and ornamented with carvings of gilded wood, to shelter an exceptionally venerated saint. Even [274] animals are represented; in one rock two elephants are cut out and dyed green, each carrying a personage. In another corner stands a white elephant, one of the incarnations of Buddha. The body, which is about a yard and a half high, is made of wood and stuff, and the whole is covered with calico. Some small earthen cones, surmounted by a stick, are arranged in front of the sacred animal, forming a miniature garden with a tiny staircase. I believe they represent something analogous to our ex-votos. If I can believe the interpreter's explanations, these earthen cakes are placed here by people who have been ill and wish to thank heaven for preserving their life; the number of the cones corresponds with their age. The entrance hall, which at the first glance resembles an old curiosity shop, is lighted from the outside; it leads to other galleries, which we explored with a lantern. Corridor succeeds corridor, it seems as though the grotto were endless, and it must really extend for a great distance. Legend relates that it communicates with Lai Chou. Sometimes the passages are so narrow that we are forced to crawl through them, sometimes the rooms are large enough for us to stand upright. In some of them a bamboo bed

denotes the sojourn of some pilgrim or belated fisherman. One division, which is reached by a rectangular entrance, is filled with a multitude of small divinities of the same size and form. This must be a reserve stock, for the walls are covered with red and gilt paper."

10: d'Orleans--287-288 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 531, 778

"While our men rest, we are carried to the right bank of the stream, where there is a grotto in the middle of a calcareous cliff; in front of the opening there is a kind of balustrade cut in the stone, and a staircase leads to the celebrated sanctuary of Pakou, already described by Garnier; here only one room is found, and that is not very deep, but it is filled with religious objects similar to those at Nam Ou; and we have the same experiences as upon that day, for we can hardly step in the midst of this field of gods for fear of crushing some of them with every movement. I notice several banners, some floating and others rolled up, most of them represent two divinities standing upon lotus flowers; there is a small gilt chest in the form of a tabernacle; and, higher up, a bell in gilt plaster, a form derived from the lotus bud; on the sides of the room are white dragons with goggle eyes, showing their teeth. They are of Chinese design, a man (all are in plaster) [288] with his hands on his hips, is on horseback upon a pedestal, he also has tusks, round eyes and extraordinarily large ears; and on the ground, in the midst of fragments of innumerable prayers written in Laotian upon palm leaves, lie innumerable statues, some of them wearing chasubles; a few gods are riding upon elephants; while chariots are also represented by small wooden vehicles placed upon four wheels, and ornamented with pieces that overhang them like rostra. A series of small divinities are carved, each in separate medallions, upon painted panels of wood fastened in pairs."

10: d'Orleans--320-321 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 411, 438, 443, 778

"They [LSS: women merchants in Luang Prabang] have a very diversified stock of goods to choose from, including gold embroidered shirts made by the Lus, Siam brocaded vests, old silver, bracelets made of Kas bronze, and hatchets and other weapons in old bronze; these latter are very scarce and difficult to buy, as they are preserved with superstitious reverence by the families to which they belong. The hatchets, some of which are straight while others are curved, are very characteristic, while the ivory-handled knives represent yaks, the genii of the Buddhist religion, [321] similar to those which are found in the interior of Borneo."

10: d'Orleans--330-331 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 532, 778

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "The market occupies the principal artery of the town, with numerous pagodas and palaces to the right and left, one of those on the left being Ouate Mai, ouate being the word used in Laotian, Siamese, and Burmese, to signify temple, while mai means new. The pagoda itself from 100 to 130 feet long by fifty to seventy feet broad, with whitewashed walls and a tile roof. The interior is very similar to that of a Catholic church, with pictures on the walls representing religious legends, and at the end an altar, upon which are accumulated ornaments of all kinds and statues of gods in every variety of pose, while in the centre, as in all the other temples, is a golden figure of Buddha seated, from seven to ten feet high. The features are the same in all these statues of Buddha, and, with his legs crossed, and his hands resting upon his thigh the statue which is more the outcome of high strung religious feelings, and represents the very spirit of the races which have [331] succeeded one another upon this soil for so many centuries, than the work of any great artist, seems to have concentrated in it attitude, its countenance, and its gaze, the essence of the moral beliefs, the object of existence, and the reason of death, as they were conceived by one-half of the old world."

10: d'Orleans--331-332 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 173, 532, 778

"With the exception of the principal statue, the gods are not seated, and in this pagoda of Ouate Mai, the divinity held in the greatest veneration is one with outstretched hands as if in the act of giving the benediction. This is the Prabang or 'Buddha of the gold washings,' as he is made out of the gold found in the district. Tradition has it that this deity was brought here by the Laotians, when they emigrated from Muong-Theng, and that, after being carried off to Bangkok by the Siamese, it was brought back to Luang Prabang about twenty years ago. Another legend is that the statue was sent about 200 years ago by the king of Cambodia; but in any case it has given its name to the town, and it is covered with embroideries and chasubles, and placed in the recess of a reliquary to which diverse ornaments are suspended. In front of this is a movable bronze grating, ending in two dragons with intertwined tails, called Nâk, while to the left of the altar is a pulpit very similar to a sedan chair, from which the bonzes [332] give their lessons and recite their prayers."

10: d'Orleans--332 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 524, 778, 793

"Outside the principal building, in the courtyard of the pagoda, [LSS: the pagoda of Ouate Maï in Luang Prabang] are a series of ongmong, or small buildings which contain the statues of the gods; pyramids (Tâte) containing the bones of prominent bonzes or members of the Royal Family, and plaster bells like the lotus flower, behind all these buildings, hidden among the trees, being the houses of the bonzes, whose pupils we remark at play, the game at which they play, with a hollow ball made out of bamboo canes twisted together, being one which requires great skill."

10: d'Orleans--333 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 532, 778, 793, 177.35

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "Above the market and built against the hill is the residence of one of the four leading bonzes from whom we had a visit yesterday; and upon going to see him there we find that the interior is ornamented with coloured designs and pictures, given him by Frenchmen, of the Eiffel Tower and so forth, with a small chapel in one corner and a library of religious books, many of which are rolled up in palm leaves. The only curious object in the adjoining pagoda is a wooden statue of Buddha (Pasine), in a crouching attitude, like that of a monkey when scratching his chin. The skull is very depressed and misshapen; and it is possible that those who offered the image were desirous of depicting the incident in his life, when having complained to God of the temptation which the flesh evoked in him, he received by way of reply a violent blow on the head in order to crush his carnal appetites."

10: d'Orleans--339-340 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 361, 532, 778

"Part of the town is very sparsely inhabited, a few ruins on the track indicating the site [340] of the ancient ramparts, while turning back in the direction of the river, we have on our left the grounds of several houses belonging to mandarins, and on the right, at the foot of the hill, a group of pagodas well worth a visit.

The most important of these is Ouate Uisoune, so named after the king who built it. Dating, as the Siamese Colonel tells us, from the fourteenth century, it is in a very decrepit state, but there is much in it worth seeing; notably the gates which are of carved wood and gilt. To the right in Pra Noriei, the fourarmed goddess, borne up by Kroute, the god of the birds, and in the centre are two women, one of whom is being carried by five elephants, while to the left a god standing erect upon a buffalo is supposed to represent the chief of the coolies who weed the courtyards of the pagodas. In the interior are a number of wooden columns covered with gilded designs and others of masonry, together with pictures representing the history of Pra Uetsandaha and of Guadama. Upon the altar is a large gilt statue called Pratiao Ong Luong (great god)."

23: Franck--299-300 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 346, 361, 778

"Luang Prabang means Kingdom of the Divine Buddha. What more natural then than that there should be many Buddhist temples, shrines, and monasteries in its capital? Indeed there are so many on both sides of the river that the town might easily be mistaken for a holy city, devoted to priests and pilgrims. Some of the temple compounds are bare ground scattered with yellow-roofed buildings of Siamese or Burmese character, with big stupas made of mud bricks and more or less overgrown with vegetation, with mere cells raised on piles, in which languid bonzes meditate. Others are covered with groves of trees, shaded by masses of palm and banana leaves; but in them all great calm and quiet reigns. Just behind the main and market street fronting the royal palace is a rocky ridge called Pagoda Hill, two hundred feet above the plain and half encircled by the Nam-khan by which travelers unworthy of Fords come to [300] the capital from the east or south. It is worth climbing if only for the view it offers of the idyllic city and its surrounding semi-jungle; and along it ramble queer old religious structures, including one built over a gigantic 'footprint of Buddha' in the native rock."

68: Mouhot--95-96 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 776, 753, 778

"[HD: At Khao-Khoc, Siam. See category 116, p. 90] The Laotian is as superstitious as the Cambodian, and perhaps more so than the Siamese. If a person falls ill of a fever, or, indeed, is ever so slightly indisposed, they believe it to be owing to a demon who has entered his body. If any matter in which they are engaged goes wrong, or an accident happens when hunting, fishing, or cutting wood, it is the fault of the demon. In their houses they carefully preserve some object, generally a simple piece of wood, or some parasitic plant, whose form they fancy bears a resemblance to some part of the human [96] body; and this is constituted their household god, and prevents evil spirits from entering, or, at least, causes them speedily to depart."

68: Mouhot--120-121 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
778, 753

"[HD: The head mandarin of Chaiapume, a town in territory that is now central Siam] provided me with other elephants for a visit to some ruins existing about 3 leagues north of the town, at the foot of a mountain. The superstitious Laotians say that [121] these ruins contain gold, but that every one who has sought for it has been struck with madness."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

acknowledge in the street a lady with whom one happens to be on 584
particularly good terms. These things in Laos are fraught with an 576
etiquette which is the legacy of a highly organized society not too far gone in decay.

The charm of Vientiane lies in the life and the customs of the 346
people. Unless one is an amateur of pagoda architecture there is 531
little else to be seen. The Laotians have preferred to work in wood, rather than stone, and their art, confined chiefly to the decoration by religious artists of the doors, pillars and interiors of pagodas, quickly perishes in such a climate.

Outside the town there is a great, grey, half-decayed *stupa*, built 771
as a tomb for a hair of the Buddha. It is surrounded by a cloister, 755
containing perhaps a thousand Buddha images; a collection of 778
which the people of Vientiane are very proud. But even here, where the religion is practised in its purest form, there is a little degeneration, a little backsliding from the lofty philosophic conception; and the taint of magic practices shows itself. Selecting one of the numerous images as a personal tutelary divinity, the devotee subjects it to a kind of bribery similar to that sometimes practised in Southern Europe with images of the saints. In this case the image's chief function is healing, and when the sufferer recovers from any complaint he hastens to the pagoda to apply gold-leaf to the part of the Buddha corresponding to that where he has felt the pain in his own body. I was interested to deduce from this practice that the people of Vientiane are much plagued by headaches – perhaps [164]
those which accompany malaria.

Standing in a corner of the sanctuary was an ancient ithyphallic 778
statue, an old Hindu divinity, no doubt, which had been worn 789
smooth in the appropriate parts by the feminine adoration of a 842
thousand years. I was told that the women of the French colony who wish for a child frequently emulate their husbands' pose of Laos-ization by coming here secretly to pay their respects. I 000
wondered whether this clandestine tribute might not be extended

pious king who justified the bonzes' prophecies by his deeds. He 643*
built a magnificent pagoda to the memory of his father, the
Wat-Visoun (2), the materials for which were requisitioned from 346
175*

2. The edifice which bears this name dates from the time of the king Zakarine (1898). The enormous "stupa" next to it, which covered rich treasures which have only recently come to light, is now in the process of being restored.

the vassals of the northern provinces. Legend has it that the raft
carrying the columns provided by the king of Tran-Ninh sank /539/
downstream from Pak-Vet, and the inhabitants of the region still
say today that they can be seen at certain times of the year beneath the waters of the Nam-Khane.

Edict against the cult of the "Phis." The king's great piety 771
and his mystical attachment to the /73/ dogmas of orthodox 175*
Buddhism made him intolerant of the Brahmanic practices which 643*
continued to be honored by the peoples of his States. In 1527 he
prohibited the cult of the Genii and decreed that all the temples
erected to the "Phis" should be demolished. A pagoda called
"Sisouvannathevalok" (1) was built on the very site of the sanctuary/778/

1. This pagoda was destroyed by a tornado in 1883. The king at that time, His Majesty Sisavang-Vong, had it rebuilt in 1905 on the original foundations.

of the tutelary Genie of the capital. But it was impossible, even for the supreme chief of existences, to drive from the heads of people as fatalistic as his subjects were the innumerable superstitions which they attached to accidents, to diseases and to the phenomena of sky, earth and water. Despite the royal ordinances the cult of the "Phis," together with a belief in sorcerers and witches, persisted and still persists today.

Phothisarath was the first of the kings of Lan-Xang to leave his 663
Xieng-Thong palace and reside at Vientiane for many years. 175*

Thanks to its central location and its comparative nearness to 633
the kingdoms of Ayuthya and Annam, this city had grown extensively as a consequence of the development of trade. The Kmers, who had been in full decline /74/ since the ruin of Angkor by the kings of Ayuthya, no longer had any influence there. The

633 Lunet de la Jonquiere has deduced that the ramparts of
643* Vientiane were composed of brick walls from four to six
175* meters in height with an earth banquette inside. They in-
172 cluded three sections, the salients of which were provided
/712/ with circular forts about eight meters high. Two gates which were fortified and crowned with spearhead ornaments gave entrance to the second section, one on the east towards the That-Luong, and the other on the west at the exit of the present Luang-Prabang road.

royal palace in the pagoda of which the emerald Buddha (Pra-Keo), the sign of power and command /82/ which he had brought from Xieng-Mai in 1548 (1), was placed.

/778/ 1. The emerald Buddha was in reality cut from a block of green jasper. The Siamese were to capture it in 1778 and take it to Bangkok, of which it became the tutelary divinity and where the sumptuous temple which rises today in the first court of the royal palace was built for it in 1785.

172 Of the eighty some pagodas which Vientiane was to boast, the
633 Wat Pra-Keo was assuredly one of the greatest and most beautiful.
175* "The trees which veil it (today), the lianas which tie it to the columns and spread a mysterious shadow over its ruins make the visitor feel something of what the soul of the ancients felt on the threshold of a sacred wood. Brick openwork forms the enclosure and monumental staircases lead to the parvis. A dragon writhes on the ramps and raises its menacing head in a last coil. The columns of the gallery are graceful, tall, slender and without a base, but end in a capital of long, sharp leaves which fold outwards and look as though they were raised by the weight which they bear..." (2).

2. De Carne, op. cit. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois. Paris, 1872./

175* The sanctuary was built on a terrace with three levels. The facade
172 opened onto a monumental portico whose three gateways and side
346 windows were richly framed /83/ /Page 83 is devoted to an illustra-
532 tion: "Ruins of the Pra-Keo at Vientiane"--Translator./ /84/ with many-colored sculptures. The whole edifice was entirely gilded on the outside.

175* easily drove back the Laotian detachments which were sent to
648* meet it and rejoined the main column in the vicinity of Vientiane
726 itself.

The siege of the city lasted four months, and when the Siamese entered the city Ong-Boun had fled with Chao-In, one of his sons (2).

2. According to Prince Damrong, Ong-Boun hid at Kham-Keut. According to His Royal Highness Phanuphanthavongswardja he took refuge in Annam. /Prince Damrong, Guerres siamo-birmanes, Bangkok, 1920. His Royal Highness Phanuphantuvongswardja, Repression de la revolte de Vientiane, Bangkok, 1926. /

Chulalok took possession of the territory in the name of his sovereign, left a military occupation force, gave its administration to a governor who settled in the royal palace, and then regained
/778/ Thanabury taking Ong-Boun's children with him and carrying off the Prabang and the Prakeo.

642 Interregnum (1778-1782). Four years passed during which
175* Vientiane lived /157/ in direct dependency on the Siamese government. At Bangkok, in the meantime, Phia-Tak was attracting attention by eccentricities which soon alienated the whole court. Finally this rude warrior went insane, disorders broke loose and General Chakkri, who was on duty in Cambodia, hastily returned to bring the rebels back into obedience. He strengthened the throne to his own profit, for he mounted it under the name of Phra-Phuti-Chao-Luong (June 1, 1782) (1).

1. This king, who is also called Rama the First, was the founder of the present dynasty. He transferred the seat of his government from the right bank of the Menam to the left bank, where he laid the first foundations of modern Bangkok.

648* Submission of Ong-Boun. Ong-Boun gained knowledge of these
175* events in his exile. He also learned that his sons had been kindly treated by the new sovereign, and he then decided to make his submission. The king of Siam displayed clemency, gave the aged prince permission to end his days in his old capital, and gave the government of the principality to his eldest son Chao-Nan.

369 Anou had built the new temple of Sisaket not far from the deconse-
175 crated Prakeo "with the purpose of attracting the grace of Heaven
/348/ to the souls of his parents as well as to those of all his relatives and to all the souls which people Hell and the world" (2). The corner-

2. Cf. inscription on the stele.

stone was laid on "Thursday, the ninth day of the waxing moon of the year Kap-San" (1824), in the midst of a large assembly of the populace.

778 Inauguration of the temple of Sisaket (1824). On this occasion
796 the king made innumerable gifts to the bonzes (clothing, sandals,
346 fans, iron pen points to write on latania leaves, mats, mattresses,
175* copper betel services, rice baskets, vases, metal drinking cups, carafes, goblets, etc.). He gave /163/ pieces of cloth to the poor, and generous bounties to artisans and musicians. The people walked in procession around the royal palace, carrying oriflammes and effigies of animals which were flowered and perfumed with incense. The holiday lasted three days, to the accompaniment of general rejoicing (1).

/ 1. Ibid. /Inscription on the stele./

346 This temple was the only one which the French found still standing when they reached Vientiane. Of the first enclosure there remain two 'thats', which have recently been restored, and an elegant square pavilion-library whose quadruple pinnacled roof is supported by a graceful colonnade. Three other pavilions have disappeared (2).

2. A bath pavilion, one for worship and one for the tom-toms and gongs.

A cloister pierced by a porch on each side surrounds the central sanctuary, the outer gallery of which discloses a gateway and finely worked windows under the triple porch roofs. The inside walls are
/532/ illuminated by frescoes surmounted by many niches in the form of lotus leaves where thousands of statuettes are grouped in pairs. A wooden ceiling is embellished with gilded panels, and on the altar stands a giant Buddha entirely covered with gold leaf.

115: Le Boulanger--147 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8
Ho

Although not organized at first, their bands gradually formed 175*
into armed contingents which soon became known under the names 563
of /237/ black, yellow or red Flags, depending on the color of
their banners. In contrast to the Meos, who were called White
Flags (1) and whose settlement fifteen years previously had, on the

1. See above, pp. 212 and 213.

whole, been permanent and not too violent, the Hos waged a war
of brigandry which calls to mind the sinister exploits of the Grandes /579/
Compagnies which were dismembered by Du Guesclin. They razed
villages, held the terrorized inhabitants for ransom, or else hired
themselves out to the inhabitants to protect them against other
bands. The cantons of the Black River were the first to fall prey to
their pillaging, but then the leaders of the region came to terms
with them, interested them in their internal disputes, took them
with them to the Tonkinese delta to aid the Annamites against the
French, and finally sent one band against another in the Laotian
territories which they devastated as far as Nong-Khay. Both mili-
tary and diplomatic action had to be taken by France following the
first Pavie mission in order to suppress them. Those of them who /144/
did not go back to China abandoned their guns to become farmers,
married Thai or Kha wives and thus created a stock of mixed blood
which, by successive crossings, /238/ merged into the mass of the
population.

Restitution of the Prabang by Siam (1867). In the midst of all 648*
the cares which the threats of these invaders caused him, Tiantha- 175*
Koumane had the satisfaction of restoring the venerated statue of 778
the Prabang to his people.

Carried off to Vientiane by Thao-Nong in 1707 and ravished
successively by Chulalok in 1778 and by Bodin in 1828 (1), the

1. See above, pp. 47, 133, 156, 158 and 174.

kingdom's ancient palladium was finally returned by King Mongkut,
in 1867, to Fa-Ngoun's descendant, who sent the Oupahat Oun-Kham
to Bangkok to take solemn possession thereof.

Taken by land as far as Xieng-Mene (Luang-Prabang right bank),
it was displayed for seven days and seven nights at the landing of

648* Ta-Khoc-Hua where great celebrations were held in the presence of
175* the whole court, then transported to the left bank on August 26 and
778 placed on the site of the present royal palace. A temple was immediately built to hold it, but a fire destroyed the building before it was finished and the Prabang was placed in the pagoda of Visoun. Twenty-two /239/ /Page 239 is devoted to an illustration: "The Prabang in the Temple of Vat-Mai."--Translator/ /240/ years later, when this temple threatened to fall into ruins, the statue was transferred to the Wat-Mai (1).

1. Cf. Note of February 21, 1929 by His Eminence the minister of Cults.

The restitution of the statue was to be the last political act of the Siamese monarch, who died on October 1, 1868. In the following year Tiantha-Koumane followed him to the tomb, shortly after Chao-Pho of Xieng-Khouang who was succeeded by his brother Chao-Hung.

OUN-KHAM (1811 - December 15, 1895), KING 1872-1887.

643* The Oupahat Oun-Kham, who was fifty-eight years old, mounted
648* the throne of Luang-Prabang and was assisted by his cousin Souvanna-
175* Phouma as second king, but he did not receive the investiture from the new suzerain Chulalongkorn until 1872. The hesitation is a further mark of the care which the government of Bangkok took in every circumstance to strengthen its mastery over the territories of the left bank of the Mekong.

648* Henceforth checked by Britain in its plans for expansion both to-
175* wards Burma and in the Malay Peninsula, Siam had just terminated, in a way which it had obviously /241/ not foreseen ten years earlier, the long struggle against Annam in Cambodia which it had been pursuing for two centuries. The compromise which it signed with France in 1867 forbade it any new acquisitions in the Kmer kingdom for some time to come (1). No matter how bitter, these results did

1. See above, p. 231, note.

not strike an irremediable blow against its grand design of rebuilding a Thai empire, for it seemed that the weakening of the sovereign of Hue must facilitate the permanent annexation of the northeastern

115: Le Boulanger--149 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

778

Fig. 13. The Prabang in the Temple of Vat-Mai.

/Facing p. 238/

under the rocks, where it loses itself in an immense grotto. It can be navigated by pirogues in all seasons from Keng-Kièt on. 505 133

The large island of Don-Don is found between Pak-Hin-Boun and Lakhône.

Lakhone is an important center on the right bank located opposite Tha-Khèk, which is the nearest point to the Annam coast on the whole Mékong (1). [361]

(1) From Tha-Khèk to the mouth of the Cua-Nhuong (Hatinh) is reckoned 180 kilometers as the crow flies.

Just below the 17th parallel is found Muong-Panom, the holy city [87] [Illustration] [88] [Blank page] [89] of Laos and a celebrated spot of pilgrimage, by reason a That (1) which is said to contain relics [778]

(1) A that is a kind of stele or four-sided pyramid.

of Buddha. Opposite Panom, on the left bank, the Sé-Bang-Fai flows into the Mékong.

The Sé-Bang-Fai comes from the Annamitic Chain. It has a sinuous and extremely long course, but cannot be navigated in any season except by pirogues as far as Pou-Houa, that is to say for a distance of about eighty kilometers.

Below its mouth, and thirty kilometers upstream from Savannakhèt, is the Keng-Kabao. The latter deserves mention here, for during the low water period it forms an insurmountable obstacle for steam launches, which never go below this point from November to July.

Difficulties in navigation do not begin until after Hueûn-Hin, and the steam launches of the River Merchant Fleet Company [compagnie des Messageries fluviales] could reach that point during the high water period if there were any commercial advantage to be gained by so doing.

A series of rapids stretches over a length of about 160 kilometers between Hueûn-Hin and Pak-Moun. These are known as the "rapids of Kemmarat" because of the large muong (2) on the right bank which

(2) Muong = province; also means capital of a province. [631]

is located along this part of the river. They are a succession of rapids

149: Reinach--124 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

792

Although less pure than in Cambodia, the bonzes' morals in Laos are generally fairly good. They are, moreover, greatly loved, highly regarded and fondly cherished. When there is a celebration or a great feast in a family, part of the choicest dishes is always reserved for the bonzes. 785 554

On the next to the last day of every phase of the moon, the bonzes must make public confession of their faults and be prepared, should the need arise, to undergo the punishments which the code stipulates. 792

Bonzeries are schools and at the same time workshops where all trades are taught. All knowledge is concentrated in them, as our knowledge was during the Middle Ages in monasteries. 871 874

Together with the pagodas, they are also spots of inviolable asylum in accordance with certain rights, and hostelries where travelers are lodged and fed with the produce of the bonzes' alms-seeking. 485 778

Newly ordained bonzes must stay in the pagoda at least three months, and may quit their habit at the end of this period. If a bonze desires to return to the pagoda after he has reentered lay life, his reassumption of the habit gives rise to the same formalities and ceremonies as the first time. It is a new ordination. 792

The liturgical litanies of the Buddhist religion, which the bonzes psalmodize, may not be translated into Laotian. The bonzes and the [165] [Illustration] [166] [Blank page] [167] Laotian faithful, as well as the cantors and the French adepts, chant prayers whose meaning they do not understand (1). 198 788

(1) In reality the Laotian, Lu and Youn bonzes form a sort of caste as the Druids used to in Gaul. More particularly, they are the ministers of worship, the repositories of moral authority, of scientific traditions, of secrets and of artistic and industrial methods. They transmit by word of mouth the precepts of Buddhist dogma, which were long ago explained by those who introduced the religion into the land. But the writings in "Pali" which contained these, although they can still be read mechanically by a few scholars, are no longer understood. Thence arises the necessity of handing down their meaning by word alone. Thence also, without doubt, arises the increasingly greater attenuation of the purity and force of these principles as they 792 779 178

149: Reinach--124a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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346
778

Fig. 43 /p.165/ A ceremony in the Wat-Si-Saket Pagoda in Vien-Tiane.

346 Pagodas are always built on ground which has been perfectly leveled, is quite extensive and is surrounded by a wooden palisade or brick wall of elbow height.

[485] Within the pagoda enclosures there are bonzeries and dependent structures to serve as quarters for the bonzes, schools for their pupils and hostelries for travelers.

735 The construction and upkeep of pagodas are entirely dependent on the generous liberality of the faithful. Thus these edifices can be used
346 as a criterion for discovering both the state of prosperity of a region and the religious faith of its inhabitants.

[778] As used to be the case for our churches, Laotian pagodas and even their enclosures are, according to the customs of the land, sanctuaries which confer immunity against legal prosecution for certain crimes and misdemeanors.

[527] It is also in the enclosure and sometimes under the cloisters and verandas of the pagodas that the inhabitants gather on the legal holidays, and also private holidays, which are known as "Ngans".

844 Childbirth. Dr. Estrade describes the delivery of a woman of southern Laos as follows. The preliminaries, the operation itself and post-delivery procedure are the same, with only slight differences in detail, in northern Laos, and we may therefore quote Dr. Estrade's description as applicable to all of Laos in general.

"Childbirth never takes place in the house inhabited by the pregnant woman or her direct relatives, but always in the home of a neighbor or distant relative who gives hospitality to the patient until she is up and about again. The duration of pregnancy is counted in moons, as in all calculations of time, the moon being the essential element for the Laotian in the measurement of time and the occurrence
777 of a great many phenomena. When a woman reaches the last moon of her pregnancy she takes certain precautions all tending to delay
821 delivery until the first phase of the new moon, since births during the last phases are signs of misfortune [189] such as the death of the child,
[782] deformity, etc. These prejudices have such force that parents are careless in caring for any child born during the last phases of the moon, and in such a case all of their effort goes into prayers, offerings to the bonzes and the making of votive offerings (1)

(1) This assertion should not, however, be taken too literally or in any general sense. This is a prejudice which is kept up by the bonzes in their own self-interest, and is easy to see through. (Author's note.)

323 The potters' methods and equipment do not differ from those which are in widespread use everywhere.

The method of firing depends on the nature of the article, and firing may be done either in kilns dug out of the clay soil, in the banks of watercourses, or under stacks of rice straw. Wood or rice straw is used to fire the kilns.

In some regions articles are given a shiny black patina resembling graphite by firing them for a second time in paddy husks.

326 Brass-founding. One has only to explore the pagodas of
• 778 Laos in order to realize that brass-founding used to be held in honor.
411 Religious statues can be found which are sometimes of great [458]
415 weight and usually of quite fine workmanship and taste, taking into account, to be sure, the quite special manner in which they conceive esthetics.

Although the crucibles have not been fired for many long years for casting such large pieces, the industry of brass-founding continues to be exercised by a certain number of specialists who are content with producing religious statuettes, necessities for betel, bells for elephants and livestock, various kinds of vases, cuspidors, etc.

This industry is an extremely ancient one in the land. It was certainly practiced during the Bronze Age, as is attested by the spear-heads, daggers, hatchets and halberds which have been found in northern Laos and which can now be seen in the Saint-Germain museum.

[821 It is interesting to note that the inhabitants of Laos attribute a
172] meteoric origin to objects of the Bronze Age, as also to those of the Age of Polished Stone. They believe that these objects fall from the sky when it thunders, and that they are produced by lightning.

The following are some of the methods used by Laotian founders. Casting is always done by the lost wax process.

325 Casting statues. On an initial rough clay model, the
532 artist applies a layer of fine, soft and well-pugged clay which he shapes in a more careful manner. Then after covering the statue, which is already much more than a rough draft, with a layer of bees-wax of the proper thickness, he finishes modeling the statue on the wax, inserting all the details and all the ornaments which it is to include. Polishing a bit here, engraving there, setting precious stones or simply glass between the eyelids to represent eyes, and inserting gold lips where the mouth is to be located, he gives the

325
415

When thus prepared the mold and the crucible, which form a single block, are placed on the furnace with the crucible undermost, amidst the charcoal which is given a forced draft with an alternating bellows. What happens then cannot be imagined. The wax melts with the first heat and falls into the crucible, leaving a void between the two walls of the mold which the metal will fill. As soon as the latter is ready, as can be seen by the color of the flames which come out through the lateral openings, the founder seizes the block with a pair of tongs and turns it upside down suddenly so as to pour the contents of the crucible automatically into the cavity of the mold. After the metal has cooled the clay envelope is broken like an egg shell, and the object appears with the shape and relief or chased ornaments which the wax model possessed.

The founders use various alloys, depending on whether the objects which they are making are statues, common utensils or bells. Some are made of brass, zinc and tin, others of red copper, silver and bronze from old gongs, etc. Sometimes, when the statue is a religious one, the faithful are impelled by their ardor to throw gold and silver jewelry and coins into the crucible.

[778]

The principal pieces of equipment of the founder are the bellows, crucibles, tongs, a series of sculptor's boasters, an alternating turn-bench, graving tools, scrapers, hammers, etc.

285

Basketry. The inhabitants of Laos, especially the Khas, are past masters in the art of basketry, and the objects which come from their hands have a finish, a delicacy, a seal of elegance and a purity of form which are surprising at first sight.

Rattan, certain kinds of bark and thin skins and strips of bamboo are the materials used in basketry.

The main articles produced by this industry include floor mats, bed mats, calibrated baskets for measuring grain, buckets for drawing water, large baskets, baskets for holding cooked rice, platter covers, trays with feet, boxes for betel necessities, baskets to carry on the back, bird cages, hats, etc.

[463] Most basketwork articles are delivered unfinished, although some are smoked or else lacquered black or red. Except for a few articles which find a market outside of the region of manufacture, but always within the limits of Laos, it may be said that the basketwork industry is an entirely local one.

The Khas, moreover, do not have a monopoly in this industry, and all the inhabitants of Laos are basket makers to a greater or less degree.

175 the fourteenth century. Archaeological discoveries made in recent
177 years in the region of Luang Prabang and more recent ones in the
779 neighborhood of Vientiane may enable this important event in the religious history of Laos to be moved back more than two centuries.

[23] The Pagoda.

346 "Laotians liked to place their pagodas on high points, but their marked taste for the edge of the water made them prefer the neighbor-
•778 hood of rivers. This location of pagodas is a natural consequence of
[192] the relations between bonzes and inhabitants. The former drew their livelihood from the latter, and these are crowded on the river banks."
In principle the pagoda consists of three elements:

346 1) The buildings connected directly with the cult: vat, chapels, libraries; that, standing landmarks and niches;

2) The surrounding enclosures, exterior and interior;

3) The buildings for the immediate use of the inhabitants of the pagoda: monastery [bonzerie], cells for the bonzes, reception halls.

The vat consists of a large hall furnished with a pedestal on which stands the statue of the Buddha often accompanied by a preaching pulpit. The columns and walls are frequently ornamented with paintings.

Among the annexes of the vat, the most numerous are the chapels which are in the form either of delicate buildings or small compound halls.

The that is a votive and sometimes a funereal monument. (See appendix on Vientiane).

The only piece of furniture always found in the vat is the preachingpulpit, an elegant construction, often made of gilded wood. By way of furniture there are a few seats for the chiefs of the bonzes,
[788] particularly for the torch bearer. Finally, particularly in the region of Luang Prabang, one finds the hang-lin, a curious spout-shaped object, with elegant decoration, which is used for sprinkling the Buddhas on great feast days (cf. the New Year). These various finely carved objects are usually made of gilded wood and are sometimes inlaid with enamelled lead [24] whose brilliant gleam makes them sparkle. The manuscript chests are usually collected in the
[217] libraries, piled up in the shape of an inverted pyramid; they are generally carved and gilded.

include all the local genii one comes across in Indochina, either under the name of Neak Ta in Cambodia, or Phi in Laos, to mention only two countries. The cult of the Phi is still very much alive in Laos, although it has long been contested by the Buddhist clergy and forbidden by an edict of Phothisarath in 1527. 771 776

[30] But there are several classes of phi. First of all there are the universal phi, those are the ones which Buddhist tradition has attempted to assimilate for better or worse. 776

The book of Khun Bolom says precisely that the Phi Fa (Phi of heaven) and the Phi Then are in reality Indra, and the guardians of the four worlds. The Phi Sua Muon are Nang Tholani (Dharani, goddess of the earth) and Nang Mekhala (Manimekhala, deity of the sea). Finally there is the Phi Then Ten (Visvakarman, the builder).

The local protecting genii of the kingdom of Lan Xan are the fifteen Nagaraja (Praya Nak) who are the genii of water, living in the river rapids, at the confluence of rivers, on the rocks on the river banks or in caves. Their natural form is that of a serpent, but they can also take on human form.

Then follow the familiar genii, the wandering phi (Phi Pho), and the phi of dwellings (Phi Heuan). The Phi Heuan are honored at the time of marriage, and the Laotian code prescribes the indemnities which must be paid to please the Phi. There are also the phi of parents [or relatives--Translator] (Phi Me). These are often confused with the preceding ones. Their cult is celebrated either inside the house, or outside in a small shelter built for this purpose. This little structure is usually built leaning against a tree; sometimes it contains a small statuette or a stone, or even nothing. In that case one finds only a few grains of glutinous rice, and one or two small sticks of incense in a horn made of a banana leaf. This little house is the home of the Phi. He watches the living from the beyond and manifests himself every time a member of the family behaves badly. His intervention is most often known by a sudden and serious illness. One must then try to find out what has displeased the phi. For this one goes to the "sorcerer" and he will indicate [31] the sacrifice which must be made to the phi to appease his anger." [671] 788 778 755

There exist also village phi to whom honor and offerings are due at the time of every ritual or local ceremony, particularly about the seventh month. Coinciding with a sort of pause in the ordinary activity of the Laotian, a pause which is regulated by a change in season, return of the rains and the rise of the Mekong waters, the feasts of the "months of the spirits" are centered around the evocation 776 796 787

342 bedrooms separated from each other by partitions or curtains, the
[178] other is the communal room. In the space between the inner and outer beam, and not limited by the longitudinal partition, is the altar on which there are always one or several buddhas. It is placed on the side of the bedrooms, on the "soung" side of the dwelling, that is on the side opposite the entrance. The dimensions of the dwellings vary between six and twenty-four meters long by four to nine meters wide.

342 The houses are most often open to the east or to the north. They may also overlook what is passing by in the streets or the paths and,
823 as the case may be, the whole length of the river. For there is a superstition which forbids building "across the current," which is considered as unconquerable and invincible, and it would be dangerous to defy it.

343 The outhouses consist of an adjoining kitchen and a granary, a few meters removed from the principal dwelling. Near this granary
[252] is found the picturesque rice pestle (khok khao) which the women work with their feet.

343 [62] All the villagers participate in building the house. When the propitious day and moment have been determined, the owner feeds
476 everybody the whole time the house is being built.

Tattooing

301 Every self-respecting Laotian must be tattooed. The absence of
885 tattooing is a sign of mental and moral, therefore of social, inferiority.
562 As a general rule, however, the Laotian woman is not tattooed. This custom is found only among the women of Youan, Kha or Lu.

The Laotian is tattooed chiefly on his thighs, forearms and chest.
301 The tattooing on the thighs is so close together that from a distance a tattooed man looks as if he were wearing close-fitting blue shorts. The Laotians are called "white bellies" as opposed to those who are tattooed down to the navel and are then called black bellies. The colors used for tattooing are indigo blue, red, and black made from a mixture of lampblack diluted with buffalo gall.

Those who have been tattooed are convinced that the signs they
[151] wear give them certain supernatural powers, particularly making them invulnerable to bullets and snake bites. During the events of 1941 Siamese soldiers were found wearing white cotton vests covered with cabalistic signs closely related to tattooing. These are a kind of removable tattooing intended to protect those who are wearing them.

173: Deydier --68 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

778

Fig. XI. The walking Buddha. Bronze of the Louis Finot Museum. Hanoi. (Cl. E.F.E.O.)

7: Thompson--372 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 769, 771, 775, 779

"Along with the first migrations from the North and West into Laos filtered the Vedic precepts and the laws of Manu. From 900 to 700 B.C. the more militant dogmas of Brahmanism began to appear, at the same time as the ancestral cult and innumerable auxiliary superstitions. About the thirteenth century Buddhism began to appear by different routes, but it is the Ceylonese variety, albeit profoundly modified, which has the largest number of Laotian followers. Chiefly because it rejects study and examination, this doctrine permits many superstitions to live side by side with it, embedded at varying depths in the popular consciousness. The kind of Buddhism practised by the Laotians and some Khas is almost entirely excempt from philosophic speculation. Bonzes recite prayers incomprehensible to themselves and to the people, but they must mark every social event. These ceremonies, a reverential attitude towards sacred places, a dash of animism, the ancestral cult, and a belief in Kharma, make up official Laotian religion. Some of this has been absorbed by the Yaos and Lus, Khas and Meos, each of whom has added their own assortment of superstitions. Laotian superstitions, too, are myriad. They attribute all evils to spirits--none other than their ancestors, who take delight in returning to earth expressly to torment their relatives. Hence the great power of sorcerers, who, incidentally, are rent by the greatest professional jealousy. All of this, with a smattering of Christian converts, form an ill-defined, uneasy pantheism, quite congenial to the Laotian soul."

7: Thompson--378-379 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 779, 797

"In April 1881 two priests from the Society of Foreign Missions went to Oubone, where they found not a single native Christian. On a tour which they later made throughout Laos they found only four Christians in the whole country, two Siamese and two Annamites. When they began to evangelize Laos the current anarchy bred by the Ho invasions, Siamese deportations, and the perennial economic uncertainty was conducive to an encouraging number of conversions. With the establishment of the French, political security was assured, and the number of converts began visibly to decline. The ease of the early conversions had been misleading. Through centuries of persecution and uncertainty the Laotians have acquired a marked flair for success. They know to a fine point what earthly authorities it is worth their while to please. Moreover, the Laotians share the usual Asiatic indifference to dogma. One religion is as good to them as another, provided it does not upset the [379] social structure. Catholic discipline is irksome too. The Laotians find the indissolubility and relative asceticism of a Christian marriage far less congenial than their traditional polyandry and polygamy. The missionaries have also vainly tried to induce them to clothe themselves more voluminously and to give up opium."

10: d'Orleans--311-312 . T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 779, 793, 781

"It is not every man, indiscriminately, who is allowed to pay court to the young women, for one class is [312] excluded, viz., that of the bonzes and the aspirants to that order. The creed is Buddhism, very much the same as in Burmah and Siam. Apart from a few free-thinkers, who are regarded as brands plucked for the burning, the people are religious, that is to say they flock to the pagodas for certain festivals, bring presents, and provide liberally for the bonzes."

23: Franck--300-301 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 793, 779, 883

"Some of the old priests of Luang Prabang are honored as demigods by the people of the kingdom. They step forth from their holy dwellings only with a ceremonial parasol held over them, by one of the surrounding group of youngster attendants in the same bright yellow; and the French commissaire himself was almost servile in the respectful politeness with which he treated the most holy of them all, whose attitude sometimes suggested that it was he who had the upper hand. These bonzes may not even kill a flea, though the provocation must often be almost too strong to be borne; but they may eat beef and the flesh of other animals killed by some one else. Even the cynical French residents say they are real celibates, that they would be expelled from the order if they were caught breaking this particular vow. It might be harder to keep were not all young men expected to be priests for a year or two, as those of European lands become soldiers, only the ones to whom the monastic life appeals retaining the yellow robe, which the great majority soon discard for marriage. Little less sacred than the priests are the dogs that all but overrun the capital, eating the food laid out for gods and bonzes, much as the sacred oxen of India take their toll from pious shopkeepers. Held in a kind of Buddhist reverence by the people and more or less [301] protected by the priests, these mongrels are not even subjected to muzzle or license, though the French would like to improve their rules of sanitation to the extent of exterminating the harmless but self-confident curs."

23: Franck--301 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 657, 779, 177.77 France
636.77

"But the French do not insist on imposing their religious beliefs on their wards and colonies. In Luang Prabang they go so far as to provide for the up-keep of the temples and monasteries in the annual governmental budget. In a way this is a means of supporting the educational system, for the priests act as schoolmasters to their novices. In great contrast to China, there is not a single Christian missionary in all the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha, not even a Catholic priest."

23: Franck--341-342 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 342, 361, 515, 779

"The uncrowded, simple, but commodious houses of these Laosian villages are always set well apart and high above the ground, back among palm-trees, banana-plants, and the like. They do not have to crowd together and save all the arable land for rice to feed too numerous mouths, for here a gentle Buddhism takes place of an ancestor-worship so [342] ardent that offspring must be had at any effort and cost. Most families have round or square granaries like huge covered baskets made of wide woven splints and covered by a big thatch roof, all raised off the ground out of reach of rats. The simple houses themselves were of similar materials, a ladder or half a dozen bamboo or pole rungs leading up to the big porch at one end, and close to the floor, a tiny window or two that can be pushed open to one side. Such a village is a thousand per cent more pleasant than a Chinese town, even when there is no public stopping-place except in the same room with slightly supercilious priests who sometimes break sound sleep with their devotions. There is an incredible amount of bathing and great quiet compared to densely packed Chinese existence. Such a village is like a country home in its atmosphere, while those of China resemble tenement-living on the worst of East Sides."

25: Brodrick--98-99 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 779, 782, 792, 872

"...the framework of Little Vehicle Buddhism looks much the same as in the land of the Khmers. There are the saffron-robes, but the bonzes are sturdier and less composed than in Cambodia. When the monks do their rounds with their begging-bowls, the holy men do not hesitate to look women in the face, to speak with them and even to touch their hands. The Laotian bonzes are not the less Laotian for being bonzes, and by no means all of them observe strictly the precepts of their Order. In fact, some of them are [99] a little loose of conduct. Again, the Buddhist hierarchy in the Laos is almost more sacerdotal than monastic, and, in the public estimation, the bonze is more or less of a priest, that is, a man performing efficacious and quasi-magical ceremonies. There are temple-schools, as in Cambodia, Siam and Burma. In these schools the male population learns to read and write in the complicated Laotian script that is rather derived from Siamese than from Cambodian. The same moral obligations are supposed to constrain the monks. The offerings at the pagoda services are just fragrant frangipani flowers, candles and incense. There is no such divergence from Little Vehicle practice as would make of Laotian Buddhism a new religion such as is the Lamaism of Tibet. But everything is a little distorted, vague, misty, if we will. The alien religion is subjected to a strong push from beneath and is transmuted by an all-pervading atmosphere of nonchalance and good humour."

25: Brodrick--104 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 779, 177.79 France
636.79

"In the kingdom of Luang-Prabang there is no doubt that Little Vehicle is the state religion. We have seen how royally and respectfully. H. M. King Sisavang Vong received the Venerable Narada and his slip of the sacred Bodhi Tree. [HD: see category 116, p. 62-63] And the efforts of the French administration to purge the practice and reform the discipline of the monks was mildly successful in the Laos though not so obvious as in Cambodia. Still, the Laotians are difficult to coerce."

from pantheism to Christianity, passing through polytheism, anthropomorphism, Brahminism, Buddhism and metempsychosis. 771

To be sure, the most widespread religion and the one which numbers the greatest number of faithful is Ceylon Buddhism in the form of the Hinayâna doctrine, that is to say the form which adheres to the letter of the scriptures without pretending to seek or discover the esoteric meaning of the words of the master Çakya Mouni. 795 779

It is precisely because this doctrine abjures all casuistry, all scholasticism and all free examination that it has allowed the superstitions of Brahminism and still others to coexist alongside it. These latter are still more or less deeply entrenched, depending on the region and on whether the moral influence of the Aryans has been more or less effective and beneficent in uplifting the populace.

Since, in general, the Buddhism of the Laotians and of the Kha tribes which practice it is, by virtue of its very doctrine, exempt from all free [148] examination and from all philosophical speculation, it is a latria cult manifesting itself in ritual recitations. These latter, moreover, are incomprehensible to the faithful and even to the bonzes. To these prayers are added ceremonies and outer marks of deference for sacred places, temples, idols, worship accessories and officiants. [Illustration alongside text here.] 779

Besides this mild form of Buddhism there are still traces--often very deep ones--of Brahminism and ancestor worship, of a kind of polytheism or cult of spirits which are either beneficent genii or terrible demons, of Pythagorism, of metempsychosis, and of a curious anthropo-spiritualist belief which attributes an individual soul to each of the parts of man's body, to his moral faculties, to his food and even to his excrement, as well as to the four elements--earth, air, water and fire.

This latter belief borders closely on metempsychosis, since it also holds that all souls are immortal and subsist throughout a series of successive existences in the form of various incarnations, in the bodies of men or animals, in plants or in minerals.

It cannot be denied that this doctrine is a highly moral one. Since each mutation or incarnation is a reward or a [149] punishment, there can be no doubt but that, in combination with the precepts of sociability, respect for others and gentleness which are contained in Hinayâna Buddhism, it has had great influence on the moral evolution and social conservation of the people of Laos as well as on their moral customs.

779 Buddhism is practiced by the Laotians, the Lus, the Youns and a few Thai tribes as well as by the Khouène and Khmou Khas.

771 The white, black, red and Neua Thais, and also the Phou-Thais, have generally adopted Brahminic ancestor worship. The Lolos, Méos, Lantène Yaos, etc. are also devotees of this cult, although they have somewhat modified it with certain superstitions.

The Khas of the various tribes profess a kind of ill-defined pantheism as well as the cult of genii, spirits of "Phis," which the other races also observe. Christianity, in both the Catholic and Protestant form, has been adopted by people of diverse origin who have gathered in Christian communities or formed scattered groups in the midst of populations with Asiatic beliefs.

Let us now try to define these various cults and to show how they are understood and by whom they are served.

Religion of the Laotians:

779 "The religion of the Laotians," says the Superior Resident, "is Buddhism. But since there were no Brahmins in Laos whose interest was to see the Brahminic Pantheon supreme, Buddha has kept his preponderant place in the pagodas, whereas in Ceylon and Nepal, the last Buddhist centers in the Indies, he has lost this place and been submerged under and confused with the more ancient gods of Brahminic origin.

[792] "Most of the Laotian bonzes are completely ignorant of the dogmas of the religion which they blindly and deafly serve. One does meet highly learned ones, however, who seem to have a fairly 779 clear idea of doctrine. Eternal nature, which has existed for all time and forms the essence of everything, is to be regarded as a bottomless nothingness and an incommensurable void. Sometimes however, through the fatal effect of desire, this void takes on an appearance. Thence comes all evil, and thence arises suffering. All the appearances which we call life, sickness, death, and separation from what we love, what we desire and [150] what we cannot have, are so many misfortunes. Now, desire is at the origin of all these misfortunes. Suppress desire and at the same time suffering is suppressed. The path to be followed is a simple one: destroy all desire; detach yourself from the things of this world, and try to raise yourself step by step to a higher state throughout all the successive lives which you are obliged to live in varied forms and which will be all the more excellent in the degree that all the acts, words and

779 thoughts of your previous life have been good. Thanks to these efforts you will pass successively, in your various incarnations, from the state of man to the state of holy man, then to that of saint and finally to that of Buddha or perfection, from which you will fall back into the mute and calm abyss, the void and eternal rest. Besides the constant effort of the will to raise itself, the good deeds which you accomplish will tend to the same purpose, whether they be deeds of action, of thought, of word or of intention.

"Anyone who, on the other hand, abandons himself to evil actions and makes no effort to raise himself gradually moves away from the state dreamed by Buddha, and his successive reincarnations occur in the opposite direction, descending into the bodies of animals which may be more or less maleficent and despicable.

"The above, however, are speculations to which the Laotian intelligence cannot rise. The Buddhist religion as practiced in Laos demands only a few outer signs of deference towards bonzes and holy places.

771 "Besides Buddhism, the Laotians have retained, or transformed
776 into a cult, certain Spirits or Genii whom they call Phis, the in-
782 numerable deities of the Brahminic Pantheon by which Buddhism was accompanied when it was imported into Laos and which have been reduced to a lesser stature.

"All the forces of nature, all that is capable of bringing disorder into life and every movement or phenomenon which the Laotian cannot explain is personified by a particular Genie or Spirit.

"The cult of these Phis may be summed up as follows: it is an interested exchange of gifts or sacrifices by men, in return for the goodwill, neutrality or help of the Phis. Oftentimes, when the Phi is not greatly dreaded, a bargain will be made with him which will be repaid after he has performed his part of the bargain. The cult of the Phis has a widespread following, and they have their lay priests who bear the title of guardians of the Genii.

771 "In addition to the cult of the Phis, which is nothing more nor
821 less than a form of polytheism, the Laotians are subject to rather numerous superstitions.

"Thus if an eclipse of the moon occurs Laotians imagine that a tiger is trying to devour it, and everyone at once begins to take turns banging on gongs, firing shots and using every means to make as much noise as possible so as to frighten off the aforesaid tiger and prevent it from swallowing the nocturnal star.

149: Reinach--116 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

the "Phi."

It is said that each of us has his good and his evil genie which are engaged in a constant struggle, and that we are good or evil according as the one or the other gains the upper hand. This is a kind of symbolism of good and evil, but here the controlling and guiding conscience is replaced by the influences of the moment, the occasion, the circumstances and the milieu. 779 776

Each house also has its own "genie", reminiscent of the Roman Lares, to which sacrifices and offerings are made on every possible occasion. 776 782

The evil "Phis" are more dreaded and receive a great many more offerings than the good "Phis," with whom no trouble need be taken.

In each village there is a sorcerer to explain the actions of the "Phis" and teach the way to gain their favor. Although consultations with them are not free of charge these sorcerers, who are called Mo-hou-ha, Mo-Phi or Phi-pop depending on the province, are just as [155] [Illustration] [156] [Blank page] [157] highly regarded as the "Guardians of the Genii" of the Buddhist religion and, like them, are exempt from servitude and taxes.

In times of epidemic all responsibility is attributed to the evil "Phis", and in order to make them take flight the men of the villages beat on the roofs of their houses with long bamboo poles until such time as the "Phis" are supposed to have disappeared.

The Khas have retained a belief in metempsychosis which is tinged with certain rather vague superstitions bearing on a future life and some kind of resurrection. But this second existence is not everyone's privilege, and will exist only insofar as one's life has been a good one. 775

They also believe in the existence of a place of torment where perjurers, murderers, etc. will remain for all eternity. To be sure, they believe in a general way that a new life will begin and that it will be a reward or a punishment for the individual's deeds in his last incarnation. Thus a brave and good man will return as a happy and respected chieftain. Others will be entitled only to an animal existence, the importance of which in the scale of being will be like a personification of their faults and merits. One odd fact is that women always want to return in the guise of a man. [562]

Religion of the Lus. The religion practiced by the Lus is a form of Buddhism which has been mitigated by certain local customs 771 779

771 and to which is added the pantheism of the "Phis." Their general
779 doctrine, however, includes a belief in an "element which creates all things" and in a future life, the sanction of their dogmatic taboos and precepts, in a place of eternal beatitude which it is possible to inhabit here on earth and which is, at bottom, nothing else but the annihilation of being in the "Nirvana" of the Buddhists.

Among the Lus, even more so than in China and the Indies, the basis of this mystical and dreamlike religion which is so well suited to their temperament is an idea of the nothingness of things, the uselessness of effort and even of action. It is, in a word, the most complete pessimism and the annihilation of energy and will.

775 Various beliefs. 1. The following is an incantation or prayer
769 for [158] dying persons which gives a good picture of the system of the world and of the idea of metempsychosis:

539

The sky and the earth are growing dark!
Come out, souls, and gain "space"!
The spirits of the parts of the body are joined together
and form only one!
Listen to the law of Buddha:
We teach the road which leads to the kingdom of Buddha,
the kingdom of the rising sun.
The one soul, the union of the spirits of the body, knows
today that birth and death are alike!
What is birth?
Nothingness produces the generative breath.
The breath produces fire.
Fire produces water.
Water produces earth, mother of all beings.
Birth is produced by harmony and perfect equilibrium of
the elements.
What is death?
Death is a return to the beginning by the reversal of causes.
Earth masters water.
Water masters fire.
Fire masters air.
Air masters nothingness.
Nothingness always remains nothingness.
Nothingness is infinite.

149: Reinach--120 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

In résumé, Buddhist morality is based on the five following commandments, which are obligatory for all men without distinction: 779

1. Do not take the life of any living being;
2. Do not steal the property of others;
3. Do not commit adultery;
4. Never lie;
5. Do not get drunk on fermented beverages.

It should be noted that these five commandments give rise only to prohibitions, a fact which would seem to indicate that man is mainly inclined toward evil. This is the characteristic feature of Buddhist law: it forbids evil without indicating the means of doing good; it does not uplift the individual morally, but limits itself to preventing him from falling still lower. It acts to preserve a certain moral and social status in which the greater part of humanity is to be kept, under the domination of the bonzes who alone are capable of rising to a knowledge of good and evil.

Despite the purity of its morality and the elevation of its precepts, this religion, which denies progress but from which Christianity has nevertheless borrowed more than one dogma, has not yet been able, after twenty-five centuries of existence, to make civilization penetrate to its faithful.

The Laotian clergy. The Buddhist clergy is composed of three categories of holy men, whom we call bonzes in Laos and talapoins (2) 792 871

(2) From the Siamese word Tala;pat, a bonze's fan made of palm leaves.

in Siam. These categories are:

1. Boys from ten to fifteen years of age who have entered a bonzery only to learn to read and write the Thai language, and who are called Xieng or Nèn;

2. Student bonzes, called Hatit, who complete their religious education until they reach the age of twenty-two or twenty-five by the study of Youn characters and of Pali, as well as by reading the sacred books;

[161] 3. Last the ordained bonzes or Phra (Phâ, in the current pronunciation) who have pronounced their temporary vows.

There is a well-defined hierarchy among the bonzes which, in terms equivalent to our own, goes from the archbishop to the simple 792

149: Reinach--124 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Although less pure than in Cambodia, the bonzes' morals in Laos are generally fairly good. They are, moreover, greatly loved, highly regarded and fondly cherished. When there is a celebration or a great feast in a family, part of the choicest dishes is always reserved for the bonzes. 792 785 554

On the next to the last day of every phase of the moon, the bonzes must make public confession of their faults and be prepared, should the need arise, to undergo the punishments which the code stipulates. 792

Bonzeries are schools and at the same time workshops where all trades are taught. All knowledge is concentrated in them, as our knowledge was during the Middle Ages in monasteries. 871 874

Together with the pagodas, they are also spots of inviolable asylum in accordance with certain rights, and hostelries where travelers are lodged and fed with the produce of the bonzes' alms-seeking. 485 778

Newly ordained bonzes must stay in the pagoda at least three months, and may quit their habit at the end of this period. If a bonze desires to return to the pagoda after he has reentered lay life, his reassumption of the habit gives rise to the same formalities and ceremonies as the first time. It is a new ordination. 792

The liturgical litanies of the Buddhist religion, which the bonzes psalmodize, may not be translated into Laotian. The bonzes and the [165] [Illustration] [166] [Blank page] [167] Laotian faithful, as well as the cantors and the French adepts, chant prayers whose meaning they do not understand (1). 198 788

(1) In reality the Laotian, Lu and Youn bonzes form a sort of caste as the Druids used to in Gaul. More particularly, they are the ministers of worship, the repositories of moral authority, of scientific traditions, of secrets and of artistic and industrial methods. They transmit by word of mouth the precepts of Buddhist dogma, which were long ago explained by those who introduced the religion into the land. But the writings in "Pali" which contained these, although they can still be read mechanically by a few scholars, are no longer understood. Thence arises the necessity of handing down their meaning by word alone. Thence also, without doubt, arises the increasingly greater attenuation of the purity and force of these principles as they 792 779 178

779 pass from one generation to another and suffer partial suppressions
78 and numberless interpolations.

[198] The bonzes of our own day do not know the sacred language and are reduced to imitating the "hateful" monks of whom Rabelais speaks, "who neither till the soil nor work, but only mumble
792 a great stock of legends and psalms which they do not understand at all."

792 The bonzes are the ones who consecrate water and prepare with
641 their prayers for the pronunciation of the oath of allegiance which native officials take twice a year to their direct sovereign and, if necessary, to their suzerain both for themselves and for the whole
788 population. The oath consists in reciting the formula and in drinking lustral water in which the candles used for the ceremony have been extinguished and in which the arms of the sovereign have been dipped.

The following is the formula of the oath which is pronounced in Laos twice a year, in the capital of each province, in the presence of the government commissioner. This formula has been in use in the land for centuries and was left just as it was, except for substituting the title of President of the Republic for that of the king of Siam, Vien-Tiane or Luang-Prabang.

Formula of the oath: "I (there follow the names, titles and qualities of each of the mandarins present, each of whom repeats the formula, which is read aloud by one of them, generally the eldest), take an oath of allegiance and offer my life to the President of the French Republic. I give my word before God and before the angels present in heaven. May God and his angels deign to listen to my vows, because the President of the French Republic governs our land with wisdom and skill, follows the ancient customs and protects the bonzes, the authorities and the inhabitants.

"I place myself under his sacred feet, as well as the soldiers and inhabitants who live in my muong, and we all swear him allegiance.

[168] "I ask to serve the administration in the shadow of his sacred feet and to acknowledge his goodness by promising to be faithful and never to revolt in thought, word or body.

"If I show myself ungrateful to, or if I revolt against the President of the French Republic in thought, word or body; if I see or learn that peril threatens the President of the French Republic and remain silent instead of warning him immediately of the peril which I see or know; if I show myself ungrateful towards the President of the

Tribal Tai

619 The Neua-Thais. The Neua-Thais differ very little, in all
361 respects, from their fellows. They generally live on higher ground than the other Thais, but they change the location of their village quite frequently. [241] [Illustration] [242] [Blank page] [243]

291 The women knot their skirts under their armpits, above their breasts, and always wear a very short jacket made of cotton, silk or velvet, depending on the season.

231 They engage in sericulture, and with the silk spin and weave brocaded cloth with harmonious colors.

•779 At the same time as ancestor worship, the Neu-Thais practice an attenuated form of Buddhism. Pagodas are rare and the bonzes, few in number, serve several centers in turn.

461 Their character is docile. They do not have a very marked taste for trade and are content to be excellent farmers and livestock breeders.
276 Unfortunately, they are inclined to be opium smokers. This is doubtless due to the proximity of the Meos and Yaos who are the producers of the drug.

619 The Phou-Eunes. This branch of the Thai family is very close to
101 the Laotians in mores and customs.

There are only a few modifications in costume and language, modifications due to the age-old proximity of the Annamites and the continuous relations which have existed between the two peoples.
[438] These latter may be explained by the fact that the territory long inhabited by the Phou-Eunes in the east and southeast of Tran-Ninh is situated on the Tonkin Gulf side, and that their produce naturally flows towards the ports on the Annamite coast (1).

(1) To be sure, there are several groupings of Phou-Eunes in the Mekong basin, in Tran-Ninh, to the northeast of Vien-Tiane and in Camkeut-Cammon.

361 The Phou-Eunes prefer to live in high valleys and on high plateaus where the climate is quite severe during the winter. They are more reserved in character than the Laotians, more industrious and less inclined to celebrations and festivities of all kinds.

779 Their religion is Buddhism, but the bonzes are less numerous than elsewhere. It is probable that the little taste which Phou-Eunes have for the religious life is due to the influence of nearby Annam, where the bonzes are a long way from being venerated and coddled as they are in Laos.

734 friend take one's place.

Laotians when they pay a visit to a sick person, prattle noisily,
574 ask the sick person a great number of unnecessary questions, and
576 sometimes tell him stories to cheer him up. This custom must stop. The patient, who is tired, needs rest. The visit one pays him should not last longer than ten minutes.

574 Condolence visit. --The Laotian ceremony connected with
576 the condolence visit is the opposite of the Western ceremony. The
764 The visitor, instead of appearing sad before the family of the deceased, is gay and smiling.

In order to give you an idea of what goes on in a house in which a death has taken place among the Laotians, I shall content myself by citing here certain passages from my article, "The custom
764 of funeral ceremonies in the land of Laos" (1): "Those who believe
574
576 1. In Kinnary, No. 4, November, 1946.

in the existence of the phi place a tray of food intended for the deceased near the coffin. Furthermore they place, at the head of the coffin, a sword marked with a cross with chalk, together with a superstitious formula in order to prevent the phi from stealing the coffin away from the deceased. The coffin has to be watched over day and night. The watchers talk, play certain games, or engage in any other diversion. /274/

/825/ "In the course of this watch cats are also prevented from prowling around the coffin. A cat which were to jump across would provoke the resurrection of the dead person, according to what certain people say.

"The house in which the person has died is called heuan di (happy house). There one works, sings, dances, and plays. From it can be heard the sound of orchestras and shouts of joy. Such spectacles have something disconcerting about them to the eyes of strangers. Nevertheless, one should not regard this behavior as a sign of irreverence towards the deceased person. Despite its smiling appearance, the family of the deceased suffers profoundly. It abstains from violent shedding of tears and from public lamentations because it considers a discreet grief more dignified and the sense one has of death in this way a nobler one."

/779/ It would be difficult not to respect this tradition which stems

daughter, Princess Nang Yot Keo. At an indeterminate date which must come between 1340 and 1350, he was given the command of an army destined to reconquer the kingdom of his fathers. According to the Laotian chronicle, the victorious advance of this army enabled Fa Ngoum to declare himself king of Lan Xan. He immediately demanded the submission of all the Thai princes of Mekong. The center of resistance to Fa Ngoum was Phai Nam (spiny bamboos) because of the impenetrable vegetable belt which protected it like veritable ramparts. Fa Ngoum seized it by means of the classical trick of ornamenting missiles with gold and silver, then pretending to retreat and then pouncing on the enemy at the moment when they had scattered to gather the precious metal. In memory of this episode, the town was baptized Vieng Kham which means "circled with gold" and which later became Vientiane, "circled with sandalwood." Fa Ngoum organized his kingdom with force and reigned as a despot. Complaints were made and the king of Cambodia advised him to be moderate. Fa Ngoum then requested that a mission be sent him from Cambodia consisting of religious and lettered men, and of artisans. This mission introduced the orthodox books of Buddhism and a statue of the Buddha (Prabang) which had been presented in the eleventh century to the Khmer sovereign by the king of Ceylon. Prabang thus became the safeguard of the kingdom.

175 [723] 103 175 641 177 779

Up until recent years this tradition led one to believe that the introduction of Buddhism into Laos dated from Fa Ngoum. The discovery of a certain number of Buddhist sculptures of Khmer manufacture of the twelfth century A. D., has destroyed this theory (see below: Introduction of Buddhism to Laos).

[172]

After a series of wars, Fa Ngoum died in 1373 at the age of fifty-eight. His successor Sam Sen Thai reigned from 1373 to 1416. He kept [16] peace in his kingdom and passed on to his successor a prosperous kingdom, well established and living in peace, and at the same time dreaded by its neighbors.

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The fifteenth century saw a succession of sovereigns about whom history has nothing in particular to tell. Let us mention, however, a war with the emperor of Annam. The first part of the sixteenth century passes under the reign of King Phothisarath (1506-1547), a pious Buddhist. One of his most famous actions is the edict against the cult of Phis. Setthathirath came into power in 1548 after a war with the Burmese. His death was followed by a troubled period. The beginning of the seventeenth century is particularly obscure, but in 1637 a great king called Souligna Vongsa (1637-1694) ascended

[771]

175 the throne. During his reign the kingdom of Lan Xan became again a powerful state. It was at this time that the Dutchman van Wusthoff (1641) visited Vientiane, followed in 1666 by Father Marini (see appendix: Vientiane). This era was one of prosperity for the country.

The eighteenth century brought tragedy to Lan Xan. The country found itself divided into two factions and the two kingdoms of Vientiane and of Luang Prabang did not cease to tear each other apart, thus playing into the hands of Siam and Annam. In the course of the nineteenth century, King Anou (1805-1828) attempted to bring back some of its former pomp to the kingdom of Vientiane. A disastrous war with Siam brought about the systematic destruction of the town of Vientiane and the Siamese domination of the left bank of the Mekong. In 1831 the kingdom of Vientiane even became a Siamese province. Its disappearance led Siam to exert its suzerainty on the principality of Luang Prabang. Since then, [17] Siamese influence became more and more marked in these regions, and two royal commissioners were still assisting the king of Luang Prabang when August Pavie arrived at this town (see appendix).

It is well known that, through the intervention of this friend of Laos, Siam renounced "all claim to the whole territory on the left bank of the Mekong and to the islands in the river." In 1895, His Highness Oun Kham, king of Luang Prabang, received from the representative of France official recognition of the kingdom by the French government. However, in spite of the directives given by Pavie, the Franco-Siamese treaty of 1893 could not be satisfactory either for Laos or for Siam. This error was the result of political policy in regard to England. A partial ratification was necessary, which was accomplished in the treaties of 1904 and 1907.

The accession of His Royal Highness Sisavang Vong in 1904 opened a new era for the kingdom of Lan Xan which ended in the independence of Laos within the framework of the French Union.

[18] RELIGION

BUDDHISM

779 The Life of Buddha.

Buddhism, the official religion of Laos, is of Indian origin. The story of Sakyamuni, its founder, is without doubt one of the questions most discussed by western science. As Mr. Foucher points out, there is no event in his life, however simple, about which the

question does not arise how one is to know where biographical truth ends and legendary fiction begins. There are two schools: one, with E. Senart, admits the historical personality of Sakyamuni but insists it is difficult to separate the legendary pomp which surrounds it; the other, with Oldenberg and his disciples, feels it is only possible to reconstruct the life of Buddha from the Singhalese sources (canon pali). Both seem to be both right and wrong. They are right in what they admit, and wrong in what they omit. In the Buddha of E. Senart, it is the man who is wanting; in that of Oldenberg, what is lacking is the god. While Sakyamuni has himself been careful to tell us that he is a man, it is equally certain that India has made a god of him.

"In those days, about the time of Zoroaster in Iran and of Confucius in China, a hundred years before Socrates and five centuries before Jesus Christ, in a lost corner of Nepalese Tarai which is still marked by an inscribed pillar of the emperor Asoka (third century B.C.), [19] a child was born in the family of a kind of feudal lord. His mother died seven days after his birth. He was brought up by his maternal aunt, the second wife of his father. He grew up, received the education suitable to his caste, married, had a son, but at this point became completely disgusted with the world. He then abandoned everything, his family, his wife, his child, and left his native town on horseback. In the morning he sent back his horse and groom and all his princely finery. He exchanged his silk rainments for the coarse clothing of a hunter, became a mendicant monk and set out in search of a solution to the eternal problem of destiny. At first he studied under reputed ascetics, but not satisfied with the teachings of his masters, he retired into solitude. At last, after six years of painful research, as he was sitting under a tree of which a shoot still exists near Gaya in Bihar, he discovered the cure for all the suffering in the world. At first he went to Benares to preach the new road to salvation to five of his former schoolmates, but soon the number of his converts increased, and his doctrine was spread abroad. For forty-five years the Master himself traveled as a preaching mendicant throughout the whole middle basin of the Ganges. At last death overtook him during one of his ceaseless journeys in a small obscure village in the same region, but further east than that in which he was born, and there he breathed his last, according to the Singhalese people in the year 543, or, according to calculations of European scholars, about 477 before our era." (Foucher)

173: Deydier--11 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

The Doctrine.

779 The Buddhist faith consists in recognizing the eminent value of the three "joys" (triratna) which are three "refuges"; the Buddha, his dharma or Law, and the Community (sangha). But Buddhism [20] retains the old popular Indian theory of transmigration (samsara) and of karma (the sum of good and bad deeds performed in previous lives). Taking this fact into consideration, the doctrine of Buddha can be summarized as "offering a hope of escape outside of the cycle of rebirths." The universe is but an ocean of suffering. Birth, old age, illness and death, desire and its satisfaction--all is suffering. This suffering arises from the thirst for existence which is born from our attachment to material things. This attachment itself arises from the legacy of our former existences, and this legacy acquires its power from the ignorance which makes us accept as real the accumulated adventitious "I" in the strata of our millennial past. Let us dispel this ignorance and our attachment to life will disappear, the karman in us will be exhausted, and we will escape from the cycle of transmigration. Freed from enforced labors of samsara, the Buddhist finally attains nirvana (Grousset).

The Community.

After obtaining enlightenment, the Buddha fasted for seven weeks. He hesitated to preach his doctrine. Then Brahma and Indra (we must not forget that Buddhism has kept the gods of Brahmanism, but their rôle is now reduced to that of supernumeraries) came to beg him to turn the wheel of the Law. His first audience consisted of his five former schoolmates. Thus the Community was founded. Soon it grew and included some holy men and some laymen. In this form it has remained up to the present day.

Hinayana and Mahayana.

Ancient Buddhism was essentially a brotherhood of isolated monks living in pious retreats apart from human activity and practising [21] a purely ecclesiastical discipline whose purpose was to form arhat, that is, saints purified from all defilement who have escaped forever from the ocean of transmigrations. Their cult was concentrated on the memory of the Sakyamuni Buddha, his relics and his holy places. However, soon after the death of the Buddha there were internal discussions, and sects arose in the bosom of Buddhism. Scholarly controversy between the sects never entailed political rupture, but by the force of things disagreement became more and more marked. The period of the Koushan kings (about the second to third century of our era) saw the differentiation of the two historical

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forms of Buddhism: the Mahayana or Great Vehicle, and the Hinayana or Little Vehicle. "One must beware of contrasting too violently the two Vehicles, as is often done. They were held together by many and subtle bonds." However in our days a Laotian Hinayanist and a Mongol Mahayanist have nothing in common.

Roughly, the essential difference between the two doctrines is that Hinayana considers the Buddha not as a superior man but as a man, while Mahayana deified Sakyamuni, who, without being a god, was as much as or more than a deity. Activity, formerly condemned, is glorified, sanctified on condition that it is freed from personal interests and is used for the salvation of others. Individual salvation has absolute value only if it contributes to universal salvation. The nirvana of the Hinayanist must be denounced as a scandalous exaltation of self. Bodhi, the supreme knowledge which makes Buddhas, is accessible to all beings. The saint is the Bodhisattva, who is on the point of reaching nirvana, yet remains during periods of incalculable successive existences to save [22] souls. The Mahayanist universe, which has grown immeasurably is filled with an infinite multitude of Buddhas. Many Bodhisattva exist: the principal ones are Avalokitesvara, Maitreya, Manjousri, Vajrapani, etc. Besides, each Buddha and each Bodhisattva has been doubled by a dhyani-Buddha, a contemplative Buddha (spiritual Buddha). To the belief in nirvana proclaimed by the Hinayana, the Mahayanists add an infinite series of paradises, the "pure Grounds" (this notion is Iranian) where souls saved by the grace of the Bodhisattva are born again in the symbolical lotus.

Mahayana now flourishes in central Asia, in Tibet, China, Japan and in Vietnam, was in vogue in Java, and in the ancient Khmer empire from the ninth to the thirteenth century. Its influence is found in certain sculptures of Luang Prabang (see appendix). Hinayana is practised at the present time in Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Cambodia and Laos. [101]

Introduction of Buddhism to Laos.

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According to certain documents, Buddhism was introduced to Laos by Buddhaghosa. This legend is too popular in other Buddhist countries of the Indochinese peninsula for it to be given any credit here. Laotian tradition tells us that Fa Ngoum had a mission come from Cambodia which brought not only the sacred books of orthodox Buddhism but also Brahmanic texts whose traces can still be found today. This tradition, which offers greater proofs than the legend, fixed the date of the introduction of Buddhism to Luang Prabang in

175 the fourteenth century. Archaeological discoveries made in recent
177 years in the region of Luang Prabang and more recent ones in the
•779 neighborhood of Vientiane may enable this important event in the religious history of Laos to be moved back more than two centuries.

[23] The Pagoda.

346 "Laotians liked to place their pagodas on high points, but their
778 marked taste for the edge of the water made them prefer the neighborhood of rivers. This location of pagodas is a natural consequence of
[792] the relations between bonzes and inhabitants. The former drew their livelihood from the latter, and these are crowded on the river banks."
In principle the pagoda consists of three elements:

346 1) The buildings connected directly with the cult: vat, chapels, libraries; that, standing landmarks and niches;

2) The surrounding enclosures, exterior and interior;

3) The buildings for the immediate use of the inhabitants of the pagoda: monastery [bonzerie], cells for the bonzes, reception halls.

The vat consists of a large hall furnished with a pedestal on which stands the statue of the Buddha often accompanied by a preaching pulpit. The columns and walls are frequently ornamented with paintings.

Among the annexes of the vat, the most numerous are the chapels which are in the form either of delicate buildings or small compound halls.

The that is a votive and sometimes a funereal monument. (See appendix on Vientiane).

The only piece of furniture always found in the vat is the preaching pulpit, an elegant construction, often made of gilded wood. By way of furniture there are a few seats for the chiefs of the bonzes,
[788] particularly for the torch bearer. Finally, particularly in the region of Luang Prabang, one finds the hang-lin, a curious spout-shaped object, with elegant decoration, which is used for sprinkling the Buddhas on great feast days (cf. the New Year). These various finely carved objects are usually made of gilded wood and are sometimes inlaid with enamelled lead [24] whose brilliant gleam makes them sparkle. The manuscript chests are usually collected in the
[217] libraries, piled up in the shape of an inverted pyramid; they are generally carved and gilded.

173: Deydier--15 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

He[1] must never look at a woman. However a few old women are 792
seen in the pagoda. These are the devotees. They are dressed in 785
white, their heads are completely shaved, and they lead a life of
observance and asceticism which is as rigorous as that of the monks. 562
They render small services to the bonzes, decorate the altar, etc.,
but they live outside the enclosure of the pagoda.

Laotian Buddhism.

In a recent pamphlet, His Excellency Thao Nhouy Abhay, former 779
Minister of National Culture and Education, wrote: "In its intrinsic
substance Buddhism is deeply tolerant, but ours [26] has truly become 795
not austere enough." Therefore he proposes some necessary reforms
which would quickly raise the intellectual and moral level of the
bonzes in Laos. There are two sects in Laos: the Mahanikay and the [792]
Thammayut. The only difference between the two is the way in
which they consider that monastic rule should be observed. Nothing
distinguishes them in appearance except the color of the monastic
robe of the Mahanikay, which is brownish-ochre almost chestnut.
The king is the chief of the Buddhist clergy. As for the believer 643
who regularly observes his religious duties, he is satisfied with little [735]
and gives much in alms. Buddhist tales and particularly Laotian
texts, among them the Pannasajataka (Ha Sip Xat), quote all the
merits acquired for future lives by those who give alms and, above
all, feed the bonzes.

Religious Literature.

The basis of the religious literature of Laos is the Buddhist 779
Tripitaka. These "Three Baskets" contain the integral "word of the 538
Buddha."

The basket [corbeille] of Vinaya (Vinayapitaka) is the rule of monastic life. It consists of five sections: Patimokkha, Mahavagga, Coullavagga, Souttavibhanga and Parivara. The Patimokkha is meant to be read in public (particularly on the feasts of the eighth month), on the periodic days of confession. The Mahavagga and the Coullavagga give the list of daily obligations, illustrated by examples drawn from the life of the Buddha. The Souttavibhanga is really a commentary on the Patimokkha; finally the Parivara is both a revision and a catechism.

The Basket of the Soutta (Souttapitaka) contains an enormous amount of preaching and of edifying tales. Among others, the famous Dhammapada, a treasury of the sayings of the Buddha and the Jatakas are to be found in this basket.

[27] The third basket is that of Abhidharma and consists of seven

1 [i.e., a bonze -- Analyst]

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538 treatises on metaphysics.

[198
178] Such is the whole of the Buddhist canon in force in Laos. Unfortunately, as the knowledge of Pali disappeared, many texts were forgotten because they were not understood and therefore were not followed. But certainly the most popular text and that which forms the core of all Buddhist literature is the Jatakam.

The Jatakas.

This name is given to a collection of tales about the former lives of the Buddha. As the Master is supposed to have had the greatest variety of experiences from the animal state to that of a god, going through the different states of humanity, his long career as bodhisattva provides ample material for stories of all sorts, moral tales, satirical tales, parables, fables, etc. These stories have no equivalent in any literature, for Buddha knows not only his own births, but also the former births of all creatures, and these he relates as the occasion presents itself. The method of exposition is always the same. The narrator tells more or less briefly the circumstances giving rise to the story of the Buddha, then comes the story itself, finally by way of conclusion, the Buddha relates the past to the present by indicating the identity of the characters in their various roles.

The greatest number of Jatakas take place at the time when "Brahmadatta reigned in Benares," which is the equivalent of our "once upon a time."

In these tales the Buddha appears in the most varied roles; he is in turn ascetic, king, scholar, courtier, brahman, prince, noble, merchant, landlord, slave, potter, elephant-driver, woodcutter, mason, thief, actor, student, etc. Sometimes he is a god or the deity of [28] a tree, sometimes merely an animal, such as a serpent, a lizard, a bull, a pig, a dog, etc. The Buddha has none of the prejudices of nobility. Instead he gives a comforting example of how in all ranks of creation one can realize perfection in oneself and serve the collective interests of the universe. The most incongruous materials are harmoniously blended in this incoherent collection which is always frank. The whole Indian folklore is poured into this convenient framework, where it has received the Buddhist stamp, and been spread throughout the whole Far East where it has been received with enthusiasm.

There are 547 Jatakas. Some are more popular than others. Thus, in Laos, there are ten which form a special collection called "Sip Xat" (the ten Jatakas). The best known are the Temiya Jataka: (Cf. Appendix: Luang Prabang).

779 "The prince heir to the throne Mugapakkha remained dumb until
538 he was thirteen years old. He recovers his speech at the moment when his father wants to bury him alive. He then explains his previous silence by showing that an inconsiderate word may be the cause of great torment in future existences for him who has uttered it." And the Sama Jataka:

"Sama who fed his father and mother, who were both blind, dies of a wound inflicted unintentionally by king Kusi who was deer hunting. As Sama is dying, he entrusts his murderer to break the news to his parents, who lament so painfully that Sakkha is moved and brings Sama back to life."

But of all, the most popular is unquestionably the Pha Vet, the Laotian name for the Vessantara Jataka. (Cf. below Boun Pha Vet).

There exists another series of Jatakas which rival the five hundred Jatakas in popularity. It is the Pannasajataka (Ha Sip Xat) or the fifty
[101] Jatakas. This very peculiar text is found in [29] all the literature of western Indochina, and was probably composed in Thai country. Versions exist in Burmese, Khmer, Siamese and Laotian. The Laotian rendition has the peculiarity of containing 27 out of 50 tales which are not found in any other version. These 27 stories are entirely original. They are at the moment in the process of being translated.

Finally the five hundred Laotian Jatakas form a convenient framework into which all kinds of stories in the current language have been inserted. Their study will doubtless prove a mine of information on local folklore.

THE PHI

771 We cannot conclude the chapter relating to the religion of Laos without mentioning the cult of the Phi.

776 In his books "La Participation" and L'Evolution humaine" the late lamented Jean Przyluski distinguished three successive phases of religion which, according to him, are related to an economic and social state.

When man is a collector of food, that is, when he lives from what he can gather or hunt or fish, his religion is vegetalism or totemism. When he becomes a producer, man's religion becomes agrarian, honoring the gods of vegetation, of the earth, the forests, etc., and particularly the protecting genie of the village. Finally, in the period of urban communities, universal gods appear.

While some reservations might be made on this classification, it does nevertheless offer a convenient framework in which we can

10: d'Orleans--311-312 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 779, 793, 781

"It is not every man, indiscriminately, who is allowed to pay court to the young women, for one class is [312] excluded, viz., that of the bonzes and the aspirants to that order. The creed is Buddhism, very much the same as in Burmah and Siam. Apart from a few free-thinkers, who are regarded as brands plucked for the burning, the people are religious, that is to say they flock to the pagodas for certain festivals, bring presents, and provide liberally for the bonzes."

10: d'Orleans--313 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 202, 782, 793

"The signal for the commencement of the principal acts of worship is a big bell placed upon the summit of the hill, and it is also used as an alarm bell in the event of fire, in which case it is rung in quite a different way.

The bonzes give instruction to their pupils, preside over certain festivals and preach to the people: they read passages from the sacred books, inculcate charity, and above all impress upon their congregations the importance of making many presents to the pagoda so as to be well pleasing to heaven and to deserve everlasting life.

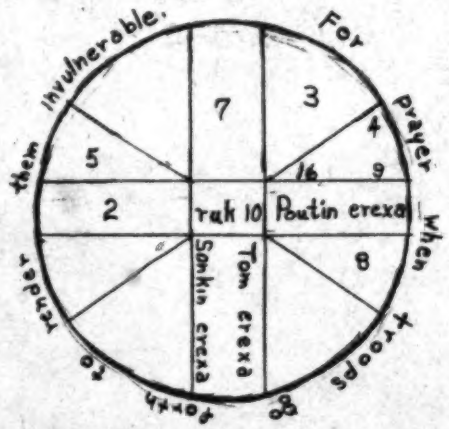
In a small chapel, in front of each pagoda, a bronze bell rings every afternoon at four o'clock, while on Sundays and fête days it rings at 1 A. M. The bonzes, be it added, are supposed to make only two meals a day, in the early morning and at noon, but their pupils are not expected to conform to this rule."

10: d'Orleans--338 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 363, 775, 782

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "Between the palace and the river bank a broad street runs parallel to the market, and at frequent intervals are jars containing water, placed there by the inhabitants, who believe that in so doing they are making sure of a reward hereafter."

10: d'Orleans--340-343 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 173, 346, 777, 782

"Behind the altar [LSS: of the pagoda of Ouate Uisoune in Luang Prabang] is a semi-circular black stone upon a wooden pedestal and covered with Laotian inscriptions. Upon one side of this stone, it is related how the king of Muong Hay (near Muong Yan), having come for a festival with the king of Luang Prabang, left in the pagoda images of Buddha and books made of palm branches about 1198. The date is 1198 after Tiaoman Ta, who is supposed to have lived sixty-six centuries ago, so that it is one difficult to verify. Upon the reverse is a cabalistic sign which, worn by a soldier on the [pages 341 and 342 contain illustration] [343] breast, renders him invulnerable. This sign is as follows:-



10: d'Orleans--340-343 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-2
116, 173, 346, 777, 782

The figures are in Laotian.
Ruk is an invocation to the gods.
Poutin erexa means (Pra god) pout, protect me.
Tom (in) erexa means (Teonda god) protect me.
Sonkin erexa means, bonzes protect me.
In this, as in the other temples are to be found the conduit for the holy water, the pulpit, the sunshades, the divinities which lay hands on the faithful, the adorned gods and the Buddhas with clasped hands (Pra Hopokoute), while in the adjoining pagoda of more recent construction are twenty rows of small gilt Buddhas placed close beside one another against the wall."

10: d'Orleans--345 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos

247, 782

[LSS:During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"Flowers, including piles of gardenias picked in the gardens, four varieties of orchid and red and white flowers from different trees, are also bought in large quantities for the decoration of the pagodas..."

10: d'Orleans--346 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 782, 796, 821

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.] "April 12th
As we cross the stream, we notice all along the banks tiny rafts conveying presents, notably rice, and these are offerings made by the boatmen in order that they may take plenty of fish, and be favoured by the weather while out with their boats.

In the town the statues are still out in the open, or rather they are placed under a small scaffolding, the sacred water conduit pouring out its contents drop by drop through the dragon's mouth in which it terminates at one end, while the other end is in the pagoda and is being fed by the priests, long tapers with strips of paper bearing the donor's name are burning before the altar."

10: d'Orleans--352-353 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 535, 644, 782

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"The 15th [LSS: of April] is a more interesting day for us, as the king is to make a progress through the streets, the event being announced early in the morning by two of the four guns which the Siamese have mounted here.

When we arrive at the pagoda of Ouate Uisonne, we find that the crowd is already very great, and that women are bringing to the pagoda flowers and meats placed in large dishes. From the street to the entrance of the temple the path is covered with bamboo mats; the peristyle is draped with yellow [353] silk, beneath which the king is seated and is taking tea, while the bonzes are reciting prayers inside. The same dances described above are again performed, with the addition this time of a third figure, viz., that of a dragon with a golden head and jaws like a crocodile, the body being formed of material which has a blue stripe down the middle of the back. There are two men inside, and the monster, which goes through the most extraordinary contortions, is called Tsinng (the lion)."

10: d'Orleans--369 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 226, 782

"After leaving Muong Liep we camp at the right of the river near a sand-bank covered with the remains of former encampments. A hundred paces off is a large pond some 150 feet broad and of considerable length. It owes its name to its green waters nong kiou (green pond). In the month of February people come from all directions, and even from Luang Prabang, to camp on its edge and to fish. Many big fish are caught here, but now, we are told, they are in a cavern which extends under the sand-bank. I do not know how true this may be, but it is certain that in walking on the sand and striking it, a hollow sound is heard. Before fishing two bullocks are sacrificed to the dragon of the lake, and tchoum-tchoum is drunk.

When we talk of fishing ourselves with dynamite our boatmen dissuade us: 'they cannot dive because of the dragon.' "

25: Brodrick--96-97 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-3
116, 776, 769, 782, 823

"Although the people of the Laos are happy-go-lucky and carefree, and their mild and mitigated Little Vehicle Buddhism sits lightly upon them, the spirits are ever-present. Still, to this day, in a country where men are naturally, it seems, hospitable and open-handed, no stranger will be invited until the spirits have given their permission sought by offerings to them of five candles of pure beeswax, five frangipani flowers, five incense-sticks and a bottle of rice-alcohol.

All that happens to hurt man is the work of spirits. For 'primitive' men--and the Laotians, despite their real if rustic civilization, maintain many of the reactions and fundamental beliefs of 'primitives' --disaster, and the greatest of all disasters, death, is not 'normal' or 'natural.' In the Land of the Laos, the p'hi-lok or manes of the ancestors are jealous beings, easy to take offence and these p'hi or spirits and the ho or demons must receive propitiatory sacrifices. There is a similar underlying fear and faith in Cambodia but they are better hid. But in the Laos it may be said that all believe that ghosts come back at night in animal shape to plague the living. In animal shape. The archaic ideas which we tend to label rather too easily as 'totemistic' are all vaguely interwined with feelings rather than definable dogmas, feelings of some close relation between man and other animals.

With the p'hi-lok, who sow terror, and the p'hi phob, or evil spirits, are the numberless demons of the woods and the guardian genii of the wild. The forests are fearsome

places and best avoided. The old travellers told a terrible tale of the Forest of the King of [97] Fire, the Dong-Phaja-Fai, through which you had to climb to reach Korat, (1) and

1. Korat, of course, is in modern Siam, but it is in Laotian land. Mgr. Pellegoix's entertaining Description du Royaume de Siam was published in 1854.

the journey took five whole days. The awful name, alone, of this dread jungle spread terror, and countless wayfarers never came through the deep shades, since as Pellegoix relates, in an effort, doubtless, to rationalize the legends, here and there in this jungle, the earth contains 'mineral arsenic' whose dust the passer-by breathes and with it death.

If the Laotian goes into the jungle, ill may befall him, and surely will if he there spends the night. He may disappear for ever or he may be transported to an enchanted land wherein, for long years he may chase phantoms and illusions and if he manages, at last, to escape from this bewitched realm, when he reaches his hut he will not be recognized by his relations who, having mourned him as dead, have long ceased to think of him and will be most embarrassed and annoyed at his reappearance--or, if he shuns such adventures, he will emerge from the great woods as a sick man, the demons have struck him with malignant fever, dragging him to the grave in a few short days.

25: Brodrick--96-97 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-3
116, 776, 769, 782, 823

Picanon told a curious tale of what he experienced, years ago, when he was living on Khone island, right in the south near the Khong cataracts and the Cambodian frontier. After a day of torrential showers and violent storms, in the evening as he was finishing his dinner in his house, two young women ran in upon him and threw themselves trembling at his feet imploring him for aid and for protection. Thinking that some brigand was after the women, Picanon reached for his gun and made to go out on to the veranda, but the girls sobbed to him not to venture forth alone for a p'hi had called to them and cursed them at the very moment they were passing the house. They tottered with him out of the windows and pointed to a bushy mango-tree in a rice-field nearby. On the tree was a bird, luminiferous in the moonlight. It flew screeching away as Picanon fired a charge of shot in its direction, and the women were reassured."

25: Brodrick--98-99 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 779, 782, 792, 872

"...the framework of Little Vehicle Buddhism looks much the same as in the land of the Khmers. There are the saffron-robes, but the bonzes are sturdier and less composed than in Cambodia. When the monks do their rounds with their begging-bowls, the holy men do not hesitate to look women in the face, to speak with them and even to touch their hands. The Laotian bonzes are not the less Laotian for being bonzes, and by no means all of them observe strictly the precepts of their Order. In fact, some of them are [99] a little loose of conduct. Again, the Buddhist hierarchy in the Laos is almost more sacerdotal than monastic, and, in the public estimation, the bonze is more or less of a priest, that is, a man performing efficacious and quasi-magical ceremonies. There are temple-schools, as in Cambodia, Siam and Burma. In these schools the male population learns to read and write in the complicated Laotian script that is rather derived from Siamese than from Cambodian. The same moral obligations are supposed to constrain the monks. The offerings at the pagoda services are just fragrant frangipani flowers, candles and incense. There is no such divergence from Little Vehicle practice as would make of Laotian Buddhism a new religion such as is the Lamaism of Tibet. But everything is a little distorted, vague, misty, if we will. The alien religion is subjected to a strong push from beneath and is transmuted by an all-pervading atmosphere of nonchalance and good humour."

25: Brodrick--100 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 535, 764, 782

"...the funerals in the Laos are gay ceremonies. When a man dies his body is covered in perfume-soaked sawdust piled into a hardwood coffin--the Laos is a land of fine, hard-grained woods--and the whole is placed upon a catafalque near the house. The bier is watched day and night by youths and maidens who sing songs, improvise poems, crack jokes, make love, and play musical instruments, while, from time to time, but not too often, the Buddhist monks come and read sutras of the Good Law. Cremation is not so strictly observed as in Cambodia, but most bodies are burned, at least in the towns and larger villages. After the incineration comes the Feast of the Appeasement of the Spirits. A covered altar is set up near the dead man's house, and on the altar are offerings to the manes or ghosts, offerings of frangipani flowers, of rice, of betel, of alcohol and of swords. And all night long, the women dance archaic-sounding, rhythmic measures to the tunes strummed out by an orchestra."

68: Mouhot--154 [2] N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 782, 793

"[HD: In the villages of southern Luang Prabang province] The Laotian priests are continually praying in their pagodas; they make a frightful noise, chanting from morning to night. Assuredly they ought to go direct to Paradise."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

403 electricians hugged each other, and, enchanted by the din, the
527 audience began to drift away from the theatre and make for the dancing floor.

527 The second attraction in order of popularity was a love-court. A
584 quadrangular arrangement of tables had been formed, covered by a
● 782 thatched roof raised on posts decorated with woven bamboo
793 representations of animals, weapons and phallic emblems. Seated round the tables in the interior of the square were the girls, and their suitors sat facing them. Between the couples had been placed offerings of food, brought by the girls. Originally a tribute to some ancient, forgotten fertility god, a primeval Thai Venus, the offerings would be given, next day, to the bonzes. All through the night the bantering of witticisms, the singing and the exchange of improvised verse would go on, accompanied by the accordion-like
[584] wheezings of the Kène, the Stone Age gourd pipes of Laos. Sometimes through a happy fault in the circuit the splutter and bellow of the loud-speakers would suddenly lapse, and you heard the beehive dronings of the communal love-making, the kènes, and the voice of the presiding bonze, preaching continually in an archaic, incomprehensible language from the wicker cage into which he had been fastened. The cage symbolized the protection of his religion from these earthly distractions. As soon as inspiration failed he would be relieved by the next on the rota of preachers, waiting now to take his place.

584 Love-courts are the accepted preliminary to the consummation of
[533] affairs of the heart, which — despite European conviction that
576 romantic love is a Western invention — are accompanied in Laos by much versifying and mild, self-imposed frustrations. When, for instance, a well-known beauty is wooed by a number of suitors, a serenading match may be arranged on the veranda of her house to permit her to test under competitive conditions the poetic and musical capabilities of each of them. Complete pre-marital freedom
[836] is recognized, but much outward reserve is maintained. There is a time and place for everything. It is incorrect, for example, to

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

the greatest artistic interest. I asked the headman if it would be 796
possible to take any, as the bonze was crumpling and smashing them 782
vigorously with his broom. But the chief shook his head regretfully. 532
Buddhism had degenerated in these remote provinces and was 285
swamped with re-emergent spirit cults. These objects had been dedicated to the *phi** and would have to be burnt in a ritual fire. The *phi* would also receive the burnt essence, I noticed, of a large, very obscene, and no doubt magically valuable picture.

At about this time when the bonze was treading underfoot the 669
village's artistic output of several months, a party of Issarak or Viet- 726
Minh, timing their action to coincide with the convoy's arrival at 731
Moung Kassy, had set fire to the forest just south of the post. A steady breeze was blowing from that quarter, and the fire, started over a width of about a mile and fanning out as it advanced, moved slowly towards the fort.

Coming up over the river bank it took us some time to realize what was happening. There was a haze; but then there was always a haze in Laos, although by this time of day it should have been clearing and not thickening. And then we heard the crackling, punctuated with the sharp pops, which might have been distant rifle fire, but which were the explosions of thick stems of bamboo. Looking up then we saw the curtain of smoke hanging over Muong Kassy, white at the top, and black at its base and streaked occasionally by lance-points of flame, which were still two miles away.

We ran to where the car was parked, started it and tried to drive down the road towards the fire. Dupont was as pleased with it as July 14th. In about fifty yards we got tangled up with the convoy and had to leave the car on the side of the road and run on. The fire was advancing on a ragged front and was as irresistible as a volcano. Black smoke was being blown before it so that at first the flames were out of sight; but when they came through they were two hundred feet high – twice the height of the tallest tree. It went forward in zigzagging rushes; eating its way quickly through the bamboo

* [i.e., spirits. -- Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

000 eventually to the Buddhas to solicit their curative powers; and if so what we should learn from it about the prevalence of disease among Europeans.

217 The museum of Vientiane, which I visited in the hope of learning
532 something of the living art of the country, has also little more to
771 show than a collection of Buddhas. There is a tranquillity, a lack of compulsion in the Hinayanist Buddhism of Cambodia and Laos — so different from the neurotic deformation practised by the later Khmer kings — which is not propitious to the development of religious art. There was no violence or drama in the life of Buddha comparable to that of Christ, and the Indian Epics have been eschewed in Laos as improperly secular. It has been enough to carve Buddhas, and more Buddhas *ad infinitum*, seeking perhaps to multiply in this way the magic virtues which each image contains. The curator takes you round, explaining the characteristic postures — there are seven or eight — all of which can be appreciated in five minutes. After that there are minute differences of physique and physiognomy to be noted that reflect the influences of India, of Java, of Thibet or of Ceylon. That is all.

177 By the time the museums turn to the art of the people, the
532 grotesque animals in bamboo, the carved movable figures which
782 are obscene to European eyes — all of which become a pagan burnt-offering at the end of each *boun*[1] — it will be too late. The microphone is an infallible sign of what is to come. Nothing of this kind will survive the era of materialism, under whatever form it arrives.

253 These are the sights of Vientiane, but in addition there is a
825 spectacle which is popular with Europeans, who, remote, isolated, and living under difficulties, tend to shut themselves up within the protective social rituals of people in exile.

This spectacle is the slaughterhouse at work. I do not know whether or not it is illegal in Laotian law to kill animals, but certainly it is thought shameful, and the killing for Europeans is done at the dead of night on the outskirts of the town. The

[1] [Laotian religious festival. -- Analyst]

A DRAGON APPARENT

000 There was a recognized place about a mile up the river, which was free from weed and rock, and once again, because the water was deep and swiftly running, it was very cold and refreshing. We had
.515 been swimming round for an hour or so when we noticed a number of Laotian girls hanging about. They were not watching us, but sauntering backwards and forwards in twos and threes, chatting to each other. By the time there were twelve of them, Dupont, keeping well in the water called to them and asked if we were disturbing them in any way. One of the girls came to the edge of the bank, bowed, and looking down at her feet said that it was their usual bathing time, but that there was no hurry, of course. Dupont asked the girls if they would retire for a moment, and they walked a short distance away and stood in a preoccupied circle while we got out of the water. We then dressed quickly and walked on down the path leading to their village. After about a hundred yards we looked back. All the girls, quite naked, were in the water. At that moment two bonzes were strolling slowly along the bank past them; but the girls paid no attention. The bonzes were wrapped in the mantle of holy invisibility.

622 When we reached the village, Dupont asked punctiliously for
304 the headman, making the excuse that he wanted to visit the pagoda. It was quite evident that this headman was in the good graces of the garrison, and probably supplied them with labour. He was very dignified and had a fine house, with European furniture. Although barefooted, he wore a French suit. On the suggestions of the soldier from the camp he took down his trousers and showed us his legs, which from ankles to thighs were tattooed, in the local manner, so
796 closely that he seemed to be wearing stockings. The annual *boun*[1]
782 had just been celebrated at the local pagoda and a bonze was in the
532 act of sweeping into a heap the votive offerings with which the floor
285 of the courtyard was littered. There was a great collection of elephants, buffaloes, peacocks and tigers, all woven in basket-work. The kind of thing that Picasso produces when he is not painting, but perhaps rather better. They seemed to me to be of

[1] [i.e., religious festival.-- Analyst]

565 The common people, kind and carefree in character, roamed
175* over the country in all directions as easy-going masters, leaving
/462/ household tasks to the women and the work of the fields to dependents of an inferior race or to slaves. They were excellent boatmen and traders rather than farmers, so that they liked to perform the function of peddlers and served as a link between the multiple /55/ varieties of mankind which inhabited Lan-Xang.

567 Slavery existed--slaves could be obtained through capture, as
175* the result of debt or through trade--and brought high profits to those
563 who engaged in this traffic. In the region of Muong-Swa there was also a kind of serfdom which was applied to certain Kha tribes placed under the patronage of the king, the princes or the chief representatives of the nobility.

565 But if we consider the gentle and happy temperament of this
175* people whose good humor made up for everything, we are justified in believing that the relations between the various social levels must have been free of any harshness.

191 They spoke a dialect derived from the language which was imported into the basin of the Ménam by Rama Khamheng at the end of the thirteenth century and which was itself derived from the
771 graphs of India (1). They practiced orthodox Buddhism together
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1. Cf. Mission Pavie, op. cit. /Études diverses, Vol. II, "Recherches sur l'Histoire du Cambodge du Laos et du Siam"/ Inscription of Sukhothaï translated by Father Schmitt, p. 192: "It was in (1287 A.D.) that the king Rama-Khameng summoned a teacher who created Thaï writing."

with the cult of the "Phi" or Genii which represented for them the beneficent or maleficent forces of Nature. The bonzes were of comparatively pure morals amidst these peoples for whom enjoyment and pleasure were, when /56/ all is considered, the true gods. Although they were fairly ignorant and recited their prayers in Pali
/782/ without understanding them, they did not lack a certain air of nobility. They also enjoyed a high regard and had as much favor as they could desire. The bonzeries[1] which were built near the pagodas were at once places of inviolable asylum, schools frequented by all the children of the village, and workshops where trades could be learned.

/[1] Buddhist Monasteries--Analyst./

779 thoughts of your previous life have been good. Thanks to these efforts you will pass successively, in your various incarnations, from the state of man to the state of holy man, then to that of saint and finally to that of Buddha or perfection, from which you will fall back into the mute and calm abyss, the void and eternal rest. Besides the constant effort of the will to raise itself, the good deeds which you accomplish will tend to the same purpose, whether they be deeds of action, of thought, of word or of intention.

"Anyone who, on the other hand, abandons himself to evil actions and makes no effort to raise himself gradually moves away from the state dreamed by Buddha, and his successive reincarnations occur in the opposite direction, descending into the bodies of animals which may be more or less maleficent and despicable.

"The above, however, are speculations to which the Laotian intelligence cannot rise. The Buddhist religion as practiced in Laos demands only a few outer signs of deference towards bonzes and holy places.

771 "Besides Buddhism, the Laotians have retained, or transformed
776 into a cult, certain Spirits or Genii whom they call Phis, the in-
782 numerable deities of the Brahminic Pantheon by which Buddhism was accompanied when it was imported into Laos and which have been reduced to a lesser stature.

"All the forces of nature, all that is capable of bringing disorder into life and every movement or phenomenon which the Laotian cannot explain is personified by a particular Genie or Spirit.

"The cult of these Phis may be summed up as follows: it is an interested exchange of gifts or sacrifices by men, in return for the goodwill, neutrality or help of the Phis. Oftentimes, when the Phi is not greatly dreaded, a bargain will be made with him which will be repaid after he has performed his part of the bargain. The cult of the Phis has a widespread following, and they have their lay priests who bear the title of guardians of the Genii.

"In addition to the cult of the Phis, which is nothing more nor
771 less than a form of polytheism, the Laotians are subject to rather
821 numerous superstitions.

"Thus if an eclipse of the moon occurs Laotians imagine that a tiger is trying to devour it, and everyone at once begins to take turns banging on gongs, firing shots and using every means to make as much noise as possible so as to frighten off the aforesaid tiger and prevent it from swallowing the nocturnal star.

Khas

776 lay priests preside. These lay priests, or rather these servants of the
793 Spirits, correspond to the Guardians of the Genii in the Buddhist religion. Usually they exercise their ministry only when one of
755 their countrymen falls sick or dies.

"In case of a serious illness the servant of the Spirits goes to the sick person's house, goes to his side and recites a few prayers. Then he takes a bowl of uncooked rice on which he stands an egg with the smallest end upwards. With his right hand the officiant drops a certain number of grains of rice on the point of the egg, performing this operation three times in all. If the same number of grains of rice remain on the point of the egg each time, this means that a "Spirit" has entered the sick person's body.

787 "By means of similar maneuvers, the Spirit is then questioned to find out what he wants to eat. Depending on the answer, a buffalo, an ox or a pig may be killed. The designated animal is slaughtered and then scorched without being skinned so as to destroy the hairs which cover it. The entrails are taken out and carefully washed [154] in running water, then replaced in the animal's body. The victim is taken to the altar of the Spirits, which is located outside the village, and placed with its head towards the altar. Then prayers are said asking the Spirit to cure the sick person. When the ceremony is over the animal is taken back to the village, where it is cut into pieces and divided among all the inhabitants. The invalid rarely gets well.

"There are also sorcerers and witches among the Thais, who are consulted in circumstances of lesser importance.

[775] "The Thais believe in metempsychosis, although their ideas on the subject are not very clear" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

771 Religion of the Khas. Among the Khas, even those who practice
•782 Buddhism, the only existing religion is a religion of "Phis" which is similar to the Thai belief in "Spirits, Genii and Demons." The
776 outer manifestations of this cult consist of offerings of rice, flowers and fruit, but never include sacrifices of animals. Small shelters which affect the form of an ordinary house are built at the entrance to villages to receive propitiatory offerings destined for the "Phi".

the "Phi."

It is said that each of us has his good and his evil genie which 779
are engaged in a constant struggle, and that we are good or evil 776
according as the one or the other gains the upper hand. This is a
kind of symbolism of good and evil, but here the controlling and
guiding conscience is replaced by the influences of the moment,
the occasion, the circumstances and the milieu.

Each house also has its own "genie", reminiscent of the Roman 776
Lares, to which sacrifices and offerings are made on every possible 782
occasion.

The evil "Phis" are more dreaded and receive a great many more
offerings than the good "Phis," with whom no trouble need be taken.

In each village there is a sorcerer to explain the actions of the
"Phis" and teach the way to gain their favor. Although consultations
with them are not free of charge these sorcerers, who are called
Mo-hou-ha, Mo-Phi or Phi-pop depending on the province, are just
as [155] [Illustration] [156] [Blank page] [157] highly regarded as
the "Guardians of the Genii" of the Buddhist religion and, like them,
are exempt from servitude and taxes.

In times of epidemic all responsibility is attributed to the evil
"Phis", and in order to make them take flight the men of the villages
beat on the roofs of their houses with long bamboo poles until such
time as the "Phis" are supposed to have disappeared.

The Khas have retained a belief in metempsychosis which is 775
tinged with certain rather vague superstitions bearing on a future life
and some kind of resurrection. But this second existence is not
everyone's privilege, and will exist only insofar as one's life has
been a good one.

They also believe in the existence of a place of torment where
perjurers, murderers, etc. will remain for all eternity. To be sure,
they believe in a general way that a new life will begin and that
it will be a reward or a punishment for the individual's deeds in
his last incarnation. Thus a brave and good man will return as a
happy and respected chieftain. Others will be entitled only to an
animal existence, the importance of which in the scale of being will
be like a personification of their faults and merits. One odd fact is [562]
that women always want to return in the guise of a man.

Religion of the Lus. The religion practiced by the Lus is a 771
form of Buddhism which has been mitigated by certain local customs 779

346 Pagodas are always built on ground which has been perfectly leveled, is quite extensive and is surrounded by a wooden palisade or brick wall of elbow height.

[485] Within the pagoda enclosures there are bonzeries and dependent structures to serve as quarters for the bonzes, schools for their pupils and hostelries for travelers.

735 The construction and upkeep of pagodas are entirely dependent on the generous liberality of the faithful. Thus these edifices can be used
346 as a criterion for discovering both the state of prosperity of a region and the religious faith of its inhabitants.

[778] As used to be the case for our churches, Laotian pagodas and even their enclosures are, according to the customs of the land, sanctuaries which confer immunity against legal prosecution for certain crimes and misdemeanors.

[52] It is also in the enclosure and sometimes under the cloisters and verandas of the pagodas that the inhabitants gather on the legal holidays, and also private holidays, which are known as "Ngans".

844 Childbirth. Dr. Estrade describes the delivery of a woman of southern Laos as follows. The preliminaries, the operation itself and post-delivery procedure are the same, with only slight differences in detail, in northern Laos, and we may therefore quote Dr. Estrade's description as applicable to all of Laos in general.

"Childbirth never takes place in the house inhabited by the pregnant woman or her direct relatives, but always in the home of a neighbor or distant relative who gives hospitality to the patient until she is up and about again. The duration of pregnancy is counted in moons, as in all calculations of time, the moon being the essential element for the Laotian in the measurement of time and the occurrenc
777 of a great many phenomena. When a woman reaches the last moon of her pregnancy she takes certain precautions all tending to delay
824 delivery until the first phase of the new moon, since births during the last phases are signs of misfortune [189] such as the death of the child, deformity, etc. These prejudices have such force that parents are
[782] careless in caring for any child born during the last phases of the moon and in such a case all of their effort goes into prayers, offerings to the bonzes and the making of votive offerings (1)

(1) This assertion should not, however, be taken too literally or in any general sense. This is a prejudice which is kept up by the bonzes in their own self-interest, and is easy to see through. (Author's note.)

527 From time to time a girl will get up and leave the celebration.
836 She is soon followed by a young man, and both disappear into the
584 shadows, escorted for form's sake by a little boy or girl. This is the beginning of a liaison and will doubtless end in marriage, unless the young gallant is in too much of a hurry, clumsy or flighty and finds himself faced with paying one of the special fines if he compromises the girl and refuses to make up for it.

782 Offerings to the pagodas. There are other "Ngans" which have a
527 half profane and half religious purpose. That is to say, they are
531 established either to thank heaven for a lucky event or to solicit its clemency. They may occur, for example, either to celebrate a return to health after a long illness, or the success of a trading season or hunting or fishing expedition, or to call down blessings from on high on a trip which is being made or planned, etc. These types of "Ngans" then involve offerings to the pagodas and to the bonzes, offerings which bear the name of "Tone-Pheung" (literally, wax cut in pieces). They are so named because of the wax imitation flowers which decorate [222] a kind of pyramid or small pagoda supporting them, called "Pha-Sate" (in French, Faithful to God).

These little edifices are built and decorated by the friends or guests with a rapidity, a taste and an elegance which would be astounding if we did not know the degree to which artistic feeling is innate in the Laotian, and if we were not aware of the prodigious skill with which he is endowed.

Built on a bamboo framework covered with pieces of banana wood, carved with festoons and ornamental moldings, and arranged in tiers of roofs, in minarets and in columns, these "Pha-Sate," which are always between one and two meters in height, seem to be made of ivory and affect an extraordinary variety of forms each of which is more graceful than the last and which seem to be inspired by the architecture of the pagodas of India, Cambodia and Burma.

It will not be in vain to note that the only purpose of these ephemeral edicules, which will keep their new look for only a short while, is merely to present the wax offering in a less banal and more artistic manner than if it had been given in the form of thick, heavy, massive blocks.

The "Pha-Sate" are mounted on stretchers which are carried by men. Besides their wax flowers, they are decorated with natural

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flowers, pompoms and multicolored cotton streamers. Thick wax candles are stuck to the uprights, into which coins, gold nuggets, gold leaf and precious stones are sunk.

The wax is destined for worship purposes and the other offerings will be used for the upkeep of pagodas or for ornamenting sacred statues. The bonzes are not forgotten, for on the platform of the "Pha-Sate," either between the uprights or in special baskets ad hoc, there are articles of clothing, bedclothes, kettles, talaps, betel accessories, etc.

The day preceding the delivery of the "Tone-Pheung" to the pagoda is spent in making all kinds of preparations--cooking food, making betel quids, cigarettes, cakes and other necessary items [223] for the morrow's celebration. In the evening there is a kind of rehearsal for the "Ngan" in which the singers and musicians practice until an extremely late hour while the mothers and married women continue to work in the presence of the young men and girls talking merrily.

On the morning of the day when the "Tone-Pheung" is to be presented to the pagoda the bonzes are invited to a copious feast which continues long after their departure among relatives, friends and neighbors. The bonzes come back in the afternoon to bless the "Tone-Pheung" and to say certain prayers. Then, towards five in the afternoon, the procession forms and five or six bearers, depending on the weight, take the stretcher supporting the offering and raise it to their shoulders. The men follow first after the procession, and then the women, and the latter carry lighted wax candles in their hands. Musicians bring up the rear, and the whole crowd moves toward the pagoda by the longest route. There the "Pha-Sate" or the "Tone-Pheung" is taken around the enclosure three times and finally put down at the entrance to the pagoda. Those present place their candles in a special holder at the foot of the great statue of Buddha, and then withdraw while the bonzes recite prayers in the presence of whoever is making the offering and his relatives.

The guests then return to the home of their host, where the celebration goes on all night and sometimes even lasts into the following day.

The bonzes remove the wax from the "Pha-Sate" and use it to make candles for worship purposes. The flowers are placed at the feet of Buddha, and the coins and precious stones are put aside.

527 Those desirous of obtaining special graces give similar celebrations which last several days and several nights, and the offerings are more
182 beautiful and more varied. It is generally on occasions of this sort that assumptions of the habit by bonzes and their pupils are particularly likely to occur.

Being present at these ceremonies confers certain indulgences, and that is why they are so punctually followed and why all those who take part try [224] to help in celebrating them by offerings of all sorts.

[196] On the spot where the celebration is to be held, a sort of pulpit is constructed beforehand where the bonzes stand as they come up by turns to read passages chosen for the occasion from the sacred books. They never allow themselves to be disturbed by the surrounding noise, but stand as if transfixed in the middle of the songs and shouts.

It is readily understandable that this should be an agreeable way to procure one's salvation, but since it is very costly it is not within everyone's means. Fortunately, there are ways of compromising with
[565] heaven which enable even the poorest to associate themselves in these great celebrations, in accordance with their resources, by means of even very modest offerings and to benefit therefrom both spiritually and materially.

There is no doubt but that a belief in the efficacy of plenary and partial indulgences enters into their consideration, but it is equally reasonable to suppose that the attraction of the profane pleasures which one enjoys in the course of these gatherings is not the least of the motivating causes which lead the Laotian people to frequent them so zealously.

[171] Pirogue races. We have seen that pirogue races and regattas took place during some of the legal holidays, and a few words of explanation on this matter are given below.

526 This custom must have been introduced by the Malays and then
501 handed down from the Kmers to the Laotians, following an ascending direction from south to north.

The pirogues used in the "Souang-Hua" (1) regattas are specially

(1) Literally, pirogues which run.

built and exclusively reserved for this use. Sometimes as much as twenty-five meters in length, they are hewn out of specially chosen wood and have most elegant delicate and elongated lines. Their extremities are armed with what appear to be slender gilded horns. The exterior is lacquered black with gold ornamentation and the

586 the Laotians." (Le Laos français.) [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

764 Deaths. Funerals. Everything takes place among the Thais
769 as among the Laotians. The poor are buried, while well-to-do people are cremated in great pomp. Celebrations take place at which animals are sacrificed, there is a great deal to eat and quantities of rice brandy and rice beer are consumed. But here there is ancestor worship, and so the altar of the "Phis" of the house and the body itself receive offerings as long as the funeral feasts last.

After cremation, which, as in India, is practiced on a raised pyre at the bottom of a pit dug in the ground, the ashes and burnt bones are sealed in a jar with a few silver coins placed there to pay for the dead person's food during his wanderings through "space."

The jar is buried on the site of the pyre. Then [237] [Illustration] [238] [Blank page] [239] the mattresses, bolster and pillow of the deceased are placed on top, as well as food and a drinking vase full of water. All of his clothes are fastened to poles planted fan-wise on one side of the tomb. Sometimes a fence closes off the site of the tomb.

In some regions the jar containing the remains and ashes of the deceased is buried in a hidden place in the mountains, known only to the dead person's closest relatives.

This procedure, which is not a ritual one, is doubtless intended to place the mortal remains beyond the reach of any profaners of sepulchres who might be attracted by the temptation of the few coins mixed with the ashes.

Finally, a little house is often built over the tomb which is supposed to represent the dwelling place of the deceased.

Games, Celebrations, Festivals. Like their Laotian brothers, the
527 Thais are great lovers of celebrations. The chief holiday, one which is celebrated in May or June every year and during which all work ceases for four days, is that of the dead or Boun-Phi-Tai.

Animal sacrifices are made to the different genii, and are
•782 accompanied by prayers in honor of the dead. The favor of each
769 genie or "Phi" spirit is gained by sacrificing a particular animal, as a dog for the "Phi" of tigers, chickens and pigs for the "Phis" of the mountains, a goat for those which watch over the roads leading to watercourses, and buffalo and oxen, finally, for the "Phis" of the

village and those of ancestors. Prayers for the dead are said, and 782
when they are over the head and feet of a goat, crude clay statuettes 769
representing two men, two buffalo and two oxen, and numeroux wax
candles are placed on a raft made of banana trees. The raft is
launched full into the current of a river while men collect on the
banks and fire salvos of shots and shoot off fireworks.

The musical instruments of the Thais are the "Kene" and [240] 534
a kind of clarinet with two tubes, reinforced by gongs and tom-toms.

Their songs are not at all noisy and are much more like mono- 538
tonous chants.

The Thais have a very characteristic game, and this is the game 524
of the "inexhaustible jar." A jar of rice beer is placed on the floor
of a house and five bamboo tubes stuck in it to serve as straws. Five 273
men take positions around the jar, and each of them puts a tube in
his mouth. Into each of the jars, and above a kind of porous stopper
made of pressed paddy husks, water is poured by means of an ox
horn with a hole in the end. At a given signal both men and women
begin to suck conscientiously while the contents of the ox horn are
poured into each jar three times in succession. The ones who empty
their jar first win, and the losers have to drink the contents of ten
horns of water poured over what is left of the beer in their jar.

The Thai beer does not have a bad taste, and its alcoholic
strength is equivalent to that of hard cider, which it closely resembles
in flavor. Although the additions of water decrease the beverage's
percentage of alcohol it nevertheless produces a slight intoxication,
due primarily to the speed with which it is sucked through the straw.
But the inebriety never degenerates into a quarrel, and provokes
nothing but laughter, songs and unadulterated merriment.

Who would believe that the Thais have the custom of throwing 527
"confetti"? Nothing is more true, however, for in the celebrations
at the end of harvest, which take place in December or January,
the merrymakers throw cotton seeds mixed with paddy, with husks,
and sometimes also with ashes.

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Years	Number of animals exported	Average purchase price in Laos	Sale price at outlet markets
		francs	francs
1898	103 Horses	50	112.50
1899	185 Horses	From 30 to 125	From 88.50 to 225
	14 Mares	From 30 to 75	From 40 to 95

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Finally, we recommend the introduction of donkeys into Laos, with a view toward producing mules by coupling the donkeys with Laotian mares. The mules of Yunnan, which are highly reputed, reach heights as great as 1.32 meters. Extremely sturdy, they can readily carry a net weight of ninety kilograms of merchandise, not counting the saddle and pack-saddle. It is obvious that much use might be made of these animals in Laos for all kinds of transport.

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Buffalo. Buffalo breeding is much in honor throughout all of Laos. It supplies the needs of agriculture and of food consumption, which [403] absorbs a large number of these animals, particularly young ones. Many of them, in fact, are sacrificed on the occasion of celebrations and various ceremonies, while others are used daily for food in some of the larger centers.

It may truly be said that buffalo are raised everywhere, and since this animal is extremely hardy it can always find enough to eat, even in the forests.

The administration is encouraging the raising of buffalo in a most effective way, and since our arrival in Laos the work has grown by such proportions that exports of buffalo to nearby regions has assumed genuine importance. (4,721 head in 1898 and 3,144 in 1899.) When we entered into possession of Laos, however, the land had been largely depopulated of its animals. They had been removed by the Siamese, and it is nothing short of miraculous that the herds have been restored in so short a time despite the considerable losses caused by periodic outbreaks of epizootic disease, often extremely violent.

These favorable results have been achieved thanks to the wise foresight of the higher authorities, who prohibited all exports and imports as long as the bovine plague lasted.

796 It is not necessary to delay here over the licentious scenes, the songs
831 with words defying decency, the action of special marionettes, all
789 the allusions to the relationship between men and women intended to stimulate the fertility of the earth by sympathetic magic, all of which are well-known rites from classic antiquity up to ancient China. We will refer the reader to the authoritative study on the cycle of The Golden Bough by Sir James Frazer.

796 But what is the exact origin of this feast? Some claim that it is peculiar to Vientiane and has been celebrated in other towns of Laos only within the last twenty years. This comment is of capital interest. For, after the pillaging of Vientiane in 1827 by the Siamese General Phya Bodin, the majority of the population of Vientiane was deported to the right bank of the Mekong. Gradually the town was re-peopled by people coming from Tran-Ninh. Now it is a curious fact that on all the rocket shafts there is a strange decorative design whic is similar to those seen on bracelets and necklaces in the region of Xieng Khouang. Some [40] reliable authors having put out the hypothesis that the designs on these necklaces were the survival of an ancient solar cult, should one conclude that the rockets are the last misunderstood vestiges of an ancient fire worship, formerly practised by the populations of Tran Ninh? But then, at what time and under the influence of what rite, did this fire worship become transformed into a ceremony to obtain rain? The question remains open and perhaps future research and discoveries will give an explanation of this feast which is one of the most original and least known of Laos.

The Sacrifice of the Buffalo.

796 The sacrifice of the buffalo takes place at about the same time
● 782 as the feast of the rockets. This ceremony is known to all the Indonesian people of southeastern Asia, and its survival in Laos is of the greatest interest in the study of the antecedents of this country.

This ceremony is spread out through the months of May and June when the rainy season begins. It is found in western Laos where, according to a Pali chronicle, a Laotian king of Xieng Mai, who had no faith, adored demons and sacrificed buffaloes to the genii of the woods, the trees, the mountains, etc....

At Vientiane, near the Jules Bosc Avenue, can be seen a large stone which the Laotians worship as being a grain of rice. The buffalo is killed near this stone. A Nang Thyem woman, "inspired or possessed, after a series of invocations and ritual dances, pours water from a teapot onto the [illegible], while the by-standers flood the same stone with

[touques]. 796

The experts throw themselves on the stone, turning it over to see if its underside has been wetted. According to the arrangement of the dry spots, [41] deductions are drawn on the topography of the rice fields which will be flooded, or remain dry, and on the advantage of making rice fields either "high or low." 782 787 243

This sacrifice of the buffalo is found in the myth of Gavampati the strange monk held aloof by the Buddhist community because he took the attitude of being an enemy of the waters. His death allowed the arrival of the rains. 789

Khao Vassa (Feast of the Eighth Month).

This is the date of the beginning of the Buddhist Lent. During the three months of rains, not being able to go from one place to another preaching, the Buddha and his community retired into the park of the Jetavana. Besides the season of rains, as it awakens life everywhere, causes animals to swarm in great numbers. It is therefore impossible at this time of year to travel without violating, at each step, the precept which forbids the destruction of all existence, however infinitely small it may be. Thus, during this period, the bonzes may not leave the pagoda and are obliged to be present at the general confession. 796 792 783

Oldenberg describes this confession according to the Pali texts as follows:

"No monk may miss it. Only he who is stricken with mental alienation may be dispensed....By the light of a torch, the monks take their places at the place of assembly on low stools which have been prepared for them. Neither laymen nor student bonzes [bonzillons] nor nuns may be present, for the rule of the Order, to be recited in the form of a formula of confession, is considered in principle as a secret appurtenance of the monks only. This formula of confession, the Patimokkgam, is recited aloud by the oldest member [doyen].

"Oh Reverend one, whoever has committed a sin, may he confess it.... After the third time that the question has been repeated, if a monk does not confess a sin which [42] he has committed and which he remembers, he is guilty of an intentional lie. Now an intentional lie, oh reverend one, is an obstacle to religious life. Such are the words of the Blessed One."

Then there follows a list of the sins which must be confessed. At the head of the list are the most serious ones:

173: Deydier--31 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

775 According to the normal cycle of rebirths, when they have ended their stay in Heaven and are on the point of returning to earth, they themselves choose their future parents.

All the thirty-two souls go and haunt the water jar of the adopted household. After the third night, at the moment when the future father comes for a drink, they insinuate themselves into the folds of the belt of his sarong. After remaining there for three nights they will enter the maternal womb by the natural passages at the time of conjugal intercourse.

755 When one of these wandering souls leaves the body in order to divert himself, the man becomes ill. In order to [49] cure him, the
782 soul must be called back, and then the Sou Khouan is performed.

When the Sou Khouan is considered necessary, the master of the house goes and consults an achar (pronounced: atiar ~~ak~~, acarya), an aged bonze, for the choice of the ceremonial days and hours, where this achar will officiate.

When the prescribed moment arrives, the pha khouan (tray containing offerings) must be ready. In the center of the tray is a goblet artistically decorated with small flowering branches on which are attached tiny candles and white cotton threads about twenty centimeters long. Around this goblet are arranged a boiled hen's egg called khay khouan (egg offered to the spirits), some pellets of glutinous rice, cakes, and ripe bananas.

The tray and goblet may be of wood, copper or silver, the richest appearing at weddings. Instead of a single goblet, several of different sizes can be placed one on top of the other to form a pyramid, and be decorated with flowers, candles and cotton threads.

In addition to the eatables already mentioned, one can also place on the tray a ngeun fac (ancient silver coin in the shape of a parallelepiped weighing 225 grams) or some other precious object.

Next to this tray is placed a small one on which is set a yellow-clawed cock which has been plucked, drawn and boiled. This is the khay khouan (the cock offered to souls). In addition one can add the head and viscera of a boiled pig.

[273] The whole is completed with a bottle of [rice] alcohol and some glasses. In the olden days, the alcohol was contained in a small natural gourd, and the cups [50] were made of bamboo or wood. But rich people had porcelain utensils imported from China. The alcohol can be replaced by a jar of fermented glutinous rice, the liquid extract of which is drunk by sucking it through bamboo tubes dipped into the bottom of the jar.

173: Deydier--32 H, E-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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The person whose absent spirits are to be recalled sits next to the pha khouan, on the other side of which is the achar master of ceremonies facing him.

In the case of a wedding, the bride and bridegroom each sits in front of his and her own pha khouan and achar, the young man being on the right of his affianced.

Those present, consisting of aged persons, notables, relatives, friends and acquaintances, sit around mostly behind the interested parties.

While the candles are lighted, the achar commences to recite the prayer.

After the litanies are ended, the oldest and most respected of the assembly begins a series of the phouk khene (fixing a thread to the wrist) starting with the achar. The latter extends his forearm horizontally, either his right or his left, bent at right angles and held near the elbow by the hand of another person in the gathering. The opposite hand must be held in the attitude of prayer in front of the face as if it were joined to the hand on the other side. The man who will tie the knot then grasps the white cotton thread by the middle, so that the two halves hang down. These he draws over the wrist which is held in both directions of the axis of the arm, in order to sweep away the kho, that is, the misfortunes sent as a punishment for former sins. Then he detaches from the extremity of each thread a little piece which he throws towards the setting sun, thus throwing the kho afar. He then takes the khay khouan, a [51] pellet of rice, a banana, and finally one of the precious objects contained in the pha khouan. These he places in the extended open hand to serve as an offering to the khouan, and brings the small tray containing the khay khouan closer in such a way that the back of this hand is in contact with that of the chicken. Finally, after tying the thread around the wrist, he grasps the loops of the knot between the thumb and the forefinger, and rolls them together for about a second, giving him time to finish the formula of good wishes which he has been murmuring since the beginning while accomplishing the gestures described above.

The symbolical knot tied to the wrist serves to hold the khouan who have just been attracted to it, and prevents them from wandering away again. One can take advantage of the opportunity to "tie the wrist" of anyone present, either as a sign of friendship or of hommage. [576] At the close of the ceremony, which comes to an end without any more formalities, everyone is invited to a meal offered for the occasion.

The Bassi

782 This is the noble form of the Sou Khouan. It is not necessary to choose a day or a moment for its celebration. The Bassi greets the passing traveler to wish him welcome or a good journey on his departure. This is the typical Laotian ceremony.

Birth

843 Rites de passage. Van Gennep has defined under this name all the prohibitions and ceremonies which the pregnant woman, and one who has given birth, must observe in order to protect herself and her child from harmful influences. In Laos these prohibitions are strictly observed.

During Pregnancy. The woman must follow a certain number of observances in order to avoid the death of the [52] fetus. She must not eat partially hatched eggs, nor larvae of bees for she would make the child wicked like insects. She must not drink hot drinks for the child would be bald, etc. She must not step over a hollow oven for the child would have a harelip, nor over a horse's tether for the child would be a glutton; she must not paint her face for she would make the child frivolous, etc.

Before Delivery. These practices become stricter before her confinement, and others are added to them. The woman about to give birth must not eat round, hard-skinned eggplants, nor sugar cane, for the water bag would break with difficulty. The disorders of taste are due to the desires of the fetus, so these must be satisfied unless the desired dishes are forbidden. She must wear her skirt in such a way that the belt is always at the same height, for otherwise the child would not present itself well. She must not stand in the opening of a doorway, nor sit on a mortar for pounding rice, nor eat rice directly from the pot, for the progression of the fetus would be hindered at the time of birth.

There are also other beliefs. Wearing red garments would bring on hemorrhages, lying on one's back would risk making the placenta adhere, and it would become loose at the time of delivery only with great difficulty. Finally, to visit a woman in childbed might bring on a miscarriage, for the fetus might get the fancy to escape too soon.

When she awakes, the pregnant woman must strike her loins three times with her closed fists wishing at the same time that the placenta detach itself, and that the water bag break easily. In the evening, at the time of her daily bath, she should rub her belly with sand as she faces the setting sun in order to remove the layer of

173: Deydier--38 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

Marriage

In Laos one gets married in the even months. The favorite month is the sixth, that of the feast of rockets, and the last one possible, because in the eighth month the sons-in-law do not dare to interrupt the work in the fields and after that until the twelfth month the Buddhist Lent must be observed. 585 805

[56] The Marriage Proposal. Laotian tradition requires a previous request, and the obligatory giving of the Kha Khun Phi, tribute paid to the guardian genii, also the optional gift of the Kha Dong, the dowery which is given by the husband to the bride or to her parents. [782] 584

The boy's mother, accompanied by one or two aged female relatives, goes to the home of the young girl, and in the course of conversing asks if the girl is of age to be married. The mother is free to answer that her daughter is too young or that no young man loves her, and that she runs the risk of remaining an old maid. In this last event the answer is an acceptance. Then during further visits material questions are settled. Up until the day of marriage the two affianced ones do not exchange a single word, and besides it is not necessary for them to know each other. However, as the Laotian villages are not very big, it is probable that the young people have had the opportunity to meet several times at the boun.

The official request takes place the day before the wedding and on the evening of this day, after dinner, the young man goes to the home of his future bride and with her attends the prayer of the bonzes who bless the water contained in begging bowls. A white cotton cord links together the bonzes, the begging bowls and the two betrothed. The blessed water is kept throughout the night. The next day at the earliest hour the same bonzes, the relatives and friends come and sprinkle the two young people generously with this water. When they have dried themselves and changed their clothes, they make their morning offering to the bonzes who bless them once more. 788 584

The Sou Khouan. This is properly called the marriage ceremony. The days and hours for the ceremony are determined by the aged hora (astrologists or soothsayers) after a minute study of the horoscopes of each one. This ceremony takes place in the home of the young girl. After a [57] family Sou Khouan celebrated at his home, the husband returns to his betrothed accompanied by two comrades who protect him with two parasols and followed by a procession of bearers. 585 [787]

May, and Vat Visun to render homage to the protecting genii of the village and chase away the evil spirits. 527

During three days the Laotians do no cooking. Fish, turtles, bird etc., are bought in the big market and then set free as a sign of penitence and redemption of sins committed either voluntarily or not against living beings during the past year. 782

Possibly there is here a survival of the origin of the cycle of animals. According to Finot, at a very remote period, the custom of curing sick children by letting an animal go free had arisen. When a child was saved in this manner, he was said to have been born from this animal because he owed it life. He was forbidden to kill it, and the year of the child's birth was given the same [65] name as the animal. It is thus that the cycle of twelve years was established. 825 771

In the dry beds of the Mekong and of the Nam Khan, small that made of sand are built. Each one wishes the other a long life, whose number of years will equal the number of grains of sand forming the that, and great prosperity, for ill-luck has fled with the last day of the past year, and the New Year should bring as many riches as there are grains of sand in the that. Often around the principal that, other much smaller ones are erected, their number corresponding to the age of the builder. They express the wish of the one who has built them that he will see many more years added to those he has already lived. Actually these little that around the central mound are a reproduction of Mount Merou surrounded by different worlds (Cf. the symbolism of the That Luang). 521 805

In the pagodas the statues of Buddha are taken down from the altars and placed in little wooden prasat. They are sprinkled with perfumed water which flows in the hang-lin (a kind of gutter of gilded wood whose extremities represent the head of an aquatic monster), for the year now ending must be completely exhausted, and a minute cleansing, both material and spiritual, must leave a strictly clear way for the New Year. In the streets the young girls sprinkle not only the [562] bonzes whom they honor, but all the young men, to compensate for all the minor vexations they have endured from the men during the past year. The high dignitaries are not exempt from these showers of more or less clean water. Sometimes their faces are rubbed with lampblack or mud, when they have the ill luck of meeting a group of young girls. Do we have a survival of the theme of the svayamvara here (free choice of the man by the young girl)?

[66] The day in between, the day before New Year's day, is one of complete rest. All the events which occur during this day will determine

226 village. At the foot of the tree which is supposed to contain the
[182] dwelling of the genie, there is an altar about two meters high. Here,
the Chao Muong, surrounded by all the fishermen, places five roasted
chickens, two bottles of [73] rice alcohol, six coconuts, some betel
527 leaves, some areca nuts, some cakes, some small sticks of incense,
some beeswax candles. These he offers to the genie, asking him to
intervene in his favor so that the fishing this year be fruitful.

787 The genie is addressed by the intermediary of one of the village
sorceresses. As soon as she is "possessed" by the genie, she goes into
527 a trance. She is then unconscious of what is happening around her
and the genie answers through her mouth to the questions asked of her
226 by the fishermen. Invariably the genie's answer is the same: the
catch will be fruitful if traditions peculiar to the fishing of the pa beuk
are followed. The possessed woman, surrounded by a circle of fisher-
men, is at first standing up and is holding a cup in which are flowers,
[272] small sticks of incense, and ten beeswax candles. Her hands begin to
tremble when the genie enters into her; she then sets the cup down at
her feet, and, on top of her own clothes, puts on those of the fishermen
who present her with them on a tray for the sacrifice: an ordinary
sin, a cotton shirt dyed red, a belt and a turban also of cotton dyed
red to which are added a metallic plaster, and two yards [brasse]
of white cotton cloth for her personal use. After turning all around,
she squats down, her bust moving in a gyrating motion, and from
this moment she speaks in the name of the genie.

On the 10th day of the crescent moon the Chao Muong and the
preachers arrive at Kao Lieu, "the nine windings" of the Mekong,
where there is a very famous genie who is much more powerful than
that of Ban Si Khay. Forming a large procession, they fetch the
village sorceress with parasols, lances, swords and gongs. Piled high
on an offering tray are nine bars of silver, two kilograms of beeswax,
ten candles, four coconuts, some betel leaves, some areca nuts,
[74] a metal plaster, two yards [brasse] of white cloth, a raw hen's
egg, a bottle of rice alcohol. The procession returns with the sorcer-
ess to the front of the altars which are regular houses, and everyone
settles down in them. The entrance is to the west, that is, opposite
[182] the town. The offerings for the genie are four times greater than at
Ban Si Khay as each altar receives nine roast chickens, nine bars of
silver, four coconuts, some areca, some betel, candles, small
sticks of incense. In addition, every three years, a buffalo is sacri-
ficed, and in the years between, a pig. There are the same questions
and the same answers as at Ban Si Khay.

173: Deydier--48 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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In the night of the 11th to 12th day of the crescent moon, the stop is at Hat Hin Siou where some offerings are made to the local genie: two coconuts, two chickens, etc., with the request that he be favorable to the fishing. There are two more stops before arriving at Ang which must be reached on the 12th day of the crescent moon, at eight o'clock in the morning. In the evening all the fishermen go to the village to question the sorceress. There is no procession, but the same gifts as at Ban Si Khay; same questions, same answers. On the 13th day, at seven in the morning, they go to the altar of the genie with offerings to invite him to come and live in the temporary shelter which has been erected on the sandbank at Ang, north of the village, and to beg him to favor the fishing. The whole procession then goes toward the temporary altar and deposits its offerings.

On the 13th day of the crescent moon, the fishing starts at the precise moment when the moon disappears behind the mountain, that is at about four o'clock in the morning.

The gong is struck and immediately the 384 fishing dugouts go into the harbor. Each dugout is decorated with leafy branches, with seven untwisted cotton threads and with a bottle of rice alcohol, and is occupied by two fishermen. They throw a net measuring three meters in width and six meters in length which sinks down to a depth of [75] 35 brasses [70 meters] by means of lead sinkers. The first fish caught is offered to the genie. It is laid gently on its side, its head turned towards the rising sun, its tail lifted towards the setting sun. Some flowers are laid on its cheek and sprinkled with alcohol, while the master of ceremonies says: "The moment of celebrating the feast of Ang, which is your feast, has arrived. The ritual offerings have been made to you. To bring this feast to a happy close we beg you to give the fishermen pa beuk in great quantities."

The fish is then killed with a pointed bamboo which is sunk between the fish's eyes. It is then divided in two. The prepared liver is offered to the genie after it has been fixed in various ways according to ritual recipes, while candles and small sticks of incense decorate the nine offering trays each of which bears the bowl of food.

10: d'Orleans--347-348 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 783, 796, 823

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"Women sprinkle water over the chief bonze, and others bolder still, come and pour the contents of their jar over some young student. This custom of sprinkling or pouring water, which is also to be met with at certain festivals in Siam and Burmah, would not be so suprising if it were confined to the priests, but here the girls pick up mud and plaster the faces of the young men, whoever they may be, and our white dresses tempt them so much that we are obliged to assume a very stern look in order to keep them at a distance. The young men, however, are too gallant to resent these attentions, and as for the bonzes, they get something better than water offered them, as presents are made them in the shape of pans full of food, which are handed to two men who accompany the chair.

When the procession reaches Ouate Sieng Tong, it enters the courtyard, and the bonzes, after reciting [348] the usual prayers, enter a sort of shed surrounded by planks and having upon the top the same water conduit which has been used for sprinkling water over the gods. The women pour their water into this conduit, which flows down over the priests, who emerge from the shed purified and washed, but dripping wet, though this they do not seem to mind."

10: d'Orleans--353-354 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 644, 783, 823

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"The king comes and greets us after he has taken his tea; he seems to be amiable and intelligent, but, as at all our other interviews, timid and ill at ease, especially with the Siamese Colonel upon the one side and us upon the other. As soon as our audience is over, he ascends the small wooden construction over which the water conduit is placed, and his servitors bring him one after the other several jugs of water which he pours into it and which trickle down, drop by drop, upon a Buddha placed on [354] a gilt chair in an adjoining building."

[touques]. 796

The experts throw themselves on the stone, turning it over to see if its underside has been wetted. According to the arrangement of the dry spots, [41] deductions are drawn on the topography of the rice fields which will be flooded, or remain dry, and on the advantage of making rice fields either "high or low." 782 [787] 243

This sacrifice of the buffalo is found in the myth of Gavampati the strange monk held aloof by the Buddhist community because he took the attitude of being an enemy of the waters. His death allowed the arrival of the rains. [789]

Khao Vassa (Feast of the Eighth Month).

This is the date of the beginning of the Buddhist Lent. During the three months of rains, not being able to go from one place to another preaching, the Buddha and his community retired into the park of the Jetavana. Besides the season of rains, as it awakens life everywhere, causes animals to swarm in great numbers. It is therefore impossible at this time of year to travel without violating, at each step, the precept which forbids the destruction of all existence, however infinitely small it may be. Thus, during this period, the bonzes may not leave the pagoda and are obliged to be present at the general confession. 796 792 783

Oldenberg describes this confession according to the Pali texts as follows:

"No monk may miss it. Only he who is stricken with mental alienation may be dispensed....By the light of a torch, the monks take their places at the place of assembly on low stools which have been prepared for them. Neither laymen nor student bonzes [bonzillons] nor nuns may be present, for the rule of the Order, to be recited in the form of a formula of confession, is considered in principle as a secret appurtenance of the monks only. This formula of confession, the Patimokkgam, is recited aloud by the oldest member [doyen].

"Oh Reverend one, whoever has committed a sin, may he confess it.... After the third time that the question has been repeated, if a monk does not confess a sin which [42] he has committed and which he remembers, he is guilty of an intentional lie. Now an intentional lie, oh reverend one, is an obstacle to religious life. Such are the words of the Blessed One."

Then there follows a list of the sins which must be confessed. At the head of the list are the most serious ones:

796 1. To have had carnal relations with anyone, even an animal.
2. To have stolen the property of others.
3. To have killed.
792 4. To have falsely usurped spiritual perfections, and with the intention of personal profit.

783 Then follows a list of lesser sins. When the enumeration is completed, the reader addresses the monks, repeating three times the following question:

"Now, I ask the reverend ones: Are you free of these sins? And for the second time: Are you pure? And for the third time I ask: Are you pure?" If everyone is silent, the reader says: "The reverend Ones are free of these sins, therefore they are silent, that is how I understand it."

In this way are catalogued in more than two hundred paragraphs, without much order, the precepts dealing with the daily life of the monks, their housing, their food and drink. No detail however irrelevant or insignificant is omitted.

In Laos as in Cambodia "during the entire rainy season, a taper of the Vassa must burn in each pagoda. This consists of a more or less richly carved, painted, wooden cylinder into which is poured virgin wax around a wick" (E. Porée-Maspéro). Before going into retreat, the bonzes are given garments, then the people form a procession and enter the pagodas where they deposit their taper.

[43] Ho Khao Padap Dinh--the Feast of the Dead of the Ninth Month

196 773 This feast is celebrated on the fifteenth day of the waning moon of the ninth month and is accompanied by offerings to the bonzes.
735 A Jataka (Sadhitissaraja) taken from the Ha Sip Xat tells us the benefits acquired by celebrating this feast.

"Two poor devout Buddhist woodcutters sold the produce of their labor and bought two large urns. Into them they put some rice, a few pieces of sugar cane, two bowls, four bananas, some meat and fish, and some delicacies. They offered all this to a bonze on the day of the feast of the dead and vowed to be born again in a better state. As a result of this act of charity they were born again into a royal family. The husband became king and his wife queen. The Buddha then said to those who were listening to this story: "When an act of charity is done for the feast of the dead, one attains three blisses: the terrestrial bliss of being king, the celestial bliss of becoming Indra and finally the supreme bliss of Nirvana."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

deserted the village paddy fields at our approach. Dupont told the 361
driver to wait behind as we went into the village. As a convert to 361
the Laotian way of life he paid much attention to local etiquette; 576
he said that we must on no account appear with arms. There were 784
no signs of life in the village and Dupont found this disconcerting. We must keep a careful look-out, he said, for a white thread across the path, or a cross decorated with red flowers. Either would mean that the village was taboo to strangers; in the first case because of a violent death or the presence of epidemic disease and in the second because the feast of the tutelary spirit was being celebrated. It was for reasons of these periodical taboos that Laotian villages, although built as near as possible to roads, were not actually *on them*. The places where we had stopped that day were not true Laotian villages at all, but military posts, around which a few store-keepers, mostly Chinese, had grouped themselves.

Although Dupont could find no signs of a definite taboo, he was 576
still very uneasy that no one had come out to greet us. The correct 784
thing on entering a Laotian village with the intention of staying the night was to ask for the headman and obtain his permission to do so. Unless this were done it would be a grave discourtesy to enter any house. Dupont emphasized that while the Laotians were tolerant, civilized and hospitable, there were certain indispensable forms, and as we mooched about the deserted village, he poured out information on the subject; even describing the position for correct sleeping; body stretched out at right angles to wall containing door, feet pointing to the door. When I suggested that we might find an empty hut and sleep in it, he was startled. Although the villagers might overlook minor breaches of custom, he said, this would be a grave one, involving them in an expensive purification ceremony before the hut could be occupied again.

I offered no more suggestions and in the end we found a rather 576
scared looking woman who said, when Dupont spoke to her in Laotian, that the headman was away, and was not expected back. It was quite clear now that we were not welcome, and Dupont said

562 rather, to the wife, that she be good and serviceable and that she sweeten the conjugal life.

A great mandarin who has chosen a life's companion, be she the offspring of a family from the common people or not, has raised her to his rank. She is therefore just as respectable, if not more so, as her husband, since the fair sex is, out of courtesy, more highly regarded than the stronger sex in all civilized countries.

We must therefore render the respect to Laotian women which is their due by the same title which makes it the due of Western women. It is necessary:

1. --that at gatherings the women should not sit on the floor while the men are seated in chairs.

2. --that at banquets the women be placed each one between two men;

3. --that the places of honor be reserved for the weaker sex;

4. --that the women be served before the men;

5. --that the man yield his seat to the woman in auditoriums, in vehicles of public conveyance, etc.

In a word, it is necessary that the man respect the woman and that he no longer look upon her as inferior to himself.

* * *

000 To conclude, in my opinion it would be preferable to modify and even to suppress certain of our customs and of our traditional ceremonies provided this modification does not run contrary to Buddhist rules. There would be occasion to regulate, notably, the funeral ceremony in Laos: for example in a funeral procession to prescribe orderly walking and the observance of silence; to prohibit smoking, the chewing of tobacco, and so forth.

771 Sometimes "tradition" and "superstition" are confused. I repeat, all that partakes of the domain of superstition must be banished. The Laotian is subject to a great number of superstitions, of which the following are some examples: /979/

784 It is forbidden, under certain pretexts:

--to have one's hair cut on Wednesday and to wash one's hair on Thursday because it is on these days, it is said, that Buddha had his hair cut and washed;

--to go on all fours in the deep forest, in order not to attract

tigers! 784

--to eat lying down, for fear of turning into a snake; a story told to encourage children to hold themselve well while eating;

--to eat the liver and the gizzard of the chicken, for fear of becoming mad: a story to make children leave, to the adults, all that is good on a dish;

--to open one's strong-box or one's small box for locking up money, jewels or other valuable objects, during the night; wealthy persons who did not observe this rule would soon become poor;

--and finally, to put an end to this long enumeration, there is the interdict to a married couple to sleep in the same bed on the birthday of one of the marriage partners.

I leave you the trouble, Ladies and Gentlemen, to think about these beliefs.

Among us a wedding present consisting of jewels or of silver 784
plate may be of an uneven number. But where bank notes or objects /801/
of lesser importance are concerned, the number must always be even.

Certain superstitions come close to French superstitions. For 787
instance: a buzzing in the ears signifies: "Somebody is saying something bad about me somewhere." In Laos if someone drops his bowl of rice while eating, this has the same significance. The buzzing in the ears means that the phi (demon) asks you for the way but that you do not deign to answer. That is why you get a hard box on the ear. Then you must answer him: "Thang louang nok ban!" (Follow the great road which passes in front of the house). An itch in the ears means that it is going to rain.

Another French superstition which has passed into a proverb 777
is: "Lucky at cards (play), unlucky in love." Laotians are more fortunate, for they do not have this belief. Among us one can be lucky at play and at the same time lucky in love.

Pierre NGINN

Director of Information Nationale
au Laos, corresponding member of
the Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient.

10: d'Orleans--313-314 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 688, 785, 793

"From the second grade the priest is supposed to be a celibate, but the rule is sometimes disregarded, and it is no uncommon thing for a priest of loose habits to change his dres [sic] at dusk and go out to amuse himself. If his superiors catch him, he and his accomplice are sentenced to some such severe labour as supplying bricks for the pagoda, while in Cambodia they are more severe, the pagoda itself being closed.

These vows are not necessarily perpetual, and if a Tiammone feels that he no longer has any vocation, [314] his superior can release him from them upon the request of his relatives and after the performance of certain formalities. This, however, is a rare occurrence."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

241 sufficient for his requirements. If there are six members of the
461 family, six standard, equal sized portions of land will be cultivated.
511 If a child is born into the family another piece of land is cleared and
792 worked. When a member of the family dies, whether it be a baby or the grandfather, cultivation of his portion will be stopped. Just enough is produced for the family to eat and to provide a small surplus sold in the market – *with the bonze's approval* – to buy occasional strict necessities, like a silk shawl and a bicycle for the
735 daughter. There is no social insurance and there are no poor. The
556 old and the sick are supported by the young, or, where they are
792 left without able-bodied providers, by the community, and the
771 bonzes give instructions for the necessary land to be placed under cultivation for them. The accumulation of wealth which is not to be used for definite, approved purposes, causes a man to lose prestige among his neighbours, just, as in the West, the process is reversed. The main difference, it seems, between Buddhism in Indo-China, and Christianity – apart from any question as to their relative merits – is that, whether we admire it or not, the former is largely put into practice.

It is a stimulating reflection that the Western millionaire, obsessed for the sake of social distinction with the amassing of enormous possessions – little of which he can personally consume – would attain the same ends of personal celebrity under a Laotian Buddhistic order of things by his priestly austerities – by embracing the most abject and prestige-conferring form of poverty.

181 For this reason perhaps the local Evangelist missionary and his
771 wife have made no converts. Like all who have lived among the
●785 Laotians they are charmed with them – although, of course,
797 disappointed at their blindness. They also deplore their immorality.

In the matter of converts the Evangelists have been no more unsuccessful than their Portuguese, Spanish and French forerunners. The Laotians having little capacity for abstractions, either in their

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Miao AE5

language or religion, cannot follow the subtlety of Western religious concepts. They have a passion for taking things *au pied de la lettre*. Being told that the basic commandment of Christianity as well as Buddhism is 'thou shalt not kill', they cannot swallow such reservations as capital punishment and 'the just war'; while casuistry repels them. Moreover, a bonze, the spiritual leader of the country people among whom he lives and works, occupies by virtue of his rigorous fulfilment of the principles of his religion, a position in their esteem accorded in the West, say, to a boxing champion. The Laotians have come to associate the prestige of sanctity with certain abstinences and uncomfortable practices. The bonze gives an example of utter renunciation which is awe-inspiring by comparison with the minor self-abnegations of the villagers. The Laotians, therefore, although tolerant in the extreme, are not impressed by the worth of a would-be spiritual leader who presents himself to them loaded with material possessions. And this negative attitude deepens into a certain aversion if, as usually happens, the holy men of the West spend most of their time hunting in a country where animals must be allowed to die of old age. I fear that where the austere Dominicans, and the Jesuits failed, there is little hope for the Evangelists.

However, the missionary was far from despondent. There were Meos in the mountains not far from Vientiane, and just as in the plateaux of Viet-Nam the Moïs had not rejected the Gospel, so here the primitive peoples of the mountains seemed promising material for evangelization. There would be no risk of jeopardizing conversion by hunting, among such hearty amateurs of open-air sports as the Meos, and if the missionary had more of this world's goods than they – well, that was a sure sign that his *ai* (or spirit), was stronger, and it would be a good thing to imitate him. Before the Meos could trouble themselves with renunciatory religions they would have to create a comfortable and abundant civilization for themselves. There was no chance of becoming sated with prosperity at the top of their mountains.

792 vicar and young seminarist. The grades have the following titles:

1. Nên (student or Xieng). Thi-Houa (Deacon), student preparing for ordination;
2. Tiao-Houa or Pha (ordained bonze or vicar);
3. Samdet or Tiao-Wat (curate, head of a pagoda);
4. Sa (Satouk-Nial), bishop;
5. Khou, bishop;
6. Thane, archbishop. [Illustration alongside text here.]

There are also bonzesses who devote themselves to the service of the temples of Buddha and are mainly responsible for keeping them supplied with flowers, candles, perfume, etc.

Bonzesses must be at least forty-five years old. They wear white garments, keep their heads completely shaved and take only two meals each day, before noon. They are not allowed to live with their husbands and must sleep on ground in close proximity to the pagoda. They are a kind of vestals, but with the difference that they are neither young nor virgins and that they do not take vows of chastity.

792 The following are the duties imposed on bonzes and the faults
785 which they must avoid:

[162] Ask alms each day for your living.

You must always be clothed in your yellow garments.

You must live in pagodas and not in lay habitations. You must abstain from pleasures of the flesh, from stealing, from lying and from murder of any person or thing which has life.

Do not be prideful of your own cleanliness.

Do not till the soil.

Do not destroy any tree.

Do not kill any animal.

Do not drink any intoxicating beverage.

Do not eat rice after noon.

Do not pay attention to songs, music or dancing.

Do not use any perfume on your body.

Do not sit or sleep in a place which is higher than the one where your superior is.

Do not have either gold or silver in your possession.

Speak only of religious subjects.

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Do only religious works.
Do not give flowers to women.
Do not thank anyone for giving you alms.
Do not borrow anything from laymen.
Do not lend anything on interest, not even a small pot.
Do not have implements of war, lances or swords.
Do not eat to excess.
Do not sleep to excess.
Do not administer any poison.
Do not give strong medicine to a pregnant woman.
Do not make any incision which will draw blood.
Do not seek any pleasure in looking on women.
Do not sleep in an open place.
Do not work for money.
Do not buy or sell anything.
When you eat, do not make noise like a dog.
Do not sing any joyful song.
Do not play any instrument.
Avoid races and gambling.
Do not judge your neighbor; do not say of this man that he is evil, or of that man that he is good.
It is sinful to do any of the following:
Not to walk through the streets in a contemplative posture.
Not to shave your head and eyebrows, or to neglect your fingernails.
[163] To move your legs when you are seated.
To affect an austere air, to have a more severe air than others and not to make your words agree with your actions.
To receive alms in order to give them to someone else.
To speak to a woman in a secret place.
To mingle in royal affairs, except when they concern religion.
To cultivate the soil; to raise turkeys, chickens, cows, buffalo, elephants, horses, pigs or dogs as laymen do.
To own objects of gold and silver as your private property.
To preach in any other language but "Pali".
To sit on the same mat as a woman.
To cook rice.
To eat anything which has not been offered with hands clasped.

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To dream of a woman and be awakened by the dream.
To covet the property of others.
To speak profanely of earth, wind, fire, water or anything whatsoever.

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Ordained bonzes, like novices and students, shave their heads, eyebrows and beards carefully and repeat this operation every two weeks. Their clothing, which is the same for all and is of a uniform yellow color obtained by means of a jackwood dye, consists of a sarong, a kind of very full skirt which is worn folded in pleats and extends from the waist to the ground, and which is held in at the waist by a narrow sash. A half-tunic passing under one arm is attached to the opposite shoulder, and is split on one side. The whole garment is kept in place by a sash worn crosswise, and is covered with a kind of toga in the antique manner which is severely draped.

Ordained bonzes wear in addition a piece of pleated cloth on the left shoulder on which sacred characters and various formulas are inscribed.

Bonzes obey a code which was brought to them from India together with the sacred books, and a part of which has been quoted above.

The code requires that their clothing should not be made of one piece of cloth which is whole and of full width, but that it be made of unmatched pieces sewn together. Since the code does not in any way specify the nature of the cloth, one sees bonzes' garments [164] of silk and velvet as well as of cotton and flannel, depending on the generosity of the donors.

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Failure to keep the vow of chastity is very severely punished. The guilty person is marched through the village or city and seated backwards on a horse or carried on a wattle while a minor functionary proclaims the fault committed aloud and beats on a gong. Children and even adults utter hoots and throw filth at the guilty party and his female accomplice, who follows a few steps behind him. When he gets back to the pagoda the bonze is degraded from his rank and then handed over to the civil authorities if there are any grounds for so doing (1).

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(1) This custom has fallen into disuse. Faults committed by bonzes are treated much more indulgently in Laos than in Cambodia.

149: Reinach--124 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Although less pure than in Cambodia, the bonzes' morals in Laos are generally fairly good. They are, moreover, greatly loved, highly regarded and fondly cherished. When there is a celebration or a great feast in a family, part of the choicest dishes is always reserved for the bonzes. 792 785 554

On the next to the last day of every phase of the moon, the bonzes must make public confession of their faults and be prepared, should the need arise, to undergo the punishments which the code stipulates. 792

Bonzeries are schools and at the same time workshops where all trades are taught. All knowledge is concentrated in them, as our knowledge was during the Middle Ages in monasteries. 871 874

Together with the pagodas, they are also spots of inviolable asylum in accordance with certain rights, and hostelries where travelers are lodged and fed with the produce of the bonzes' alms-seeking. 485 778

Newly ordained bonzes must stay in the pagoda at least three months, and may quit their habit at the end of this period. If a bonze desires to return to the pagoda after he has reentered lay life, his reassumption of the habit gives rise to the same formalities and ceremonies as the first time. It is a new ordination. 792

The liturgical litanies of the Buddhist religion, which the bonzes psalmodize, may not be translated into Laotian. The bonzes and the [165] [Illustration] [166] [Blank page] [167] Laotian faithful, as well as the cantors and the French adepts, chant prayers whose meaning they do not understand (1). 198 788

(1) In reality the Laotian, Lu and Youn bonzes form a sort of caste as the Druids used to in Gaul. More particularly, they are the ministers of worship, the repositories of moral authority, of scientific traditions, of secrets and of artistic and industrial methods. They transmit by word of mouth the precepts of Buddhist dogma, which were long ago explained by those who introduced the religion into the land. But the writings in "Pali" which contained these, although they can still be read mechanically by a few scholars, are no longer understood. Thence arises the necessity of handing down their meaning by word alone. Thence also, without doubt, arises the increasingly greater attenuation of the purity and force of these principles as they 792 779 178

149: Reinach--132 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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(Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

Besides these major holidays there are a certain number of others which are more religious than secular in character and which fall in between the ones dealt with above.

In the course of the sixth month (April-May), for example, a religious holiday is celebrated in memory of the first leaders of the Buddhist religion.

At the end of the eleventh month, on a date which is fixed in accordance with the rites and which varies from one year to another, a celebration takes place in the pagodas in honor of the men who first introduced Buddhism into Indo-China.

Finally, after the twelfth month (November or December), comes the feast of penitence which applies to all the faithful. During a [174] kind of Lent which lasts for nine days, true believers must abstain from certain foods and from all sex relations.

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Since our establishment in Laos the province capitals and all the centers where Europeans live have celebrated the National Holiday on July 14 which the natives call Boun-Phi-Falang-Sete (Holiday of the French Genie) or, by onomatopoeia, Boun Ka-Tor-Yu-Yet. [C. A. M. Translator's note. The latter term seems to be an approximation of the French Quatorze juillet ("July 14").]

MORES AND CUSTOMS

101

By reason of their diverse origins and the relations into which they have entered with neighboring peoples, as well as by the cross-breeding which has taken place, the races of Laos necessarily have characteristics, costumes, dwellings and, in a word, mores and customs which differ to a greater or less extent from one race to another (1).

(1) On this question of mores and customs we shall have recourse from time to time to a notice entitled Le Laos français which was written by the Superior Resident in Laos and based on reports and local monographs which were provided by our administrators and are in consequence authoritative.

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If we have consistently reproduced here extracts from the above work, this is because they provide an admirable summation

173: Deydier--14 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

The Laotian Bonze--The Monastic Rules. 792

As in Ceylon, Cambodia and the other Buddhist countries, the 785
Laotian who enters religious life does not make a perpetual vow. To become a bonze, all that is necessary is to be twenty years old, not to have killed, nor stolen, nor have any skin disease. When he is ordained, the young man agrees to observe the Buddhist rules which are: not to take life, not to steal, not to sin against virtue, not to lie, not to drink intoxicating liquors, not to eat outside of the prescribed hours, not to attend entertainments which excite the senses, not to touch gold, nor silver, etc.

The bonze's head, chin and eyebrows are completely shaved. 301
In principle he must shave twice a month. The garments of the bonze must not be made of one piece and their color must be yellow ochre 292
or yellow. These two traditions have their origin in the history of the life of the Buddha. When he left the palace of his father, the Buddha cut his hair and exchanged his princely garments for those of a hunter. Now, the hunter was a poor man dressed in rags covered with the yellow ochre dust of the fields. Therefore, since that day, in memory of the first religious garments of the Buddha, tradition demands that all bonzes wear this costome. Texts are not agreed as [795]
to the color, the Saddharma-smrtyupasthana sutra giving a whole list of colors for the dyeing of religious garments. We will not delay over the discussions which have arisen amongst the various Buddhist schools over [25] this problem. We will limit ourselves to stating that in central Asia and in Tibet the bonzes wear brownish-red garments instead of the beautiful yellow color of the Laotian and Cambodian togas.

Bonzes get up very early in the morning. Having made their toilet and said their prayers, they leave about seven o'clock in single file to beg for their food. To be precise, we should add that the containers for the alms are usually carried by student bonzes [bonzillons]. After returning to the pagoda they have a brief meal, then they teach [871]
the student bonzes [bonzillons] to read and write, while others perform the manual tasks necessary to the upkeep of the monastery. About noon, the bonze has another meal which is the last of the day. He does not eat any food till the following morning. After the meal he [264]
must wash his fingers (he eats only with his right hand), and rinse out his mouth. Then he has a siesta, and at the close of the afternoon he works at his tasks as in the morning. In principle he must never go out alone; he is always accompanied by a brother monk to protect him from any temptation.

173: Deydier--15 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

He[1] must never look at a woman. However a few old women are 792
seen in the pagoda. These are the devotees. They are dressed in 785
white, their heads are completely shaved, and they lead a life of
observance and asceticism which is as rigorous as that of the monks. 562
They render small services to the bonzes, decorate the altar, etc.,
but they live outside the enclosure of the pagoda.

Laotian Buddhism.

In a recent pamphlet, His Excellency Thao Nhouy Abhay, former 779
Minister of National Culture and Education, wrote: "In its intrinsic 795
substance Buddhism is deeply tolerant, but ours [26] has truly become
not austere enough." Therefore he proposes some necessary reforms
which would quickly raise the intellectual and moral level of the
bonzes in Laos. There are two sects in Laos: the Mahanikay and the [792]
Thammayut. The only difference between the two is the way in
which they consider that monastic rule should be observed. Nothing
distinguishes them in appearance except the color of the monastic
robe of the Mahanikay, which is brownish-ochre almost chestnut.
The king is the chief of the Buddhist clergy. As for the believer 643
who regularly observes his religious duties, he is satisfied with little [735]
and gives much in alms. Buddhist tales and particularly Laotian
texts, among them the Pannasajataka (Ha Sip Xat), quote all the
merits acquired for future lives by those who give alms and, above
all, feed the bonzes.

Religious Literature.

The basis of the religious literature of Laos is the Buddhist 779
Tripitaka. These "Three Baskets" contain the integral "word of the 538
Buddha."

The basket [corbeille] of Vinaya (Vinayapitaka) is the rule of monastic life. It consists of five sections: Patimokkha, Mahavagga, Coullavagga, Souttavibhanga and Parivara. The Patimokkha is meant to be read in public (particularly on the feasts of the eighth month), on the periodic days of confession. The Mahavagga and the Coullavagga give the list of daily obligations, illustrated by examples drawn from the life of the Buddha. The Souttavibhanga is really a commentary on the Patimokkha; finally the Parivara is both a revision and a catechism.

The Basket of the Soutta (Souttapitaka) contains an enormous amount of preaching and of edifying tales. Among others, the famous Dhammapada, a treasury of the sayings of the Buddha and the Jatakas are to be found in this basket.

[27] The third basket is that of Abhidharma and consists of seven

1 [i.e., a bonze -- Analyst]

10: d'Orleans--314 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 753, 771, 787, 828

"The great development of the Buddhist creed does not prevent superstitions of another order from being prevalent among the multitude, superstitions the trace of which is easily followed at the great festivals that always appertain to ancient traditions or to the dread of evil spirits. Diseases are regarded in the light of persons, and when the cholera made its appearance here last year, one of the mandarins went round the town at the head of a squad of soldiers who executed discharges of musketry at the gates to drive away the enemy. But the native chief was not rewarded for his zeal, as two days after, as the story goes, the cholera appeared to him in a dream and reproached him for trying to drive it away, saying that in coming to Luang Prabang it was simply doing its duty. As a punishment for his conduct, the cholera announced to him his approaching death, and when the mandarin woke up he was so terrified by the dream that he fell ill and died three days afterwards."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
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and we were down to the nursing-mothers, who, removing their 273
babies from the breast and passing them to onlookers, tripped lightly 574
towards us. Although the rice-alcohol, with its queer burnt-cereal
taste, was weaker than usual, my friends said, it was beginning to take
effect. The Moïs had slipped into an easy-going joviality and the [822]
nursing-mothers received some mild familiarities, for which they
exchanged good-natured slaps. Their capacity for alcohol, though,
was greater than that of the elder ladies, and they were not to be
deceived by a mere pretence of drinking on our part. Calling for
beakers they sucked up the alcohol, spat libations, syphoned off
liquor until the beakers were filled, and presented them to us.
Taking stock of the situation we saw that we had drunk our way to
within two nursing-mothers of those perfect young representatives
of the Polynesian race, the chief's daughters, who flung us occa-
sional glances from between sweeping lashes. But we were all
flagging, dizzy with the alcohol and the stunning reverberation of
the gongs. And the morning was wearing on. It would have
been difficult to imagine our condition by the time we had
drunk our way down to an interesting social level. The Moïs
encouraged us with smiles and gestures, but we could do no
more.

It was at a village in the vicinity of Buon Dieo, where two years 683
previously an extraordinary affair had taken place. A family of 695
eight persons were suspected of magic practices to the detriment of 754
the village. According to local custom a representative was chosen 755
as accuser and a trial by ordeal arranged. This consisted of the 776
villagers' champion and the head of the accused family plunging 787
their heads under water, the first to withdraw his head, in this case
the accused, being held to have lost the day. According to the
rulings of customary law governing this rather unusual case the
charged persons were found to be possessed by certain minor
demons, located in each case in a bodily organ. The general
attitude thus was a sympathetic one. The prisoners were regarded

643* merchandise).
648* His life was also a short one. He died at the age of thirty-three,
175* handing down the crown to an only son born two years after his accession to the throne.

SOM-PHOU (1488-1502), KING 1496-1501.

643* This child, Som-Phou, who gave only his name to his reign, was
175 removed from power by the ministers, for reasons unknown, when he reached the age of thirteen. He then died in the following year.

/71/ VISOUN (1467), KING 1501-1520.

643* His uncle Phé-Sai (1) was summoned to the throne in his place in
175

1. Next to the last son of Tiakaphat.

/821/ 1501. According to the Annals, the sky was streaked with lightning and thundered unceasingly on the coronation day. Struck by this phenomenon, in which they saw a manifestation of divine satisfaction, the Council of Ministers gave him the name of Phaya-Visoun (lightning).
/787/ In 1506 a son was born to him who was named Phothisarath in consequence of a dream which Visoun's mother had a few days before the queen's delivery. "Banyans in flower (Kok-Pho) had appeared to her in which innumerable birds warbled joyfully." When consulted, the priests predicted that the expected child would be a Saint, and in the royal family everyone rejoiced at the thought that the newborn would come into the world under the sign of the sacred tree in whose shade Buddha had attained the triple science and found the secret of the destinies.
346 In order to magnify in anticipation, so to speak, the marvelous
643* events of his reign, King Visoun built many temples around his palace.
175* /72/ The foundations of a pagoda which was erected under his auspices to the memory of a daughter who had died young can still be seen today in Luang-Prabang (1).

1. Another pagoda, "Posot-Luang," which was located on the present site of the ice-house, has completely disappeared. Great celebrations were held there in honor of the birth of Photisarath.

643* PHOTHISARATH (1506), KING 1520-1547.
His son Phothisarath, who succeeded him in 1520, was an extremely

643• Muong-Bo road and took a stand before the latter village. But a
648• disagreement resulting from long-standing rivalry sprang up between
175• the commander of the Xieng-Khouang troops, An-Om, and one of his officers who negotiated with Vientiane and thereby caused a retreat to the capital through the valley of the Nam-Nhiep.

Pressed from all sides, An-Om could not defend /150/ Xieng-Khouang, and Ong-Long's columns entered into it without firing a shot while King Xom-Phou fled along the Muong-Khang road.

In the meantime the king of Annam, who had had word of the dispute, sent his two vassals a message urging them to lay down their arms. The king of Vientiane seemed to be the first to return to peaceful ideas. He had Tran-Ninh evacuated and invited Xom-Phou to come and visit him. The latter doubtless suspected a trap, and spent three years deciding to set out. His fears were not unfounded, for when he reached Som-Di he was suddenly assaulted by a hundred or so of Ong-Long's soldiers, who captured him and took him to Vientiane without any regard for his rank (1).

1. According to the Annals of Tran-Ninh, Xom-Phou was to
/821/ be put to death as they descended the Nam-Lick, but "light-
/787/ ning broke the instrument of punishment in the executioner's hands and they did not dare to execute him."

He had been there for three years when Ong-Long received another message from the king of Annam blaming him for his conduct and ordering him to set Xom-Phou free immediately. He kept this ultimatum to himself, but hastened to begin negotiations for his prisoner's release with every appearance of generosity. The prince /151/ of Tran-Ninh promised tribute, and was finally allowed to return to his own land (1760) (1).

1. Xom-Phou kept his promise, and up until the time of his death came to do homage to the king of Vientiane every three years. The tribute from Xieng-Khouang then consisted of golden flowers weighing twenty ticals each, two horses with silver harness, a thousand swords made of native iron, a thousand brush knives, a thousand shovels, a thousand plowshares and selected foodstuffs. (Cf. de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./)

It is, moreover, under the reign of Xom-Phou that the

urgings, no less than three successive expeditions (the Sourisseau, 624
Friquegnon and Dussault columns) and two years of difficult and 669
costly operations were necessary to restore order and suppress the Yunnanese bands. The deposition of the Chao-Fa -- applicable both to himself and his heirs -- was decreed in April 1916, and the former principality was converted into a simple "muong." Phra-Ong-Kham died in China in 1923, and when his family offered to make its submission it was given permission to return to Muong-Sing.

2. The Meo rebellion (1919-1921). While these events were M
transpiring the Meos, who lived mainly high up on the peaks of 563
Luang-Prabang and Tran-Ninh (1), had maintained a proper atti- 669
L

1. See above, p. 212. 787

tude even though approached by the Chao-Fa and the /358/ Chinese brigands. Nor had they seemed at first to pay any more attention to the movement which their fellows in Tonkin had just initiated in the basin of the upper Black River.

Continuing to live apart from other races in jealous isolation, they had nevertheless seemed for some time past to be moving towards closer terms with the provincial administration, which had succeeded in interesting them in road projects. But in July 1919 one of the leaders of the Tonkin rebellion who was being pursued by our troops and was called Batchay came to seek refuge among them. From this lair he sent out emissaries whose mission it was to devote themselves to secret propaganda efforts among the Meo groupings of Upper Laos in favor of a king who, "accomplishing the will of Heaven, was to bring them happiness, peace and prosperity." The rumor rapidly circulated among these credulous tribes that a prophecy which had fallen from the sky was summoning all Meos to revolt and form a great independent kingdom with its capital at Dien-Bien-Phu or Muong-Heup. To the accompaniment of incantations and magic formulas, the able-bodied population was called to march against the Laotians, Khas and Annamites and to build the palace of the awaited sovereign.

/359/ In vain did the king of Luang-Prabang send messages to L
the Meo leaders in protest against these absurd rumors. Within a M
few weeks armed bands were formed which began to ransom and 563
pillage the villages of Tran-Ninh, Luang-Prabang and the Houa- 669
Phan. Our militia had to occupy the outpost of Muong-Heup, which

776 lay priests preside. These lay priests, or rather these servants of the
793 Spirits, correspond to the Guardians of the Genii in the Buddhist religion. Usually they exercise their ministry only when one of
755 their countrymen falls sick or dies.

"In case of a serious illness the servant of the Spirits goes to the sick person's house, goes to his side and recites a few prayers. Then he takes a bowl of uncooked rice on which he stands an egg with the smallest end upwards. With his right hand the officiant drops a certain number of grains of rice on the point of the egg, performing this operation three times in all. If the same number of grains of rice remain on the point of the egg each time, this means that a "Spirit" has entered the sick person's body.

•787 "By means of similar maneuvers, the Spirit is then questioned to find out what he wants to eat. Depending on the answer, a buffalo, an ox or a pig may be killed. The designated animal is slaughtered and then scorched without being skinned so as to destroy the hairs which cover it. The entrails are taken out and carefully washed [154] in running water, then replaced in the animal's body. The victim is taken to the altar of the Spirits, which is located outside the village, and placed with its head towards the altar. Then prayers are said asking the Spirit to cure the sick person. When the ceremony is over the animal is taken back to the village, where it is cut into pieces and divided among all the inhabitants. The invalid rarely gets well.

"There are also sorcerers and witches among the Thais, who are consulted in circumstances of lesser importance.

[775] "The Thais believe in metempsychosis, although their ideas on the subject are not very clear" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

771 Religion of the Khas. Among the Khas, even those who practice
782 Buddhism, the only existing religion is a religion of "Phis" which is similar to the Thai belief in "Spirits, Genii and Demons." The
776 outer manifestations of this cult consist of offerings of rice, flowers and fruit, but never include sacrifices of animals. Small shelters which affect the form of an ordinary house are built at the entrance to villages to receive propitiatory offerings destined for the "Phi".

"symbol" and the last vestige of an ancient usage, for the rockets can only set a few handfuls of straw afire. The wives and children of the deceased, all in great mourning costume, that is to say entirely clothed in white cotton goods, came and prostrated themselves before the Governor of the province, presented him with a platter of flowers and wax candles and asked him whether the King, "the master of life," had given permission for the cremation to take place and whether, for this purpose, he had sent "fire" from Luang-Prabang. 764

The Governor gave the fire to the dead man's relatives and then, in giving permission to cremate, he delivered an address which may be translated as follows:

[212] "The Tiao-Muong of Pak-Lay has been a good and just man during his life. He has never committed perjury. We may hope, together with his numerous family, that his Phi (soul) will be taken by the Thévada (angels) to the Spaces and there be presented to the holy Buddhas, Phra-Pouthi-Tiao, Phra-Tama-Tiao and Phra-Sang-Kha-Tiao, who will take him with them to Paradise to stay for a while. Then, at the time of rebirth, his Phi will again be incarnated in the body of a just, good and happy man who will have all the goods which are to be desired and a numerous progeniture." 764 755

[Illustration here]

The songs and music stopped during this speech, but they began again with new zest when the Governor of the province approached the pyre and set fire to the four corners. He was immediately followed and imitated by the family, the bonzes, the officials and the spectators. All without exception insisted on contributing fire, either with wax candles, resinous torches, dry bamboo or firebrands, or else with whole boxes of matches [213] or even with mere handfuls of dry grass which they had uprooted. 764

A thick, suffocating black smoke reeking of kerosene and resin rose up and enveloped the catafalque, and then a few tongues of flame shot forth. The evening wind was beginning to be felt and cleared the smoke somewhat. The flames grew hotter and finally hid the catafalque. A backward rush began, for the heat was far too intense and forced the spectators to move away from the [Illustration here] pyre. Only a few men armed with green bamboo poles remained nearby, seared by the fire but attentive and anxious, for someone had to see whether the coffin would lean to the right side, that is to say in the direction of Luang-Prabang, the residence of the King from whence "the fire" came. With a sudden crackling 764 187

764 the fire collapsed. In a great shower of sparks, in the middle of a
787 long blue flame, the coffin tottered and fortunately leaned to the right side. The dead man's spirit was satisfied, and it was also an excellent omen for the prosperity of the Muong.

764 [214] Now the pyre, the catafalque, the coffin, the corpse and all were nothing more than an immense live fire, an incandescent mass which projected bizarre flashes on the motley crowd and gave to it, in the evening twilight beside the great river, a phantasmagorical air.

From time to time one of the posts of the canopy could be seen in the center of the fire, rising towards the sky like a gigantic torch. The coffin toppled, and for the space of a second the corpse seemed to appear grimacing and twisting in the middle of the flames, like a salamander.

The whole fire fell in, and the crackling noises lessened. Two or three tongues of flame shot out here and there, only to be extinguished immediately. The coals finished burning themselves out, and soon nothing was left of the pyre and of the whole edifice, so bizarrely decorated, but a pile of gray ashes in the middle of which a few whitish and incompletely burned bone fragments could still be seen. With night the last gleams of the pyre disappeared, the last coals went out and the only light remaining was that of the twinkling stars.

Early the next day the bonzes went to the spot where the pyre had stood. They collected the ashes which had been cooled by dew during the night and then, after throwing a few handfuls to the four winds, they used the rest to draw a crude human face on the ground. The few whitish bones which were still left and which crumbled at the touch were collected and placed in a jar of ordinary earth, which would be buried in the enclosure of a pagoda at the foot of a sacred "ficus."

Later on, since the deceased had been well-to-do and his family
[565] was wealthy, the latter would be helped by the people of the province to build a brick pyramid called "That" inside the pagoda enclosure.

A few ashes in an urn and, in some, the memory of a great celebration and a few good meals...and that is all that remained of the man who had long been a great leader in his province.

533 Music. "Instrumental music holds a place of honor in Laos.
534 The instruments are few in number, and are of Malayan and Chinese origin.

tigers; 784

--to eat lying down, for fear of turning into a snake; a story told to encourage children to hold themselve well while eating;

--to eat the liver and the gizzard of the chicken, for fear of becoming mad: a story to make children leave, to the adults, all that is good on a dish;

--to open one's strong-box or one's small box for locking up money, jewels or other valuable objects, during the night; wealthy persons who did not observe this rule would soon become poor;

--and finally, to put an end to this long enumeration, there is the interdict to a married couple to sleep in the same bed on the birthday of one of the marriage partners.

I leave you the trouble, Ladies and Gentlemen, to think about these beliefs.

Among us a wedding present consisting of jewels or of silver 784
plate may be of an uneven number. But where bank notes or objects /801/
of lesser importance are concerned, the number must always be even.

Certain superstitions come close to French superstitions. For 787
instance: a buzzing in the ears signifies: "Somebody is saying something bad about me somewhere." In Laos if someone drops his bowl of rice while eating, this has the same significance. The buzzing in the ears means that the phi (demon) asks you for the way but that you do not deign to answer. That is why you get a hard box on the ear. Then you must answer him: "Thang louang nok ban!" (Follow the great road which passes in front of the house). An itch in the ears means that it is going to rain.

Another French superstition which has passed into a proverb 777
is: "Lucky at cards (play), unlucky in love." Laotians are more fortunate, for they do not have this belief. Among us one can be lucky at play and at the same time lucky in love.

Pierre NGINN

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include all the local genii one comes across in Indochina, either under the name of Neak Ta in Cambodia, or Phi in Laos, to mention only two countries. The cult of the Phi is still very much alive in Laos, although it has long been contested by the Buddhist clergy and forbidden by an edict of Phothisarath in 1527. 771 776

[30] But there are several classes of phi. First of all there are the universal phi, those are the ones which Buddhist tradition has attempted to assimilate for better or worse. 776

The book of Khun Bolom says precisely that the Phi Fa (Phi of heaven) and the Phi Then are in reality Indra, and the guardians of the four worlds. The Phi Sua Muon are Nang Tholani (Dharani, goddess of the earth) and Nang Mekhala (Manimekhala, deity of the sea). Finally there is the Phi Then Ten (Visvakarman, the builder).

The local protecting genii of the kingdom of Lan Xan are the fifteen Nagaraja (Praya Nak) who are the genii of water, living in the river rapids, at the confluence of rivers, on the rocks on the river banks or in caves. Their natural form is that of a serpent, but they can also take on human form.

Then follow the familiar genii, the wandering phi (Phi Pho), and the phi of dwellings (Phi Heuan). The Phi Heuan are honored at the time of marriage, and the Laotian code prescribes the indemnities which must be paid to please the Phi. There are also the phi of parents [or relatives--Translator] (Phi Me). These are often confused with the preceding ones. Their cult is celebrated either inside the house, or outside in a small shelter built for this purpose. This little structure is usually built leaning against a tree; sometimes it contains a small statuette or a stone, or even nothing. In that case one finds only a few grains of glutinous rice, and one or two small sticks of incense in a horn made of a banana leaf. This little house is the home of the Phi. He watches the living from the beyond and manifests himself every time a member of the family behaves badly. His intervention is most often known by a sudden and serious illness. One must then try to find out what has displeased the phi. For this one goes to the "sorcerer" and he will indicate [31] the sacrifice which must be made to the phi to appease his anger." [671] [788 778] 755

There exist also village phi to whom honor and offerings are due at the time of every ritual or local ceremony, particularly about the seventh month. Coinciding with a sort of pause in the ordinary activity of the Laotian, a pause which is regulated by a change in season, return of the rains and the rise of the Mekong waters, the feasts of the "months of the spirits" are centered around the evocation 776 796 787

776 of one or several spirits who are reincarnated in one possessed. This
796 person enables the villagers and those living in the same quarter to
•787 know the course of the new year and, if necessary, to improve it by means of gifts and prayers. During this time the village is forbidden to strangers (Lévy).

776 A series of particularly dangerous phi is also known; these are the Phi Phetu (Sk: Preta), that is the wandering souls of people who
725 have died in an abnormal way, by accident, suicide, childbirth for a woman, etc. These souls cannot be born again. They remain present in order to torment human beings. The Phi Houa Kout are
776 the headless phi, the Phi Khon Long are those who carry the coffins,
754 the Phi Pop have the power of entering into the body of a living human being. The unfortunate person then has the evil eye and is expelled from the village. In the region of Savannakhet, there is a village of victims of the Phi Pop which was created by a Protestant mission, in order to rescue these poor creatures who would otherwise die of hunger, for they are forbidden to enter any village.

The Phi Phong are the spirits of human beings who have studied the formulas to acquire magic powers but have not conformed strictly to certain rites prescribed by their studies. They are bloodthirsty and go out at night by the light of the fire [32] which issues from their nostrils along the banks of rivers and streams, and of ponds, to catch fish and toads. If one meets a Phi Phong, one must flee for he can spit in one's face, and then one may become a Phi Phong oneself.

776 The Phi Kong Koi lives in the mountains and has the shape of a monkey. During his existence on earth he was the servant of a Vietnamese. One day, having been too badly treated, he decided to escape. But in order not to be caught, he camouflaged his footprints by putting his heels in front and his toes behind. The Vietnamese, deceived by this trick, went off in the opposite direction
[198] and never found him. In our days when the Laotians want to chase away the Phi Kong Koi, the speak Vietnamese to each other. But if one is traveling in the mountains, one must refrain from lighting a fire or cooking any fish or meat or crabs, for the odor attracts the phi who wants to come and eat. His victim would have his intestines split open. The approach of the phi is always preceded by a violent storm and a torrential rain. There are said to be a great many Phi King Koi in the region of Samneua.

There is, however, another kind of Phi. This one seems to have a particular hatred for archaeologists. These are the phis who inhabit sculptures or the tumuli which are found in the bush [en brousse]. But that is another story...

[touques]. 796

The experts throw themselves on the stone, turning it over to see if its underside has been wetted. According to the arrangement of the dry spots, [41] deductions are drawn on the topography of the rice fields which will be flooded, or remain dry, and on the advantage of making rice fields either "high or low." 782 787 243

This sacrifice of the buffalo is found in the myth of Gavampati the strange monk held aloof by the Buddhist community because he took the attitude of being an enemy of the waters. His death allowed the arrival of the rains. 789

Khao Vassa (Feast of the Eighth Month).

This is the date of the beginning of the Buddhist Lent. During the three months of rains, not being able to go from one place to another preaching, the Buddha and his community retired into the park of the Jetavana. Besides the season of rains, as it awakens life everywhere, causes animals to swarm in great numbers. It is therefore impossible at this time of year to travel without violating, at each step, the precept which forbids the destruction of all existence, however infinitely small it may be. Thus, during this period, the bonzes may not leave the pagoda and are obliged to be present at the general confession. 796 792 183

Oldenberg describes this confession according to the Pali texts as follows:

"No monk may miss it. Only he who is stricken with mental alienation may be dispensed....By the light of a torch, the monks take their places at the place of assembly on low stools which have been prepared for them. Neither laymen nor student bonzes [bonzillons] nor nuns may be present, for the rule of the Order, to be recited in the form of a formula of confession, is considered in principle as a secret appurtenance of the monks only. This formula of confession, the Patimokkgam, is recited aloud by the oldest member [doyen].

"Oh Reverend one, whoever has committed a sin, may he confess it.... After the third time that the question has been repeated, if a monk does not confess a sin which [42] he has committed and which he remembers, he is guilty of an intentional lie. Now an intentional lie, oh reverend one, is an obstacle to religious life. Such are the words of the Blessed One."

Then there follows a list of the sins which must be confessed. At the head of the list are the most serious ones:

173: Deydier--36 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

Marriage

In Laos one gets married in the even months. The favorite month is the sixth, that of the feast of rockets, and the last one possible, because in the eighth month the sons-in-law do not dare to interrupt the work in the fields and after that until the twelfth month the Buddhist Lent must be observed. 585 805

[56] The Marriage Proposal. Laotian tradition requires a previous request, and the obligatory giving of the Kha Khun Phi, tribute paid to the guardian genii, also the optional gift of the Kha Dong, the dowery which is given by the husband to the bride or to her parents. [782] 584

The boy's mother, accompanied by one or two aged female relatives, goes to the home of the young girl, and in the course of conversing asks if the girl is of age to be married. The mother is free to answer that her daughter is too young or that no young man loves her, and that she runs the risk of remaining an old maid. In this last event the answer is an acceptance. Then during further visits material questions are settled. Up until the day of marriage the two affianced ones do not exchange a single word, and besides it is not necessary for them to know each other. However, as the Laotian villages are not very big, it is probable that the young people have had the opportunity to meet several times at the boun.

The official request takes place the day before the wedding and on the evening of this day, after dinner, the young man goes to the home of his future bride and with her attends the prayer of the bonzes who bless the water contained in begging bowls. A white cotton cord links together the bonzes, the begging bowls and the two betrothed. The blessed water is kept throughout the night. The next day at the earliest hour the same bonzes, the relatives and friends come and sprinkle the two young people generously with this water. When they have dried themselves and changed their clothes, they make their morning offering to the bonzes who bless them once more. 788 584

The Sou Khouan. This is properly called the marriage ceremony. The days and hours for the ceremony are determined by the aged hora (astrologists or soothsayers) after a minute study of the horoscopes of each one. This ceremony takes place in the home of the young girl. After a [57] family Sou Khouan celebrated at his home, the husband returns to his betrothed accompanied by two comrades who protect him with two parasols and followed by a procession of bearers. 585 [787]

764 coffin is placed on a truck. The bonzes are at the head of the procession, then the widow and the children dressed in white as a sign of mourning.

[60] The coffin is placed on the pyre. All those attending, holding a lighted candle or resinous torch, go to the pyre in single file, and throw the brands into the fire. It is forbidden to light a torch by lending one's light or by borrowing that of a neighbor. During this time the family must throw offerings to the crowd: pieces of banana branches, lemons, etc., into which have been introduced coins mixed with grilled rice. The cotton thread, called fay mongkhou, which [751] had surrounded the house in order to chase away sorrow, illness, the phi, etc., is removed at the end of the ceremony.

[187] [775] On the third day the bones are fetched away. The bonzes are invited, but before touching the ashes, they must be examined to see if they have left any imprints either animal or human, in order to know in what form the dead man will be reborn. The bones are gathered with wooden pincers and then placed in an urn. A statue in a vaguely human form is erected of wet cinders. The urn and the offerings are surrounded by a cotton thread, then the bonzes recite a prayer and this closes the ceremony. The urn will be placed in a pagoda or buried by the family who will erect a that. A little later, to commemorate the death of the departed, the family will dig a hole in the pagoda or near the that, and in it plant a long bamboo at the end of which is fastened a cotton banner laminated with small bamboo sticks. A tray of offerings is brought, which had been placed at the foot of the bamboo pole while it was being set up, and which is held by the relatives and friends of the dead man. Before this, offerings of food had been wrapped in a banana leaf. Once the bamboo is set up, water is poured all around on the earth which is holding it up, in the hope that the merits of this action will reach the other world. Then the whole family [61] squats down around the pole and with joined hands recites prayers.

The Laotian House.

342 It is built on piles and has a veranda. The roof is curved slightly inwards. A long stake holding the water jar is sunk in the ground near the veranda outside the house. The floor is of bamboo or of thin wide boards. The wall and ceiling are of bamboo panels, or of boards, or of mud. There are two principal doors and few windows. A partition going from the inner beam of the front gable separates the house lengthwise in two parts, most often of equal size. One is divided into

301 The use of these magic shirts is also known in Cambodia. The designs
262 usually consist of flowers, geometric figures, tools, flowers, vegetable
751 branches, and of animals. Sometimes pictures drawn from Buddhist iconography can be recognized.

[174] Apparently the origin of tattooing is to be found in totemism. By
301 analyzing the Laotian tattooing designs, [63] it has been possible to recognize traces of sun worship, as well as the mythological role of the dog. But at the present time Laotians seem only to value tattooing as an artistic ornament.

The Divining Rod.

•787 Among the curios which the tourist looks for in Laos, the most
823 easily found is a carved bamboo cane. Immediately below the head, which is often of chased silver, there is a sort of checkered diagram
825 made up of twenty-five little squares. Below this divining diagram are found, in succession from top to bottom, a zebu, a horse, a rakshasha or ogre, a tiger, a buffalo, a deer, an elephant. These animals correspond respectively to the days of the week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

It should be noted that, except for the buffalo and the deer, the others are the symbolical animals of the zodiac and correspond to the different cardinal points.

The Laotians consult these figures at different actions of their lives: choice of a wedding day, the hour for burial, etc. The diagram is used to calculate the hour, and the animals indicate the cardinal point which should be followed.

This cane is also found among the Man.

[64] THE NEW YEAR AND THE FEASTS OF THE FIFTH MONTH

527 The Laotian New Year always takes place between the 6th day
805 of the crescent moon of the 5th month and the 5th day of the crescent moon of the 6th month. The very core of the feast includes three days: the last day of the past year, the intermediate day and the New Year's day, properly so-called. The most picturesque ceremonies are those of Luang Prabang, for there tradition has been best preserved.

527 The programme of the feasts begins with a procession of royal elephants. Their heads ornamented with red and black painted designs, their drivers dressed in red tunics with yellow lapels, on their backs, the fifteen elephants go to the pagodas of Xieng Tong, Vat

226 village. At the foot of the tree which is supposed to contain the
[182] dwelling of the genie, there is an altar about two meters high. Here,
the Chao Muong, surrounded by all the fishermen, places five roasted
chickens, two bottles of [13] rice alcohol, six coconuts, some betel
527 leaves, some areca nuts, some cakes, some small sticks of incense,
some beeswax candles. These he offers to the genie, asking him to
intervene in his favor so that the fishing this year be fruitful.

•787 The genie is addressed by the intermediary of one of the village
sorceresses. As soon as she is "possessed" by the genie, she goes into
527 a trance. She is then unconscious of what is happening around her
and the genie answers through her mouth to the questions asked of her
226 by the fishermen. Invariably the genie's answer is the same: the
catch will be fruitful if traditions peculiar to the fishing of the pa beuk
are followed. The possessed woman, surrounded by a circle of fisher-
men, is at first standing up and is holding a cup in which are flowers,
[592] small sticks of incense, and ten beeswax candles. Her hands begin to
tremble when the genie enters into her; she then sets the cup down at
her feet, and, on top of her own clothes, puts on those of the fishermen
who present her with them on a tray for the sacrifice: an ordinary
sin, a cotton shirt dyed red, a belt and a turban also of cotton dyed
red to which are added a metallic plaster, and two yards [brasse]
of white cotton cloth for her personal use. After turning all around,
she squats down, her bust moving in a gyrating motion, and from
this moment she speaks in the name of the genie.

On the 10th day of the crescent moon the Chao Muong and the
preachers arrive at Kao Lieu, "the nine windings" of the Mekong,
where there is a very famous genie who is much more powerful than
that of Ban Si Khay. Forming a large procession, they fetch the
village sorceress with parasols, lances, swords and gongs. Piled high
on an offering tray are nine bars of silver, two kilograms of beeswax,
ten candles, four coconuts, some betel leaves, some areca nuts,
[14] a metal plaster, two yards [brasse] of white cloth, a raw hen's
egg, a bottle of rice alcohol. The procession returns with the sorcer-
ess to the front of the altars which are regular houses, and everyone
settles down in them. The entrance is to the west, that is, opposite
[782] the town. The offerings for the genie are four times greater than at
Ban Si Khay as each altar receives nine roast chickens, nine bars of
silver, four coconuts, some areca, some betel, candles, small
sticks of incense. In addition, every three years, a buffalo is sacri-
ficed, and in the years between, a pig. There are the same questions
and the same answers as at Ban Si Khay.

10: d'Orleans--288 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 132, 788

"Pakou is a shrine for pilgrimages; the people come from Luang Prabang with great pomp several times a year; they hold boat races, get up picnics, and pray. The grotto has another advantage for us besided its religious interest, for it gives us a fine view over the valley of the Mekong; but it is the middle of the day, and the light is so intense that the distance is lost in a trembling atmosphere of heat. When we return to the pirogues, I find it is more than 125 degrees in the sun, and my alcohol thermometer has burst."

10: d'Orleans--332 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 735, 788

"The temples are public, and they who have no family home are entitled to sleep in them, while upon week days the people come to make offerings of flowers, and perform libations with water, listening to the advice given them by the priests, while the women tell their beads, and signify that they have got through them by blowing through a sea shell."

149: Reinach--124 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Although less pure than in Cambodia, the bonzes' morals in Laos are generally fairly good. They are, moreover, greatly loved, highly regarded and fondly cherished. When there is a celebration or a great feast in a family, part of the choicest dishes is always reserved for the bonzes. 792 785 554

On the next to the last day of every phase of the moon, the bonzes must make public confession of their faults and be prepared, should the need arise, to undergo the punishments which the code stipulates. 792

Bonzeries are schools and at the same time workshops where all trades are taught. All knowledge is concentrated in them, as our knowledge was during the Middle Ages in monasteries. 871 874

Together with the pagodas, they are also spots of inviolable asylum in accordance with certain rights, and hostelries where travelers are lodged and fed with the produce of the bonzes' alms-seeking. 485 778

Newly ordained bonzes must stay in the pagoda at least three months, and may quit their habit at the end of this period. If a bonze desires to return to the pagoda after he has reentered lay life, his reassumption of the habit gives rise to the same formalities and ceremonies as the first time. It is a new ordination. 792

The liturgical litanies of the Buddhist religion, which the bonzes psalmodize, may not be translated into Laotian. The bonzes and the [165] [Illustration] [166] [Blank page] [167] Laotian faithful, as well as the cantors and the French adepts, chant prayers whose meaning they do not understand (1). 198 788

(1) In reality the Laotian, Lu and Youn bonzes form a sort of caste as the Druids used to in Gaul. More particularly, they are the ministers of worship, the repositories of moral authority, of scientific traditions, of secrets and of artistic and industrial methods. They transmit by word of mouth the precepts of Buddhist dogma, which were long ago explained by those who introduced the religion into the land. But the writings in "Pali" which contained these, although they can still be read mechanically by a few scholars, are no longer understood. Thence arises the necessity of handing down their meaning by word alone. Thence also, without doubt, arises the increasingly greater attenuation of the purity and force of these principles as they 792 779 178

779 pass from one generation to another and suffer partial suppressions
78 and numberless interpolations.

[198] The bonzes of our own day do not know the sacred language and are reduced to imitating the "hateful" monks of whom Rabelais speaks, "who neither till the soil nor work, but only mumble
792 a great stock of legends and psalms which they do not understand at all."

792 The bonzes are the ones who consecrate water and prepare with their prayers for the pronunciation of the oath of allegiance which
641 native officials take twice a year to their direct sovereign and, if necessary, to their suzerain both for themselves and for the whole
788 population. The oath consists in reciting the formula and in drinking lustral water in which the candles used for the ceremony have been extinguished and in which the arms of the sovereign have been dipped.

The following is the formula of the oath which is pronounced in Laos twice a year, in the capital of each province, in the presence of the government commissioner. This formula has been in use in the land for centuries and was left just as it was, except for substituting the title of President of the Republic for that of the king of Siam, Vien-Tiane or Luang-Prabang.

Formula of the oath: "I (there follow the names, titles and qualities of each of the mandarins present, each of whom repeats the formula, which is read aloud by one of them, generally the eldest), take an oath of allegiance and offer my life to the President of the French Republic. I give my word before God and before the angels present in heaven. May God and his angels deign to listen to my vows, because the President of the French Republic governs our land with wisdom and skill, follows the ancient customs and protects the bonzes, the authorities and the inhabitants.

"I place myself under his sacred feet, as well as the soldiers and inhabitants who live in my muong, and we all swear him allegiance.

[168] "I ask to serve the administration in the shadow of his sacred feet and to acknowledge his goodness by promising to be faithful and never to revolt in thought, word or body.

"If I show myself ungrateful to, or if I revolt against the President of the French Republic in thought, word or body; if I see or learn that peril threatens the President of the French Republic and remain silent instead of warning him immediately of the peril which I see or know; if I show myself ungrateful towards the President of the

149: Reinach--126 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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French Republic, whose happiness and wisdom only grow from day to day, may God and his angels who are present in the air and in heaven punish me, may they deprive me of all necessary things, may they kill me by the sky's lightning, may they strike me with all sorts of terrible maladies, may they cause me to die by the sword or the gun, may wild animals devour me, may I be entirely ruined, and may misfortune burden me everywhere I go or reside. May God and his angels cover my body with sores, and may diseases strike me, and may I die abandoned by all so as to serve as an example to the world; after my death may I be condemned for centuries to the flames of hell, and may nothing enable me to escape these exemplary punishments.

"If after (a thousand years) I am reborn to a new life in any part of the world whatsoever, may I not have an instant of happiness, may I lack everything, and may I never see God and his angels, who will never be able to cleanse me of the fault which I have committed by showing myself ungrateful and faithless towards the President of the French Republic.

"If, on the contrary, I am grateful and faithful to the President of the French Republic, if I never revolt in thought, word or body, if I never ally myself with foreigners to disturb his security and that of his people, may God and his angels who are present in the air and in heaven make me live long in this world, may I avoid all the dangers which threaten me, and may I be exempt from all human slavery; I drink the water of the oath; may peace and prosperity reign in my home.

"After my death, as a reward for my faithfulness, may my happiness continue in heaven in a place where joys and pleasures abound, and may I find myself with God in the midst of his angels. If later on (in a thousand years) I am reborn to a new life, may I be showered with riches, dignities, joys and pleasures, may I obtain all that I desire, may I be exempt from all human misery, and finally may I again find myself in the presence of God and his angels, as a reward for my fidelity and my gratitude, with the President of the French Republic.

"I drink the water of the oath" (1).

(1) After Captain Gosselin, op. cit. [Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900.]

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[169] The formula used in southern Laos is more concise and slightly different.

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The natives of Laos, whatever their race, have a great respect for any oath and stand in much dread of the consequences of perjury.

Oaths are widely used in courts of law in cases of disputes between individuals. When a judge has reached the end of his arguments and is confronted with a stubborn plaintiff he sends him to the pagoda before the sacred statues to deny the accusation or affirm his statements.

In this case, the above formula is modified in accordance with the needs of the case, as regards the object of the oath and the type of authority invoked as sanction. But the basis is always the same.

As a means of legal procedure, an oath is regarded as an argument of such force and of such grave consequences that it is used only as a last resort. In Laos it is the ultima ratio judicium.

805

The Laotian calendar (1). The Laotian year is calculated on the

[792]

(1) Since the bonzes establish the calendar we have thought it well to place this information in the chapter devoted to religion in Laos.

phases of the moon and includes twelve months which are divided into twenty-four half-moons. The months have thirty and twenty-nine days alternately, giving 354 days in the year or eleven days less than in the solar year.

In reality the Laotian calendar is luni-solar, for in order to bring the ordinary year into approximate harmony with the solar year an extra month is inserted every three years after the eighth month, and repeats the latter. It is called the "second eighth month" (Dueune pèt song). In chronological dating, the Laotian year begins about the middle of the fifth month (April).

Like the Siamese, the Laotians have adopted a system for co-ordinating and numbering their years which is based on a great cycle of sixty years and two other intermediate cycles of ten and twelve years each. The first of these intermediate cycles is decimal, and the second is zodiacal (duodecimal).

[170] Each year is designated first by the name of the great cycle, then by those of each of the intermediate cycles and by a chronological number.

314 Indeed scavenging, that is to say the gathering of forest products, hunting and fishing, is all that is needed besides rice and maize to supply the day to day needs of the native and even provide him with a comparatively important basis for trade.

Forest Products

314 824 [563] 1. Benzoin (Khab-Niane).

Benzoin is extracted from the tree called Styrax benzoin, by means of incisions made on the trunk. The benzoin trees (Kok-Khab-Niane) are localized in Upper Tran-Ninh, the south of the Hua-Pahn and the north of the province of Luang-Prabang. They are not cultivated in any way. The resin or gum is harvested at certain times of the year, generally by the Khas, at the foot of the trees and along the trunk, where it coagulates in masses or tears.

Benzoin is collected in its natural state, that is to say in tears of various sizes and in breakages. In the production centers it is separated into three grades: large and medium tears, medium and small tears, and small pieces and breakages. In the transit markets these three grades are sorted and screened and once more divided into six kinds or types, which are: large tears, medium tears, small tears, mixed large, mixed medium, and finally tiny fragments and dust.

[43] A few years ago a chemical process was [329] discovered, it would seem, for extracting certain of the aromatic alkaloids contained in benzoin from coal, and the market value of this product suddenly dropped by more than sixty percent. At the present time, depending [435] on the grade, the market price in Luang-Prabang is from 90 to 115 francs per hundred kilograms (1), in Nong-Khay from 100 to 135

(1) We have deemed it preferable to give the price in francs and per hundred kilograms, since the reader may not be familiar with Laotian weights and currency.

788 francs, and in Korat from 120 to 160 francs.

314 439 Part of the benzoin production is consumed locally in the manufacture of sticks of incense for use in worship. All the rest is exported to Bangkok and from there to Europe. A very small proportion is sent to Tonkin by way of the Black River. Upon its arrival in Bangkok, benzoin from Laos is worth twice as much as in Luang-Prabang.

824 314 2. Crimson lake or stick-lac (Khang-Deng).

This gum is produced by an insect of the "cochineal" type, the

175 the fourteenth century. Archaeological discoveries made in recent
177 years in the region of Luang Prabang and more recent ones in the
779 neighborhood of Vientiane may enable this important event in the religious history of Laos to be moved back more than two centuries.

[23] The Pagoda.

346 "Laotians liked to place their pagodas on high points, but their
marked taste for the edge of the water made them prefer the neighbor-
778 hood of rivers. This location of pagodas is a natural consequence of
[792] the relations between bonzes and inhabitants. The former drew their livelihood from the latter, and these are crowded on the river banks."
In principle the pagoda consists of three elements:

346 1) The buildings connected directly with the cult: vat, chapels, libraries; that, standing landmarks and niches;

2) The surrounding enclosures, exterior and interior;

3) The buildings for the immediate use of the inhabitants of the pagoda: monastery [bonzerie], cells for the bonzes, reception halls.

The vat consists of a large hall furnished with a pedestal on which stands the statue of the Buddha often accompanied by a preaching pulpit. The columns and walls are frequently ornamented with paintings.

Among the annexes of the vat, the most numerous are the chapels which are in the form either of delicate buildings or small compound halls.

The that is a votive and sometimes a funereal monument. (See appendix on Vientiane).

The only piece of furniture always found in the vat is the preaching pulpit, an elegant construction, often made of gilded wood. By way of furniture there are a few seats for the chiefs of the bonzes,
[788] particularly for the torch bearer. Finally, particularly in the region of Luang Prabang, one finds the hang-lin, a curious spout-shaped object with elegant decoration, which is used for sprinkling the Buddhas on great feast days (cf. the New Year). These various finely carved objects are usually made of gilded wood and are sometimes inlaid with enamelled lead [24] whose brilliant gleam makes
[217] them sparkle. The manuscript chests are usually collected in the libraries, piled up in the shape of an inverted pyramid; they are generally carved and gilded.

include all the local genii one comes across in Indochina, either under the name of Neak Ta in Cambodia, or Phi in Laos, to mention only two countries. The cult of the Phi is still very much alive in Laos, although it has long been contested by the Buddhist clergy and forbidden by an edict of Phothisarath in 1527. 771 776

[30] But there are several classes of phi. First of all there are the universal phi, those are the ones which Buddhist tradition has attempted to assimilate for better or worse. 776

The book of Khun Bolom says precisely that the Phi Fa (Phi of heaven) and the Phi Then are in reality Indra, and the guardians of the four worlds. The Phi Sua Muon are Nang Tholani (Dharani, goddess of the earth) and Nang Mekhala (Manimekhala, deity of the sea). Finally there is the Phi Then Ten (Visvakarman, the builder).

The local protecting genii of the kingdom of Lan Xan are the fifteen Nagaraja (Praya Nak) who are the genii of water, living in the river rapids, at the confluence of rivers, on the rocks on the river banks or in caves. Their natural form is that of a serpent, but they can also take on human form.

Then follow the familiar genii, the wandering phi (Phi Pho), and the phi of dwellings (Phi Heuan). The Phi Heuan are honored at the time of marriage, and the Laotian code prescribes the indemnities which must be paid to please the Phi. There are also the phi of parents [or relatives--Translator] (Phi Me). These are often confused with the preceding ones. Their cult is celebrated either inside the house, or outside in a small shelter built for this purpose. This little structure is usually built leaning against a tree; sometimes it contains a small statuette or a stone, or even nothing. In that case one finds only a few grains of glutinous rice, and one or two small sticks of incense in a horn made of a banana leaf. This little house is the home of the Phi. He watches the living from the beyond and manifests himself every time a member of the family behaves badly. His intervention is most often known by a sudden and serious illness. One must then try to find out what has displeased the phi. For this one goes to the "sorcerer" and he will indicate [31] the sacrifice which must be made to the phi to appease his anger." [671] 788 778 755

There exist also village phi to whom honor and offerings are due at the time of every ritual or local ceremony, particularly about the seventh month. Coinciding with a sort of pause in the ordinary activity of the Laotian, a pause which is regulated by a change in season, return of the rains and the rise of the Mekong waters, the feasts of the "months of the spirits" are centered around the evocation 776 796 787

805 [34] The Days.

The Laotian week follows the same order as the French week:

Van Athit	Sunday
Van Tian	Wednesday [sic]
Van Ang Kam	Tuesday
Van Phut	Wednesday
Van Phahat	Friday [sic]
Van Souk	Monday [sic]
Van Sao	Saturday

The Hours.

The day is 24 hours long and is divided into 16 ngam (periods of an hour and a half each).

796 All the Laotian feasts are dated according to this calendar. The Buddhist feasts are listed in a manuscript of the Vat Pra Keo called Hit Sip Song Khong Sip Si.

THE BOUN (Sk. punya)

796 Every newcomer to Laos will quickly learn to recognize the word boun. Literally this term means "to obtain merits, to give
788 alms," but by extension, it designates the ceremony or feast which accompanies this act. Its meaning has degenerated rather quickly and to "make a boun" means "celebrate a feast."

The religious boun consists essentially in presenting offerings of candles, flowers, etc. to the images of Buddha and gifts to the bonzes after having accomplished the pradakshina or ritual "circumambulation" of the pagoda with lighted candles. This pradakshina is an ancient Brahmanic rite which consists in turning around a funeral pyre or a monument, keeping it always on the right.

Feast of Khao Chi (See below after the feast of the harvest).

Makha Bousa (Feast of the third month).

796 [35] The first religious feast of the Laotian year is that of the "Makha Bousa." It takes place on the fifteenth day of the crescent moon of the third month (end of January to middle of February).

This is the origin:

"Near Vaisali in the country-town of Belouva, a serious illness attacked the Buddha, and he was near death. Then he thought of his

173: Deydier--36 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

Marriage

In Laos one gets married in the even months. The favorite month is the sixth, that of the feast of rockets, and the last one possible, because in the eighth month the sons-in-law do not dare to interrupt the work in the fields and after that until the twelfth month the Buddhist Lent must be observed. 585 805

[56] The Marriage Proposal. Laotian tradition requires a previous request, and the obligatory giving of the Kha Khun Phi, tribute paid to the guardian genii, also the optional gift of the Kha Dong, the dowery which is given by the husband to the bride or to her parents. [782] 584

The boy's mother, accompanied by one or two aged female relatives, goes to the home of the young girl, and in the course of conversing asks if the girl is of age to be married. The mother is free to answer that her daughter is too young or that no young man loves her, and that she runs the risk of remaining an old maid. In this last event the answer is an acceptance. Then during further visits material questions are settled. Up until the day of marriage the two affianced ones do not exchange a single word, and besides it is not necessary for them to know each other. However, as the Laotian villages are not very big, it is probable that the young people have had the opportunity to meet several times at the boun.

The official request takes place the day before the wedding and on the evening of this day, after dinner, the young man goes to the home of his future bride and with her attends the prayer of the bonzes who bless the water contained in begging bowls. A white cotton cord links together the bonzes, the begging bowls and the two betrothed. The blessed water is kept throughout the night. The next day at the earliest hour the same bonzes, the relatives and friends come and sprinkle the two young people generously with this water. When they have dried themselves and changed their clothes, they make their morning offering to the bonzes who bless them once more. 788 584

The Sou Khouan. This is properly called the marriage ceremony. The days and hours for the ceremony are determined by the aged hora (astrologists or soothsayers) after a minute study of the horoscopes of each one. This ceremony takes place in the home of the young girl. After a [57] family Sou Khouan celebrated at his home, the husband returns to his betrothed accompanied by two comrades who protect him with two parasols and followed by a procession of bearers. 585 [787]

10: d'Orleans--271 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 502, 789

"The river narrows and forms a rapid, which is considered dangerous; and before he approaches it our steersman takes off his turban and rolls it round his breast, then he washes his face, kneels down like a Mussulman with clasped hands, then, raising himself, he strikes the pirogue several times with his hand; he is invoking the devil, who guards the rapids, and is begging him to grant us a safe passage. This prayer is a Laotian custom; for my own part the ceremonial inspires me with less confidence than our men's quick eyes and strong arms, which take us through the rapids without any check."

10: d'Orleans--271 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 361, 417, 789

"We stop for lunch at the village of Ban Sop Huan, on the right bank of the river; the houses form a street, like the one at Sop Nao; as usual two posts stand at the entrance of it; each has a piece of carved wood on the top, which, from a distance, resembles a duck or a chicken, some white scarves also are hanging from them; they are intended to drive away the evil spirits."

68: Mouhot--99 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 776, 823, 789

"I am at the gates of the infernal regions, for so the Laotians and Siamese designate this forest, [HD: i.e. Dong Phya Phia, the forest of the 'King of Fire', between Khao-Khoc and Korat in Siam] and I have no spell to terrify the demons which inhabit it, neither tiger's teeth nor stunted stag-horn; nothing but my faith in and love for God. If I must die here, where so many other wanderers have left their bones, I shall be ready when my hour comes."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

acknowledge in the street a lady with whom one happens to be on 584
particularly good terms. These things in Laos are fraught with an 576
etiquette which is the legacy of a highly organized society not too
far gone in decay.

The charm of Vientiane lies in the life and the customs of the 346
people. Unless one is an amateur of pagoda architecture there is 531
little else to be seen. The Laotians have preferred to work in wood,
rather than stone, and their art, confined chiefly to the decoration by
religious artists of the doors, pillars and interiors of pagodas,
quickly perishes in such a climate.

Outside the town there is a great, grey, half-decayed *stupa*, built 771
as a tomb for a hair of the Buddha. It is surrounded by a cloister, 755
containing perhaps a thousand Buddha images; a collection of 778
which the people of Vientiane are very proud. But even here,
where the religion is practised in its purest form, there is a little
degeneration, a little backsliding from the lofty philosophic conception; and the taint of magic practices shows itself. Selecting one of
the numerous images as a personal tutelary divinity, the devotee
subjects it to a kind of bribery similar to that sometimes practised
in Southern Europe with images of the saints. In this case the image's
chief function is healing, and when the sufferer recovers from any
complaint he hastens to the pagoda to apply gold-leaf to the part of
the Buddha corresponding to that where he has felt the pain in his
own body. I was interested to deduce from this practice that the
people of Vientiane are much plagued by headaches – perhaps [164]
those which accompany malaria.

Standing in a corner of the sanctuary was an ancient ithyphallic 778
statue, an old Hindu divinity, no doubt, which had been worn 789
smooth in the appropriate parts by the feminine adoration of a 892
thousand years. I was told that the women of the French colony
who wish for a child frequently emulate their husbands' pose of
Laos-ization by coming here secretly to pay their respects. I 000
wondered whether this clandestine tribute might not be extended

314 The wax is not of uniform quality in Laos, but varies in color and texture depending on the region, the type of bees [336] which produce it, and also on the flowers on which the latter feed.

In this land there are hive hunters who have a rare skill and an extraordinary flair. They are able to find wild hives in the confusion of the forest foliage, in hollow trunks and in rocky crags where no one else could. The methods used to capture the swarms of bees and their hives differ little from those in use in Europe, and include noise, music and smoke.

[789] The Laotians claim that some bee hunters are able to get rid of the swarms of bees by attracting their queen by means of the sound of a kind of flageolet and by pronouncing certain cabalistic words.

435 The price of wax is quite high. A hundred kilograms cost 250 francs in Luang-Prabang, 219 francs in Nong-Khay, 290 francs in Cammon, 300 francs in Song-Khone and Saravane, 333 francs in Bassac, 208 francs in Attopeu, 312 francs in Stung-Treng, 500 francs in Korat, 250 francs in Pnom-Penh, and 300 francs in Cholen.

15. Rattan (Vai).

314 The rattan is a palm tree of the genus Calamus rudentum and Calamus petracus. There are several types in Laos, which are used
285 in accordance with their particular qualities.

The rattan industry is still in its early stages. A few Kha tribes of southern Laos traffic in rattan and supply the needs of local consumption, either in the form of crude rattan delivered in bundles, or in the form of mats and baskets, at a price of five francs per thousand or about sixty kilograms. It is present in great abundance throughout the whole land, and in northern Laos is even used for trade with Siam, which produces little rattan.

It is to be hoped that among the samples sent from Laos to France there will be some good ones which can be used abroad in the manufacture of all the wickerwork and esparto articles whose consumption is constantly increasing. This would provide an appreciable source of revenue for the land.

16. Bamboo.

313 There are some twenty varieties of bamboo. All [337] [Illustration] [338] [Blank page] [339] except one of these grow wild, the exception being the golden bamboo (Mai-So-Kham), which is chiefly cultivated in the enclosures of pagodas.

The following description of the many uses of bamboo is taken from the interesting work by Mme. Massieu:

173: Deydier--24 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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The different reasons for this feast must therefore be sought. First of all, it takes place at the end of [38] the dry season. It is the last rejoicing before the heavy work of the rice fields. Furthermore, its purpose is well determined, for it is intended to bring on the rains and to assure the fertility of the soil.

The principal element of this manifestation is the rocket. This is a long decorated bamboo which is supposed to represent the body of a Naga, one of its extremities being adorned with a Naga head. As for the multi-colored streamer hanging beneath, it symbolizes the rainbow. This theme, which is also found in Indochina, deserves to be studied in Laos before any comparison can be made. A passage of the history of Thao Kathanam gives us the reason for throwing up rockets in order to obtain rain:

"...the day Thao Kathanam was married to the daughter of the King of Champa there was a great feast. From the summit of Mount Gijjakuta, the Yaksa, Gandharva and Phi launched rockets to celebrate the event. For three days all the rockets rose to the sky where they reached the world of the Catulokapala (the four guardians of the world). The Then (genii) thought that the inhabitants of the earth were throwing fire in order to burn the muong Then. They were troubled by this and went to seek protection from the god Indra. Indra then instigated storms, rain and a devastating wind to destroy these balls of fire. The remains of the rockets fell to earth, caught on the trees and became parasitic plants. Since then, in order to obtain rain, rockets are launched towards the sky to frighten the Then."

But the throwing of rockets is also a competition, and the owner of the rocket which goes furthest is sure of a prosperous year. The Legend of Thao Phadeng and of Nang Ay of the country of the Nagas gives us the origin of this competition.

[39] "The son of the king of the Nagas was the rival of Thao Phadeng for the hand of Nang Ay. The father of Nang Ay did not know to whom to give his daughter, so he advised the two suitors to make some rockets. The one who would launch his rocket the furthest would become the husband of Nang Ay. Thao Phadeng won, but the son of the king of the Nagas would not accept his defeat and decided to obtain Nang Ay dead or alive." Then begins an amazing story in which there is no further question of rockets, and no element which might furnish an explanation.

In this way, the rain brought about by this hurling and competition of rockets will ensure a good harvest. Also to this first ceremony there is grafted a second which is the feast of fecundity.

796 It is not necessary to delay here over the licentious scenes, the songs
83 with words defying decency, the action of special marionettes, all
• 769 the allusions to the relationship between men and women intended to stimulate the fertility of the earth by sympathetic magic, all of which are well-known rites from classic antiquity up to ancient China. We will refer the reader to the authoritative study on the cycle of The Golden Bough by Sir James Frazer.

796 But what is the exact origin of this feast? Some claim that it is peculiar to Vientiane and has been celebrated in other towns of Laos only within the last twenty years. This comment is of capital interest. For, after the pillaging of Vientiane in 1827 by the Siamese General Phya Bodin, the majority of the population of Vientiane was deported to the right bank of the Mekong. Gradually the town was re-peopled by people coming from Tran-Ninh. Now it is a curious fact that on all the rocket shafts there is a strange decorative design whic is similar to those seen on bracelets and necklaces in the region of Xieng Khouang. Some [40] reliable authors having put out the hypothesis that the designs on these necklaces were the survival of an ancient solar cult, should one conclude that the rockets are the last misunderstood vestiges of an ancient fire worship, formerly practised by the populations of Tran Ninh? But then, at what time and under the influence of what rite, did this fire worship become transformed into a ceremony to obtain rain? The question remains open and perhaps future research and discoveries will give an explanation of this feast which is one of the most original and least known of Laos.

The Sacrifice of the Buffalo.

796 The sacrifice of the buffalo takes place at about the same time
782 as the feast of the rockets. This ceremony is known to all the Indonesian people of southeastern Asia, and its survival in Laos is of the greatest interest in the study of the antecedents of this country.

This ceremony is spread out through the months of May and June when the rainy season begins. It is found in western Laos where, according to a Pali chronicle, a Laotian king of Xieng Mai, who had no faith, adored demons and sacrificed buffaloes to the genii of the woods, the trees, the mountains, etc....

At Vientiane, near the Jules Bosc Avenue, can be seen a large stone which the Laotians worship as being a grain of rice. The buffalo is killed near this stone. A Nang Thyem woman, "inspired or possessed, after a series of invocations and ritual dances, pours water from a teapot onto the stone, while the by-standers flood the same stone with

[touques]. 796

The experts throw themselves on the stone, turning it over to see if its underside has been wetted. According to the arrangement of the dry spots, [41] deductions are drawn on the topography of the rice fields which will be flooded, or remain dry, and on the advantage of making rice fields either "high or low." 782 [787] [243]

This sacrifice of the buffalo is found in the myth of Gavampati the strange monk held aloof by the Buddhist community because he took the attitude of being an enemy of the waters. His death allowed the arrival of the rains. [789]

Khao Vassa (Feast of the Eighth Month).

This is the date of the beginning of the Buddhist Lent. During the three months of rains, not being able to go from one place to another preaching, the Buddha and his community retired into the park of the Jetavana. Besides the season of rains, as it awakens life everywhere, causes animals to swarm in great numbers. It is therefore impossible at this time of year to travel without violating, at each step, the precept which forbids the destruction of all existence, however infinitely small it may be. Thus, during this period, the bonzes may not leave the pagoda and are obliged to be present at the general confession. 796 792 783

Oldenberg describes this confession according to the Pali texts as follows:

"No monk may miss it. Only he who is stricken with mental alienation may be dispensed....By the light of a torch, the monks take their places at the place of assembly on low stools which have been prepared for them. Neither laymen nor student bonzes [bonzillons] nor nuns may be present, for the rule of the Order, to be recited in the form of a formula of confession, is considered in principle as a secret appurtenance of the monks only. This formula of confession, the Patimokkgam, is recited aloud by the oldest member [doyen].

"Oh Reverend one, whoever has committed a sin, may he confess it.... After the third time that the question has been repeated, if a monk does not confess a sin which [42] he has committed and which he remembers, he is guilty of an intentional lie. Now an intentional lie, oh reverend one, is an obstacle to religious life. Such are the words of the Blessed One."

Then there follows a list of the sins which must be confessed. At the head of the list are the most serious ones:

149: Reinach--10la G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

791
291

Fig. 36 /p.135/ Typical Khas of the province of Stung-Treng.

149: Reinach--113 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

776 "The Laotians also believe that there are people who are possessed
771 by the demon or who have [151] the evil eye. They call them 'Phi-
pop.' When a person or family in a village is so regarded by the
791 other inhabitants, they are forced to move and to go and live in one
of the villages composed exclusively of Phi-pop" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

The boatmen and folk who dwell along the watercourses also believe in the existence of certain particular beings, as for example the Siren or "Nguoc." The siren, whom some people claim to have seen (?), is said to have the form of a snake with paws and an enormous head surmounted by a red, saw-toothed crest. It is supposed to have seven nostrils in a single nose, and a mouth provided with several rows of teeth. The scales which cover it and the lobes of its tail are said to be able to clash against one another and make a great deal of noise.

791 In times of public calamity, the "Tho-Nguoc" assumes a human voice and announces important events or cataclysms to come.

754 The "Phi-pop," to whom we have referred above, have, according
683 to popular belief, the power of casting spells and causing the death of animals and even persons by means of their incantations, their practices or their glance. The natives say that they can reduce a buffalo hide to the size of a grain of rice and thus make a person swallow it. Once in the stomach the hide is supposed to regain its natural volume and cause the death of the person who has swallowed it by making the stomach burst after intolerable suffering. It goes without saying that the "Phi-pop" who is the cause of the evil can, in return for certain gifts, arrest the suffering and deliver the patient before death overtakes him. A person who believes he has swallowed a buffalo hide falls prey to a kind of madness and commits all sorts of extravagances, to such a point that his neighbors try to get him out of the village and get rid of him, for he has become a "Phi-pop" in his turn. People claim that there is only one way to find out if a man is possessed, and that is to throw him into the water with his feet and hands tied. If he floats he is not possessed, but if [152] the opposite proves to be the case--and this is what invariably happens--then a "Phi-pop" is really present and his disappearance is regarded as a blessing.

149: Reinach--114 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

as a blessing. 791

One fact worthy of note is that the "Phi-pop"--men, women and even adolescents--are extremely intelligent folk with lively 755 eyes and full of a strong will and energy. They know [Illustration here] a host of recipes and therapeutic formulas which have been 156 handed down to them by their parents. They might be described as bonesetters or people who have medicine as a sideline, and who act on weak minds and nervous temperaments by the power of suggestion. "Phi-pop" women and girls are usually quite pretty.

One of the methods most widely used to gain the favor of the 755 "Phis" is to play deafening music. 533

"It is not at all unusual to hear diabolic and uninterrupted music in a Laotian house for several days and nights running. In this house there is a person who is seriously ill. All the noise is designed to frighten or to assuage the spirit in the sick person's body and to persuade or force it to [153] leave the body of the invalid. The sick person generally succumbs under the waves of this curative but noisy harmony" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.] [113]

Religion of the Thais. They have neither pagodas nor bonzes, 771 but practice ancestor worship and have a great veneration for the "Spirits or Genii," to whom they make offerings on all occasions. 769

In the first room of the house there stands a bamboo altar. The "Spirits" or "Phis" of dead forbears are supposed to inhabit this altar, which is composed of two different levels, the highest one for the male Phis and the other for the female Phis. At its foot there is an opening covered with an elliptical wooden ornament shaped like a mouth. It is there, on this "ancestors' mouth," that the head of the family places offerings and prayers, especially when a member of the family is sick. In principal an animal is never killed without some scrap of food or a few drops of blood being offered to the ancestors' mouth.

"Spirits, whether genii or demons, are everywhere--in the sky, 776 on earth, in the forests, in the water. They are the object of a 793 widespread cult over which individuals who might be described as 755

25: Brodrick--98-99 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 779, 782, 792, 872

"...the framework of Little Vehicle Buddhism looks much the same as in the land of the Khmers. There are the saffron-robes, but the bonzes are sturdier and less composed than in Cambodia. When the monks do their rounds with their begging-bowls, the holy men do not hesitate to look women in the face, to speak with them and even to touch their hands. The Laotian bonzes are not the less Laotian for being bonzes, and by no means all of them observe strictly the precepts of their Order. In fact, some of them are [99] a little loose of conduct. Again, the Buddhist hierarchy in the Laos is almost more sacerdotal than monastic, and, in the public estimation, the bonze is more or less of a priest, that is, a man performing efficacious and quasi-magical ceremonies. There are temple-schools, as in Cambodia, Siam and Burma. In these schools the male population learns to read and write in the complicated Laotian script that is rather derived from Siamese than from Cambodian. The same moral obligations are supposed to constrain the monks. The offerings at the pagoda services are just fragrant frangipani flowers, candles and incense. There is no such divergence from Little Vehicle practice as would make of Laotian Buddhism a new religion such as is the Lamaism of Tibet. But everything is a little distorted, vague, misty, if we will. The alien religion is subjected to a strong push from beneath and is transmuted by an all-pervading atmosphere of nonchalance and good humour."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

slaughterers are obliged to work by flares, which is responsible, the 253
French think, for an unusually picturesque effect. It is 'not done' to 825
go along while the actual killing is in progress, but shortly after, when the carcasses are suspended from hooks to be cut up, and the workers, stripped to their loincloths, and garishly splashed, paddle about in a vermilion sea. Cars are stationed just beyond the reach of the steaming odours, and one is recommended to see the thing as one views a nude in a picture gallery – that is, divorced from all but a disinterested abstraction, in this case the colour.

The possibilities of Vientiane, it was clear, would be quickly 292
exhausted. Thao Nhouy, the Laotian Minister of Education, lent 301
me his jeep to see some of the surrounding villages, but the roads 535
were so appalling that it broke down after being driven for about five miles. He then suggested that I might like to see the local schoolgirls dancing, and when I said that I would be delighted, and asked for permission to take photographs, the girls were sent off home, on their bicycles, to get their best clothes. An hour or two later they began to trickle back, wearing their mothers' jewellery as well as their own and with their silk finery done up in paper parcels. When they had dressed and were ready they made a glittering sight. One girl wore a scarf ornamented with real gold thread said to be worth about £50 in English money. They danced under the supervision of a teacher whom I recognized as a professional actor, from the *boun*,[1] and who occasionally intervened when a girl failed in some minor feat, such as bending her fingers back at an expressive ninety degrees from the palm.

All these girls, dressed as they were like princesses, came from 493
shacks in the forest. Each one had a bicycle – infallibly fitted with 511
dynamo lighting, and sometimes 3-speed gears. It seems that a bicycle for his daughter is one of the essentials for which a Laotian will work. It is considered ill-bred and irreligious in Laos to work 241
more than is necessary. The father of a family cultivates an amount 461
of land, estimated, by a bonze who is expert in such matters, to be 511
792

1 [i.e., Laotian religious 255
festival. -- Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

241 sufficient for his requirements. If there are six members of the
461 family, six standard, equal sized portions of land will be cultivated.
511 If a child is born into the family another piece of land is cleared and
792 worked. When a member of the family dies, whether it be a baby or the grandfather, cultivation of his portion will be stopped. Just enough is produced for the family to eat and to provide a small surplus sold in the market — *with the bonze's approval* — to buy occasional strict necessities, like a silk shawl and a bicycle for the
735 daughter. There is no social insurance and there are no poor. The
556 old and the sick are supported by the young, or, where they are
792 left without able-bodied providers, by the community, and the
771 bonzes give instructions for the necessary land to be placed under cultivation for them. The accumulation of wealth which is not to be used for definite, approved purposes, causes a man to lose prestige among his neighbours, just, as in the West, the process is reversed. The main difference, it seems, between Buddhism in Indo-China, and Christianity — apart from any question as to their relative merits — is that, whether we admire it or not, the former is largely put into practice.

It is a stimulating reflection that the Western millionaire, obsessed for the sake of social distinction with the amassing of enormous possessions — little of which he can personally consume — would attain the same ends of personal celebrity under a Laotian Buddhistic order of things by his priestly austerities — by embracing the most abject and prestige-conferring form of poverty.

181 For this reason perhaps the local Evangelist missionary and his
771 wife have made no converts. Like all who have lived among the
785 Laotians they are charmed with them — although, of course,
797 disappointed at their blindness. They also deplore their immorality.

In the matter of converts the Evangelists have been no more unsuccessful than their Portuguese, Spanish and French forerunners. The Laotians having little capacity for abstractions, either in their

victorious (1), and this expedition, which would seem to have 648*
643*

1. With the help of Trần-Ninh. 728
175*

been imposed on him, is the only campaign which is related during his long forty-three year reign.

According to the Annals he strictly observed the Buddhist teaching and followed, in a more docile manner than his father had done, the pious counsels of Pha-Maha-Pasaman-Thala-Tiao, his spiritual director, "and so his kingdom knew a long period of peace and prosperity." He was a great builder of temples, and erected the pagodas of Manorom, Ouposot (with a library which was given the manuscripts which had been brought from Angkor), and Xieng-Kang which was built in memory of his daughter, the young princess Sivayaka, who died of smallpox at the age of twelve. 643* 175* /645 792/

The Three Hundred Thousand Thaïs. In 1376 he gave orders for a general census of the inhabitants of Lang-Xang. The results gave 300,000 "registered" Thaïs, not counting women, children, bonzes, foreigners, slaves and Khas (2), and Oun-Hueun took /53/ 161 175* 654

2. The number of registered non-Thaïs was about 400,000.

/C.A.M. Translator's note. Page 53 is devoted to a map: "Lan-Xang and surrounding regions at the death of Fa-Ngoun (1374)". / as his reigning name Phaya-Sam-Sène-Thaï, the King of the Three Hundred Thousand Thaïs.

Social Organization. These folk then constituted a society grouped by families and divided into Nobles and Commoners. The Nobles were given certain privileges and helped to administer the kingdom, from the dignitaries who were princes of royal blood down to the simple officials who were responsible for collecting taxes, for assembling labor drafts, for transporting goods, etc. 631 565 175*

In the provinces the heads of circumscriptions (Muongs) were elected either from the Nobles or from the Commoners, but the choice of the electors generally fell on the son or some relative of the person who was to be replaced, unless there were some unworthiness or notorious incapability.

175* inhabitants and especially the songs and laughter of the beautiful
114 girls bedecked with flowers. . . . It nevertheless follows from his re-
/771 marks that Lan-Xang was then the veritable holy land of Buddhism
792/ and that it possessed the most highly venerated sanctuaries where priests from Siam and Cambodia "came to spend ten or twelve days to study and receive their grades."

439 For a long time now the rich traders of Holland had been sending
175* ships into the waters of the Indian Ocean in search of cloves, /106/ nutmeg, pepper, silk goods, gold dust and porcelain. In 1641 the mother country had made settlements in Java, Sumatra, Borneo, the Celebes and the Moluccas, and its flag was known as far as the seas of China and Japan. Several mercantile establishments had sent out "sub-traders" from Batavia to Siam and to Cambodia. In July 1641 the governor general of Java, Van Diemen, ordered a mission which was operating in Pnom-Penh on behalf of the East India Company to send out a caravan to "the land of gum lac and benzoin." Under the direction of Van Wustof and his assistants William de Gover and Hubert Boudewinsz, the caravan entered the Mekong. The voyage was a long and difficult one, and often dangerous where rapids had to be passed. These men left Phom-Penh on July 20 and reached Vientiane on November 3 after 106 days of effort. They brought a good-sized packet of cloth and cottonstuffs, a casket of emeralds set in rings and small gifts such as brightly colored sampots (?), mirrors which closed like a book, etc. . . (1).

1. Cf. Cabaton, Le Laos et les Neerlandais au dix-septieme siecle (1913).

A few kilometers out of Vientiane a /107/ messenger from the king came to find out what the foreigners' intentions were and was shown a letter from Van Diemen to the "sovereign of Laos." He was fully satisfied and took them to the outskirts of the city to dwellings which had been prepared for them on the banks of the river. On the following day, November 4, the merchandise and gifts were unloaded. On the 5th the Dutch were received by the king "a quarter of an hour's
/576/ march away from the capital." They knelt down most humbly, their feet bare, striking the ground three times with their foreheads and holding a large candle in each hand, and were welcomed in a tumultuous camp of soldiers, horses and elephants caparisoned with

115: Le Boulanger--104 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

It was in this holy place that Anou received /164/ his subjects' 796
and vassals' oaths of fidelity twice a year up until 1827. The 643*
ceremony was continued, after his downfall, in honor of the king 175*
of Siam. Nowadays it takes place in April and November of each
year and the oath, accompanied by prayers from the bonzes, is
addressed to the president of the French Republic in accordance
with the traditional formula: "May any one of us who breaks this /695/
oath be devoured by the tiger, may he be struck by lightning, may
his soul burn in blazing flames... etc." (1).

1. A monastery was recently built near the cloister, which 792
has been transformed into a museum. A center of religious
learning has been revived there by the leader of the bonzes
who is presently in charge of it.

Voyage to Bangkok (1825). In the meantime Anou kept closely 643*
informed of the events which were transpiring in the west of the 648*
Indo-Chinese peninsula. In the south the Siamese had come to 175*
grips with the Annamites in Cambodian territory, and in the north
the British in India were extending their sphere of action towards
Burma in a way which was disturbing for the Thai regions of the
basin of the Salouen and the Upper Menam. In 1825 he went to
Bangkok to attend the funeral of king Phan-Dinh- /165/ /Page 165
is devoted to an illustration: "Square of the temple of Sisaket at
Vientiane."--Translator/ /166/ Klang, and there he learned that
a British delegation had entered into ticklish negotiations with the
government of the deceased king and that the intransigence of the
English was causing the greatest difficulties at the court. He profited
thereby in order to ask permission to repatriate to his country the
Laotian families who had been taken captive in the course of the
preceding century, but was given a categorical refusal (1).

1. He was told that the Laotian families had been settled
in Siam for too long a time not to have become completely
Siamese. Cf. H.R.H. Phanuphanthuvongswardja, op. cit.
/Repression de la revolte de Vientiane. Bangkok, 1926./

Hiding his disappointment, he regained his capital greatly dis- /721/
contented. The following year, when the rumor reached Vientiane
that the Anglo-Siamese parleys had been broken off and that a

000 marvelous in its color and animation, which by its novelty and with its long curtain of dark green mountains behind, affords a surprise to the eyes which captures the imagination." "I feel completely happy," he wrote, "at the idea of living in this ravishing corner and confronted with so incomparable a decor" (1).

1. Mission Pavie, "Geographie et Voyages," Vol. VI, p. 32.

175* 648* He was ceremoniously welcomed by the two Siamese commissioners, the governor of Sukhotai and the louang Pitsanoulep, who were responsible for the internal administration of the kingdom, who took every precaution to isolate him from the king, the mandarins and the inhabitants, and who avoided compromising themselves by replying to all his questions that the true master of the land and the only one qualified to furnish him information on his projected voyage towards Tonkin was the Chao_Meun, vanquisher of the Hos, whose triumphant return was imminent.

While awaiting the arrival of this all-powerful personage Pavie settled in for better or for worse, explored the city and its suburbs, visited the pagodas and, in chance meetings and despite the strict surveillance of which he was the object, engaged in intimate chats with the natives whose sympathies he gained immediately by virtue of his delicate /259/ good nature. At their first meeting he made a friend of the Satou (1) of the Wat-Mai, who was greatly taken by

/792/ 1. Superior of the bonzery.

the keen interest which he displayed in Laotian customs and legends. He had only been in Luang-Prabang for a few days when his picturesque figure was familiar to all. As he passed the confused and worried faces relaxed and everyone smiled at him and greeted him with a word, for they were involuntarily attracted, given confidence and conquered...

He displayed such simplicity in insisting that he be received by King Oun-Kham that the Kaluongs no longer dared postpone an audience which they committed the imprudence of not refusing him categorically. On February 15 they presented him to the old monarch who was seventy-six years old, deaf, asthmatic and "in truth greatly weakened." By all appearances the latter seemed to have been given a severe lesson and "to feel great apprehension at the trouble which the arrival of a French agent might cause him, especially at a time when Siamese troops occupy his principality."

779 Buddhism is practiced by the Laotians, the Lus, the Youns and a few Thai tribes as well as by the Khouène and Khmou Khas.-

771 The white, black, red and Neua Thais, and also the Phou-Thais, have generally adopted Brahminic ancestor worship. The Lolos, Méos, Lanène Yaos, etc. are also devotees of this cult, although they have somewhat modified it with certain superstitions.

The Khas of the various tribes profess a kind of ill-defined pantheism as well as the cult of genii, spirits of "Phis," which the other races also observe. Christianity, in both the Catholic and Protestant form, has been adopted by people of diverse origin who have gathered in Christian communities or formed scattered groups in the midst of populations with Asiatic beliefs.

Let us now try to define these various cults and to show how they are understood and by whom they are served.

Religion of the Laotians:

779 "The religion of the Laotians," says the Superior Resident, "is Buddhism. But since there were no Brahmins in Laos whose interest was to see the Brahminic Pantheon supreme, Buddha has kept his preponderant place in the pagodas, whereas in Ceylon and Nepal, the last Buddhist centers in the Indies, he has lost this place and been submerged under and confused with the more ancient gods of Brahminic origin.

[792] "Most of the Laotian bonzes are completely ignorant of the
779 dogmas of the religion which they blindly and deafly serve. One does meet highly learned ones, however, who seem to have a fairly clear idea of doctrine. Eternal nature, which has existed for all time and forms the essence of everything, is to be regarded as a bottomless nothingness and an incommensurable void. Sometimes however, through the fatal effect of desire, this void takes on an appearance. Thence comes all evil, and thence arises suffering. All the appearances which we call life, sickness, death, and separation from what we love, what we desire and [150] what we cannot have, are so many misfortunes. Now, desire is at the origin of all these misfortunes. Suppress desire and at the same time suffering is suppressed. The path to be followed is a simple one: destroy all desire; detach yourself from the things of this world, and try to raise yourself step by step to a higher state throughout all the successive lives which you are obliged to live in varied forms and which will be all the more excellent in the degree that all the acts, words and

149: Reinach--120 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

In résumé, Buddhist morality is based on the five following commandments, which are obligatory for all men without distinction: 779

1. Do not take the life of any living being;
2. Do not steal the property of others;
3. Do not commit adultery;
4. Never lie;
5. Do not get drunk on fermented beverages.

It should be noted that these five commandments give rise only to prohibitions, a fact which would seem to indicate that man is mainly inclined toward evil. This is the characteristic feature of Buddhist law: it forbids evil without indicating the means of doing good; it does not uplift the individual morally, but limits itself to preventing him from falling still lower. It acts to preserve a certain moral and social status in which the greater part of humanity is to be kept, under the domination of the bonzes who alone are capable of rising to a knowledge of good and evil.

Despite the purity of its morality and the elevation of its precepts, this religion, which denies progress but from which Christianity has nevertheless borrowed more than one dogma, has not yet been able, after twenty-five centuries of existence, to make civilization penetrate to its faithful.

The Laotian clergy. The Buddhist clergy is composed of three categories of holy men, whom we call bonzes in Laos and talapoins (2) 792 871

(2) From the Siamese word Talapat, a bonze's fan made of palm leaves.

in Siam. These categories are:

1. Boys from ten to fifteen years of age who have entered a bonzery only to learn to read and write the Thai language, and who are called Xieng or Nèn;

2. Student bonzes, called Hatit, who complete their religious education until they reach the age of twenty-two or twenty-five by the study of Youn characters and of Pali, as well as by reading the sacred books;

[161] 3. Last the ordained bonzes or Phra (Phâ, in the current pronunciation) who have pronounced their temporary vows.

There is a well-defined hierarchy among the bonzes which, in terms equivalent to our own, goes from the archbishop to the simple 792

792 vicar and young seminarist. The grades have the following titles:

1. Nèn (student or Xieng). Thi-Houa (Deacon), student preparing for ordination;
2. Tiao-Houa or Pha (ordained bonze or vicar);
3. Samdèt or Tiao-Wat (curate, head of a pagoda);
4. Sa (Satouk-Niat), bishop;
5. Khoû, bishop;
6. Thane, archbishop. [Illustration alongside text here.]

There are also bonzesses who devote themselves to the service of the temples of Buddha and are mainly responsible for keeping them supplied with flowers, candles, perfume, etc.

Bonzesses must be at least forty-five years old. They wear white garments, keep their heads completely shaved and take only two meals each day, before noon. They are not allowed to live with their husbands and must sleep on ground in close proximity to the pagoda. They are a kind of vestals, but with the difference that they are neither young nor virgins and that they do not take vows of chastity.

792 The following are the duties imposed on bonzes and the faults which they must avoid:

785 [162] Ask alms each day for your living.

You must always be clothed in your yellow garments.

You must live in pagodas and not in lay habitations. You must abstain from pleasures of the flesh, from stealing, from lying and from murder of any person or thing which has life.

Do not be prideful of your own cleanliness.

Do not till the soil.

Do not destroy any tree.

Do not kill any animal.

Do not drink any intoxicating beverage.

Do not eat rice after noon.

Do not pay attention to songs, music or dancing.

Do not use any perfume on your body.

Do not sit or sleep in a place which is higher than the one where your superior is.

Do not have either gold or silver in your possession.

Speak only of religious subjects.

149: Reinach-121a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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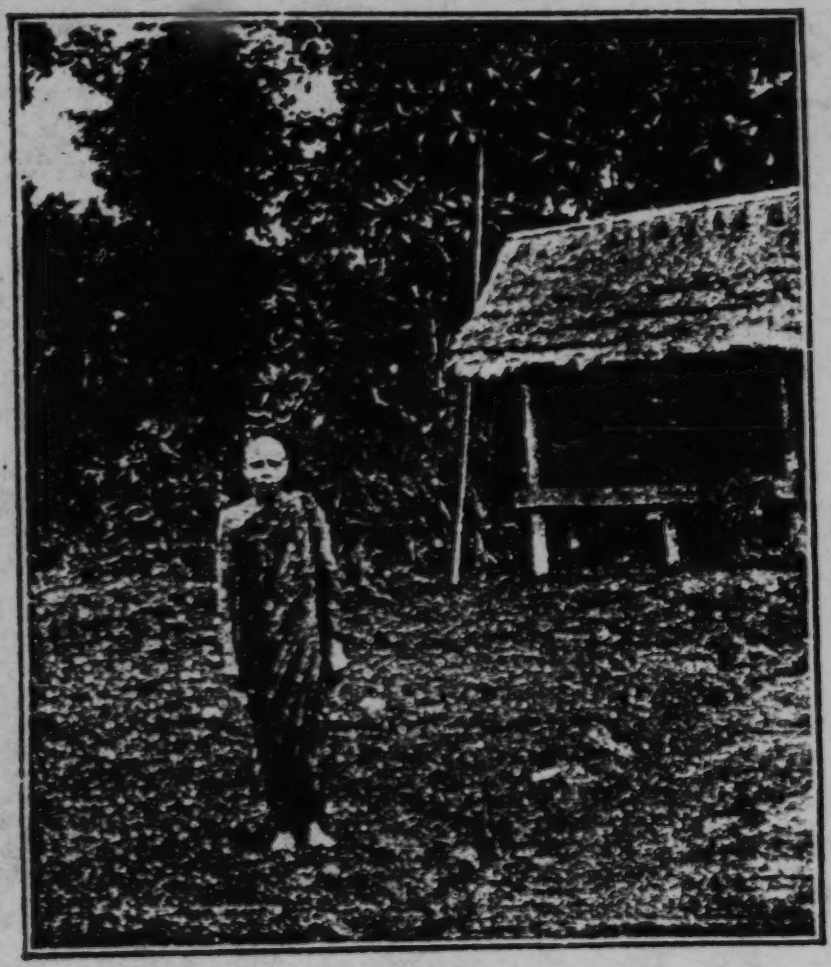

Fig. 42 /p.161/ A young bonze.

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Do only religious works.
Do not give flowers to women.
Do not thank anyone for giving you alms.
Do not borrow anything from laymen.
Do not lend anything on interest, not even a small pot.
Do not have implements of war, lances or swords.
Do not eat to excess.
Do not sleep to excess.
Do not administer any poison.
Do not give strong medicine to a pregnant woman.
Do not make any incision which will draw blood.
Do not seek any pleasure in looking on women.
Do not sleep in an open place.
Do not work for money.
Do not buy or sell anything.
When you eat, do not make noise like a dog.
Do not sing any joyful song.
Do not play any instrument.
Avoid races and gambling.
Do not judge your neighbor; do not say of this man that he is evil, or of that man that he is good.
It is sinful to do any of the following:
Not to walk through the streets in a contemplative posture.
Not to shave your head and eyebrows, or to neglect your fingernails.
[163] To move your legs when you are seated.
To affect an austere air, to have a more severe air than others and not to make your words agree with your actions.
To receive alms in order to give them to someone else.
To speak to a woman in a secret place.
To mingle in royal affairs, except when they concern religion.
To cultivate the soil; to raise turkeys, chickens, cows, buffalo, elephants, horses, pigs or dogs as laymen do.
To own objects of gold and silver as your private property.
To preach in any other language but "Pali".
To sit on the same mat as a woman.
To cook rice.
To eat anything which has not been offered with hands clasped.

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To dream of a woman and be awakened by the dream.
To covet the property of others.
To speak profanely of earth, wind, fire, water or anything whatsoever.

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Ordained bonzes, like novices and students, shave their heads, eyebrows and beards carefully and repeat this operation every two weeks. Their clothing, which is the same for all and is of a uniform yellow color obtained by means of a jackwood dye, consists of a sarong, a kind of very full skirt which is worn folded in pleats and extends from the waist to the ground, and which is held in at the waist by a narrow sash. A half-tunic passing under one arm is attached to the opposite shoulder, and is split on one side. The whole garment is kept in place by a sash worn crosswise, and is covered with a kind of toga in the antique manner which is severely draped.

Ordained bonzes wear in addition a piece of pleated cloth on the left shoulder on which sacred characters and various formulas are inscribed.

Bonzes obey a code which was brought to them from India together with the sacred books, and a part of which has been quoted above.

The code requires that their clothing should not be made of one piece of cloth which is whole and of full width, but that it be made of unmatched pieces sewn together. Since the code does not in any way specify the nature of the cloth, one sees bonzes' garments [164] of silk and velvet as well as of cotton and flannel, depending on the generosity of the donors.

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Failure to keep the vow of chastity is very severely punished. The guilty person is marched through the village or city and seated backwards on a horse or carried on a wattle while a minor functionary proclaims the fault committed aloud and beats on a gong. Children and even adults utter hoots and throw filth at the guilty party and his female accomplice, who follows a few steps behind him. When he gets back to the pagoda the bonze is degraded from his rank and then handed over to the civil authorities if there are any grounds for so doing (1).

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(1) This custom has fallen into disuse. Faults committed by bonzes are treated much more indulgently in Laos than in Cambodia.

149: Reinach--124 G-3 (no date) J-901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Although less pure than in Cambodia, the bonzes' morals in Laos are generally fairly good. They are, moreover, greatly loved, highly regarded and fondly cherished. When there is a celebration or a great feast in a family, part of the choicest dishes is always reserved for the bonzes.

On the next to the last day of every phase of the moon, the bonzes must make public confession of their faults and be prepared, should the need arise, to undergo the punishments which the code stipulates.

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Bonzeries are schools and at the same time workshops where all trades are taught. All knowledge is concentrated in them, as our knowledge was during the Middle Ages in monasteries.

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Together with the pagodas, they are also spots of inviolable asylum in accordance with certain rights, and hostelries where travelers are lodged and fed with the produce of the bonzes' alms-seeking.

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Newly ordained bonzes must stay in the pagoda at least three months, and may quit their habit at the end of this period. If a bonze desires to return to the pagoda after he has reentered lay life, his reassumption of the habit gives rise to the same formalities and ceremonies as the first time. It is a new ordination.

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The liturgical litanies of the Buddhist religion, which the bonzes psalmodize, may not be translated into Laotian. The bonzes and the [165] [Illustration] [166] [Blank page] [167] Laotian faithful, as well as the cantors and the French adepts, chant prayers whose meaning they do not understand (1).

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(1) In reality the Laotian, Lu and Youn bonzes form a sort of caste as the Druids used to in Gaul. More particularly, they are the ministers of worship, the repositories of moral authority, of scientific traditions, of secrets and of artistic and industrial methods. They transmit by word of mouth the precepts of Buddhist dogma, which were long ago explained by those who introduced the religion into the land. But the writings in "Pali" which contained these, although they can still be read mechanically by a few scholars, are no longer understood. Thence arises the necessity of handing down their meaning by word alone. Thence also, without doubt, arises the increasingly greater attenuation of the purity and force of these principles as they

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149: Reinach--124a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 43 /p.165/ A ceremony in the Wat-Si-Saket Pagoda in Vien-Tiane.

779 pass from one generation to another and suffer partial suppressions
78 and numberless interpolations.

The bonzes of our own day do not know the sacred language
[198] and are reduced to imitating the "hateful" monks of whom Rabe-
lais speaks, "who neither till the soil nor work, but only mumble
792 a great stock of legends and psalms which they do not under-
stand at all."

792 The bonzes are the ones who consecrate water and prepare with
their prayers for the pronunciation of the oath of allegiance which
641 native officials take twice a year to their direct sovereign and, if
necessary, to their suzerain both for themselves and for the whole
788 population. The oath consists in reciting the formula and in drinking
lustral water in which the candles used for the ceremony have been
extinguished and in which the arms of the sovereign have been dipped.

The following is the formula of the oath which is pronounced in Laos twice a year, in the capital of each province, in the presence of the government commissioner. This formula has been in use in the land for centuries and was left just as it was, except for substituting the title of President of the Republic for that of the king of Siam, Vien-Tiane or Luang-Prabang.

Formula of the oath: "I (there follow the names, titles and qualities of each of the mandarins present, each of whom repeats the formula, which is read aloud by one of them, generally the eldest), take an oath of allegiance and offer my life to the President of the French Republic. I give my word before God and before the angels present in heaven. May God and his angels deign to listen to my vows, because the President of the French Republic governs our land with wisdom and skill, follows the ancient customs and protects the bonzes, the authorities and the inhabitants.

"I place myself under his sacred feet, as well as the soldiers and inhabitants who live in my muong, and we all swear him allegiance.

[168] "I ask to serve the administration in the shadow of his sacred feet and to acknowledge his goodness by promising to be faithful and never to revolt in thought, word or body.

"If I show myself ungrateful to, or if I revolt against the President of the French Republic in thought, word or body; if I see or learn that peril threatens the President of the French Republic and remain silent instead of warning him immediately of the peril which I see or know; if I show myself ungrateful towards the President of the

149: Reinach--126 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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French Republic, whose happiness and wisdom only grow from day to day, may God and his angels who are present in the air and in heaven punish me, may they deprive me of all necessary things, may they kill me by the sky's lightning, may they strike me with all sorts of terrible maladies, may they cause me to die by the sword or the gun, may wild animals devour me, may I be entirely ruined, and may misfortune burden me everywhere I go or reside. May God and his angels cover my body with sores, and may diseases strike me, and may I die abandoned by all so as to serve as an example to the world; after my death may I be condemned for centuries to the flames of hell, and may nothing enable me to escape these exemplary punishments.

"If after (a thousand years) I am reborn to a new life in any part of the world whatsoever, may I not have an instant of happiness, may I lack everything, and may I never see God and his angels, who will never be able to cleanse me of the fault which I have committed by showing myself ungrateful and faithless towards the President of the French Republic.

"If, on the contrary, I am grateful and faithful to the President of the French Republic, if I never revolt in thought, word or body, if I never ally myself with foreigners to disturb his security and that of his people, may God and his angels who are present in the air and in heaven make me live long in this world, may I avoid all the dangers which threaten me, and may I be exempt from all human slavery; I drink the water of the oath; may peace and prosperity reign in my home.

"After my death, as a reward for my faithfulness, may my happiness continue in heaven in a place where joys and pleasures abound, and may I find myself with God in the midst of his angels. If later on (in a thousand years) I am reborn to a new life, may I be showered with riches, dignities, joys and pleasures, may I obtain all that I desire, may I be exempt from all human misery, and finally may I again find myself in the presence of God and his angels, as a reward for my fidelity and my gratitude, with the President of the French Republic.

"I drink the water of the oath" (1).

(1) After Captain Gosselin, op. cit. [Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900.]

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[169] The formula used in southern Laos is more concise and slightly different.

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The natives of Laos, whatever their race, have a great respect for any oath and stand in much dread of the consequences of perjury.

Oaths are widely used in courts of law in cases of disputes between individuals. When a judge has reached the end of his arguments and is confronted with a stubborn plaintiff he sends him to the pagoda before the sacred statues to deny the accusation or affirm his statements.

In this case, the above formula is modified in accordance with the needs of the case, as regards the object of the oath and the type of authority invoked as sanction. But the basis is always the same.

As a means of legal procedure, an oath is regarded as an argument of such force and of such grave consequences that it is used only as a last resort. In Laos it is the ultima ratio judicium.

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The Laotian calendar (1). The Laotian year is calculated on the

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(1) Since the bonzes establish the calendar we have thought it well to place this information in the chapter devoted to religion in Laos.

phases of the moon and includes twelve months which are divided into twenty-four half-moons. The months have thirty and twenty-nine days alternately, giving 354 days in the year or eleven days less than in the solar year.

In reality the Laotian calendar is luni-solar, for in order to bring the ordinary year into approximate harmony with the solar year an extra month is inserted every three years after the eighth month, and repeats the latter. It is called the "second eighth month" (Dueune pèt song). In chronological dating, the Laotian year begins about the middle of the fifth month (April).

Like the Siamese, the Laotians have adopted a system for co-ordinating and numbering their years which is based on a great cycle of sixty years and two other intermediate cycles of ten and twelve years each. The first of these intermediate cycles is decimal, and the second is zodiacal (duodecimal).

[170] Each year is designated first by the name of the great cycle, then by those of each of the intermediate cycles and by a chronological number.

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wax candles decorated with flowers, cigarettes and a sum of money. (Author's note)

the family from the hands of her patient.

"Two or three days after her confinement ends the mother must go to the pagoda and give a few presents to the bonzes, who give her in return a few cotton threads which she fastens to her wrists" (4). [751] [792]

(4) Dr. Estrade, 1895. Dictionnaire et Guide franco-laotien. [113]

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Cases of dystocia and other childbearing difficulties are very rare in Laos, thanks to the physiological law which decrees that childbirth shall occur all the more naturally insofar as one comes closer to the primitive type and as one's body has not been deformed either by certain professional attitudes or by artifices of dress. [191] But when any difficulty of this type does occur the Laotian midwives are extremely skilful. Their hands take the place of the steel instruments in our gynecological and surgical arsenal, and their results are usually successful both for mother and child.

[554]

When the newly delivered mother is allowed to get up there occur traditional feasts and celebrations, the brilliance of which varies with the status of the young mother's parents. It is generally during these happy gatherings that the bonzes or sorcerers choose the name which the newborn child is to bear. They usually base their choice on some peculiarity of the coloring or eyes, or on a phase of the moon. The name will be replaced by another if the child falls sick, for in this case, as they say, the old name was unpleasing to his "Phis," that is to say to his personal tutelary spirits.

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Infanticide. Scarcely any cases of infanticide can be cited in Laos, and abortions are extremely rare or at least very well hidden. For when cases do occur it is among members of a class which, because of the rank it holds, is anxious to conceal its faults from the mass of the people.

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In popular belief abortion, whether voluntary or natural, is regarded as a punishment of heaven or as a case of aberration which cannot fail to draw down the utmost scorn on the guilty parties and their accomplices.

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Marriage. Marriage in Laos is made ready for long in advance, thanks to the liberty which young people of both sexes enjoy. The latter meet one another at every celebration and can communicate

moreover, the object of the utmost scorn on the part of the whole 548
population, and their houses are relegated to points outside the muong, that is to say outside the city.

No such practice exists in rural areas, and if a few girls grant 836
their lovers great intimacies it is in the hope--a hope which is almost always realized--that marriage will be the result.

Death, burial, cremation. In principle, Laotians are supposed 764
to cremate their dead. In this they are obedient to the ancient 766
traditions which specified this ceremony, but since cremation is a costly practice poor people are simply buried.

In certain cases, as in deaths resulting from dysentery epidemics, from childbirth, from suicide, etc., the bodies are thrown into the river or its tributaries.

Laotians have no cemeteries enclosed by walls or barriers. A corner of the forest near the muong or village is reserved for this use and serves as a last resting place for those of the inhabitants who cannot be cremated or should not be thrown into the water. There, at the foot of the trees and in their shade, repose those adults and adolescents whose families did not even have means to buy the ritual cremation firewood, and also the children who never underwent the operation of "cutting the forelock" (1).

(1) This operation takes place at the age of thirteen and marks the transition from childhood to adolescence. It is the sign of nubility. [881]

When it is to be buried, the body of the dead person is placed in 764
a sort of coffin made of ax-hewn planks which are usually poorly 792
joined and covered with colored paper burdened with ornamentation. Sometimes a mat is used, in simpler fashion, or else lattices made of split and crushed bamboo stalks like those which form the floors of houses. The whole is tied together with rattan or with bamboo bark.

This is the lot of destiny's outcasts. After a few family ceremonies and a feast given in the dead person's home [201]--the magnitude of which ceremonies and feast vary depending on the dead person's station in life and his family's resources--the bonzes, accompanied by a few pupils, come and recite the funeral orisons.

The bonzes are not supposed to look at the body during their prayers, and they hold up a screen called Talapsat to hide their faces.

149: Reinach--152 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Gifts from the family serve as payment for the bonzes. When the prayers are over, flowers and wax candles are added to the gifts. The body is then raised on the shoulders of four pallbearers of good-will and taken to the cemetery, where there are a few ablutions and where the bonzes recite the last prayers before the burial. 764 792

When all is done the persons present take turns throwing branches, earth and stone into the grave, in the belief that these things will preserve the deceased from contact with wet soil and the teeth of animals. The grave, comparatively shallow, is dug two sok (.9 meter) deep for adults and a half sok (.65 meter) deep for children and adolescents. When the cavity has been filled with earth and well tamped down with the feet, the persons present withdraw and all is over forever.

No worship will be practiced for this tomb, and it will soon disappear under a thick blanket of vegetation. Relatives sometimes return, however, after a rainfall if the ground happens to have settled slightly on the very spot of the grave. They then fill up the tomb and build a sort of tumulus above it with flat stones or heavy round rocks.

The custom of throwing into running water the bodies of persons who had died as a result of certain diseases, generally of an epidemic character, used to be practiced in Laos before our arrival there. The inhabitants had no concern for the fatal consequences which such a procedure might have on public health. Since our arrival in the land an absolute prohibition has been issued against throwing any corpse into the watercourses. Nowadays the people are content merely with simulating this custom and with interring bodies after a pretended immersion. 766 744

[202] When the family of the deceased is wealthy or even well-to-do, cremation is the standard procedure. This ceremony is not performed immediately after death is pronounced, but may often be postponed for more than a month either to enable relatives to come from a distance, or to await the settlement of a pending lawsuit, or else the arrival of the fire sent by the sovereign if the deceased is a prince, an official or a man of a certain rank. Wealthy families postpone the date of cremation out of ostentation, for the interval between death and cremation is supposed to be filled with feasts, celebrations and amusements of all kinds which are put on almost continuously for the bonzes, relatives, friends, neighbors and [554] 764

149: Reinach--156 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Ever since the death, singers and improvisers of both sexes accompanied by volunteer musicians had recounted the merits, qualities and exploits of the deceased at great length and with emphasis before a numerous audience which remained attentive and never grew tired. They boasted of his good deeds, listed his particular habits and tastes and enumerated his many children and grandchildren.

They dwelled with great satisfaction on the intimacies which he had taken with the fair sex up to quite an advanced age, and in support of their remarks showed brightly illuminated drawings painted on long streamers of glazed calico. These drawings, as much by the truth of the attitudes shown as by their outrageous realism, were the joy of the spectators. Both children and adults roared with laughter as they listened to the highly spicy commentary of the improvisers.

A curious fact was that this exhibition did not occasion any obscene or even suggestive gesture on the part of the audience.

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The bonzes, who are the only art students in this country, are the ones who color these pictures. If published in our own land, the latter would certainly call down all the rigor of the law on their author.

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The day of cremation finally came, and the funeral proper began.

One of the sons of the deceased first set free two pairs of partridges and turtledoves, pet birds which he had had. The poor creatures were unaccustomed to flight and refused to leave their cage, but then beat their wings and clumsily escaped to a perch a few meters above ground on one of the trees [207] in the garden. A trail of ashes was spread all around the fence surrounding the house of the deceased in order, as popular belief has it, to prevent his spirit from escaping into the nearby region and tormenting the living.

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A solid bamboo stretcher which twelve hardy men would carry on their shoulders was placed on the ground to await the catafalque. Attendance was heavy, and people of all ages came from a distance. They wore their holiday clothes with vivid, light and iridescent colors. They wore flowers in their ears and hair and carried multicolored streamers, wax candles and sticks of incense in their hands.

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The members of the family, the officials of the Muong and the bonzes were also there in force.

The catafalque was carried from the house by hand and put down on the stretcher, which the porters then raised to their shoulders. At its base, near the feet of the deceased, was fastened a strip of calico

149; Reinach--166 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Since there is not, so to speak, any class of salaried workers in Laos except in certain types of work and in transport by pirogues and rafts, the inhabitants of any given center lend one another their help in farming, harvesting, building houses or pirogues, etc. Taking turns, the one who has asked help of his neighbors will put on a celebration for them when the work is over, and will himself receive an invitation from someone else in return for help which he has given.

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Laotian celebrations, in which the bonzes are never forgotten, are usually given under the verandas of the pagodas or in their dependencies, unless they take place in the host's own home or under sheds specially constructed for the purpose on one side. The latter is always the case in a "Ngan" given for those who have helped in building a house, and the same is true for a birth or marriage.

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Celebrations generally begin towards four or five in the afternoon when the heat is beginning to wane. They last all night and sometimes resume on the following day after the guests have relaxed for a few hours. Some "Ngans" go on in this way for nearly a week and are interrupted only by the coming of the Laotian sabbath, a day of absolute rest when only the preparation of food is permitted, and no work or pleasure. By the light of kerosene lamps borrowed here and there, or of resinous torches, the girls, who are decked out in all their finery, are stationed in a line squatting down against a wall or partition. Before them there are [221] vases made of copper, silver or porcelain. They all pretend to be busy with minor tasks and may imitate, for example, the preparation of food. But in reality this is only their way of keeping some kind of countenance.

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[461 805]

The adults and children of both sexes are massed at each end of the row of girls. Then the young men, their heads covered with scarves, come and squat down opposite the girls and with their heads still covered begin an animated conversation which soon turns into regular flirting. If there is enough space the orchestra takes up its position nearby and in the center, between the young people, are the singers, improvisers and "Kene" players. Cakes, fruit, quids of betel, cigarettes, rice brandy and various condiments are passed around.

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Spectators who have not been specially invited come and stand behind the young people, as do passersby who drop in for a quid, a cigarette, a cup of brandy or a bowl of rice, or to listen to the songs and music for a little while.

149: Reinach--354 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

272 The distillation methods used are good ones, but the equipment used leaves much to be desired and does not make it possible to obtain rectified alcohol of a high degree. By taking 25 or 28 proof native alcohol and distilling it for a second time with European equipment, a fairly good-tasting alcohol can be obtained which is 68 to 72 proof.

389 Powder-making. The inhabitants of Laos make the powder themselves which they use for hunting and for fireworks. They know how to proportion and triturate the ingredients--charcoal, saltpeter (1)

[317] (1) The saltpeter which is collected in grottoes containing calcareous rocks is chiefly made up of masses of droppings from birds and bats. The bat is called "Kiea" and saltpeter "Khi-Kiea," or, literally, Droppings of bats.

and sulphur--in order to make either explosive powder or fusing powder.

792 The bonzes are the fireworks-makers par excellence who make
527 the many and varied fireworks without which no celebration is really
389 complete. Bombs, firecrackers, Roman candles, serpents, pinwheels, etc. and, in a word, almost all the usual fireworks are made using rudimentary processes and local products.

389 The rockets (Bang-Fai) deserve special mention. They consist of a body containing fusing powder, to which is attached a wick several meters long and made of spun cotton or sometimes even of paper. The latter is smeared with mealed gunpowder mixed with gum, and the whole is fastened to a directing shaft. If the rocket is an Aeolian one, its rear is provided with a kind of Pan's pipe made of bamboo tubes which gives forth a harmonious sound as it describes its trajectory in the air.

The rockets vary greatly in size. In some the powder weighs only a few decagrams, and [468] the guide shaft is from two to three meters long. Other larger ones carry a "Mune" of powder (about 12 kilograms) and sometimes more, and the guide shaft is a whole stalk of bamboo some 15 meters long and from 12 to 15 centimeters in base diameter.

Rockets are generally decorated with gilded or colored paper. With the application of rice paste motifs, some of them manage to look very like a dragon with threatening jaws and terrifying eyes, and in these the body envelops the shaft and the head contains the Aeolian harp as well as the powder cylinder. The stands used for launching

175 the fourteenth century. Archaeological discoveries made in recent
177 years in the region of Luang Prabang and more recent ones in the
779 neighborhood of Vientiane may enable this important event in the religious history of Laos to be moved back more than two centuries.

[23] The Pagoda.

346 "Laotians liked to place their pagodas on high points, but their
marked taste for the edge of the water made them prefer the neighbor-
778 hood of rivers. This location of pagodas is a natural consequence of
[792] the relations between bonzes and inhabitants. The former drew their livelihood from the latter, and these are crowded on the river banks."
In principle the pagoda consists of three elements:

346 1) The buildings connected directly with the cult: vat, chapels, libraries; that, standing landmarks and niches;

2) The surrounding enclosures, exterior and interior;

3) The buildings for the immediate use of the inhabitants of the pagoda: monastery [bonzerie], cells for the bonzes, reception halls.

The vat consists of a large hall furnished with a pedestal on which stands the statue of the Buddha often accompanied by a preaching pulpit. The columns and walls are frequently ornamented with paintings.

Among the annexes of the vat, the most numerous are the chapels which are in the form either of delicate buildings or small compound halls.

The that is a votive and sometimes a funereal monument. (See appendix on Vientiane).

The only piece of furniture always found in the vat is the preaching pulpit, an elegant construction, often made of gilded wood. By way of furniture there are a few seats for the chiefs of the bonzes,
[788] particularly for the torch bearer. Finally, particularly in the region of Luang Prabang, one finds the hang-lin, a curious spout-shaped object, with elegant decoration, which is used for sprinkling the Buddhas on great feast days (cf. the New Year). These various finely carved objects are usually made of gilded wood and are sometimes inlaid with enamelled lead [24] whose brilliant gleam makes
[27] them sparkle. The manuscript chests are usually collected in the libraries, piled up in the shape of an inverted pyramid; they are generally carved and gilded.

173: Deydier--14 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

The Laotian Bonze--The Monastic Rules.

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As in Ceylon, Cambodia and the other Buddhist countries, the Laotian who enters religious life does not make a perpetual vow. To become a bonze, all that is necessary is to be twenty years old, not to have killed, nor stolen, nor have any skin disease. When he is ordained, the young man agrees to observe the Buddhist rules which are: not to take life, not to steal, not to sin against virtue, not to lie, not to drink intoxicating liquors, not to eat outside of the prescribed hours, not to attend entertainments which excite the senses, not to touch gold, nor silver, etc.

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The bonze's head, chin and eyebrows are completely shaved. In principle he must shave twice a month. The garments of the bonze must not be made of one piece and their color must be yellow ochre or yellow. These two traditions have their origin in the history of the life of the Buddha. When he left the palace of his father, the Buddha cut his hair and exchanged his princely garments for those of a hunter. Now, the hunter was a poor man dressed in rags covered with the yellow ochre dust of the fields. Therefore, since that day, in memory of the first religious garments of the Buddha, tradition demands that all bonzes wear this costome. Texts are not agreed as [795] to the color, the Saddharma-smrtyupasthana sutra giving a whole list of colors for the dyeing of religious garments. We will not delay over the discussions which have arisen amongst the various Buddhist schools over [25] this problem. We will limit ourselves to stating that in central Asia and in Tibet the bonzes wear brownish-red garments instead of the beautiful yellow color of the Laotian and Cambodian togas.

Bonzes get up very early in the morning. Having made their toilet and said their prayers, they leave about seven o'clock in single file to beg for their food. To be precise, we should add that the containers for the alms are usually carried by student bonzes [bonzillons]. After returning to the pagoda they have a brief meal, then they teach the student bonzes [bonzillons] to read and write, while others perform [871] the manual tasks necessary to the upkeep of the monastery. About noon, the bonze has another meal which is the last of the day. He does not eat any food till the following morning. After the meal he [264] must wash his fingers (he eats only with his right hand), and rinse out his mouth. Then he has a siesta, and at the close of the afternoon he works at his tasks as in the morning. In principle he must never go out alone; he is always accompanied by a brother monk to protect him from any temptation.

He[1] must never look at a woman. However a few old women are seen in the pagoda. These are the devotees. They are dressed in white, their heads are completely shaved, and they lead a life of observance and asceticism which is as rigorous as that of the monks. They render small services to the bonzes, decorate the altar, etc., but they live outside the enclosure of the pagoda. 792 785 562

Laotian Buddhism.

In a recent pamphlet, His Excellency Thao Nhouy Abhay, former Minister of National Culture and Education, wrote: "In its intrinsic substance Buddhism is deeply tolerant, but ours [26] has truly become not austere enough." Therefore he proposes some necessary reforms which would quickly raise the intellectual and moral level of the bonzes in Laos. There are two sects in Laos: the Mahanikay and the Thammayut. The only difference between the two is the way in which they consider that monastic rule should be observed. Nothing distinguishes them in appearance except the color of the monastic robe of the Mahanikay, which is brownish-ochre almost chestnut. The king is the chief of the Buddhist clergy. As for the believer who regularly observes his religious duties, he is satisfied with little and gives much in alms. Buddhist tales and particularly Laotian texts, among them the Pannasajataka (Ha Sip Xat), quote all the merits acquired for future lives by those who give alms and, above all, feed the bonzes. 779 795 [792] 643 [735]

Religious Literature.

The basis of the religious literature of Laos is the Buddhist Tripitaka. These "Three Baskets" contain the integral "word of the Buddha." 779 538

The basket [corbeille] of Vinaya (Vinayapitaka) is the rule of monastic life. It consists of five sections: Patimokkha, Mahavagga, Coullavagga, Souttavibhanga and Parivara. The Patimokkha is meant to be read in public (particularly on the feasts of the eighth month), on the periodic days of confession. The Mahavagga and the Coullavagga give the list of daily obligations, illustrated by examples drawn from the life of the Buddha. The Souttavibhanga is really a commentary on the Patimokkha; finally the Parivara is both a revision and a catechism.

The Basket of the Soutta (Souttapitaka) contains an enormous amount of preaching and of edifying tales. Among others, the famous Dhammapada, a treasury of the sayings of the Buddha and the Jatakas are to be found in this basket.

[27] The third basket is that of Abhidharma and consists of seven

1 [i.e., a bonze --Analyt]

[tonques]. 796

The experts throw themselves on the stone, turning it over to see if its underside has been wetted. According to the arrangement of the dry spots, [41] deductions are drawn on the topography of the rice fields which will be flooded, or remain dry, and on the advantage of making rice fields either "high or low." 782 787 243

- This sacrifice of the buffalo is found in the myth of Gavampati the strange monk held aloof by the Buddhist community because he took the attitude of being an enemy of the waters. His death allowed the arrival of the rains. 789

Khao Vassa (Feast of the Eighth Month).

This is the date of the beginning of the Buddhist Lent. During the three months of rains, not being able to go from one place to another preaching, the Buddha and his community retired into the park of the Jetavana. Besides the season of rains, as it awakens life everywhere, causes animals to swarm in great numbers. It is therefore impossible at this time of year to travel without violating, at each step, the precept which forbids the destruction of all existence, however infinitely small it may be. Thus, during this period, the bonzes may not leave the pagoda and are obliged to be present at the general confession. 796 792 183

Oldenberg describes this confession according to the Pali texts as follows:

"No monk may miss it. Only he who is stricken with mental alienation may be dispensed....By the light of a torch, the monks take their places at the place of assembly on low stools which have been prepared for them. Neither laymen nor student bonzes [bonzillons] nor nuns may be present, for the rule of the Order, to be recited in the form of a formula of confession, is considered in principle as a secret appurtenance of the monks only. This formula of confession, the Patimokkgam, is recited aloud by the oldest member [doyen].

"Oh Reverend one, whoever has committed a sin, may he confess it.... After the third time that the question has been repeated, if a monk does not confess a sin which [42] he has committed and which he remembers, he is guilty of an intentional lie. Now an intentional lie, oh reverend one, is an obstacle to religious life. Such are the words of the Blessed One."

Then there follows a list of the sins which must be confessed. At the head of the list are the most serious ones:

796 1. To have had carnal relations with anyone, even an animal.
2. To have stolen the property of others.
3. To have killed.
792 4. To have falsely usurped spiritual perfections, and with the intention of personal profit.

783 Then follows a list of lesser sins. When the enumeration is completed, the reader addresses the monks, repeating three times the following question:

"Now, I ask the reverend ones: Are you free of these sins? And for the second time: Are you pure? And for the third time I ask: Are you pure?" If everyone is silent, the reader says: "The reverend Ones are free of these sins, therefore they are silent, that is how I understand it."

In this way are catalogued in more than two hundred paragraphs, without much order, the precepts dealing with the daily life of the monks, their housing, their food and drink. No detail however irrelevant or insignificant is omitted.

In Laos as in Cambodia "during the entire rainy season, a taper of the Vassa must burn in each pagoda. This consists of a more or less richly carved, painted, wooden cylinder into which is poured virgin wax around a wick" (E. Porée-Maspéro). Before going into retreat, the bonzes are given garments, then the people form a procession and enter the pagodas where they deposit their taper.

196 [43] Ho Khao Padap Dinh--the Feast of the Dead of the Ninth Month

773 This feast is celebrated on the fifteenth day of the waning moon of the ninth month and is accompanied by offerings to the bonzes.

735 A Jataka (Sadhitissaraja) taken from the Ha Sip Xat tells us the benefits acquired by celebrating this feast.

"Two poor devout Buddhist woodcutters sold the produce of their labor and bought two large urns. Into them they put some rice, a few pieces of sugar cane, two bowls, four bananas, some meat and fish, and some delicacies. They offered all this to a bonze on the day of the feast of the dead and vowed to be born again in a better state. As a result of this act of charity they were born again into a royal family. The husband became king and his wife queen. The Buddha then said to those who were listening to this story: "When an act of charity is done for the feast of the dead, one attains three blisses: the terrestrial bliss of being king, the celestial bliss of becoming Indra and finally the supreme bliss of Nirvana."

173: Deydier--28 H,B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotian: AM8

Ho Khao Slak--The Feast of the Tenth Month. 796

This feast is similar to that taking place in Cambodia at the same period. Offerings are made to the bonzes by casting lots. The name of the bonze is written on small tickets which are mixed up in a cup. Each donor offers his present to the monk whose name he has drawn. 735

The Feasts of the Eleventh Month. 792

The Buddhist Lent finishes on the fifteenth day of the crescent moon of the eleventh month. In each pagoda the bonzes recite the Patimokkha, then confess their sins before leaving the [44] community to go either on a pilgrimage or into a rustic retreat for the period of the dry season. 796

The Offering of Kanthin. During this feast the ceremony of Kanthin takes place. This consists in offering to the bonzes garments, bedding, etc.... 796 735

"When the Buddha was in the Jetavana at Savatthi, some monks came to find him. They were caught by the beginning of Lent and were obliged to stop on their way. When they set out again after the fifteenth day of the crescent moon of the eleventh month, they arrived covered with mud. The Buddha therefore authorized them to accept the gift of garments at the end of Lent." [773]

The Kanthin can only be accepted by a group of at least five bonzes, but the material may not be borrowed of a third or offered on demand. Those who receive a Kanthin must sew its pieces themselves. (Cf. the Laotian bonze).

The Feast of the Waters.

Other feasts correspond to these purely Buddhist ones. The day before the race of the dugouts the faithful throw into the river small illuminated boats of bamboo or banana wood. Originally lamps were used, consisting of a piece of string dipped in oil, and held up by a banana leaf. This cord was woven at one end in the shape of crows' feet, in memory of the Jataka of the "White Crow." 796 773

"A female crow had made its nest at the top of a tree. On the night of a storm the bird died, and its five eggs were carried away by the current. They were gathered by five animals, a hen, an otter, a turtle, a cow, a serpent and gave birth to five buddhas. These buddhas often thought [45] of their mother who was in the heaven of the Tavatimca. She came down to earth in the form of

527 He then places his basket at the base of the pile of paddy and
243 the me-tao come and welcome the rice whose soul the owner of the rice is supposed to have brought back.

The master of the house then brings a straw mannequin personifying rice. Immediately the old women make a bassi before it, and tie white cotton threads to its gilded wrists. They then congratulate the rice on its return and beg it never to leave the granary again.

787 An old man, known for his powers of divination, takes the boiled
527 chicken from the basket, examines minutely its beak and claws, and from signs he discovers in them, reads the fate of the coming harvest.
243 When the prophecy is completed, he slides the entrails of the animal into the stomach of the little straw man as well as all the food from the basket.

527 The Rice figure thus adorned and restored is raised to the top of
243 the pile of paddy whence it will preside over the remainder of the feast.

Before the end of the festival, the wagons are brought out. When they are loaded with the Rice figure enthroned on the first wagon, the paddy is brought into the granaries. When the final load is under shelter, the owner places on its summit the mannequin which, still personifying the soul of Rice [70] will watch over the granary, keep away fire and lightning, and "see that the pile will never diminish or become level with the floor, however many baskets are filled from it."

The master of the harvest is careful to remove a sufficient supply of paddy to last a few weeks, then closes the granary and decorates the door with branches of khoum (to bring luck) and of som seune (gaiety). These will keep luck and gaiety in the house. Hereafter, under no pretext whatever, may the door of the granary be opened before the "third day of the third month," because then "the frog has no mouth and the dragon no anus," and consequently no voracious animal will dare come and devour the harvest.

The Feast of the Khao Chi

527 According to S. Karpelès this ceremony takes place once a year
702 in every quarter of Luang Prabang. It consists of going to the neighborhood of the capital with the bonzes of the pagoda of the designated quarter. A large procession leaves the town, headed for a plateau at the entrance to the forest. While the women are busy with the cooking, the men settle the venerable old men on rugs. The young men and novices cut down branches, clean off the bark leaving a plume of

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792

leafage, and arrange them in bundles. In the evening everyone returns in a procession to the town, and the wood which has been gathered is put out to dry in the courtyard of the pagoda. A month later, the wood is ready to burn, and another feast takes place at the pagoda. The day before all the women assemble to prepare the offerings of food for the bonzes. They take the wood cut the previous month to cook the ball of rice as big as one's fist on which oil and the contents of an egg are poured so as to form a light surrounding crust. The old people take advantage of this wood- [71] cutting and of its burning to hear additional sermons. The Hit Sip Song Khong Sip Si tell a legend of the origin of this feast, which takes place in memory of an old woman who met a bonze while going to gather wood in the forest. She offered him a ball of rice on which lay an egg. After having done this charitable deed, she was bitten by a snake and died. Since that day the Khao Chi is celebrated.

[773]

[72] ANNUAL RITES OF THE FISHING OF THE PA BEUK

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Every five years the fishing of the pa beuk takes place in five different places. This fish, belonging to the Siluridae family, has a long smooth silvery-white body, without any scales and may attain a weight of 200 kilograms. The five places are Ang (about 25 kilometers upstream from Vientiane) from the 13th to the 15th day of the crescent moon of the 3rd Laotian month, between January and February; at Luang Prabang (in the middle of the river opposite the town) from the 6th to the 7th Laotian months between May and June; at Nong Khieu (about 22 kilometers upstream from Paklay) on the 15th day of the crescent moon of the 3rd Laotian month (February); at Nong Theo (about 30 kilometers upstream from Paklay) between the 4th and 5th Laotian months, without any fixed date; at Ban Seo (about 27 kilometers upstream from Houei Sai) from the 6th to the 7th Laotian month, between May and June.

In the section of the river at Vientiane, as early as the 9th day of the crescent moon, the Chao Muong of the province or his representative leaves the capital to organize the festival. He goes by small stages in a dugout as far as Ang, a sort of wide cove or creek favorable to pa beuk fishing. First the Chao Muong and his retinue stop at Ban Si Khay, "village of the lower orders" ["village de la crasse" may have the above meaning or it may mean "village of filth"--Translator] where lives the village genie who has a wide reputation, and who is continually worshipped by the sorcerers living to the north of the

173: Deydier --59 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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Fig. II. Bonzes begging at Vientiane (Cl. Deydier).

173: Deydier--60 H.B-3 (no date) 1952. AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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Fig. III. A bonze at Luang Prabang (Cl. E.F.E.O. French School of Far East).

7: Thompson--372 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 793

"Bonzes are organized into a clear-cut hierarchy, which is not exclusively masculine. They live in bonzeries, but in no sense form a class apart. Despite strict vows and penalties for lapses, their lives are not like their Khmer colleagues' examples of austerity and chastity. They perform useful, if not intensive, service as dispensers of a mild moral education, hospitality, and shelter to wandering unfortunates. The Laotian climate and character have prevailed over Buddha's principles, so it is not surprising that Buddhism has lost much of its prestige in Laos."

10: d'Orleans--276 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 563, 583, 591, 764, 793 Ethnic subgroups

"Marriages are easily made amongst the Khamouks; the young man's parents give sixty rupees to the girl's father and mother. After the marriage feast, the bridegroom sleeps one night in his father-in-law's house, then takes his wife home with him.

The dead are buried and not burnt; there is no priest, no religious ceremonies, but the master of the house cuts a fowl's throat and the mourners rub their knees with his blood. The men generally follow one stage in the bonzeries. (1) After a few months

1. I question whether this information does not apply more to the Laotians.

they are little bonze or Siang, then grand bonze or Tit ; a man who has not made one stage is Ba."

10: d'Orleans--311-312 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 779, 793, 781

"It is not every man, indiscriminately, who is allowed to pay court to the young women, for one class is [312] excluded, viz., that of the bonzes and the aspirants to that order. The creed is Buddhism, very much the same as in Burmah and Siam. Apart from a few free-thinkers, who are regarded as brands plucked for the burning, the people are religious, that is to say they flock to the pagodas for certain festivals, bring presents, and provide liberally for the bonzes."

10: d'Orleans--312 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 292, 793

"Luang Prabang and its suburbs have about eighty pagodas, distributed over four parishes, at the head of each being a bishop, who is to be distinguished from the other priests by a short skirt of violet-coloured silk. The ordinary priests are invariably attired in yellow, with a long skirt and with drapery thrown back over the shoulder like the Lamas of Thibet, while they all have shaved heads."

10: d'Orleans--312 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 793, 796

"The hierarchy is as follows, to begin from the bottom:—

The Tiona (brethren): these are the aspirant priests or students; in many cases sent to the pagoda by their family for a brief stage.

The Siammone (priests): these have already taken the vow of celibacy.

The Satouks, or venerables.

The Satouk Kron, or venerable masters. A priest becomes Satouk by popular election, and the people consecrate their choice by pouring the water of purification over the priest whom they have chosen.

The king alone names the Satouk Kron, who are appointed by his pouring 'royal water' over them during one of the great festivals when the idols are being washed."

10: d'Orleans--312-313 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 162, 589, 793

"All the members of the religious corporation reside in the buildings near the pagodas, and they comprise nearly a tenth of the population, as a portion of the [313] body is constantly shifting. Moreover, women dressed in white, generally old maids or widows, also have their heads shaved and become female priests, their special duty being to make the collections at the pagodas."

10: d'Orleans--313 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 202, 782, 793

"The signal for the commencement of the principal acts of worship is a big bell placed upon the summit of the hill, and it is also used as an alarm bell in the event of fire, in which case it is rung in quite a different way.

The bonzes give instruction to their pupils, preside over certain festivals and preach to the people: they read passages from the sacred books, inculcate charity, and above all impress upon their congregations the importance of making many presents to the pagoda so as to be well pleasing to heaven and to deserve everlasting life.

In a small chapel, in front of each pagoda, a bronze bell rings every afternoon at four o'clock, while on Sundays and fête days it rings at 1 A. M. The bonzes, be it added, are supposed to make only two meals a day, in the early morning and at noon, but their pupils are not expected to conform to this rule."

10: d'Orleans--313-314 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 688, 785, 793

"From the second grade the priest is supposed to be a celibate, but the rule is sometimes disregarded, and it is no uncommon thing for a priest of loose habits to change his dres [sic] at dusk and go out to amuse himself. If his superiors catch him, he and his accomplice are sentenced to some such severe labour as supplying bricks for the pagoda, while in Cambodia they are more severe, the pagoda itself being closed.

These vows are not necessarily perpetual, and if a Tiammone feels that he no longer has any vocation, [314] his superior can release him from them upon the request of his relatives and after the performance of certain formalities. This, however, is a rare occurrence."

10: d'Orleans--321 [4] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 554, 793

"Then come the bonzes, one of whom, a big, fat man, with a bosom as protuberant as that of a woman, is a very important personage, as his small violet petticoat indicates. Satouk Camdi, as he is called, has a frank, cheerful face and strong voice, which he makes ample use of to ply us with questions. Once settled down, with his porters who carry sunshade, fan, &c., it seems as if we should never get rid of him. My proposal to photograph him is very gleefully accepted, and he at once makes his brother and sister sit for their portraits as well."

10: d'Orleans--321-322 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 153, 609, 793, 871

"At first, we received several visits from an aged bonze, also occupying an important position, who had been for many years friendly to the French. 'They are fathers and brothers to me,' he would say. During the second half of our visit, he had been [322] seized with a wasting illness, and we frequently went to see him. One of the interpreters of the Consulate was teaching his pupils French, and they struck me as being very intelligent, while their lessons were well done."

10: d'Orleans--332 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 524, 778, 793

"Outside the principal building, in the courtyard of the pagoda, [LSS: the pagoda of Ouate Maï in Luang Prabang] are a series of ongmong, or small buildings which contain the statues of the gods; pyramids (Tâte) containing the bones of prominent bonzes or members of the Royal Family, and plaster bells like the lotus flower, behind all these buildings, hidden among the trees, being the houses of the bonzes, whose pupils we remark at play, the game at which they play, with a hollow ball made out of bamboo canes twisted together, being one which requires great skill."

10; d'Orleans--332 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 202, 346, 731, 793

"After leaving Ouate Maï, we ascend the small hill which commands a fine view of the town, about 350 feet above, and upon the summit of which are several small buildings and a gilt belfry in which is hung a tam tam about three feet in length. Several men keep guard over it and beat it to let the bonzes know when it is the hour for study, or else an alarm bell in case of fire. There is a grand view from here, as the city is at our feet, half hidden among the cocoa trees, one part, which was burnt last year and has been rebuilt, being less wooded than the others."

10: d'Orleans--333 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 532, 778, 793, 177.35

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "Above the market and built against the hill is the residence of one of the four leading bonzes from whom we had a visit yesterday; and upon going to see him there we find that the interior is ornamented with coloured designs and pictures, given him by Frenchmen, of the Eiffel Tower and so forth, with a small chapel in one corner and a library of religious books, many of which are rolled up in palm leaves. The only curious object in the adjoining pagoda is a wooden statue of Buddha (Pasine), in a crouching attitude, like that of a monkey when scratching his chin. The skull is very depressed and misshapen; and it is possible that those who offered the image were desirous of depicting the incident in his life, when having complained to God of the temptation which the flesh evoked in him, he received by way of reply a violent blow on the head in order to crush his carnal appetites."

23: Franck--279 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 231, 342, 793

"I spent the morning in a hot walk about the scattered thatched town, [EJ: Xieng Khuang] climbing to jungle-guarded half-ruined old stupas on the rounded hills behind it. Priests of the yellow robe had again appeared, dawdling about their simple monasteries with the leisureliness of men who know that to step on an insect means to be set back that far on the long and difficult road to Nirvana. Speaking of insects, the people of Tran-ninh boast that they are never troubled by mosquitos, because, all their domestic animals being at home under their pole-legged houses, these pests are so busy down there that they never trouble to rise to human height. The custom of living over unconfined stables is further exonerated by the warmth the animals are reputed to give the householders above--for so thin-blooded a race needs its central heating-plant also, during the short tropical 'winters.' "

23: Franck--298 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 366, 697, 793

"The main street of the capital, [EJ: Luang Prabang] dying out at either end in semi-jungle, is lined by a long market, facing the entrance to the king's palace. But for that matter there is a market just outside the royal palace in Madrid, too, and many beggars also, which here seem to be unknown, unless we count the yellow-clad priests sauntering along with their begging-bowls in the early morning. Even such an Eden as this is not without its serpents, however; and rattling chains on the legs of prisoners working about the town make strange contrast both to its quiet gentle atmosphere and to the regality of its king."

23; Franck--300-301 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 793, 779, 883

"Some of the old priests of Luang Prabang are honored as demigods by the people of the kingdom. They step forth from their holy dwellings only with a ceremonial parasol held over them, by one of the surrounding group of youngster attendants in the same bright yellow; and the French commissaire himself was almost servile in the respectful politeness with which he treated the most holy of them all, whose attitude sometimes suggested that it was he who had the upper hand. These bonzes may not even kill a flea, though the provocation must often be almost too strong to be borne; but they may eat beef and the flesh of other animals killed by some one else. Even the cynical French residents say they are real celibates, that they would be expelled from the order if they were caught breaking this particular vow. It might be harder to keep were not all young men expected to be priests for a year or two, as those of European lands become soldiers, only the ones to whom the monastic life appeals retaining the yellow robe, which the great majority soon discard for marriage. Little less sacred than the priests are the dogs that all but overrun the capital, eating the food laid out for gods and bonzes, much as the sacred oxen of India take their toll from pious shopkeepers. Held in a kind of Buddhist reverence by the people and more or less [301] protected by the priests, these mongrels are not even subjected to muzzle or license, though the French would like to improve their rules of sanitation to the extent of exterminating the harmless but self-confident curs."

23: Franck--343-344 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 771, 793

"The smallest village has a few Buddhist priests, the support of whom by giving them food seems to be almost the only religious practice of the lay inhabitants. The younger bonzes [344] make the rounds each morning with their begging-bowls before the sun is high, and now and then a man or woman kneels on the ground as a priest pauses to perform for a moment or two some hocus-pocus in reward for the charity, and then turns abruptly away, as if to imply that the giver has had his money's worth. Begging is not looked upon as in the West, but as something perfectly natural, so that neither giver nor receiver seems to feel he is doing anything out of the ordinary. If I may judge by my two princely companions, all Laosian Buddhists say their prayers before going to bed as religiously as any Christian, nay, as any true Mohammedan. But they were more like people thanking a kindly benefactor with unforced gratitude than like men praying out of dread of a punishing God, and the true Laosians at least showed little if any of the fear of demonology rampant among the super-superstitious Chinese. No doubt nature is so gentle with them that the religion of fear, the dread and consequent attempts at propitiation of innumerable evil forces always waiting to do them harm, does not grow up within them."

68: Mouhot--154 [2] N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 782, 793

"[HD: In the villages of southern Luang Prabang province] The Laotian priests are continually praying in their pagodas; they make a frightful noise, chanting from morning to night. Assuredly they ought to go direct to Paradise."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

403 electricians hugged each other, and, enchanted by the din, the
527 audience began to drift away from the theatre and make for the dancing floor.

527 The second attraction in order of popularity was a love-court. A
584 quadrangular arrangement of tables had been formed, covered by a
782 thatched roof raised on posts decorated with woven bamboo
793 representations of animals, weapons and phallic emblems. Seated round the tables in the interior of the square were the girls, and their suitors sat facing them. Between the couples had been placed offerings of food, brought by the girls. Originally a tribute to some ancient, forgotten fertility god, a primeval Thai Venus, the offerings would be given, next day, to the bonzes. All through the night the bantering of witticisms, the singing and the exchange of improvised verse would go on, accompanied by the accordion-like
[534] wheezings of the Kène, the Stone Age gourd pipes of Laos. Sometimes through a happy fault in the circuit the splutter and bellow of the loud-speakers would suddenly lapse, and you heard the beehive dronings of the communal love-making, the kènes, and the voice of the presiding bonze, preaching continually in an archaic, incomprehensible language from the wicker cage into which he had been fastened. The cage symbolized the protection of his religion from these earthly distractions. As soon as inspiration failed he would be relieved by the next on the rota of preachers, waiting now to take his place.

584 Love-courts are the accepted preliminary to the consummation of
[533] affairs of the heart, which — despite European conviction that
576 romantic love is a Western invention — are accompanied in Laos by much versifying and mild, self-imposed frustrations. When, for instance, a well-known beauty is wooed by a number of suitors, a serenading match may be arranged on the veranda of her house to permit her to test under competitive conditions the poetic and musical capabilities of each of them. Complete pre-marital freedom
[836] is recognized, but much outward reserve is maintained. There is a time and place for everything. It is incorrect, for example, to

565 The common people, kind and carefree in character, roamed
175* over the country in all directions as easy-going masters, leaving
/462/ household tasks to the women and the work of the fields to dependents of an inferior race or to slaves. They were excellent boatmen and traders rather than farmers, so that they liked to perform the function of peddlers and served as a link between the multiple /55/ varieties of mankind which inhabited Lan-Xang.

567 Slavery existed--slaves could be obtained through capture, as
175* the result of debt or through trade--and brought high profits to those
563 who engaged in this traffic. In the region of Muong-Swa there was also a kind of serfdom which was applied to certain Kha tribes placed under the patronage of the king, the princes or the chief representatives of the nobility.

565 But if we consider the gentle and happy temperament of this
175* people whose good humor made up for everything, we are justified in believing that the relations between the various social levels must have been free of any harshness.

191 They spoke a dialect derived from the language which was imported into the basin of the Ménam by Rama Khamheng at the end of the thirteenth century and which was itself derived from the
771 graphs of India (1). They practiced orthodox Buddhism together
793
554

1. Cf. Mission Pavie, op. cit. /Études diverses, Vol. II, "Recherches sur l'Histoire du Cambodge du Laos et du Siam"/ Inscription of Sukhothaï translated by Father Schmitt, p. 192: "It was in (1287 A. D.) that the king Rama-Khameng summoned a teacher who created Thaï writing."

with the cult of the "Phi" or Genii which represented for them the beneficent or maleficent forces of Nature. The bonzes were of comparatively pure morals amidst these peoples for whom enjoyment and pleasure were, when /56/ all is considered, the true gods. Although they were fairly ignorant and recited their prayers in Pali
/782/ without understanding them, they did not lack a certain air of nobility. They also enjoyed a high regard and had as much favor as they could desire. The bonzeries[1] which were built near the pagodas were at once places of inviolable asylum, schools frequented by all the children of the village, and workshops where trades could be learned.

/[1] Buddhist Monasteries--Analyst./

633 be seen from a great distance. To be sure, it extends over a prodigi-
174 ous area and is so large that one would take it for a city... The king's
344 apartments, which are embellished with a superb and magnificent portico and a large number of beautiful rooms accompanied by a large parlor, are all made of wood which will not decay and ornamented inside and outside with excellent bas-reliefs so delicately gilded that they seem rather to be covered with flakes of gold than gold leaf.

"From that point one enters the courtyards which are extremely spacious, and one first sees a long line of houses built entirely of brick and roofed /113/ with tile in which the second wives usually stay, and outside another row of houses built alongside in the same symmetry for the mandarins' officers. I could write a whole volume if I undertook a minute description of all the other parts of the palace, the riches, the departments, the gardens and a number of other such things...

565 "The houses of the principal lords and of well-to-do persons are
342 very high and beautiful, and are all made of wood with a great deal
352 of artifice and a greater or lesser number of ornaments, depending on the expense to which the individuals are willing to go, but I must confess that the common people and the poor are housed extremely badly
● /793/ and that their dwellings are cabins and huts rather than houses. Only the talapoins (bonzes), who are the priests of the idols, have permission to build their monasteries and houses out of brick and stone. Instead of rugs and other such furnishings, persons of quality use small reed mats in which the weave is so delicate and so highly ornamented with figures and various leaf patterns that, to my mind, there is nothing more beautiful nor more pleasing to the eye. They ordinarily use them to cover the walls of /114/ their rooms and houses inside and outside, which they keep very clean and of which they take particular care...

643* "The king is absolute and independent... all the land belongs to
/423/ him, and he disposes as absolute lord of all that his subjects possess...
631 offices, employment, honors and wealth depend absolutely on the
174 king, who raises those persons who please him most to the highest offices in the kingdom.... The principal dignities and offices of the kingdom are eight in number. The first is that of viceroy general... and because the kingdom is divided into seven provinces seven other viceroys are appointed... there are also other governments of less consequence which depend on the former both in respect to civil affairs and to those which concern war.... Each of these provinces has
/701/ its militia, which consists of infantry and cavalry.

149: Reinach--114 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

as a blessing.

One fact worthy of note is that the "Phi-pop"--men, women and even adolescents--are extremely intelligent folk with lively eyes and full of a strong will and energy. They know [Illustration here] a host of recipes and therapeutic formulas which have been handed down to them by their parents. They might be described as bonesetters or people who have medicine as a sideline, and who act on weak minds and nervous temperaments by the power of suggestion. "Phi-pop" women and girls are usually quite pretty. 791 755 156

One of the methods most widely used to gain the favor of the "Phis" is to play deafening music. 755 533

"It is not at all unusual to hear diabolic and uninterrupted music in a Laotian house for several days and nights running. In this house there is a person who is seriously ill. All the noise is designed to frighten or to assuage the spirit in the sick person's body and to persuade or force it to [153] leave the body of the invalid. The sick person generally succumbs under the waves of this curative but noisy harmony" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.] [113]

Religion of the Thais. They have neither pagodas nor bonzes, but practice ancestor worship and have a great veneration for the "Spirits or Genii," to whom they make offerings on all occasions. 771 769

In the first room of the house there stands a bamboo altar. The "Spirits" or "Phis" of dead forbears are supposed to inhabit this altar, which is composed of two different levels, the highest one for the male Phis and the other for the female Phis. At its foot there is an opening covered with an elliptical wooden ornament shaped like a mouth. It is there, on this "ancestors' mouth," that the head of the family places offerings and prayers, especially when a member of the family is sick. In principal an animal is never killed without some scrap of food or a few drops of blood being offered to the ancestors' mouth.

"Spirits, whether genii or demons, are everywhere--in the sky, on earth, in the forests, in the water. They are the object of a widespread cult over which individuals who might be described as 776 793 755

776 lay priests preside. These lay priests, or rather these servants of the
• 793 Spirits, correspond to the Guardians of the Genii in the Buddhist
religion. Usually they exercise their ministry only when one of
755 their countrymen falls sick or dies.

"In case of a serious illness the servant of the Spirits goes to the sick person's house, goes to his side and recites a few prayers. Then he takes a bowl of uncooked rice on which he stands an egg with the smallest end upwards. With his right hand the officiant drops a certain number of grains of rice on the point of the egg, performing this operation three times in all. If the same number of grains of rice remain on the point of the egg each time, this means that a "Spirit" has entered the sick person's body.

787 "By means of similar maneuvers, the Spirit is then questioned to find out what he wants to eat. Depending on the answer, a buffalo, an ox or a pig may be killed. The designated animal is slaughtered and then scorched without being skinned so as to destroy the hairs which cover it. The entrails are taken out and carefully washed [154] in running water, then replaced in the animal's body. The victim is taken to the altar of the Spirits, which is located outside the village, and placed with its head towards the altar. Then prayers are said asking the Spirit to cure the sick person. When the ceremony is over the animal is taken back to the village, where it is cut into pieces and divided among all the inhabitants. The invalid rarely gets well.

"There are also sorcerers and witches among the Thais, who are consulted in circumstances of lesser importance.

[775] "The Thais believe in metempsychosis, although their ideas on the subject are not very clear" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

771 Religion of the Khas. Among the Khas, even those who practice
782 Buddhism, the only existing religion is a religion of "Phis" which is
similar to the Thai belief in "Spirits, Genii and Demons." The
776 outer manifestations of this cult consist of offerings of rice, flowers and fruit, but never include sacrifices of animals. Small shelters which affect the form of an ordinary house are built at the entrance to villages to receive propitiatory offerings destined for the "Phi".

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM 1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

132 started cellular constructions in the window shutters and armies of
485 cockroaches marched across the floors. Precious, expensive water was brought in large pots and left in the subdivision of the room where, using a gourd with a hole in its bottom, you could take a shower. The main advantage of having this open pot of water in the room was that it collected a gauzy layer of mosquitoes which were content to stay there in harmless concentration, unless disturbed. The Mekong could be seen from the window, a sallow strip of water across half a mile of whitened river-bed. Perhaps this drought had something to do with the town's electrical generating system, because only occasionally – and never at night – would the filament of the electric light bulb consent to glow feebly. Whenever the hot wind sprang up, stirring the trees round the house, great dry leaves as big as dishes came tumbling down and fell with a crash in the layer already deposited on the earth. It was the death-rattle of the year, which in Laos expires in croaking senility, to be re-born with the raging storms which were about to break.

346 Vientiane is a religious centre, one of the two ancient capitals of Laos. It abounds with pagodas, many of them deserted and in ruins; and colossal Buddhas, with dusty half-obliterated smiles, sit in the tumbled brickwork.

527 Since at this time,[1] when the earth had dried up, there was no
794 work to be done anywhere, it was the season of *bouns*; the Laotian festivals. Each pagoda holds one, as a means of collecting funds. They last for three days, and although an attempt is made not to hold two *bouns* at the same time, there are so many pagodas that duplication cannot always be helped; so that every night for several weeks the sky over one or more districts of Vientiane glows with the reflection of thousands of lights, while from a distance one catches the gusty, carnival sounds of Laotian rejoicings. *Bouns* start at about eleven, and go on all night.

527 The first night after my arrival I went to a *boun*, which I found by

1 [late March. -- Analyst]

173: Deydier--14 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

The Laotian Bonze--The Monastic Rules. 792

As in Ceylon, Cambodia and the other Buddhist countries, the 785
Laotian who enters religious life does not make a perpetual vow. To become a bonze, all that is necessary is to be twenty years old, not to have killed, nor stolen, nor have any skin disease. When he is ordained, the young man agrees to observe the Buddhist rules which are: not to take life, not to steal, not to sin against virtue, not to lie, not to drink intoxicating liquors, not to eat outside of the prescribed hours, not to attend entertainments which excite the senses, not to touch gold, nor silver, etc.

The bonze's head, chin and eyebrows are completely shaved. 301
In principle he must shave twice a month. The garments of the bonze must not be made of one piece and their color must be yellow ochre 292
or yellow. These two traditions have their origin in the history of the life of the Buddha. When he left the palace of his father, the Buddha cut his hair and exchanged his princely garments for those of a hunter. Now, the hunter was a poor man dressed in rags covered with the yellow ochre dust of the fields. Therefore, since that day, in memory of the first religious garments of the Buddha, tradition demands that all bonzes wear this costome. Texts are not agreed as [795]
to the color, the Saddharma-smrtyupasthana sutra giving a whole list of colors for the dyeing of religious garments. We will not delay over the discussions which have arisen amongst the various Buddhist schools over [25] this problem. We will limit ourselves to stating that in central Asia and in Tibet the bonzes wear brownish-red garments instead of the beautiful yellow color of the Laotian and Cambodian togas.

Bonzes get up very early in the morning. Having made their toilet and said their prayers, they leave about seven o'clock in single file to beg for their food. To be precise, we should add that the containers for the alms are usually carried by student bonzes [bonzillons]. After returning to the pagoda they have a brief meal, then they teach [871]
the student bonzes [bonzillons] to read and write, while others perform the manual tasks necessary to the upkeep of the monastery. About noon, the bonze has another meal which is the last of the day. He does not eat any food till the following morning. After the meal he [264]
must wash his fingers (he eats only with his right hand), and rinse out his mouth. Then he has a siesta, and at the close of the afternoon he works at his tasks as in the morning. In principle he must never go out alone; he is always accompanied by a brother [illegible] to protect him from any temptation.

He[1] must never look at a woman. However a few old women are 792
seen in the pagoda. These are the devotees. They are dressed in 785
white, their heads are completely shaved, and they lead a life of
observance and asceticism which is as rigorous as that of the monks. 562
They render small services to the bonzes, decorate the altar, etc.,
but they live outside the enclosure of the pagoda.

Laotian Buddhism.

In a recent pamphlet, His Excellency Thao Nhouy Abhay, former 779
Minister of National Culture and Education, wrote: "In its intrinsic
substance Buddhism is deeply tolerant, but ours [26] has truly become 795
not austere enough." Therefore he proposes some necessary reforms
which would quickly raise the intellectual and moral level of the
bonzes in Laos. There are two sects in Laos: the Mahanikay and the [792]
Thammayut. The only difference between the two is the way in
which they consider that monastic rule should be observed. Nothing
distinguishes them in appearance except the color of the monastic
robe of the Mahanikay, which is brownish-ochre almost chestnut.
The king is the chief of the Buddhist clergy. As for the believer 643
who regularly observes his religious duties, he is satisfied with little [735]
and gives much in alms. Buddhist tales and particularly Laotian
texts, among them the Pannasajataka (Ha Sip Xat), quote all the
merits acquired for future lives by those who give alms and, above
all, feed the bonzes.

Religious Literature.

The basis of the religious literature of Laos is the Buddhist 779
Tripitaka. These "Three Baskets" contain the integral "word of the 538
Buddha."

The basket [corbeille] of Vinaya (Vinayapitaka) is the rule of monastic life. It consists of five sections: Patimokkha, Mahavagga, Coullavagga, Souttavibhanga and Parivara. The Patimokkha is meant to be read in public (particularly on the feasts of the eighth month), on the periodic days of confession. The Mahavagga and the Coullavagga give the list of daily obligations, illustrated by examples drawn from the life of the Buddha. The Souttavibhanga is really a commentary on the Patimokkha; finally the Parivara is both a revision and a catechism.

The Basket of the Soutta (Souttapitaka) contains an enormous amount of preaching and of edifying tales. Among others, the famous Dhammapada, a treasury of the sayings of the Buddha and the Jatakas are to be found in this basket.

[27] The third basket is that of Abhidharma and consists of seven

1 [i.e., a bonze --Analyst]

is [Illustration here] a duty for us, to restore the Khas to the normal 000
status to which their imposing number in the total population as well as the special qualities which they possess give them a right.

Once emancipated from their strict servitude and from the rapacity of the Laotian and Thai mandarins, and once commanded by leaders who have been chosen by them and from members of their own race, the Khas will rise rapidly and, as [136] time passes, will certainly give a most effective impetus to the development of our possession's riches.

Moreover, they have not lost the tradition of their original status. 563
They are conscious of their own antiquity and say, not without scorn, 173
that the peoples who are newcomers to Indo-China are only their younger brothers. Their race has fallen back on its own resources, has divided into small groups, has opposed ~~a force of absolute inertia~~ to the invader and the conqueror and has thus kept itself free for many long centuries from mixtures with other peoples. Today there are still many descendants of these first possessors of the land and one may find in them, in a latent state, the energy and courage so conspicuously absent in the conquering races which drove them back to the mountains and reduced them to a kind of slavery or ostracism from which the latter greatly profited.

Nor can it be denied that the Khas are capable of moral and 563
material improvement. There are many, for example, who have 795
adopted Buddhism (1), and still others Catholicism (2). These Khas 797

(1) Khouène Khas and Khmou Khas.

(2) Bahnar Khas, Rognaos, etc.

have yielded up to persuasion and gentle treatment what they refused for many centuries to constraint and force. The future is therefore encouraging.

What is more, the question of emancipating the Khas has left 563
the domain of theory and pure speculation. In 1894 M. Macey, one 177
of our political agents, emancipated the Khas in the territories of Xieng-Khong, Muong-Mugne, Poukha, etc. The terrain was well chosen for the experiment, since this daring attempt was applied precisely to the Khouène, Khmou and Lemet Kha groups whose moral regeneration had already begun through the practice of Buddhism.

This is doubtless due to the use of the brush, which does not make it possible to draw characters as fine and as purely rounded as with a dry point, a wooden stylus, a pen or a pencil, which are the only instruments used to write the other varieties of the Thai language. 212 197

Phouthai, like Laotian, is written in characters, but these differ in number and in form. The vowels are intercalated between the consonants, or are placed like accents above the line when the consonant stands alone, or may even always be placed above in the case of some vowels. This way of understanding the use of vowels can also be found in certain primitive languages.

In the regions where Phouthai writing is used the influence of the proximity of Annam and China has clearly manifested itself, and the alphabet has become syllabic. Scholars are able to learn by heart a certain number of syllables in which consonants and vowels are joined to form a single character, but those who have not learned Laotian cannot distinguish between the vowels and consonants nor use them separately. [101]

The Phouthais, who have the same basic spoken language as the Laotians but who have a different writing and religion, must either have separated from the primitive groupings before writing was created and have attained sufficient cohesion to create their own form of writing, or else must have learned it in a perfected state of development through some foreign current. It may also be said that when the Laotians adopted the Buddhist religion they lost their old Phouthai signs and took over those of the bonzes who had come to teach them the new faith. Then the brush was abandoned for the stylus and the point, which make it possible to write more rapidly and finely and to form a greater number of signs--these being necessary, moreover, to express and define the abstract ideas and subtle dogmas of the new religion. [177 795]

[142] The Phouthai alphabet includes only twenty-three characters, almost all of which are syllabic.

The Siamese language. Of all the forms of the Thai language, Siamese, as we have seen, is the most complete and the most highly developed. Thus it will perhaps be of interest to give some notion, as rapidly as possible, of this language. 212 194

The alphabet is composed of forty-four letters which are divided into three classes, as follows:

11 letters on a rising tone, or high letters;
9 letters on a middle tone, or recto tono middle letters;

from pantheism to Christianity, passing through polytheism, anthropomorphism, Brahminism, Buddhism and metempsychosis. 771

To be sure, the most widespread religion and the one which numbers the greatest number of faithful is Ceylon Buddhism in the form of the Hinayâna doctrine, that is to say the form which adheres to the letter of the scriptures without pretending to seek or discover the esoteric meaning of the words of the master Çakya Mouni. 795 779

It is precisely because this doctrine abjures all casuistry, all scholasticism and all free examination that it has allowed the superstitions of Brahminism and still others to coexist alongside it. These latter are still more or less deeply entrenched, depending on the region and on whether the moral influence of the Aryans has been more or less effective and beneficent in uplifting the populace.

Since, in general, the Buddhism of the Laotians and of the Kha tribes which practice it is, by virtue of its very doctrine, exempt from all free [148] examination and from all philosophical speculation, it is a latria cult manifesting itself in ritual recitations. These latter, moreover, are incomprehensible to the faithful and even to the bonzes. To these prayers are added ceremonies and outer marks of deference for sacred places, temples, idols, worship accessories and officiants. [Illustration alongside text here.] 779

Besides this mild form of Buddhism there are still traces--often very deep ones--of Brahminism and ancestor worship, of a kind of polytheism or cult of spirits which are either beneficent genii or terrible demons, of Pythagorism, of metempsychosis, and of a curious anthropo-spiritualist belief which attributes an individual soul to each of the parts of man's body, to his moral faculties, to his food and even to his excrement, as well as to the four elements--earth, air, water and fire.

This latter belief borders closely on metempsychosis, since it also holds that all souls are immortal and subsist throughout a series of successive existences in the form of various incarnations, in the bodies of men or animals, in plants or in minerals.

It cannot be denied that this doctrine is a highly moral one. Since each mutation or incarnation is a reward or a [149] punishment, there can be no doubt but that, in combination with the precepts of sociability, respect for others and gentleness which are contained in Hinayâna Buddhism, it has had great influence on the moral evolution and social conservation of the people of Laos as well as on their moral customs.

10: d'Orleans--312 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 793, 796

"The hierarchy is as follows, to begin from the bottom:—

The Tiona (brethren): these are the aspirant priests or students; in many cases sent to the pagoda by their family for a brief stage.

The Tiammone (priests): these have already taken the vow of celibacy.

The Satouks, or venerables.

The Satouk Kron, or venerable masters. A priest becomes Satouk by popular election, and the people consecrate their choice by pouring the water of purification over the priest whom they have chosen.

The king alone names the Satouk Kron, who are appointed by his pouring 'royal water' over them during one of the great festivals when the idols are being washed."

10: d'Orleans--345 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 796

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"There is great animation in the streets, nearly all the inhabitants finding their way into the main thoroughfares, shouting, buying, discussing, eating, and smoking until the religious ceremony begins. The bonzes have brought into the open all their gods, excepting the large statue at the further end of the pagoda, and proceed to put them through their toilet. The women, in the meanwhile, are visiting the pagodas, the general rule being to go to those situated in another parish to that to which they belong. The evening is spent in shouting and singing, like the last."

10: d'Orleans--346 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 782, 796, 821

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.] "April 12th
As we cross the stream, we notice all along the banks tiny rafts conveying presents, notably rice, and these are offerings made by the boatmen in order that they may take plenty of fish, and be favoured by the weather while out with their boats.

In the town the statues are still out in the open, or rather they are placed under a small scaffolding, the sacred water conduit pouring out its contents drop by drop through the dragon's mouth in which it terminates at one end, while the other end is in the pagoda and is being fed by the priests, long tapers with strips of paper bearing the donor's name are burning before the altar."

10: d'Orleans--346 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 796, 822

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"In the main street we encounter a cortége which is coming from Ouate Tâte to Ouate Sieng Tong, and this is supposed to be the old year which is being thus escorted. It is curious, in this connection, to note that the old year is fetched from the west, while the new year will come from the east, but I do not know whether this is due to chance or is a matter of tradition."

10: d'Orleans--346-347 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 541, 796

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"The order and composition of the procession are regulated by rites of very long standing. At the head of the procession march young men with flowers in their hands, then two rows of bearers of red and white umbrellas for the temple, behind them coming six or eight men carrying upon their shoulders one of those gilt chairs which are used in the pagodas as pulpits, and upon which one of the principal bonzes is seated. He is accompanied by two guards, who have in their hands [347] a bamboo with a mat at the end of it shaped like a lotus leaf. Following him comes a cortége of bonzes and students in yellow, belonging to six pagodas, singing in chorus or making response to one another, while at an interval of about fifty yards, a number of young girls march in regular order, the smallest coming first. They all have a yellow scarf over their dress, and each has a parasol according to her size, from the tiny European sunshades to the vast Chinese umbrellas of oiled paper, and each of them carries a silver jar full of flowers for the pagodas or of water for the libations. Picturesque as this spectacle is, it is not the most curious part of this 'festival of the women ' as it might well be called."

10: d'Orleans--347-348 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 783, 796, 823

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"Women sprinkle water over the chief bonze, and others bolder still, come and pour the contents of their jar over some young student. This custom of sprinkling or pouring water, which is also to be met with at certain festivals in Siam and Burmah, would not be so suprising if it were confined to the priests, but here the girls pick up mud and plaster the faces of the young men, whoever they may be, and our white dresses tempt them so much that we are obliged to assume a very stern look in order to keep them at a distance. The young men, however, are too gallant to resent these attentions, and as for the bonzes, they get something better than water offered them, as presents are made them in the shape of pans full of food, which are handed to two men who accompany the chair.

When the procession reaches Ouate Sieng Tong, it enters the courtyard, and the bonzes, after reciting [348] the usual prayers, enter a sort of shed surrounded by planks and having upon the top the same water conduit which has been used for sprinkling water over the gods. The women pour their water into this conduit, which flows down over the priests, who emerge from the shed purified and washed, but dripping wet, though this they do not seem to mind."

10: d'Orleans--348 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 532, 527, 773, 796

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"The dances begin, and two men emerge from the pagoda enveloped in vast cloaks coming down to their heels which are meant to designate the skin of some wild animal, while they have on their heads a mask of black wood representing some monster with enormous eyes, large mouth with very sharp teeth, very long ears and a lower jaw which can be moved at will. Behind the head is a long mane of coarse hair, and we are told that they are known as Pi Konge, or devils with a cruel face, while the old bonze says that they are the chiefs of the tigers, or the Pi Sua (race of devils). The Siamese Colonel adds that in the Laos they are known as Pou Yen (from Pou, father) or Ya Yen (from Ya, mother), and there is a legend that men of this kind once lived in a large forest, and that though they inspired great terror two of them were captured, these monsters representing the captive pair. It is interesting to compare this native tradition with the assertion of several travellers that the Laos was formerly inhabited by a hairy race of men."

I0: d'Orleans--348-351 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 171, 527, 535, 796

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"Whatever be the origin of these two 'monsters,' [LSS: dancers in masks] they seem to amuse the crowd very much, and when after having knelt in front of the pagoda and wished the spectators a happy new year, they begin to dance, I am surprised beyond measure to find that it is the [pages 349 and 350 contain illustration] [351] self-same dance which I saw when travelling through Thibet with M. Bonvalot two years before. The steps and the attitudes are exactly the same, and it would be interesting to know whether this is a mere chance or due to the existence of the same traditions between peoples living so far apart. The tam-tam, which is beaten by hand, without any rhythm, is the music used as an accompaniment, and from time to time the monsters make a charge and send the crowd flying, one of them chasing a young girl round a tree. I can see only Laotians among the spectators, the Kas holding aloof. When the dances are over, the procession starts on its way back, the priests being escorted back to their several pagodas."

10: d'Orleans--379 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 796

"At sunset we assist at the religious service of the priests. The old bonze strikes the gong, letting it vibrate slowly and softly, and there is something sad about the ceremony. With Europeans, when a gong is used, it is beaten so as to make the most noise possible; but we do not know how to produce these plaintive and sadly eloquent sounds.

After a few short strokes to summon the pupils, the priest, accompanied by his bonzillons, recites the prayer in grave and leisurely accents, a deep silence ensuing."

23; Franck--321-322 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 644, 527, 796

"There are ceremonial occasions when the king comes to the home of the commissaire, not by Ford but on an elephant, and is carried up the steps seated on his throne, white parasols over him and a great retinue about him. The French residents condoled with me particularly because I had not reached Luang Prabang quinze jours--a fortnight--earlier. For in the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha New Year's [322] had fallen on April 12 that year, and with it comes the ceremony of the petit serment, as distinguished from the grand serment in November; that is, the swearing of fealty to the French and to the king--please note the order. Then the king rides on several elephants, I gathered, though probably only one at the time, and is carried through the town on his throne, followed by long processions of notables and mandarins in white jackets and sampots of every color of the rainbow, if not indeed several which it lacks. The common people, all the inhabitants of the capital except the Annamese and the French, kneel and bow their heads to the earth, for then they must not look upon their king, though it is said a few of the least reverent sometimes do get a glimpse à la dérobée. To judge by the pictures French residents had taken of the recent ceremony it was a sight worth coming two weeks earlier to see. In them all the inevitable cigarette was dangling from the king's lips; no ceremony is so solemn, no place so sacred, that Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah will go without his smoke. As many a photograph of the few remaining

European monarchs and their possible successors shows, he has good precedent for thus openly indulging. Perhaps it is a sign of increasing democracy, or such informal and plebeian habits may always have been shared by kings, though our expurgated histories do not mention them. Cigarette or Ford, however, the people of Luang Prabang take their king very seriously, more seriously than he does himself. The native doctor at the government hospital, educated in Hanoi and outwardly entirely French except in complexion, kneels and touches his forehead to the floor before he gives medicine to one of the king's sons in the palace nursery."

25: Brodrick--99-100 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-2
116, 527, 535, 796

"...it is difficult to spend only a few days in the Laos without living a Laotian feast-day. Take the Boun Dueun Ha, that is the New Year festival, and also that of the Little Oath (of allegiance that is). The festivities are held at the beginning of April, thus at the time of year when the days are hottest and the nights most suave.

In every village there will be a procession headed by youths bearing branches of flowers. Then will come two files of men carrying the sacred umbrellas. Afterwards six or eight men bearing upon their shoulders a palanquin, in which sits the chief of the local pagoda. The monks and their acolytes holding urns full of flowers and jars filled with lustral water, bring up the rear. So far, so good, it all seems an orderly and decent religious procession.

But as the cortège advances, the women on either side of the way throw buckets of water on the processionists, while the girls pelt them with mud. When the cortège has reached the pagoda, the whole people stand round joining in the antiphonies of praise sung in honour of the Blessed One and then fall back in a circle to watch the dances.

And these dances are not at all Buddhist. There are three main performers. There is the dragon Sing, and there is the Ngo Gneu, and then there is the Pou Gneu. These two last represent 'ancestor' spirits and their impersonators wear curious masks and their bodies are covered with beasts' skins. The wooden masks are black and swathed in streaming hair which twirls as the dance moves on. Pou Gneu has a pumpkin-like

25: Brodrick--99-100 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-2
116, 527, 535, 796

face with a huge toothy, grinning [100] mouth such as you may see in a Hallowe'en goblin. And the ancestors' ghosts come back to plague men in animal guise."

A DRAGON APPARENT

000 There was a recognized place about a mile up the river, which was free from weed and rock, and once again, because the water was deep and swiftly running, it was very cold and refreshing. We had
515 been swimming round for an hour or so when we noticed a number of Laotian girls hanging about. They were not watching us, but sauntering backwards and forwards in twos and threes, chatting to each other. By the time there were twelve of them, Dupont, keeping well in the water called to them and asked if we were disturbing them in any way. One of the girls came to the edge of the bank, bowed, and looking down at her feet said that it was their usual bathing time, but that there was no hurry, of course. Dupont asked the girls if they would retire for a moment, and they walked a short distance away and stood in a preoccupied circle while we got out of the water. We then dressed quickly and walked on down the path leading to their village. After about a hundred yards we looked back. All the girls, quite naked, were in the water. At that moment two bonzes were strolling slowly along the bank past them; but the girls paid no attention. The bonzes were wrapped in the mantle of holy invisibility.

622 When we reached the village, Dupont asked punctiliously for
304 the headman, making the excuse that he wanted to visit the pagoda. It was quite evident that this headman was in the good graces of the garrison, and probably supplied them with labour. He was very dignified and had a fine house, with European furniture. Although barefooted, he wore a French suit. On the suggestions of the soldier from the camp he took down his trousers and showed us his legs, which from ankles to thighs were tattooed, in the local manner, so
796 closely that he seemed to be wearing stockings. The annual *boun*[1]
782 had just been celebrated at the local pagoda and a bonze was in the
532 act of sweeping into a heap the votive offerings with which the floor
285 of the courtyard was littered. There was a great collection of elephants, buffaloes, peacocks and tigers, all woven in basket-work. The kind of thing that Picasso produces when he is not painting, but perhaps rather better. They seemed to me to be of

[1] [i.e., religious festival.-- Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

the greatest artistic interest. I asked the headman if it would be 796
possible to take any, as the bonze was crumpling and smashing them 782
vigorously with his broom. But the chief shook his head regretfully. 532
Buddhism had degenerated in these remote provinces and was 285
swamped with re-emergent spirit cults. These objects had been dedicated to the *phi*[1] and would have to be burnt in a ritual fire. The *phi* would also receive the burnt essence, I noticed, of a large, very obscene, and no doubt magically valuable picture.

At about this time when the bonze was treading underfoot the 669
village's artistic output of several months, a party of Issarak or Viet- 726
Minh, timing their action to coincide with the convoy's arrival at 731
Moung Kassy, had set fire to the forest just south of the post. A steady breeze was blowing from that quarter, and the fire, started over a width of about a mile and fanning out as it advanced, moved slowly towards the fort.

Coming up over the river bank it took us some time to realize what was happening. There was a haze; but then there was always a haze in Laos, although by this time of day it should have been clearing and not thickening. And then we heard the crackling, punctuated with the sharp pops, which might have been distant rifle fire, but which were the explosions of thick stems of bamboo. Looking up then we saw the curtain of smoke hanging over Muong Kassy, white at the top, and black at its base and streaked occasionally by lance-points of flame, which were still two miles away.

We ran to where the car was parked, started it and tried to drive down the road towards the fire. Dupont was as pleased with it as July 14th. In about fifty yards we got tangled up with the convoy and had to leave the car on the side of the road and run on. The fire was advancing on a ragged front and was as irresistible as a volcano. Black smoke was being blown before it so that at first the flames were out of sight; but when they came through they were two hundred feet high – twice the height of the tallest tree. It went forward in zigzagging rushes; eating its way quickly through the bamboo

[1] [i.e., spirits. -- Analyst]

369 Anou had built the new temple of Sisaket not far from the deconse-
175 crated Prakeo "with the purpose of attracting the grace of Heaven
/346/ to the souls of his parents as well as to those of all his relatives and to all the souls which people Hell and the world" (2). The corner-

2. Cf. inscription on the stele.

stone was laid on "Thursday, the ninth day of the waxing moon of the year Kap-San" (1824), in the midst of a large assembly of the populace.

778 Inauguration of the temple of Sisaket (1824). On this occasion
796 the king made innumerable gifts to the bonzes (clothing, sandals,
346 fans, iron pen points to write on latania leaves, mats, mattresses,
175* copper betel services, rice baskets, vases, metal drinking cups, carafes, goblets, etc.). He gave /163/ pieces of cloth to the poor, and generous bounties to artisans and musicians. The people walked in procession around the royal palace, carrying oriflammes and effigies of animals which were flowered and perfumed with incense. The holiday lasted three days, to the accompaniment of general rejoicing (1).

1. Ibid. /Inscription on the stele./

346 This temple was the only one which the French found still standing when they reached Vientiane. Of the first enclosure there remain two 'that's', which have recently been restored, and an elegant square pavilion-library whose quadruple pinnacled roof is supported by a graceful colonnade. Three other pavilions have disappeared (2).

2. A bath pavilion, one for worship and one for the tom-toms and gongs.

A cloister pierced by a porch on each side surrounds the central sanctuary, the outer gallery of which discloses a gateway and finely worked windows under the triple porch roofs. The inside walls are
/532/ illuminated by frescoes surmounted by many niches in the form of lotus leaves where thousands of statuettes are grouped in pairs. A wooden ceiling is embellished with gilded panels, and on the altar stands a giant Buddha entirely covered with gold leaf.

115: Le Boulanger--104 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1700-1887) Laotians AM8

It was in this holy place that Anou received /164/ his subjects' 796
and vassals' oaths of fidelity twice a year up until 1827. The 643*
ceremony was continued, after his downfall, in honor of the king 175*
of Siam. Nowadays it takes place in April and November of each
year and the oath, accompanied by prayers from the bonzes, is
addressed to the president of the French Republic in accordance
with the traditional formula: "May any one of us who breaks this /695/
oath be devoured by the tiger, may he be struck by lightning, may
his soul burn in blazing flames... etc." (1).

1. A monastery was recently built near the cloister, which 792
has been transformed into a museum. A center of religious
learning has been revived there by the leader of the bonzes
who is presently in charge of it.

Voyage to Bangkok (1825). In the meantime Anou kept closely 643*
informed of the events which were transpiring in the west of the 648*
Indo-Chinese peninsula. In the south the Siamese had come to 175*
grips with the Annamites in Cambodian territory, and in the north
the British in India were extending their sphere of action towards
Burma in a way which was disturbing for the Thai regions of the
basin of the Salouen and the Upper Menam. In 1825 he went to
Bangkok to attend the funeral of king Phan-Dinh- /165/ /Page 165
is devoted to an illustration: "Square of the temple of Sisaket at
Vientiane."--Translator/ /166/ Klang, and there he learned that
a British delegation had entered into ticklish negotiations with the
government of the deceased king and that the intransigence of the
English was causing the greatest difficulties at the court. He profited
thereby in order to ask permission to repatriate to his country the
Laotian families who had been taken captive in the course of the
preceding century, but was given a categorical refusal (1).

1. He was told that the Laotian families had been settled
in Siam for too long a time not to have become completely
Siamese. Cf. H.R.H. Phanuphanthuvongswardja, op. cit.
/Repression de la revolte de Vientiane. Bangkok, 1926./

Hiding his disappointment, he regained his capital greatly dis- /721/
contented. The following year, when the rumor reached Vientiane
that the Anglo-Siamese parleys had been broken off and that a

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[171] The Laotian era began in 638 A.D. In 1900 it is entering the second year of its twenty-second sixty-year cycle. It is numbered 1262, and called Kaute-Pi-Tkiaî or Pi-Xuèt-Tho-Sok. Since the series of years in the ten-year cycle becomes exhausted before that of the twelve-year cycle, the sign Kate or Eka of the first is added to the sign Sète or Pi-Tio of the second in order to provide a name for the eleventh year which begins a new ten-year period. This combining of names continues thus for a period of sixty years, at the end of which the first two signs of each cycle once more occur together.

Laotian holidays. Laotian holidays are at once religious and civil. Fairly numerous, since there are ten of them each year, they all begin with ceremonies in the pagodas, and in almost all localities the bonzes are the organizers, the impresarios, the decorators and the artificers.

The chronological year begins in the fifth month (March or April). Here are the names and a description of the holidays which succeed one another almost every month, and the first of which in date is that of aspersion or of the new year, lasting seven days.

"The first day of this series of holidays may rather be described as a day of purification. Early in the morning the streets of Luang-Prabang fill with people in holiday dress who go to the market to buy live animals, especially fish and birds. Towards four in the afternoon they go to the little islands which the low water has left uncovered in the middle of the river and set free the animals purchased that morning by plunging them once again in their respective elements, the fish in the water and the birds in the air. The purpose of this touching custom is to obtain pardon for sins committed during the year which is drawing to a close. In the evening the bonzes are invited to come and pray in private homes. They are presented with cooked rice, fruit, cakes, flowers and wax candles.

"During the six days which follow everyone is in a joyous state. People exchange visits and good wishes, and attach cords of cotton to form bracelets to one another's wrists as good luck pieces.

"The statues of Buddha are not forgotten. Cotton strings, usually adorned with strings of flowers, are also attached to them.

"In each pagoda the statues of Buddha are taken down from the altar and placed on the squares before the pagodas in niches forming low kiosks, where all the [172] faithful come and sprinkle them with

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perfumed water in the hope of being cured of the ills from which they suffer. In the course of the day water is sprinkled now on the bonzes, who go forth in palanquins to pay each other visits, and now on the King, the great men and the native officials, who pass back and forth through the city for two days running, some on elephant back and the others in sedan chairs.

"Although the water used in sprinkling the bonzes and the King is generally clean and perfumed, the same cannot always be said of the water used to sprinkle the kingdom's great men and officials. Every day until four in the afternoon, the young girls try to douse the young men who pass by and to smear their faces black. The young men do not sprinkle the girls, but may try to smear them with black too.

"After four in the afternoon the people get flowers and use them to decorate the pagodas. In the evening, inside the pagodas which are empty of their Buddhas, young men and women meet around the altar and Ngan (celebrations) take place each day until such time as the statue of Buddha resumes its place in the sanctuary.

"On the morning of the fourth day all the officials of the Laotian administration who have been able to come to Luang-Prabang visit the King in ceremonial dress to offer him their best wishes for the new year. After an invocation the grand master of ceremonies presents the wishes of all those present, with candles lit and flowers which each person has brought all around. Again in the name of all those present, the grand master respectfully places the traditional cotton threads around the royal wrists. Then the members of the audience come up one after the other to kneel before the king, offer him their little bouquets flanked by wax candles and touch the outstretched hand of the monarch with their inclined foreheads. This is a most picturesque manner of hand-kissing and paying homage (1).

(1) The administration of the "little oath" or oath of the fifth month takes place during this celebration. [641]

"Holiday of the eighth month (July). This is the entry of the bonzes into retreat (this holiday corresponds to our meat days preceding Lent).

"Each year, from the eighth to the eleventh month, the bonzes are not allowed to sleep outside the pagoda to which they are

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attached, and they are supposed to increase their prayers and pious exercises. At the beginning of this period, and until eleven in the morning on the first day, the inhabitants come and provide celebrations for the bonzes and offer them meals accompanied with music.

"Holiday of the ninth month (feast of waters and pirogue races).

"The purpose of this holiday, which falls in the very middle of the rainy season (August), is to obtain abundant rainfall from heaven. In the morning there is a great market which everyone attends in his best clothes, and in the afternoon there are races on the Mékong by the so-called racing pirogues.

[173] "Holiday of the tenth month (feast of cakes, or rather feast of the dead, September).

"In the morning of this day the inhabitants take little packages to their respective pagodas. A label is attached to each package with a small bamboo pin, and the label bears the name of a dead relative. Each package contains cakes and is destined for an ancestor or relative who has died recently. The packages are delivered to the bonzes, who recite prayers for the dead persons and eventually eat the cakes themselves.

"Holiday of the eleventh month (October, end of the bonzes' retreat, reminiscent of our Easter celebrations).

"The pagodas are lit up, and fireworks exploded. Private houses are also brightly lit.

"The inhabitants make bamboo rafts on which they place various foods, in the midst of bright lights. Great numbers of these illuminated rafts are then loosed in the current of a watercourse. The fiery fleets drifting downstream remind one of Venetian feast days with their lighted gondolas.

"Holiday of the twelfth month (November, feast of harvest and feast of waters).

"The harvest is over, and the dry season well established. This is the last in date of the year's public holidays, and also the most brilliant.

"A pirogue race takes place at this time, and also another ceremony of oath-taking (called the "great oath") at which all the officials of all the grades of the Laotian administration must be present.

"The holiday of Thiout-Bang-Fai, or feast of rockets, occurs on this date in all the agricultural centers and regions of Laos"(1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier

149: Reinach--132 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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(Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

Besides these major holidays there are a certain number of others which are more religious than secular in character and which fall in between the ones dealt with above.

In the course of the sixth month (April-May), for example, a religious holiday is celebrated in memory of the first leaders of the Buddhist religion.

At the end of the eleventh month, on a date which is fixed in accordance with the rites and which varies from one year to another, a celebration takes place in the pagodas in honor of the men who first introduced Buddhism into Indo-China.

Finally, after the twelfth month (November or December), comes the feast of penitence which applies to all the faithful. During a [174] kind of Lent which lasts for nine days, true believers must abstain from certain foods and from all sex relations.

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Since our establishment in Laos the province capitals and all the centers where Europeans live have celebrated the National Holiday on July 14 which the natives call Boun-Phi-Falang-Sète (Holiday of the French Genie) or, by onomatopoeia, Boun Ka-Tor-Yu-Yèt. [C. A. M. Translator's note. The latter term seems to be an approximation of the French Quatorze juillet ("July 14").]

MORES AND CUSTOMS

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By reason of their diverse origins and the relations into which they have entered with neighboring peoples, as well as by the cross-breeding which has taken place, the races of Laos necessarily have characteristics, costumes, dwellings and, in a word, mores and customs which differ to a greater or less extent from one race to another (1).

(1) On this question of mores and customs we shall have recourse from time to time to a notice entitled Le Laos français which was written by the Superior Resident in Laos and based on reports and local monographs which were provided by our administrators and are in consequence authoritative.

[114]

If we have consistently reproduced here extracts from the above work, this is because they provide an admirable summation

527 Those desirous of obtaining special graces give similar celebrations
182 which last several days and several nights, and the offerings are more beautiful and more varied. It is generally on occasions of this sort that assumptions of the habit by bonzes and their pupils are particularly likely to occur.

Being present at these ceremonies confers certain indulgences, and that is why they are so punctually followed and why all those who take part try [224] to help in celebrating them by offerings of all sorts.

[796] On the spot where the celebration is to be held, a sort of pulpit is constructed beforehand where the bonzes stand as they come up by turns to read passages chosen for the occasion from the sacred books. They never allow themselves to be disturbed by the surrounding noise, but stand as if transfixed in the middle of the songs and shouts.

It is readily understandable that this should be an agreeable way to procure one's salvation, but since it is very costly it is not within everyone's means. Fortunately, there are ways of compromising with
[565] heaven which enable even the poorest to associate themselves in these great celebrations, in accordance with their resources, by means of even very modest offerings and to benefit therefrom both spiritually and materially.

There is no doubt but that a belief in the efficacy of plenary and partial indulgences enters into their consideration, but it is equally reasonable to suppose that the attraction of the profane pleasures which one enjoys in the course of these gatherings is not the least of the motivating causes which lead the Laotian people to frequent them so zealously.

[171] Pirogue races. We have seen that pirogue races and regattas took place during some of the legal holidays, and a few words of
526 explanation on this matter are given below.

501 This custom must have been introduced by the Malays and then handed down from the Kmers to the Laotians, following an ascending direction from south to north.

The pirogues used in the "Souang-Hua" (1) regattas are specially

(1) Literally, pirogues which run.

built and exclusively reserved for this use. Sometimes as much as twenty-five meters in length, they are hewn out of specially chosen wood and have most elegant delicate and elongated lines. Their extremities are armed with what appear to be slender gilded horns. The exterior is lacquered black with gold ornamentation and the

include all the local genii one comes across in Indochina, either under the name of Neak Ta in Cambodia, or Phi in Laos, to mention only two countries. The cult of the Phi is still very much alive in Laos, although it has long been contested by the Buddhist clergy and forbidden by an edict of Phothisarath in 1527. 771 776

[30] But there are several classes of phi. First of all there are the universal phi, those are the ones which Buddhist tradition has attempted to assimilate for better or worse. 776

The book of Khun Bolom says precisely that the Phi Fa (Phi of heaven) and the Phi Then are in reality Indra, and the guardians of the four worlds. The Phi Sua Muon are Nang Tholani (Dharani, goddess of the earth) and Nang Mekhala (Manimekhala, deity of the sea). Finally there is the Phi Then Ten (Visvakarman, the builder).

The local protecting genii of the kingdom of Lan Xan are the fifteen Nagaraja (Praya Nak) who are the genii of water, living in the river rapids, at the confluence of rivers, on the rocks on the river banks or in caves. Their natural form is that of a serpent, but they can also take on human form.

Then follow the familiar genii, the wandering phi (Phi Pho), and the phi of dwellings (Phi Heuan). The Phi Heuan are honored at the time of marriage, and the Laotian code prescribes the indemnities which must be paid to please the Phi. There are also the phi of parents [or relatives--Translator] (Phi Me). These are often confused with the preceding ones. Their cult is celebrated either inside the house, or outside in a small shelter built for this purpose. This little structure is usually built leaning against a tree; sometimes it contains a small statuette or a stone, or even nothing. In that case one finds only a few grains of glutinous rice, and one or two small sticks of incense in a horn made of a banana leaf. This little house is the home of the Phi. He watches the living from the beyond and manifests himself every time a member of the family behaves badly. His intervention is most often known by a sudden and serious illness. One must then try to find out what has displeased the phi. For this one goes to the "sorcerer" and he will indicate [31] the sacrifice which must be made to the phi to appease his anger." [671] [788 778] [755]

There exist also village phi to whom honor and offerings are due at the time of every ritual or local ceremony, particularly about the seventh month. Coinciding with a sort of pause in the ordinary activity of the Laotian, a pause which is regulated by a change in season, return of the rains and the rise of the Mekong waters, the feasts of the "months of the spirits" are centered around the evocation 776 796 787

776 of one or several spirits who are reincarnated in one possessed. This
796 person enables the villagers and those living in the same quarter to
787 know the course of the new year and, if necessary, to improve it by means of gifts and prayers. During this time the village is forbidden to strangers (Lévy).

776 A series of particularly dangerous phi is also known; these are the Phi Phetu (Sk: Preta), that is the wandering souls of people who
775 have died in an abnormal way, by accident, suicide, childbirth for a woman, etc. These souls cannot be born again. They remain present in order to torment human beings. The Phi Houa Kout are
776 the headless phi, the Phi Khon Long are those who carry the coffins,
754 the Phi Pop have the power of entering into the body of a living human being. The unfortunate person then has the evil eye and is expelled from the village. In the region of Savannakhet, there is a village of victims of the Phi Pop which was created by a Protestant mission, in order to rescue these poor creatures who would otherwise die of hunger, for they are forbidden to enter any village.

The Phi Phong are the spirits of human beings who have studied the formulas to acquire magic powers but have not conformed strictly to certain rites prescribed by their studies. They are bloodthirsty and go out at night by the light of the fire [32] which issues from their nostrils along the banks of rivers and streams, and of ponds, to catch fish and toads. If one meets a Phi Phong, one must flee for he can spit in one's face, and then one may become a Phi Phong oneself.

776 The Phi Kong Koi lives in the mountains and has the shape of a monkey. During his existence on earth he was the servant of a Vietnamese. One day, having been too badly treated, he decided to escape. But in order not to be caught, he camouflaged his footprints by putting his heels in front and his toes behind. The Vietnamese, deceived by this trick, went off in the opposite direction
[198] and never found him. In our days when the Laotians want to chase away the Phi Kong Koi, the speak Vietnamese to each other. But if one is traveling in the mountains, one must refrain from lighting a fire or cooking any fish or meat or crabs, for the odor attracts the phi who wants to come and eat. His victim would have his intestines split open. The approach of the phi is always preceded by a violent storm and a torrential rain. There are said to be a great many Phi King Koi in the region of Samneua.

There is, however, another kind of Phi. This one seems to have a particular hatred for archaeologists. These are the phis who inhabit sculptures or the tumuli which are found in the bush [en brousse]. But that is another story...

173: Deydier--21 H.B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

805 [34] The Days.

The Laotian week follows the same order as the French week:

Van Athit	Sunday
Van Tian	Wednesday [sic]
Van Ang Kam	Tuesday
Van Phut	Wednesday
Van Phahat	Friday [sic]
Van Souk	Monday [sic]
Van Sao	Saturday

The Hours.

The day is 24 hours long and is divided into 16 ngam (periods of an hour and a half each).

•796 All the Laotian feasts are dated according to this calendar. The Buddhist feasts are listed in a manuscript of the Vat Pra Keo called Hit Sip Song Khong Sip Si.

THE BOUN (Sk. punya)

796 Every newcomer to Laos will quickly learn to recognize the
788 word boun. Literally this term means "to obtain merits, to give alms," but by extension, it designates the ceremony or feast which accompanies this act. Its meaning has degenerated rather quickly and to "make a boun" means "celebrate a feast."

The religious boun consists essentially in presenting offerings of candles, flowers, etc. to the images of Buddha and gifts to the bonzes after having accomplished the pradakshina or ritual "circumambulation" of the pagoda with lighted candles. This pradakshina is an ancient Brahmanic rite which consists in turning around a funeral pyre or a monument, keeping it always on the right.

Feast of Khao Chi (See below after the feast of the harvest).

Makha Bousa (Feast of the third month).

796 [35] The first religious feast of the Laotian year is that of the "Makha Bousa." It takes place on the fifteenth day of the crescent moon of the third month (end of January to middle of February).

This is the origin:

"Near Vaisali in the country-town of Belouva, a serious illness attacked the Buddha, and he was near death. Then he thought of his

796 disciples: "It is not proper that I should enter Nirvana without having conversed with those who have taken care of me, without having spoken to the community of disciples." After he had spoken to them, he received a visit from Mara, the Buddhist demon, to whom he said: "Do not worry, oh Malin, [perhaps= oh wily one--Translator] in a short time it will be the Nirvana of the Perfect one, in three months I will enter into Nirvana."

It is the memory of this reunion of disciples which the Laotians celebrate during the feast. This ceremony is the classic boun with alms to the bonzes, candles, small stick of incense, etc.

Boun Pha vet.

796 This boun may take place from the third Laotian month on. Once
346 a year, each pagoda in turn organizes a great feast. The day before, the pagoda is filled with bonzes who have come from very far away to hear the reading of this edifying story, while the young people arrive during the night to pay court to the young girls. By six o'clock of the next morning, the reading begins and only ends at nightfall. At half past seven the offering of food is made to the bonzes, then the recitation of an act of grace. After which the venerables continue the reading of the Phat Vet until the evening, taking turns at regular intervals. In the courtyard of the pagoda, a pedestal has been erected especially for the ceremony. In the center of this rises a preaching pulpit made of a banana trunk which is carved all over and surrounded by draperies on three sides in order to [35] mask the public from the bonz At the base of the four pillars supporting the pulpit, four urns of perfumed water are placed, covered with a banana leaf, and between them in the center there is a bag of paddy and a basket of salt. Along the walls of this temporary hall is displayed the history of Pha Vet painted on cloth. Each reader receives a basket in which the offerings are fancily arranged. At the end of the reading of each chapter all the listeners throw a handful of grilled rice afar. Outside at the four cardinal points small altars are erected with offerings of rice. To the east, in a secluded spot, stands a larger altar which is covered and in which are placed a miniature mat and mattress, some pillows, small sticks of incense, candles, rice pellets, flowers, a tea pot and a bowl for alms. This altar is for the reception of Pra Upagutta who will protect the feast from the malignant influences of Mara (Cf. B.E.F.E.O. 1904: Mara and Upagutta).

This story is often represented in the pagoda paintings, particularly in the Vat May at Luang Prabang.

173: Deydier--23 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

796 Pha Vet is the Laotian name of the Vessantara Jataka which is
773 the story of the last former life of the Buddha.

"Prince Vessantara, a pious Buddhist, gave many alms. In his kingdom lived a white elephant who had the power to make rain fall at will. A Brahman from a neighboring country asked him for this elephant. The charitable prince made him a present of it. The people, who were displeased, went to find the king and ask him to exile the prince. The latter was sent into the forest with his family, but on his way to his rustic hermitage he met various people who begged alms of him. He gave away successively his wagon, his horses, his children. Finally he made a gift of his wife to the god Indra who, disguised as an ascetic, had [37] asked him for her in order to prove his generosity. Then Indra gave him back his wife, while the children were returned to the king their grandfather by a brahman. With the help of his grandson, the king was able to find the prince and his wife and bring them back to the kingdom where everything came to a happy ending. After his death Prince Vessantara became a Buddha."

It should be noted in connection with this story that, according to the Chinese pilgrim Hiuan-Tsang who visited India in the seventh century of our era, the town of Po-Lou-Cha (at the present day Shahbaz Garhi, a few tens of kilometers northeast of Peshawar) became in its time the place where the framework of Vessantara Jataka was supposed to be. Numerous Graeco-Buddhist bas-reliefs illustrating this legend have been discovered there.

Vixakha Bouxa--Feast of the Sixth Month.

796 On the fifteenth day of the crescent moon, the date of the birth, illumination and death of Buddha is celebrated. The series of legends purposing to explain this feast show its complexity. A thorough study is being made at the present time in order to determine its origin and true meaning. In the present state of the question, we will limit ourselves with all reservation to giving the different explanations which we have found in the manuscripts.

We are in the presence of a typical example of a feast of profane nature which the Buddhist tradition is attempting for better or worse to assimilate. According to the Laotian Buddhists, the rockets sent off during this feast are destined to light the funeral pyre which will consume the Buddha's bier. To be precise, no Buddhist text mentions this rite, and the Hit Sip Song Khong Sip Si makes no allusion to this ceremony.

The different reasons for this feast must therefore be sought. First of all, it takes place at the end of [38] the dry season. It is the last rejoicing before the heavy work of the rice fields. Furthermore, its purpose is well determined, for it is intended to bring on the rains and to assure the fertility of the soil.

The principal element of this manifestation is the rocket. This is a long decorated bamboo which is supposed to represent the body of a Naga, one of its extremities being adorned with a Naga head. As for the multi-colored streamer hanging beneath, it symbolizes the rainbow. This theme, which is also found in Indochina, deserves to be studied in Laos before any comparison can be made. A passage of the history of Thao Kathanam gives us the reason for throwing up rockets in order to obtain rain:

"...the day Thao Kathanam was married to the daughter of the King of Champa there was a great feast. From the summit of Mount Gijjakuta, the Yaksa, Gandharva and Phi launched rockets to celebrate the event. For three days all the rockets rose to the sky where they reached the world of the Catulokapala (the four guardians of the world). The Then (genii) thought that the inhabitants of the earth were throwing fire in order to burn the muong Then. They were troubled by this and went to seek protection from the god Indra. Indra then instigated storms, rain and a devastating wind to destroy these balls of fire. The remains of the rockets fell to earth, caught on the trees and became parasitic plants. Since then, in order to obtain rain, rockets are launched towards the sky to frighten the Then."

But the throwing of rockets is also a competition, and the owner of the rocket which goes furthest is sure of a prosperous year. The Legend of Thao Phadeng and of Nang Ay of the country of the Nagas gives us the origin of this competition.

[39] "The son of the king of the Nagas was the rival of Thao Phadeng for the hand of Nang Ay. The father of Nang Ay did not know to whom to give his daughter, so he advised the two suitors to make some rockets. The one who would launch his rocket the furthest would become the husband of Nang Ay. Thao Phadeng won, but the son of the king of the Nagas would not accept his defeat and decided to obtain Nang Ay dead or alive." Then begins an amazing story in which there is no further question of rockets, and no element which might furnish an explanation.

In this way, the rain brought about by this hurling and competition of rockets will ensure a good harvest. Also to this first ceremony there is grafted a second which is the feast of fecundity.

796 It is not necessary to delay here over the licentious scenes, the songs
83 with words defying decency, the action of special marionettes, all
789 the allusions to the relationship between men and women intended to stimulate the fertility of the earth by sympathetic magic, all of which are well-known rites from classic antiquity up to ancient China. We will refer the reader to the authoritative study on the cycle of The Golden Bough by Sir James Frazer.

796 But what is the exact origin of this feast? Some claim that it is peculiar to Vientiane and has been celebrated in other towns of Laos only within the last twenty years. This comment is of capital interest. For, after the pillaging of Vientiane in 1827 by the Siamese General Phya Bodin, the majority of the population of Vientiane was deported to the right bank of the Mekong. Gradually the town was re-peopled by people coming from Tran-Ninh. Now it is a curious fact that on all the rocket shafts there is a strange decorative design whic is similar to those seen on bracelets and necklaces in the region of Xieng Khouang. Some [40] reliable authors having put out the hypothesis that the designs on these necklaces were the survival of an ancient solar cult, should one conclude that the rockets are the last misunderstood vestiges of an ancient fire worship, formerly practised by the populations of Tran Ninh? But then, at what time and under the influence of what rite, did this fire worship become transformed into a ceremony to obtain rain? The question remains open and perhaps future research and discoveries will give an explanation of this feast which is one of the most original and least known of Laos.

The Sacrifice of the Buffalo.

796 The sacrifice of the buffalo takes place at about the same time
782 as the feast of the rockets. This ceremony is known to all the Indonesian people of southeastern Asia, and its survival in Laos is of the greatest interest in the study of the antecedents of this country.

This ceremony is spread out through the months of May and June when the rainy season begins. It is found in western Laos where, according to a Pali chronicle, a Laotian king of Xieng Mai, who had no faith, adored demons and sacrificed buffaloes to the genii of the woods, the trees, the mountains, etc....

At Vientiane, near the Jules Bosc Avenue, can be seen a large stone which the Laotians worship as being a grain of rice. The buffalo is killed near this stone. A Nang Thyem woman, "inspired or possessed, after a series of invocations and ritual dances, pours water from a teapot onto the stone, while the by-standers flood the same stone with

[touques]. 796

The experts throw themselves on the stone, turning it over to see if its underside has been wetted. According to the arrangement of the dry spots, [41] deductions are drawn on the topography of the rice fields which will be flooded, or remain dry, and on the advantage of making rice fields either "high or low." 782 [787] [243]

This sacrifice of the buffalo is found in the myth of Gavampati the strange monk held aloof by the Buddhist community because he took the attitude of being an enemy of the waters. His death allowed the arrival of the rains. [789]

Khao Vassa (Feast of the Eighth Month). 796

This is the date of the beginning of the Buddhist Lent. During the three months of rains, not being able to go from one place to another preaching, the Buddha and his community retired into the park of the Jetavana. Besides the season of rains, as it awakens life everywhere, causes animals to swarm in great numbers. It is therefore impossible at this time of year to travel without violating, at each step, the precept which forbids the destruction of all existence, however infinitely small it may be. Thus, during this period, the bonzes may not leave the pagoda and are obliged to be present at the general confession. 792 183

Oldenberg describes this confession according to the Pali texts as follows:

"No monk may miss it. Only he who is stricken with mental alienation may be dispensed....By the light of a torch, the monks take their places at the place of assembly on low stools which have been prepared for them. Neither laymen nor student bonzes [bonzillons] nor nuns may be present, for the rule of the Order, to be recited in the form of a formula of confession, is considered in principle as a secret appurtenance of the monks only. This formula of confession, the Patimokkgam, is recited aloud by the oldest member [doyen].

.....

"Oh Reverend one, whoever has committed a sin, may he confess it.... After the third time that the question has been repeated, if a monk does not confess a sin which [42] he has committed and which he remembers, he is guilty of an intentional lie. Now an intentional lie, oh reverend one, is an obstacle to religious life. Such are the words of the Blessed One."

Then there follows a list of the sins which must be confessed. At the head of the list are the most serious ones:

796 1. To have had carnal relations with anyone, even an animal.
2. To have stolen the property of others.
3. To have killed.
792 4. To have falsely usurped spiritual perfections, and with the intention of personal profit.

783 Then follows a list of lesser sins. When the enumeration is completed, the reader addresses the monks, repeating three times the following question:

"Now, I ask the reverend ones: Are you free of these sins? And for the second time: Are you pure? And for the third time I ask: Are you pure?" If everyone is silent, the reader says: "The reverend Ones are free of these sins, therefore they are silent, that is how I understand it."

In this way are catalogued in more than two hundred paragraphs, without much order, the precepts dealing with the daily life of the monks, their housing, their food and drink. No detail however irrelevant or insignificant is omitted.

In Laos as in Cambodia "during the entire rainy season, a taper of the Vassa must burn in each pagoda. This consists of a more or less richly carved, painted, wooden cylinder into which is poured virgin wax around a wick" (E. Porée-Maspéro). Before going into retreat, the bonzes are given garments, then the people form a procession and enter the pagodas where they deposit their taper.

196 [43] Ho Khao Padap Dinh--the Feast of the Dead of the Ninth Month

973 This feast is celebrated on the fifteenth day of the waning moon of the ninth month and is accompanied by offerings to the bonzes.

735 A Jataka (Sadhitissaraja) taken from the Ha Sip Xat tells us the benefits acquired by celebrating this feast.

"Two poor devout Buddhist woodcutters sold the produce of their labor and bought two large urns. Into them they put some rice, a few pieces of sugar cane, two bowls, four bananas, some meat and fish, and some delicacies. They offered all this to a bonze on the day of the feast of the dead and vowed to be born again in a better state. As a result of this act of charity they were born again into a royal family. The husband became king and his wife queen. The Buddha then said to those who were listening to this story: "When an act of charity is done for the feast of the dead, one attains three blisses: the terrestrial bliss of being king, the celestial bliss of becoming Indra and finally the supreme bliss of Nirvana."

173: Deydier--28 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

Ho Khao Slak--The Feast of the Tenth Month. 796
This feast is similar to that taking place in Cambodia at the 735
same period. Offerings are made to the bonzes by casting lots. The name of the bonze is written on small tickets which are mixed up in a cup. Each donor offers his present to the monk whose name he has drawn.

The Feasts of the Eleventh Month. 792
The Buddhist Lent finishes on the fifteenth day of the crescent moon of the eleventh month. In each pagoda the bonzes recite the 796
Patimokkha, then confess their sins before leaving the [44] community to go either on a pilgrimage or into a rustic retreat for the period of the dry season.

The Offering of Kanthin. During this feast the 796
ceremony of Kanthin takes place. This consists in offering to the 735
bonzes garments, bedding, etc....

"When the Buddha was in the Jetavana at Savatthi, some monks [773]
came to find him. They were caught by the beginning of Lent and were obliged to stop on their way. When they set out again after the fifteenth day of the crescent moon of the eleventh month, they arrived covered with mud. The Buddha therefore authorized them to accept the gift of garments at the end of Lent."

The Kanthin can only be accepted by a group of at least five bonzes, but the material may not be borrowed of a third or offered on demand. Those who receive a Kanthin must sew its pieces themselves. (Cf. the Laotian bonze).

The Feast of the Waters.
Other feasts correspond to these purely Buddhist ones. The 796
day before the race of the dugouts the faithful throw into the river 773
small illuminated boats of bamboo or banana wood. Originally lamps were used, consisting of a piece of string dipped in oil, and held up by a banana leaf. This cord was woven at one end in the shape of crows' feet, in memory of the Jataka of the "White Crow."

"A female crow had made its nest at the top of a tree. On the night of a storm the bird died, and its five eggs were carried away by the current. They were gathered by five animals, a hen, an otter, a turtle, a cow, a serpent and gave birth to five buddhas. These buddhas often thought [45] of their mother who was in the heaven of the Tavatimca. She came down to earth in the form of

796 a hermit and said to them: "If you think of your mother, build little
773 illuminated boats and let them be carried away by the current on the fifteenth day of the eleventh month."

This rite is common to all the Asiatic countries of the monsoon. It is found in Lower Burma where it is said to celebrate the victory of the monk Oupagoutta over Mara. It is also practised in Cambodia, southern China at Amoy, in Borneo and in Japan.

Actually we are dealing with what Sir J. Frazer called the expulsion of the emissary he-goat. "These little rafts loaded with offerings attracted the evil genii who had been in contact with the living during the rains. They are driven away on board these frail skiffs." The expulsion of the emissary goat is often accompanied by licentious scenes similar to those of ancient Saturnalia and Bacchanalia.

[526] The race of the dugouts was originally intended to bring about the fall of the waters, but apparently it seems that in Vientiane, in spite of offerings made to the Nagas of the Nam Passak, the original idea has been lost, and the dugout race has become simply a sporting event.

The Feasts of the Twelfth Month.

796 When King Asoka had completed the 84,000 shrines which he
643 had built to contain the ashes of the Buddha, he made a great feast of the That on the fifteenth day of the crescent moon of the twelfth month. The feasts of the That Luang are celebrated in memory of this pious deed.

At Vientiane they are preceded by the feast of Vat Si Muong and conclude with those of the Vat Ong Tu [46] and Impeng (see appendix: Vientiane). They always involve the same ceremonial, circumambulation around the pagoda with small sticks of wax and incense, offerings to the bonzes, etc....

The day before the feast of That Luang, on the fourteenth day of the crescent moon, the Great Oath takes place. The king goes to the pagoda of Vat Ong Tu. All the high dignitaries and principal office-holders of the kingdom are present. The bonzes chant the ritual prayers. Two Kha guards in red tunics and green sampots, red berets with a pompon on their heads similar to the headdress worn by warriors represented at the Bayon of Angkor Thom, plunge the points of the sabres, guns and lances into four begging bowls containing lustral water. The master of ceremonies recites the oath written on palm leaves three times. Then the water in which the weapons have been dipped is distributed to the principal dignitaries who drink it.

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Then the royal retinue proceeds to the That Luang where the king must spend the night in a sala. He is accompanied by his ministers and in principle may not leave until they come and fetch him.

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On the morning of the fifteenth day, the king, carried by his guards, goes to make his offerings to the bonzes, and the whole day is devoted to public rejoicing, of which one form deserves to be mentioned. It is the game of the Thi khi.

Its origin, so far as we know at present, remains obscure. The Pra Lak Pra Lam tells us that Indra and Rama played Thi Khi together, and that since that day it has been played at Vientiane.

Let us observe that the game was unknown at Luang Prabang. It was imported from the south. Tradition required that it be played on horseback, when it was played like polo.

At the present time it is played on foot with a stick with the end bent over like a crosier and a ball the size [47] of a child's head and is similar to hockey. There are two opposing sides, the office-holders and the people. The latter should in principle win two victories out of three games. The game has no rules, there is no umpire and no limit to the ground played on. Sometimes the ball goes off into the shrubbery, and all the players go and look for it. Only a hypothetical line indicates the limit of the enemy side. [641]

The feasts of Vat Inpeng and of Vat Ong Tu merely repeat those of Vat Simuong and That Luang.

[48]

THE SECULAR CEREMONIES

The Sou Khouan can be considered as the transition between the purely religious ceremonies and the secular feasts. [527] [725]

Actually Sou Khouan means "call and reception of the soul." The Laotian has a profound belief in the transmigration of the soul. According to him, the human body is inhabited by thirty-two khouan (spirits) each of whom presides over the function of a member, an organ or an intellectual faculty.

When a human being dies, all of the thirty-two souls leave his body. According to the merits which have been acquired, they go either to the heaven of the gods, or to the province of the dead. Certain beings who have died in an abnormal manner, by suicide, drowning, etc., become wandering souls. They are to be feared, because they return to earth in order to torment the living, and one must make numerous sacrifices to them.

173: Deydier--62 H,F-3 (no date) 1952 AMI Indochina

Fig. V. Luang Prabang. The Phou Gneu Gna Gneu (Cl. Bouton). [145]

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7: Thompson--378-379 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 779, 797

"In April 1881 two priests from the Society of Foreign Missions went to Oubone, where they found not a single native Christian. On a tour which they later made throughout Laos they found only four Christians in the whole country, two Siamese and two Annamites. When they began to evangelize Laos the current anarchy bred by the Ho invasions, Siamese deportations, and the perennial economic uncertainty was conducive to an encouraging number of conversions. With the establishment of the French, political security was assured, and the number of converts began visibly to decline. The ease of the early conversions had been misleading. Through centuries of persecution and uncertainty the Laotians have acquired a marked flair for success. They know to a fine point what earthly authorities it is worth their while to please. Moreover, the Laotians share the usual Asiatic indifference to dogma. One religion is as good to them as another, provided it does not upset the [379] social structure. Catholic discipline is irksome too. The Laotians find the indissolubility and relative asceticism of a Christian marriage far less congenial than their traditional polyandry and polygamy. The missionaries have also vainly tried to induce them to clothe themselves more voluminously and to give up opium."

7: Thompson--379 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 797

"The Laotians have never been persecutors and they are hopelessly apathetic. Politely but interminably they put off conversion, on one flimsy excuse after another. Latin and their catechism are literally impossible for them to master. They seem to be paying attention, the missionaries complain, but their minds wander. Lack of roads and the unhealthiness of the country make it doubly hard for missionaries to press salvation upon them with sufficient regularity. Famines make the Laotians migrate, and they are naturally and historically nomadic. The Mission is not rich enough nor adequately staffed to offer them regular employment. Moreover, it would not be the same inducement to the Laotians that it is to the Annamites. One worthy Father wrote:

> If the Laotian is not moved by fear, vexations, or lawsuits; if he is not shunned by everyone because of a hideous or incurable disease--he cannot bring himself without the greatest difficulty to study religion. He remains as quiet as a rat in his hole. He is neither hostile nor savage, but is simply a child who makes any excuse to put off his baptism. (1)

1. Société des Missions Etrangères: Compte Rendu des Travaux (Archives du Séminaire, Paris, 1900), pp. 249-50."

7: Thompson--379-380 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 659, 797

"The static condition of the Laotian Mission moved the Society to change its policy. As in Annam, they are trying to appeal to all classes of the people through education, books, and medical care. The cult of phi, or evil spirits, is so deep-rooted in Laotians and so universally practised in cases of sickness, that Western science and social service can perhaps find there the most advantageous point for attacking native superstitions. Of course, here as elsewhere, they encounter the administration's jealous rivalry, but as yet in Laos penetration of any sort is so superficial that there is room for all comers. The government has recently dealt a blow to Mission prestige, as it did in Cambodia, by becoming the patron of Buddhism. Though recently founded, the Buddhist Institute in Luang-Prabang aims to train bonzes who formerly went to Bangkok for their instruction, as well as their investiture. This not only counteracts Siamese influence--and Bangkok has always been the lodestar of Laotian aspirations--but it is part of the French policy with Indianized peoples to revive their cultural heritage. In 1907 Tournier chose Vientiane to transform into a modern city, for he thought [380] that it might attract all Laotians thither and away from Bangkok, the moral capital of the Thai people. It remains to be seen whether all these attempts will be successful."

7: Thompson--380 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 177, 797

"The missionaries, even if they made little headway in conversions, enjoy great moral influence in Laos, especially among the mountain peoples, to whom they teach new methods of agriculture, in addition to their medical, educational, and Scriptural activities. These primitive peoples do not differentiate between spiritual and temporal authorities, and often use the missionary as intermediary with the administration. These regions are so remote, and their economic and political importance so obviously relegated to the future, that the Mission has not encountered there the anti-clerical opposition that existed for so long in Annamite countries."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

241 sufficient for his requirements. If there are six members of the
461 family, six standard, equal sized portions of land will be cultivated.
511 If a child is born into the family another piece of land is cleared and
792 worked. When a member of the family dies, whether it be a baby or the grandfather, cultivation of his portion will be stopped. Just enough is produced for the family to eat and to provide a small surplus sold in the market — *with the bonze's approval* — to buy occasional strict necessities, like a silk shawl and a bicycle for the
735 daughter. There is no social insurance and there are no poor. The
556 old and the sick are supported by the young, or, where they are
792 left without able-bodied providers, by the community, and the
771 bonzes give instructions for the necessary land to be placed under cultivation for them. The accumulation of wealth which is not to be used for definite, approved purposes, causes a man to lose prestige among his neighbours, just, as in the West, the process is reversed. The main difference, it seems, between Buddhism in Indo-China, and Christianity — apart from any question as to their relative merits — is that, whether we admire it or not, the former is largely put into practice.

It is a stimulating reflection that the Western millionaire, obsessed for the sake of social distinction with the amassing of enormous possessions — little of which he can personally consume — would attain the same ends of personal celebrity under a Laotian Buddhistic order of things by his priestly austerities — by embracing the most abject and prestige-conferring form of poverty.

181 For this reason perhaps the local Evangelist missionary and his
771 wife have made no converts. Like all who have lived among the
785 Laotians they are charmed with them — although, of course,
797 disappointed at their blindness. They also deplore their immorality.

In the matter of converts the Evangelists have been no more unsuccessful than their Portuguese, Spanish and French forerunners. The Laotians having little capacity for abstractions, either in their

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Miao AE5

language or religion, cannot follow the subtlety of Western religious concepts. They have a passion for taking things *au pied de la lettre*. Being told that the basic commandment of Christianity as well as Buddhism is 'thou shalt not kill', they cannot swallow such reservations as capital punishment and 'the just war'; while casuistry repels them. Moreover, a bonze, the spiritual leader of the country people among whom he lives and works, occupies by virtue of his rigorous fulfilment of the principles of his religion, a position in their esteem accorded in the West, say, to a boxing champion. The Laotians have come to associate the prestige of sanctity with certain abstinences and uncomfortable practices. The bonze gives an example of utter renunciation which is awe-inspiring by comparison with the minor self-abnegations of the villagers. The Laotians, therefore, although tolerant in the extreme, are not impressed by the worth of a would-be spiritual leader who presents himself to them loaded with material possessions. And this negative attitude deepens into a certain aversion if, as usually happens, the holy men of the West spend most of their time hunting in a country where animals must be allowed to die of old age. I fear that where the austere Dominicans, and the Jesuits failed, there is little hope for the Evangelists.

However, the missionary was far from despondent. There were Meos in the mountains not far from Vientiane, and just as in the plateaux of Viet-Nam the Moïs had not rejected the Gospel, so here the primitive peoples of the mountains seemed promising material for evangelization. There would be no risk of jeopardizing conversion by hunting, among such hearty amateurs of open-air sports as the Meos, and if the missionary had more of this world's goods than they – well, that was a sure sign that his *ai* (or spirit), was stronger, and it would be a good thing to imitate him. Before the Meos could trouble themselves with renunciatory religions they would have to create a comfortable and abundant civilization for themselves. There was no chance of becoming sated with prosperity at the top of their mountains.

Around 1597 Belloso and Gonzalez "dared" to wander adventurously across South Annam and even Champa in search of the king of Cambodia who had taken refuge in Laos. In 1608 another adventurer in the grand manner, de Brito (2), dreamed of ex-

2. Philippe de Brito Nicole died in Pégou, preferring impalement to prostration (sumbaya) before the king. For the same reason, other Portuguese adventurers of the grand period were boiled in oil in Siam.

tending his ephemeral sovereignty in Burma not only over Chieng Mai and Siam, but as far as Luang Prabang. His plans failed. The geographer [53] of Malacca, Godinho de Eredia, compiled a whole collection of information on this remote kingdom about the same time.

But the missionaries, it would seem, were the most persevering in their efforts to remedy the isolation of Laos, particularly the Portuguese Jesuit Cardim (1). The latter

1. Father Cardim, Relations della Provincia del Giappone. Rome, 1643.

has given various accounts of his efforts and those of his predecessors. If we are to believe him, three Portuguese traders had already entered through Cambodia when Antonio Gançalves Cavallerio persuaded the Superior of the Jesuits of Macao to send

several Fathers there in 1624, almost immediately after the first incident of the bar of Siam. Father Cardim and a Japanese companion left Macao on December 13, 1625 to go and study the language at Ayuthia [HD: then the capital of Siam], but sickness and reprisals against the acts of the Spaniards in 1629 caused the project to fail once again (H. Bernard). It was to be resumed later by Father Borelli and Father J. Baptiste Bonel, the latter of whom "died in Laos or Layès" (A. de Rhodes).

133 The market of Bassac owes its importance to the proximity of the
433 plateau. It is therefore a storehouse for the Laotians of the whole region, a reservoir [51] from which they draw. The part which it
438 plays is obviously a fine one, and no more can be asked of it.

There has also been much discussion as to whether large-scale breeding of buffalo and oxen would be successful there, for at present livestock is found only in the villages situated near the Sédone, that is to say, quite far from the plateau. The question has not yet been settled, and sufficient tests have not yet been made.

133 At the southernmost corner of the plateau there is a conical mountain about 800 meters in altitude which Francis Garnier baptized The Breast [le Téton] because of its shape, and to which he later gave the name Lagrée's Peak [Pic de Lagrée] in commemoration of the President of the Exploratory Commission of 1866.

[224] The elephant hunters of southern Laos go to the mountainous region of Saravane and Attopeu every year, and there they capture an annual quota of fifty to a hundred elephants.

133 To the east of Attopeu the mountains are inhabited by well-nigh independent Kha tribes--Cédangs, Djarais, Rognaos and
[177 Bahnars. The two latter tribes have almost been pacified, thanks to the persevering efforts of the Christian missionaries of Kon-Toum.
797] This point is the center of the mission, and through it passes the road from Attopeu to Qui-Nhon. It crosses the Annamitic Chain
563 between Kon-Xalam and Kon-Tiorak at an altitude of about 900 meters. Near Attopeu this same road goes up over Pou-Satièng (400 meters), the last ramification of the great chain, which separates the basin of the Sé-Souk from that of the Sé-Kémane.

[135] This region of Pou-Satièng, Sé-Souk and Sé-Kémane has long been known to be rich in gold deposits.

§ IV--HYDROLOGY

a.--THE MÉKONG--GENERALITIES

133 It has often been said, and rightly so, that the Nile constituted Egypt. In the same way it can be said that the Mékong makes Laos, for is it not the river which gives what vitality there is to these vast isolated regions? Is it not the river which, by its annual floods, helps the growth of rice? Does it not supply, with its fish, a large

is [Illustration here] a duty for us, to restore the Khas to the normal status to which their imposing number in the total population as well as the special qualities which they possess give them a right. 000

Once emancipated from their strict servitude and from the rapacity of the Laotian and Thai mandarins, and once commanded by leaders who have been chosen by them and from members of their own race, the Khas will rise rapidly and, as [136] time passes, will certainly give a most effective impetus to the development of our poisession's riches.

Moreover, they have not lost the tradition of their original status. They are conscious of their own antiquity and say, not without scorn, that the peoples who are newcomers to Indo-China are only their younger brothers. Their race has fallen back on its own resources, has divided into small groups, has opposed a force of absolute inertia to the invader and the conqueror and has thus kept itself free for many long centuries from mixtures with other peoples. Today there are still many descendants of these first possessors of the land and one may find in them, in a latent state, the energy and courage so conspicuously absent in the conquering races which drove them back to the mountains and reduced them to a kind of slavery or ostracism from which the latter greatly profited. 563 173

Nor can it be denied that the Khas are capable of moral and material improvement. There are many, for example, who have adopted Buddhism (1), and still others Catholicism (2). These Khas 563 795 797.

(1) Khouène Khas and Khmou Khas.

(2) Bahnar Khas, Rognaos, etc.

have yielded up to persuasion and gentle treatment what they refused for many centuries to constraint and force. The future is therefore encouraging.

What is more, the question of emancipating the Khas has left the domain of theory and pure speculation. In 1894 M. Macey, one of our political agents, emancipated the Khas in the territories of Xieng-Khong, Muong-Mugne, Poukha, etc. The terrain was well chosen for the experiment, since this daring attempt was applied precisely to the Khouène, Khmou and Lemet Kha groups whose moral regeneration had already begun through the practice of Buddhism. 563 177

149: Reinach--197 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Service of Posts and Telegraphs. Before 1900, Upper Laos paid Tonkin a yearly sum of 157,500 francs for the service of posts and telegraphs. 205 206

Lower Laos had an appropriation in its budget for wages, personnel housing, new construction, maintenance of lines, etc., and this rose to 165,295 francs in 1898.

Since 1900 the general budget has covered the service of posts and telegraphs in unified Laos. [279] [Illustration] [280] [Blank page]

[281] Public education. An appropriation of 13,750 francs is written into the 1900 budget for public education. This is a negligible expense, yet the results achieved in the Franco-Laotian schools are satisfactory. The Superior Resident writes as follows: 658 871

"Primary schools in which the elements of the French language are taught to the natives are in operation at Luang-Prabang, Vien-Tiane, Khong and in all the province capitals. There students are given basic training by an interpreter who is appointed for the purpose and for whom a salary is appropriated. As soon as they can read and write fluently the most intelligent pupils are sent to the Collège Chasseloup-Laubat in Saigon, where they continue their studies for two or three years to perfect their knowledge. Under this system we shall shortly have a good body of interpreters for the administration and for private enterprise" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

Some students from the Laotian primary schools have even been sent to the Colonial School in Paris.

Apostolic missions. 797

"The missionaries who endeavor to evangelize the peoples of Laos all belong to the French Foreign Missions Society [Missions Étrangères de France]. Some are attached to the bishop of Bangkok (2).

(2) Since 1900 the missions of Laos have been under the direction of a bishop of Laos, Msgr. Cuaz, whose temporary residence is at Nong-Sene, two kilometers to the north of Lakhone.

and these are the ones whom one meets on the banks of the Mekong.

Hill Tribes

797 The others are attached to the bishop of Binh-Dinh (Annam), and work in the mountains separating Laos from the Annamite empire.

"The missionaries attached to Bangkok have established (3):

(3) A bishopric at Nong-Sene.

"1. A Christian community at Bassac (right bank) which spreads out onto the left bank. Most of their Christians are Annamites, former slaves whom they have redeemed and liberated;

"2. A seminary on the island of Don-Done, a little way upstream from Lakhone;

"3. A Christian community at Tha-Khek (left bank);

"4. A Christian community at Pat-Choum (left bank);

"5. In the region of Pak-Sane (Vien-Tiane), a few Catholic families receive spiritual guidance from a missionary whose residence is on the right bank (Muong-Couk).

[282] "No Catholic missionary has penetrated into French Laos further north of this point.

"The extremely diligent efforts on the part of the reverend fathers have had scarcely any success in achieving conversions. By their very character the natives are inclined to be resistant towards all new religions. These leave them indifferent but not hostile, to be sure, for they are very tolerant. They are greatly attached to their docile Buddhism, which is too well suited to their character and habits for them to abandon it. Is it not Buddhism, moreover, which by giving them their moral philosophy, their [Illustration here] laws, their customs and their organization has made them what they are? Thus they are repelled en masse by the idea of adopting a new faith and a moral discipline which cannot be adapted to their mores.

"Under the direction of an apostolic provicar, the missionaries attached to the bishop of Binh-Dinh (Annam) have developed quite an extensive mission in the southeastern part of Laos. These fathers have divided their sphere of action into seven districts, the capitals of which are Kon-Toum, Kon-Meney, Kon-Ketou, Kon-Xabang, Kon-Ngo, Kon- Trang and Ro-Hay. A church has been built in each center and a missionary father customarily lives there. Beside each church is an orphanage where Annamites and Khas are taken in who are former slaves purchased by the fathers from the Cedangs, or who have come from Annam as a result of the famines in these last [283] [Illustration] [284] [Blank page] [285] few years. In addition to

Hill Tribes

these centers, the spiritual authority of the fathers extends over fifty-four other villages located among the Bahnars, the Goclars and the Rognaos, and even over a few Cedang and Djarai villages. 797

"Although the total number of conversions is not more than 3,000, the moral influence of the missionaries is considerable throughout all this region which is inhabited by Khas of rather a warlike spirit.

"After the last famines in Annam the missionaries took in 1,200 Annamites, both Catholic and non-Catholic, and organized them in three villages on the plateau of Kon-Toum. The village at Ro-Hay numbered 500 inhabitants. But the mortality rate is high among these newcomers and for the moment, at least, it does not seem that the experiment will be successful.

"The Khas in the midst of whom they live regard the reverend fathers rather as officials of the protective government than as apostles of a religion. These primitive folk cannot recognize the difference between spiritual authority and temporal authority. Thus they always address themselves to the missionaries and it is through the latter that our administration acts on these peoples.

"Up to the present time this system has presented nothing but advantages, and it will probably not be modified for a considerable length of time, at least not as long as the present state of affairs prevails and we only have reason to congratulate onrselves on the devoted cooperation which the reverend fathers give us.

"The Protestant missionaries, who are established in Siam and belong to a North American society, have made a few very discreet attempts to evangelize certain of our subjects. So far, however, they have not founded any establishments on our territory" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

The Laos which we acquired at very little cost and for a sum which is insignificant in comparison to what other colonies have cost, is that one of our possessions which has the smallest number of officials. We have noted elsewhere that its area is equal to half that of France, or very nearly equal to that of Italy. Yet seventy-two agents are sufficient for the administration and general police, including twenty-seven for the European units of the native guard, 647

149: Reinach--208 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotian: AM8

635

Treasury:

1 bursar, head of the service and 1 deputy bursar.

Religion:

1 Christian community at Pak-Sane with 1 missionary. [79]

Laotian Fleet:

Launch "Ham-Luong" with 1 European engineer.

Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet:

Agency at Vien-Tiane with 1 European agent.

149: Reinach—209 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

63/[293]
635
162

PROVINCE OF CAMMON

Area: 30,000 square kilometers.

Population: 8 Europeans including 1 merchant, 38,000 natives.

Population density per 100 square kilometers: 100.

Administrative Divisions

Muongs	Number of villages		Registered persons	
	Laotians	Pacified Khas	Laotians	Pacified Khas
Tha-Khick	113		1,480	
Pak-Hin-Boun	94		1,271	
Mahasay	200		1,262	
Kham-Keut	69		665	
Cammon	48		702	

Pak-Hin-Boun (capital)

Distance from Vien-Tiane: 348 kilometers.

Population: 4 Europeans, 250 natives.

Posts occupied by the Native Guard:

Pak-Hin-Boun.....1 chief guardsman.
Nape.....1 inspector.

Postal and Telegraph service:

Pak-Hin-Boun.....Secondary office.

Religion:

1 seminary at Don-Done
1 director.
2 missionaries.

[197]

Kha

563 their prisoners among the Djarais. This state of affairs cannot go on
567 [106] indefinitely, and after settling the question of the Djarais which is more urgent, it will be necessary for Annam and Laos to pacify these tribes by a common agreement.

563 4. Rognao, Bahnar, Goelar and Habau Khas. These tribes, over
797 whom the missionaries exercise moral authority and many of whose villages are Catholic, can be regarded as pacified even though they do not pay any tribute. I have previously explained why it would not be politic, in my opinion, to require tribute in this region as of the present time.

These tribes, which are entirely located in Laotian territory, are quite tranquil but in continual dread of undertakings by their Djarai neighbors.

563 5. The great Djarai tribe, which is by far the most important and most numerous in the estimation of the missionaries. It is said to include nearly 150,000 inhabitants and is the finest racial type which I have seen in all the Kha region.

Many villages are subject to our authority and pay the head tax. Others, such as those which I found in the valley of the Psi and on the Sesane, obey our orders, keep the roads in repair, receive traders and travelers with perfect hospitality and will pay tribute whenever we wish.

563 But there are two groups which are absolutely rebellious to our
[619 643] penetration. These are: 1) the groups of villages of Pley-Qho and Pley-Denang immediately south of the mission; and 2), somewhat further to the south, the group of the Sadetes whose two chieftains,
579 the kings of water and fire, inhabit the points which are marked on the map as Pa-Tao-Ia and Pa-Tao-Ngo.

The first of these groups has continuously committed hostile
563 acts against us. They are the ones who attacked the convoy of M.
668 Navelle when this official came to visit the mission, who have constantly attacked convoys on the road from Ang-Ke to Kon-Toum,
726 who more recently robbed a Laotian hunter of merchandise valued at more than 1,000 piasters and pierced him with sword thrusts, and, finally, who attacked M. Lacouture and killed one of his guides. These villages are dreaded by all their neighbors. It was they against whom Meyréna (1) marched, but his success was not sufficiently

(1) Since I have been led to pronounce the name of the man who dreamed of creating a Cedang kingdom, I should say a few words regarding this adventure which seems to me to have been greatly exaggerated.

tigers; 784

--to eat lying down, for fear of turning into a snake; a story told to encourage children to hold themselve well while eating;

--to eat the liver and the gizzard of the chicken, for fear of becoming mad: a story to make children leave, to the adults, all that is good on a dish;

--to open one's strong-box or one's small box for locking up money, jewels or other valuable objects, during the night; wealthy persons who did not observe this rule would soon become poor;

--and finally, to put an end to this long enumeration, there is the interdict to a married couple to sleep in the same bed on the birthday of one of the marriage partners.

I leave you the trouble, Ladies and Gentlemen, to think about these beliefs.

Among us a wedding present consisting of jewels or of silver 784
plate may be of an uneven number. But where bank notes or objects /801/
of lesser importance are concerned, the number must always be even.

Certain superstitions come close to French superstitions. For 787
instance: a buzzing in the ears signifies: "Somebody is saying something bad about me somewhere." In Laos if someone drops his bowl of rice while eating, this has the same significance. The buzzing in the ears means that the phi (demon) asks you for the way but that you do not deign to answer. That is why you get a hard box on the ear. Then you must answer him: "Thang louang nok ban!" (Follow the great road which passes in front of the house). An itch in the ears means that it is going to rain.

Another French superstition which has passed into a proverb 777
is: "Lucky at cards (play), unlucky in love." Laotians are more fortunate, for they do not have this belief. Among us one can be lucky at play and at the same time lucky in love.

Pierre NGINN

Director of Information Nationale
au Laos, corresponding member of
the Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient.

173: Deydier--37 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

585 In front of the bride's house, guards make a sham defence of the gate of the house. The husband and his retinue can enter only by making a gift of money or alcohol. When he reaches the stairway of the house, the young man may only climb it after having his feet washed on a piece of stone covered with a banana leaf by the sisters or the women servants of the bride. He must pay for this service, then seat himself in front of the two ritual phakhouan next to his bride, who is already sitting there. The Sou Khouan of the wedding [801] resembles the bassi. However at the wedding there are only two phakhouan and everything in the ceremony must be in even numbers. They are, however, larger and better decorated than the ordinary phakhouan. The marriage is celebrated by two individuals officiating who recite sacramental formulas in duet. Then, after tying a large number of cotton threads around their wrists, the married couple prostrate themselves before each of the aged people and those who are present. They are then led to their room by a lady chosen from among the most virtuous.

Funerals

764 In Laos as in all Buddhist countries, the dead are burned. How-
766 ever, a distinction is made between two kinds of death, normal death and accidental (drowning, suicide or violent death). The dead of the second category must be buried within twenty-four hours. The story is told of a peasant's wife who, having died in childbirth, was quickly cut up in pieces by the villagers who scattered them to the four winds so that she would not become a wandering soul capable of tormenting the living.

764 [58] When there is a death in a house, the body is bathed with tepid water, then with cold water. It is then perfumed and dressed. Two garments are put on it, one wrong side out, the other right side out. The former symbolizes death, the latter life, for the favorite garment of the dead person while alive was chosen. His hair is then combed and he is shackled with a white cotton thread, for he must not return to the world of the living. The same thread is used to wrap around his neck, to tie his two hands together, and his two feet together. This bond must not be cut, so a knot is made at each place where it is attached. This thread also shows man how illusory are the bonds which tie him to the world. Then the body is wrapped in [823 342] a shroud. It is laid parallel with the largest dimension of the house, as opposed to the living who always lie in the direction of its width.

10: d'Orleans--277 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 124, 177, 192, 563, 802 Ethnic subgroups

"I am trying to make a lexicon of their [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] language; they answer us, but sometimes we have a great deal of trouble in hearing what they say, and particularly in separating the affixes or suffixes, with which they can surround the same word. I notice the absence of special names for certain classes of things; they have no word for bread and the names of the numerals, except the four first, are borrowed from the Laotians; lastly mother is called ma, the word in general use amongst nearly all the peoples of the world, perhaps because it is the first sound that a newborn infant instinctively produces, when it requires food."

10: d'Orleans--277 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 202, 212, 533, 563, 802 Ethnic subgroups

"From their [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] own account, they have no special songs, but they use the Laotian music.

Writing is unknown to them; but they keep their accounts, or send their messages by means of small pieces of bamboo, marked with notches which are made at closer or longer intervals according to the signification that has been arranged. This is like our bakers' sticks. (1)

1. M. Harmand has found amongst the peoples of the south of Indo-China the same method of correspondence that Father Crabouillet discovered amongst the Lolos of Setchoun. (Cf. 'Note on the Writing of the Indo-Chinese Khas,' by M. P. Lefèvre-Pontalis, L'Anthropologie, Mars-Avril, 1892.) "

231 highly developed canine teeth.

There is another variety, not so tall and lighter in color, which is widespread mainly among the Laotian population on the banks of the Mekong and its tributaries.

[407] Cammon exports pigs to Annam. In 1899, 6,038 of these animals representing a value of 30,565 francs were exported from this province.

Chickens. The Meos have a variety of chicken which is much taller than the chickens of the plains. They make a current practice of caponizing, and this procedure produces chickens which are highly esteemed by Europeans for the firmness of their meat and the delicacy of their taste.

Goats. The raising of goats does not call for any particular remarks. It is done naturally without any particular care, and is localized in northern Laos. In southern Laos goats are found only in the wild state. Europeans have brought in a few domesticated goats for their own use.

231 Sheep. It would be interesting to try sheep raising on the
185 high plateaus of northern Laos. It has been denied that any undertaking of this nature could succeed, but it would seem that no serious attempt has as yet been made. It would first be necessary to choose a breed capable of multiplying on ground similar to that of northern Laos with respect to altitude, climate, forage, hygrometric conditions, constitution of the soil, etc. Since sheep do not withstand humidity well, it would also be necessary to move the flocks to high, dry points during the months of the rainy season. Afterwards, at the beginning of the dry season, they could be returned to pasturages in the plains.

[408] [Blank page]

[409] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER VIII

1. NUMBERS, WEIGHTS, MEASURES AND COINAGE

805 Since numbers, weights, measures and coinage serve as a basis
802 for all transactions and all commercial evaluations, we shall here

805 give a summary of the System in force in Laos.

802 Numbers. Laotian numeration is decimal, and goes up into tens of billions (1).

(1) Like all primitive peoples, the Laotians have no conception of such high numbers. Scholars, mandarins and bonzes are the only ones who know these expressions.

[2/2] [410] Numbers are written, just as we do, in groups of three figures.

802

1st example	2nd example	3rd example
1 Nung	1 Nung	11 Sib-Et
2 Song	10 Sib	12 etc. Sib-Song, etc.
3 Sam	100 Roi (Hoi or Loi)	20 etc. Sao (or Di-Sib)
4 Si	1,000 Phane	30 etc. Sam-Sib
5 Ha	10,000 Mune	40 etc. Si-Sib, etc.
6 Hok	100,000 Sen	200 etc. Song-Roi (Hoi or Loi)
7 Tiet	1,000,000 Lane	2,000 etc. Song-Phane, etc.
8 Pet	10,000,000 Kot	50,000 etc. Ha-Mune, etc.
9 Kao	100,000,000 Tu or Pa-Kot	600,000 etc. Hok-Sen, etc.
0 Soune (no value to left of a figure.)	1,000,000,000 Ha-Song-Khai	2,000,000 etc. Song-Lane, etc.
	10,000,000,000 Sib-Khai	200,000,000 etc. Song-Tu, etc.
		3,000,000,000 etc. Sam-Ha-Song-Khai, etc.
		50,000,000,000 etc. Ha-Sib-Khai, etc.

which form the private home of the house's inhabitants. 000 342

A sort of stairway without railings or a ladder gives access to the veranda from one of the short sides of the rectangle. Often a second ladder leads to a small uncovered platform [183] situated at the other end of the house. This, so to speak, is the service stairway, for the platform serves as a kitchen or storeroom and for various private uses.

Inside the house is divided into two parts by a longitudinal partition pierced by openings which give access to compartments used as bedrooms. The corridor [Illustration here] left free between the partition and the opposite wall constitutes the common room, and is provided with one or several rectangular hearths. The floor of the verandas, the bedrooms and the common room is covered with mats.

Furnishings are generally scanty, and consist of mattresses, pillows, cushions, footstools, low stools, blankets, chests, etc. [352]

The space under the house serves as a stable or barn for horses and livestock, a poultry house and a pigsty. The animals are shut up there each night. [343]

[184] Looms for weaving may be found either under the verandas or underneath the house. [286]

The storehouse for paddy is found nearby. It is also mounted on piles and may be built in a rectangular or circular shape. The "hand" or "foot" mortars used to decorticate paddy may either be near the storehouse under an addition, or else under the house. [343]

The dimensions of houses are reckoned in Hon or units as long as the span of the arms (1.8 to two meters). Houses may be anywhere from two to eight or nine hons (4 to 20 meters) in length. Their width varies from two to three spans of the arms on the average (four to six meters), not including verandas. 342 [804]

Strictly speaking, the piles are columns which rise from the ground to the tie-beams of the roof trusses. Mortises are cut in them a meter of two above the ground, and the floor joists fitted into the mortises.

Even as they are, these houses resist high winds. They provide good shelter from the sun, rain, etc. and are sufficiently comfortable, even for Europeans. The latter often have to be contented with such houses and can find little fault with them except the instability of the floor and the narrowness of the windows, which makes the inside somewhat dark.

Rice is grown in two different ways in Laos: in inundated ricefields on plains or hills, and in rais or [357] temporary mountain clearings. Only one crop is harvested per year, from November to January, since the Laotians do not practice artificial irrigation and count only on the water supplied by rain. 243 [312]

Maize is always grown in rais or on the edge of terraced hillside ricefields. In southern Laos only the Khas have any in their fields. The Laotians produce maize only in their gardens, as a vegetable. [563]

Glutinous or aquatic rice grows well only on low, hot, swampy land where the soil is heavy. Dry rice, on the other hand, thrives only on ordinary soil which is moist and slightly sandy, and on heights up to an altitude of 1,800 meters where it can endure temperatures which are relatively low for tropical regions (5° and even lower).

Plains ricefields. The land in plains ricefields generally consists of soil containing a high percentage of vegetable matter. It is composed of alluvia worked by earthworms and containing organic vegetable matter in decomposition. The clayish and sandy soil is deep enough to permit growth and nourishment of the plant roots. It generally rests either on rock, or on a compact sediment or on an alluvial strata which has a higher clay content and has not been penetrated by worms. This bottom layer prevents the ground water which is indispensable to the growth of the grain from escaping.

Terraced ricefields. In the ricefields which are terraced or arranged in steps, and which are situated on hillsides or the lower slopes of the mountains which enclose high valleys, the layer of vegetable matter is fairly thin. This is due to the fact that rocky particles removed from the peaks by running water have been deposited on natural terraces where they form a kind of alluvial cone. Man's handiwork has extended and leveled them, and arranged them in such a way that the alluvia will not be carried lower. Dikes or levees of earth and stones limit the successive terraces which cover the slopes, like the steps of a gigantic stairway. They hold back the vegetable soil, and at the same time their inner faces [358] constitute the walls of irrigation canals which circulate from one step to another from the top of the hills to the bottom, diverting into the furrows, through slits which may be opened at will, the waters of a brook or torrent which has been captured at a higher level. 243 312

Rais. Rais take their name from a Siamese unit of area measurement which is applied to ricefields and which represents a square forty meters on a side, or 1,600 square meters. They are [804] 243

249

1. Dark in color and with a strong taste. This lot comes from the upper part of the plant and is represented by the smaller leaves, which are sweet and supple.

2. Yellowish-brown in color and with an average taste. This tobacco includes the leaves from the middle part of the plant, which are somewhat larger than the preceding but less sweet and supple.

3. Yellow in color and less strong in taste. This last sample lot is made up of the leaves from the base of the plant, which are large, somewhat thicker and rougher than the preceding.

The leaves are matched in accordance with their color, surface and thickness, and then joined in packs of ten for the first sample lot, eight for the second and five for the third. They are rolled into plugs, and the tobacco is then ready for cutting.

Cutting and packing. The cutting operation is done on a horizontal bench ending in a vertical riser. This riser is pierced by a circular hole, the diameter of which is equal to the size of the plugs to be cut.

A plug is placed on the horizontal bench and its end stuck through the hole. It can then be advanced by stages with the left hand, the size of the stages to be determined by the degree of fineness desired, which depends on the type of sample lot. (The first number is as fine as Egyptian tobacco, to give some basis for comparison.) A special knife with a thin blade which is somewhat concave on the inside and is well sharpened is maneuvered with the right hand and rubs along the riser on the outside of the hole. It cuts through the plug as the latter is advanced along the horizontal bench, cutting diagonally like the blade of a guillotine.

When cut the tobacco is in the form of a flat, thin, filamentous web, and it falls into a kind of winnowing-basket. The strips of cut tobacco are carefully collected and spread out full-length on bamboo wattles, then exposed out of doors to sun, mist and dew, both day and night. The drying operation [144] lasts five days, and during the first days the tobacco is turned over several times on the wattles.

[804] After this treatment it is rolled into egg-shaped balls which are strongly compressed by hand and weigh from 100 to 150 grams each. It is then put into cylindrical baskets which are lined inside with dry leaves or bamboo leaflets.

Each basket contains one "mur" or one-fifth of a picul (12.2 kilograms), and the tobacco is sold and exported in this form and in this kind of package.

10: d'Orleans--277 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 563, 805 Ethnic subgroups

"The duration of time does not trouble them [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] either, they count the days like the Laotians, and their year consists of twelve lunar months of four weeks each, of which one contains eight days, at the end of a few years a month is intercalated. Dates escape them altogether. 'The old people know them,' they reply to our questions."

10: d'Orleans--344 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 805

"April 11th

This is a day of great rejoicing, being the celebration of the Mahason crane pai' (the calendar being finished goes away), the change of year being observed here in the fifth month, instead of in the fourth as at Nan. This and the rejoicings in the twelfth month are the two most important of the fêtes held in nearly every week of the year. This fête is very similar to that of the Annamite Têt, except that here it extended over nearly a fortnight."

25: Brodrick--100-101 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 805

"The time slips by, each moon of seven nights, each month of four moons, each year of twelve months, each cycle of twelve [101] years, each era of twelve cycles, and then no more time-count, you begin again at the beginning."

726 of his army, the survivors of which crossed the river by swimming.
643*
175* /67/ The "restoration." -- Victory of Pak Phoun. He halted at Xieng-Khane (1). In the general confusion his second son Thène-

1. To the south of Luang-Prabang, on the right bank of the Mekong, today in Siamese territory.

Kham, a worthy descendant of Fa-Ngoun, did not lose his head. He hastily regrouped the fugitives, armed the inhabitants of the region, reformed a nearly homogeneous army as well as could be expected and, since he knew that the Annamites had been greatly weakened by a dearly bought victory, set out boldly to meet them. The Laotians fought with the strength of despair and defeated the invaders at Pak-Phoun. Exploiting this success, Thène-Kham went in hot pursuit and forced them to recross the Mekong in full disorder at the level of Pak-Nane. Lan-Xang was saved. The generalissimo Phoua-Khouang-Soun had to evacuate Tran-Ninh and died in Annamite territory--it is said that he was struck by lightning in the course of a violent storm.

But these grave events had broken the physical resistance of King Tiakaphat, who died at Xieng-Khane at the age of sixty-five, "the third day of the crescent moon of the fifth month" of year 841 (1479 A. D.) (2), leaving fourteen /68/ legitimate children of which eight

●/805/ 2. The Laotian year is lunar, beginning towards the middle of April. Every three years an extra month is inserted which doubles the eighth month. The numbering of the years is based on a great cycle of sixty years and on two others of ten and eight years. The Laotian era began in 638 A. D. In 1900 it entered the second year of its 22nd cycle and it was then year 1262 (Pi-Xuet-Tho-Sok). Year 841 in which King Tiakaphat died therefore corresponds to 638 + 841 = 1479 of the Christian era.

were sons and six daughters.

THÈNE-KHAM (SOUVANNA-BAN-LANG) (1445), KING 1479-1486.

727 Thène-Kham had actually held the power ever since the death
643* of his elder brother, and the situation was therefore unchanged when
175* he mounted the throne in 1479.

149: Reinach--127 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[788 641]

[169] The formula used in southern Laos is more concise and slightly different.

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The natives of Laos, whatever their race, have a great respect for any oath and stand in much dread of the consequences of perjury.

Oaths are widely used in courts of law in cases of disputes between individuals. When a judge has reached the end of his arguments and is confronted with a stubborn plaintiff he sends him to the pagoda before the sacred statues to deny the accusation or affirm his statements.

In this case, the above formula is modified in accordance with the needs of the case, as regards the object of the oath and the type of authority invoked as sanction. But the basis is always the same.

As a means of legal procedure, an oath is regarded as an argument of such force and of such grave consequences that it is used only as a last resort. In Laos it is the ultima ratio judicium.

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The Laotian calendar (1). The Laotian year is calculated on the

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(1) Since the bonzes establish the calendar we have thought it well to place this information in the chapter devoted to religion in Laos.

phases of the moon and includes twelve months which are divided into twenty-four half-moons. The months have thirty and twenty-nine days alternately, giving 354 days in the year or eleven days less than in the solar year.

In reality the Laotian calendar is luni-solar, for in order to bring the ordinary year into approximate harmony with the solar year an extra month is inserted every three years after the eighth month, and repeats the latter. It is called the "second eighth month" (Dueune pèt song). In chronological dating, the Laotian year begins about the middle of the fifth month (April).

Like the Siamese, the Laotians have adopted a system for co-ordinating and numbering their years which is based on a great cycle of sixty years and two other intermediate cycles of ten and twelve years each. The first of these intermediate cycles is decimal, and the second is zodiacal (duodecimal).

[170] Each year is designated first by the name of the great cycle, then by those of each of the intermediate cycles and by a chronological number.

149: Reinach--128 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[198]
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The terms used to designate the years of these various cycles are taken from the Pali language and other sacred idioms of India.

1. In northern Laos the years of the cycles have the following names:

TEN YEAR CYCLE	TWELVE YEAR CYCLE
Kate-Sok.	Pi-Tkiaĭ.
Kaute-Sok.	Pi-Pao.
Ofane-Sok.	Pi-Gui.
Tao-Sok.	Pi-Maô.
Kâ-Sok.	Pi-Si.
Kab-Sok.	Pi-Saĭ.
Hab-Sok.	Pi-Sagnâ.
Ouei-Sok.	Pi-Mote.
Mîng-Sok.	Pi-Sane.
Peûk-Sok.	Pi-Hao.
	Pi-Sète.
	Pi-Kaĭ.

2. In southern Laos and Siam the years of the cycles have the following names:

TEN YEAR CYCLE	TWELVE YEAR CYCLE
Eka-Sok.	Pi-Xuèt (of the rat).
Thô-Sok.	Pi-Xalu (of the ox).
Tri-Sok.	Pi-Khane (of the tiger).
Tiattava-Sok.	Pi-Thô (of the hare).
Bentia-Sok.	Pi-Marong (of the great dragon).
Xô-Sok.	Pi-Maseng (of the small dragon).
Sattha-Sok.	Pi-Mamia (of the horse).
Attha-Sok.	Pi-Mamè (of the goat).
Nophâ-Sok.	Pi-Vok (of the monkey).
Thatsa-Sok.	Pi-Raka (of the cock).
	Pi-Tio (of the dog).
	Pi-Koun (of the pig).

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[171] The Laotian era began in 638 A.D. In 1900 it is entering the second year of its twenty-second sixty-year cycle. It is numbered 1262, and called Kaute-Pi-Tkiaî or Pi-Xuèt-Tho-Sok. Since the series of years in the ten-year cycle becomes exhausted before that of the twelve-year cycle, the sign Kate or Eka of the first is added to the sign Sète or Pi-Tio of the second in order to provide a name for the eleventh year which begins a new ten-year period. This combining of names continues thus for a period of sixty years, at the end of which the first two signs of each cycle once more occur together.

Laotian holidays. Laotian holidays are at once religious and civil. Fairly numerous, since there are ten of them each year, they all begin with ceremonies in the pagodas, and in almost all localities the bonzes are the organizers, the impresarios, the decorators and the artificers.

The chronological year begins in the fifth month (March or April). Here are the names and a description of the holidays which succeed one another almost every month, and the first of which in date is that of aspersion or of the new year, lasting seven days.

"The first day of this series of holidays may rather be described as a day of purification. Early in the morning the streets of Luang-Prabang fill with people in holiday dress who go to the market to buy live animals, especially fish and birds. Towards four in the afternoon they go to the little islands which the low water has left uncovered in the middle of the river and set free the animals purchased that morning by plunging them once again in their respective elements, the fish in the water and the birds in the air. The purpose of this touching custom is to obtain pardon for sins committed during the year which is drawing to a close. In the evening the bonzes are invited to come and pray in private homes. They are presented with cooked rice, fruit, cakes, flowers and wax candles.

"During the six days which follow everyone is in a joyous state. People exchange visits and good wishes, and attach cords of cotton to form bracelets to one another's wrists as good luck pieces.

"The statues of Buddha are not forgotten. Cotton strings, usually adorned with strings of flowers, are also attached to them.

"In each pagoda the statues of Buddha are taken down from the altar and placed on the squares before the pagodas in niches forming low kiosks, where all the [172] faithful come and sprinkle them with

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perfumed water in the hope of being cured of the ills from which they suffer. In the course of the day water is sprinkled now on the bonzes, who go forth in palanquins to pay each other visits, and now on the King, the great men and the native officials, who pass back and forth through the city for two days running, some on elephant back and the others in sedan chairs.

"Although the water used in sprinkling the bonzes and the King is generally clean and perfumed, the same cannot always be said of the water used to sprinkle the kingdom's great men and officials. Every day until four in the afternoon, the young girls try to douse the young men who pass by and to smear their faces black. The young men do not sprinkle the girls, but may try to smear them with black too.

"After four in the afternoon the people get flowers and use them to decorate the pagodas. In the evening, inside the pagodas which are empty of their Buddhas, young men and women meet around the altar and Ngan (celebration) take place each day until such time as the statue of Buddha resumes its place in the sanctuary.

"On the morning of the fourth day all the officials of the Laotian administration who have been able to come to Luang-Prabang visit the King in ceremonial dress to offer him their best wishes for the new year. After an invocation the grand master of ceremonies presents the wishes of all those present, with candles lit and flowers which each person has brought all around. Again in the name of all those present, the grand master respectfully places the traditional cotton threads around the royal wrists. Then the members of the audience come up one after the other to kneel before the king, offer him their little bouquets flanked by wax candles and touch the outstretched hand of the monarch with their inclined foreheads. This is a most picturesque manner of hand-kissing and paying homage (1).

(1) The administration of the "little oath" or oath of the fifth month takes place during this celebration.

[641]

"Holiday of the eighth month (July). This is the entry of the bonzes into retreat (this holiday corresponds to our meat days preceding Lent).

"Each year, from the eighth to the eleventh month, the bonzes are not allowed to sleep outside the pagoda to which they are

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attached, and they are supposed to increase their prayers and pious exercises. At the beginning of this period, and until eleven in the morning on the first day, the inhabitants come and provide celebrations for the bonzes and offer them meals accompanied with music.

"Holiday of the ninth month (feast of waters and pirogue races).

"The purpose of this holiday, which falls in the very middle of the rainy season (August), is to obtain abundant rainfall from heaven. In the morning there is a great market which everyone attends in his best clothes, and in the afternoon there are races on the Mékong by the so-called racing pirogues.

[173] "Holiday of the tenth month (feast of cakes, or rather feast of the dead, September).

"In the morning of this day the inhabitants take little packages to their respective pagodas. A label is attached to each package with a small bamboo pin, and the label bears the name of a dead relative. Each package contains cakes and is destined for an ancestor or relative who has died recently. The packages are delivered to the bonzes, who recite prayers for the dead persons and eventually eat the cakes themselves.

"Holiday of the eleventh month (October, end of the bonzes' retreat, reminiscent of our Easter celebrations).

"The pagodas are lit up, and fireworks exploded. Private houses are also brightly lit.

"The inhabitants make bamboo rafts on which they place various foods, in the midst of bright lights. Great numbers of these illuminated rafts are then loosed in the current of a watercourse. The fiery fleets drifting downstream remind one of Venetian feast days with their lighted gondolas.

"Holiday of the twelfth month (November, feast of harvest and feast of waters).

"The harvest is over, and the dry season well established. This is the last in date of the year's public holidays, and also the most brilliant.

"A pirogue race takes place at this time, and also another ceremony of oath-taking (called the "great oath") at which all the officials of all the grades of the Laotian administration must be present.

"The holiday of Thiout-Bang-Fai, or feast of rockets, occurs on this date in all the agricultural centers and regions of Laos"(1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier

149; Reinach--132 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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(Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

Besides these major holidays there are a certain number of others which are more religious than secular in character and which fall in between the ones dealt with above.

In the course of the sixth month (April-May), for example, a religious holiday is celebrated in memory of the first leaders of the Buddhist religion.

At the end of the eleventh month, on a date which is fixed in accordance with the rites and which varies from one year to another, a celebration takes place in the pagodas in honor of the men who first introduced Buddhism into Indo-China.

Finally, after the twelfth month (November or December), comes the feast of penitence which applies to all the faithful. During a [174] kind of Lent which lasts for nine days, true believers must abstain from certain foods and from all sex relations. [785]

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Since our establishment in Laos the province capitals and all the centers where Europeans live have celebrated the National Holiday on July 14 which the natives call Boun-Phi-Falang-Sete (Holiday of the French Genie) or, by onomatopoeia, Boum Ka-Tor-Yu-Yet. [C. A. M. Translator's note. The latter term seems to be an approximation of the French Quatorze juillet ("July 14").] 527

MORES AND CUSTOMS

By reason of their diverse origins and the relations into which they have entered with neighboring peoples, as well as by the cross-breeding which has taken place, the races of Laos necessarily have characteristics, costumes, dwellings and, in a word, mores and customs which differ to a greater or less extent from one race to another (1). 101

(1) On this question of mores and customs we shall have recourse from time to time to a notice entitled Le Laos français which was written by the Superior Resident in Laos and based on reports and local monographs which were provided by our administrators and are in consequence authoritative. [114]

If we have consistently reproduced here extracts from the above work, this is because they provide an admirable summation

149: Reinach--166 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Since there is not, so to speak, any class of salaried workers in Laos except in certain types of work and in transport by pirogues and rafts, the inhabitants of any given center lend one another their help in farming, harvesting, building houses or pirogues, etc. Taking turns, the one who has asked help of his neighbors will put on a celebration for them when the work is over, and will himself receive an invitation from someone else in return for help which he has given.

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Laotian celebrations, in which the bonzes are never forgotten, are usually given under the verandas of the pagodas or in their dependencies, unless they take place in the host's own home or under sheds specially constructed for the purpose on one side. The latter is always the case in a "Ngan" given for those who have helped in building a house, and the same is true for a birth or marriage.

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Celebrations generally begin towards four or five in the afternoon when the heat is beginning to wane. They last all night and sometimes resume on the following day after the guests have relaxed for a few hours. Some "Ngans" go on in this way for nearly a week and are interrupted only by the coming of the Laotian sabbath, a day of absolute rest when only the preparation of food is permitted, and no work or pleasure. By the light of kerosene lamps borrowed here and there, or of resinous torches, the girls, who are decked out in all their finery, are stationed in a line squatting down against a wall or partition. Before them there are [221] vases made of copper, silver or porcelain. They all pretend to be busy with minor tasks and may imitate, for example, the preparation of food. But in reality this is only their way of keeping some kind of countenance.

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The adults and children of both sexes are massed at each end of the row of girls. Then the young men, their heads covered with scarves, come and squat down opposite the girls and with their heads still covered begin an animated conversation which soon turns into regular flirting. If there is enough space the orchestra takes up its position nearby and in the center, between the young people, are the singers, improvisers and "Kene" players. Cakes, fruit, quids of betel, cigarettes, rice brandy and various condiments are passed around.

Spectators who have not been specially invited come and stand behind the young people, as do passersby who drop in for a quid, a cigarette, a cup of brandy or a bowl of rice, or to listen to the songs and music for a little while.

231 highly developed canine teeth.

There is another variety, not so tall and lighter in color, which is widespread mainly among the Laotian population on the banks of the Mekong and its tributaries.

[407] Cammon exports pigs to Annam. In 1899, 6,038 of these animals representing a value of 30,565 francs were exported from this province.

Chickens. The Meos have a variety of chicken which is much taller than the chickens of the plains. They make a current practice of caponizing, and this procedure produces chickens which are highly esteemed by Europeans for the firmness of their meat and the delicacy of their taste.

Goats. The raising of goats does not call for any particular remarks. It is done naturally without any particular care, and is localized in northern Laos. In southern Laos goats are found only in the wild state. Europeans have brought in a few domesticated goats for their own use.

Sheep. It would be interesting to try sheep raising on the
231 high plateaus of northern Laos. It has been denied that any undertaking
185 of this nature could succeed, but it would seem that no serious attempt has as yet been made. It would first be necessary to choose a breed capable of multiplying on ground similar to that of northern Laos with respect to altitude, climate, forage, hygrometric conditions, constitution of the soil, etc. Since sheep do not withstand humidity well, it would also be necessary to move the flocks to high, dry points during the months of the rainy season. Afterwards, at the beginning of the dry season, they could be returned to pasturages in the plains.

[408] [Blank page]

[409] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER VIII

1. NUMBERS, WEIGHTS, MEASURES AND COINAGE

805 Since numbers, weights, measures and coinage serve as a basis
802 for all transactions and all commercial evaluations, we shall here

805 give a summary of the System in force in Laos.

802 **Numbers.** Laotian numeration is decimal, and goes up into tens of billions (1).

(1) Like all primitive peoples, the Laotians have no conception of such high numbers. Scholars, mandarins and bonzes are the only ones who know these expressions.

[2/2] [410] Numbers are written, just as we do, in groups of three figures.

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Weights. The initial basis of weight is the "Bak" or "Salung," which is subdivided into three "Fones" or "Fines" and into thirty "Lis."

1 Bak or Salung = 3 Fones or 30 Lis = 0.003753 kilogram
1 Fone or 10 Lis = 0.001251 "
1 Li = 0.0001251 "

The multiples of the "Bak" or "Salung" are:

		kilograms
The Tael	= 10 Baks (10 Salungs) or 30 Fones	= 0.03753
The Sang (or Cattie or Hoi)	= 33 Baks (33 Salungs) or 99 Fones	= 1.23849
The Mune (or 10 Hois)	= 330 Baks (330 Salungs) or 990 Fones	= 12.3849

The multiples of the "Mune" are:

			kilograms
The Sen	= 10 Munes	=	123.849
The Lane	= 10 Sens	= 100 Munes	= 1,238.49
The Kot	= 10 Lanes	= 100 Sens = 1,000 Munes	= 12,384.9
The Tu	= 10 Kots = 100 Lanes	= 1,000 Sens = 10,000 Munes	= 123,849.

[438] [411] The picul (Hap in Laotian) weighs 61.924 kilograms in theory, but it is currently counted at 60 kilograms or else at 60.4 kilograms in trade between Europeans and Chinese.

The sub-multiples of the picul are:

The Mune	= 12.3849 kilograms	or 1/5	of a picul
The Sang (or Cattie or Hoi)	= 1.23849 "	or 1/50	" " "
The Nane	= 0.619245 "	or 1/100	" " "

The multiples of the picul are:

The Sen	=	2 piculs or	10 Munes
The Lane	=	20 piculs or	100 Munes
The Kot	=	200 piculs or	1,000 Munes
The Tu	=	2,000 piculs or	10,000 Munes
The Ha-Song-Khai	=	20,000 piculs or	100,000 Munes

Measures of volume and weight for grain and liquids (1)

(1) These measurements are represented by gourds, halves of coconuts, bamboo tubes or carefully calibrated baskets.

805 [262]

Tamlung-Si-Bate	1/1000 picul or	0.061924	kilogram
Khanane-Lao (daily ration)	1/100 picul or	0.61924	"
Khanane-Khao	1/10 picul or	6.19245	kilograms
Boung-Koite (or Mune)	2/10 picul or	12.3849	"
Bok-Noi	3/10 picul or	18.5873	"
Bok-Niai (one man's load)	4/10 picul or	24.7698	"

[182]

805 436

Coins and measurements of weight for silver

1. Sub-multiples of the Bak (or Salung) 1 Fuang=0.001876 kilogram
2. Multiples of the Bak (or Salung)

	1 Bak or 2 Fuangs=0.003753	"
Tep (Rupee)	or 3 Baks=0.011259	"
Bate (Tical)	or 4 Baks=0.015012	"
Piaster (Mane or Kib)	or 7 Baks=0.026271	"
Tael (Bia)	or 10 Baks=0.03753	"
Barre (Hang or Khane)	or 10 Bias or 100 Baks=0.3753	"
Sang or Cattie (silver pound)	or 33 Bias or 330 Baks=1.23849 kilograms	

805 [412] Measures of length for cloth, wood, etc.

		meters
	1 Niou (finger breadth) or 1/96 Fathom	=0.01895
1 Kam (closed fist) or 6 Nious	or 1/16 Fathom	=0.11375
1 Kheup (span) or 12 Nious	or 1/8 Fathom	=0.2275
1 Sok (cubit) or 2 Kheups	or 1/4 Fathom	=0.4550
1 Wa or 4 Soks or 8 Kheups	or 1 Fathom	=1.82

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1 Sok Luong (royal cubit)	or 1/4 Royal Fathom	=0.5
1 La Luong (1 Yard and a few centimeters)	or about 1/2 Royal Fathom	=1
1 Wa Luong	or 1 Royal Fathom	=2

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Linear measurements of distance

1 Wa	= 1.82 meters
1 Sen or 20 Was	=36.4 "
1 Yot or 400 Sens or 8,000 Was	=14.56 kilometers

Measures of area. There are no special measures for area. The Laotians are ignorant of geometry and express the dimensions of surfaces by giving the length of each of the sides of the figures which they are representing.

1. The area of a square is expressed by giving the length of one of the sides in linear measurements and saying that all four sides are alike.

2. The area of a rectangle is measured by giving the length of one of the longer sides and the length of one of the shorter sides in linear measurements: so long by so wide.

3. The area of a triangle or that of a polygon is expressed by adding the lengths of each side.

4. For circular plane surfaces, the length of half the circumference is given in linear measurements. This half-circumference is obtained in the following manner: the plane circle or cylinder (a tree trunk, for example) is surrounded with a cord or piece of rattan, then the latter is cut in half and measured.

5. Volumes (cylinders) are expressed by giving the half-circumference[413] and the length or height. Example: so much "Kam Vong" (circumference), and so many "Was" (fathoms) of "Luong-Niai" (length) or of "Suong"(height).

The system of weights and measures which we have just given is used in the greater part of Laos.

In certain regions a few differences are to be noted. Here are the main ones:

1. Weights

The Houn	= 0.3753 gram
The Tchi-Mu (Salung, 10 Houns)	= 3.753 grams
The Leoung, Hong or Tael (10 Salungs)	= 37.53 "
The Hang (bar of silver, (10 Taels)	= 375.3 "
The Tchoi (44 Taels)	= 1,651.32 "

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2. Second series of weights

The Tep (weight of one Rupee = 3 Salungs) = 11.259 grams
The Bate (weight of one Siamese Tical = 4 Salungs) = 15.012 "
The Tamlung-Niai (1) (weight of 4 Ticals = 16 Salungs) = 60.048 "

(1) So called in contrast to the "Tamlung Noi" which is equivalent to two and a half Ticals or ten Salungs and which is identified with the Chinese Tael.

The Ha-Hoi (weight of 10 Tamlungs = 160 Salungs) = 600.48 "
The Pane, Cattie or Tchang (weight of 80 Ticals = 320 Salungs) = 1,200.96 "

3. Measures of volume

Tchai-Mu (what can be held in the palm of the hand) = about 200 grains of rice.
Kham (a handful) = 4 Tchai-Mus
Fai (what can be held in the open hand, with fingers together) = 4 Khams
Kob (what can be held in both hands) = 4 Fais
Khanane (capacity of a coconut) = 4 Kobs
Bok (tube of bamboo containing about 3.5 kilograms of decorticated rice) = 4 Khananes
Thong-Thang (bushel containing 17.5 kilograms of white rice) = 5 Boks
Thang (double bushel containing 35 kilograms of white rice) = 10 Boks
Sen (volume of 350 kilograms of white rice) = 10 Thangs
Lane (volume of 3,500 kilograms of white rice) = 10 Sens

4. Weights used in weighing gold dust in the region of Bassac and in that of Attopeu

1. Met-Khao (weight of a grain of non-decorticated rice) = 0.03754 gram
2. Signe-Nung (Chinese weight, or 48 grains of rice) = 1.80192 grams
3. Bak-Nung (weight of 96 grains of rice) = 3.60384 "

000 maintain a correct bearing. One should pay careful attention to one's words in order not to hurt those one is speaking to; that could engender an argument, a scandal, or at the very least it might create an atmosphere of embarrassment which is always unpleasant. One should listen to the general conversation and not interrupt the speech of an important person.

A banquet in the European manner.--The director or the president of an association takes care to send out his invitation cards several days in advance of the occasion. The invited guest must answer before the day of the meal to say whether he accepts or declines the invitation. In the latter case he should state the reason for his inability to come.

Politeness requires that one come on time. One should come neither too soon nor too late. If a person does not observe the hour, one often says jokingly that he adopts "mong lao" (the Laotian hour). By "Laotian hour" is understood "one hour later than the one arranged. /805/ Every guest who arrives at 9:00 P.M. when the dinner is set at 8:00 P.M. goes by the "Laotian hour."

My dear compatriots, in order to be polite, adopt, from now on, the European hour; 8:00 P.M. is 8:00 P. M. and not 9:00 P. M.

He who presides over the banquet is seated in the middle while the most important person invited is placed in front of him. The persons of secondary importance are seated: first, to the right of the President, second, at his left, third, to the right and to the left of /562/ the outstanding guest and so forth. Laotian women have the habit of keeping apart from the men. At a banquet the group of women sits by itself. From now on we must remedy this custom because the place of the woman should be between two men.

At the table the guests remain standing and do not sit down until their hosts are seated.

Do not wipe your plates and your silver with your napkin. In so doing you would show your hostess that she does not like cleanliness and that she has not given the necessary instructions to her servants to assure the cleanness of the plates and dishes.

Formerly the number thirteen used to be considered unlucky in France: it was necessary to avoid that the number of guests at a banquet should come to 13; one had to arrange it so that one would have a smaller or larger number lest some misfortune might occur to

But that is another story...

The belief in the phi and an excessive credulity results in Laotians being often the victims of charlatans who are severely punished by the Laotian code. Luck-bringing amulets are also very widespread. But this belief in the inhabitants of the invisible world is most apparent in childbirth and in profane ceremonies. 683 757

RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES AND FESTIVALS

The Calendar

The Laotian calendar belongs to the lunar-solar system. Its elements are borrowed principally from the Indian calendar. As in all the other countries of Indochina the Laotians use the cycle of the 12 animals (Rat, Ox, Tiger, Hare, Dragon, Serpent, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Cock, Dog, Pig). 805

The era most commonly used in Laos is that of Culiasakaraj (little era) beginning in A. D. 638, the next most used is the Buddhasakaraj (Buddhist era beginning in 544 B.C.). Finally the Mahasakaraj (great era) is found in ancient inscriptions. At the present time only the Christian era is used officially.

The months.

The Laotian months are alternately of 20 and 30 days. Sometimes their Indian name is used, but most often their number is used. Their names are as follows:

No.	Laotian	Pali	
1.	deuan Tieng	Magasira	December-January
2.	- Gni	Phussa	January-February
3.	- Sam	Magha	February-March
4.	- Si	Phagguna	March-April
5.	- Ha	Citta	April-May
6.	- Hoc	Visakha	May-June
7.	- Chet	Jettha	June-July
8.	- Pet	Asadha	July-August
9.	- Kao	Savana	August-September
10.	- Sip	Potthapada	September-October
11.	- Sip Et	Assayuja	October-November
12.	- Sip Song	Kattika	November-December

805 [34] The Days.

The Laotian week follows the same order as the French week:

Van Athit	Sunday
Van Tian	Wednesday [sic]
Van Ang Kam	Tuesday
Van Phut	Wednesday
Van Phahat	Friday [sic]
Van Souk	Monday [sic]
Van Sao	Saturday

The Hours.

The day is 24 hours long and is divided into 16 ngam (periods of an hour and a half each).

796 All the Laotian feasts are dated according to this calendar. The Buddhist feasts are listed in a manuscript of the Vat Pra Keo called Hit Sip Song Khong Sip Si.

THE BOUN (Sk. punya)

796 Every newcomer to Laos will quickly learn to recognize the
788 word boun. Literally this term means "to obtain merits, to give alms," but by extension, it designates the ceremony or feast which accompanies this act. Its meaning has degenerated rather quickly and to "make a boun" means "celebrate a feast."

The religious boun consists essentially in presenting offerings of candles, flowers, etc. to the images of Buddha and gifts to the bonzes after having accomplished the pradakshina or ritual "circumambulation" of the pagoda with lighted candles. This pradakshina is an ancient Brahmanic rite which consists in turning around a funeral pyre or a monument, keeping it always on the right.

Feast of Khao Chi (See below after the feast of the harvest).

Makha Bousa (Feast of the third month).

796 [35] The first religious feast of the Laotian year is that of the "Makha Bousa." It takes place on the fifteenth day of the crescent moon of the third month (end of January to middle of February).

This is the origin:

"Near Vaisali in the country-town of Belouva, a serious illness attacked the Buddha, and he was near death. Then he thought of his

173: Deydier--36 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

Marriage

In Laos one gets married in the even months. The favorite month is the sixth, that of the feast of rockets, and the last one possible, because in the eighth month the sons-in-law do not dare to interrupt the work in the fields and after that until the twelfth month the Buddhist Lent must be observed. 585 805

[56] **The Marriage Proposal.** Laotian tradition requires a previous request, and the obligatory giving of the Kha Khun Phi, tribute paid to the guardian genii, also the optional gift of the Kha Dong, the dowery which is given by the husband to the bride or to her parents. [782] 584

The boy's mother, accompanied by one or two aged female relatives, goes to the home of the young girl, and in the course of conversing asks if the girl is of age to be married. The mother is free to answer that her daughter is too young or that no young man loves her, and that she runs the risk of remaining an old maid. In this last event the answer is an acceptance. Then during further visits material questions are settled. Up until the day of marriage the two affianced ones do not exchange a single word, and besides it is not necessary for them to know each other. However, as the Laotian villages are not very big, it is probable that the young people have had the opportunity to meet several times at the boun.

The official request takes place the day before the wedding and on the evening of this day, after dinner, the young man goes to the home of his future bride and with her attends the prayer of the bonzes who bless the water contained in begging bowls. A white cotton cord links together the bonzes, the begging bowls and the two betrothed. The blessed water is kept throughout the night. The next day at the earliest hour the same bonzes, the relatives and friends come and sprinkle the two young people generously with this water. When they have dried themselves and changed their clothes, they make their morning offering to the bonzes who bless them once more. 788 584

The Sou Khouan. This is properly called the marriage ceremony. The days and hours for the ceremony are determined by the aged hora (astrologists or soothsayers) after a minute study of the horoscopes of each one. This ceremony takes place in the home of the young girl. After a [57] family Sou Khouan celebrated at his home, the husband returns to his betrothed accompanied by two comrades who protect him with two parasols and followed by a procession of bearers. 585 [787]

301 The use of these magic shirts is also known in Cambodia. The designs
262 usually consist of flowers, geometric figures, tools, flowers, vegetable
751 branches, and of animals. Sometimes pictures drawn from Buddhist iconography can be recognized.

[74] Apparently the origin of tattooing is to be found in totemism. By
analyzing the Laotian tattooing designs, [63] it has been possible to
301 recognize traces of sun worship, as well as the mythological role of the dog. But at the present time Laotians seem only to value tattooing as an artistic ornament.

The Divining Rod.

787 Among the curios which the tourist looks for in Laos, the most
823 easily found is a carved bamboo cane. Immediately below the head, which is often of chased silver, there is a sort of checkered diagram
825 made up of twenty-five little squares. Below this divining diagram are found, in succession from top to bottom, a zebu, a horse, a rakshasha or ogre, a tiger, a buffalo, a deer, an elephant. These animals correspond respectively to the days of the week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

It should be noted that, except for the buffalo and the deer, the others are the symbolical animals of the zodiac and correspond to the different cardinal points.

The Laotians consult these figures at different actions of their lives: choice of a wedding day, the hour for burial, etc. The diagram is used to calculate the hour, and the animals indicate the cardinal point which should be followed.

This cane is also found among the Man.

[64] THE NEW YEAR AND THE FEASTS OF THE FIFTH MONTH

527 The Laotian New Year always takes place between the 6th day
805 of the crescent moon of the 5th month and the 5th day of the crescent moon of the 6th month. The very core of the feast includes three days: the last day of the past year, the intermediate day and the New Year's day, properly so-called. The most picturesque ceremonies are those of Luang Prabang, for there tradition has been best preserved.

The programme of the feasts begins with a procession of royal
527 elephants. Their heads ornamented with red and black painted designs, their drivers dressed in red tunics with yellow lapels, on their backs, the fifteen elephants go to the pagodas of Xieng Tong, Vat

173: Deydier--42 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

May, and Vat Visun to render homage to the protecting genii of the 527
village and chase away the evil spirits.

During three days the Laotians do no cooking. Fish, turtles, birds, 782
etc., are bought in the big market and then set free as a sign of penitence and redemption of sins committed either voluntarily or not against living beings during the past year.

Possibly there is here a survival of the origin of the cycle of 825
animals. According to Finot, at a very remote period, the custom of curing sick children by letting an animal go free had arisen. When 771
a child was saved in this manner, he was said to have been born from this animal because he owed it life. He was forbidden to kill it, and the year of the child's birth was given the same [65] name as the animal. It is thus that the cycle of twelve years was established.

In the dry beds of the Mekong and of the Nam Khan, small that 527
made of sand are built. Each one wishes the other a long life, whose 805
number of years will equal the number of grains of sand forming the that, and great prosperity, for ill-luck has fled with the last day of the past year, and the New Year should bring as many riches as there are grains of sand in the that. Often around the principal that, other much smaller ones are erected, their number corresponding to the age of the builder. They express the wish of the one who has built them that he will see many more years added to those he has already lived. Actually these little that around the central mound are a reproduction of Mount Merou surrounded by different worlds (Cf. the symbolism of the That Luang).

In the pagodas the statues of Buddha are taken down from the altars and placed in little wooden prasat. They are sprinkled with perfumed water which flows in the hang-lin (a kind of gutter of gilded wood whose extremities represent the head of an aquatic monster), for the year now ending must be completely exhausted, and a minute cleansing, both material and spiritual, must leave a strictly clear way for the New Year. In the streets the young girls sprinkle not only the [562] bonzes whom they honor, but all the young men, to compensate for all the minor vexations they have endured from the men during the past year. The high dignitaries are not exempt from these showers of more or less clean water. Sometimes their faces are rubbed with lampblack or mud, when they have the ill luck of meeting a group of young girls. Do we have a survival of the theme of the svayamvara here (free choice of the man by the young girl)?

[66] The day in between, the day before New Year's day, is one of complete rest. All the events which occur during this day will determine

527 805 the course of the year for good or for bad. On the day of the New Year, a bassi is offered to His Majesty the King by the ministers and high dignitaries. Then a delegation of bonzes is admitted to the palace where, after receiving the ritual offerings, they are sprinkled in a cabin by His Majesty the King and members of the royal family.

Outside in the town the aspersions continue more than ever during [643] the whole week. During these feasts the King goes in a dugout to the grottoes of Xieng Men, opposite Luang Prabang, and to those of Pak Ou where he sprinkles the statues there. Then he comes to make the ritual aspersion of the Phra Bang, palladium of the kingdom, at the pagoda of Vat May.

527 713 During these feasts of the New Year, the dance of the Phou Gneu Gna Gneu takes place. These are legendary individuals considered the ancestors of the Laotians, whose story is as follows:

When Phou Lan Xong had pierced the gourd, the king of heaven sent his son Khoum Bolom to organize the country. While he was performing the mission entrusted to him by his father, a vine was seen to rise from the earth. It grew rapidly and soon covered the whole world with its shadow. Men ceased to see the sky and were deprived of light and heat. The king ordered this monstrous vine to be cut down, but nobody dared to risk doing this. Finally an aged couple [deux vieux époux] Phou Thao Gneu and Me Ngam, armed with a hatchet and preceding the son of heaven, come down to earth, announced that they were willing to undertake this perilous task. But they stipulated that after their death they would receive offerings and would be invoked at the beginning of meals and other business. Everybody [67] agreed to this. Then they attacked the vine with blows of the hatchet. At the end of three months and three days, the vine fell and crushed them in its fall, but the sun shone again on the world.

The agreement has been kept. Since that day the dance of the Phou Gneu Gna Gneu is one of the principal elements of the Laotian feast of the New Year.

527 825 The two dancers wear enormous cardboard masks. They listen on their knees to prayers read aloud to them, while alongside of them a lion waves its paws nonchalantly. This lion has rather a peculiar role. Apparently it is another survival of the legend of the cycle of animals. Not having any toys to give their children, the first ancestors had the idea of modeling one year a rat, another year an ox, then a tiger, a hare, a dragon, etc. The name of each animal designated the year during which it was used as a toy. Finally these little figures became alive and became the ancestors of the present day species. At

7: Thompson--376-377 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 814, 177.81 France
636.81

"The tempo of France's political and economic penetration of Laos has been so much slower than elsewhere in the peninsula that the intellectual counterpart inevitably lagged ever farther behind. Naturally, the [377] first work accomplished was of a practical nature. Massie, of the Pavie Mission, wrote a dictionary in 1890-91, that included some 1,300 words, designed to aid French officials and merchants adrift in Thai countries. He found the language very simple, unlike the complexities of Annamite, and estimated only a year's study necessary for a relative mastery of it."

7: Thompson--377 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 484, 815, 177.81 France
636.81

"Laos has offered a rich field to scientists. Henri Mouhot was its first scientific explorer, and he was followed by others, chiefly zoologists. The Lagrée Mission continued this work, as did Dr. Harmand, who made a great collection there on his 1872-78 series of explorations. Pierre's work on the forest flora of Laos has been perhaps the greatest single scientific achievement."

10: d'Orleans--314 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 771, 821

"In addition to the respect felt for spirits, it would seem as if the worship of nature and its forces is still preserved, for honour is paid to the moon, the women going about the streets shouting at each change of quarter. Guns and salvoes are also fired during the eclipses, at which periods the people say that 'the moon is eaten up,' without seeking for any other explanation of the phenomenon."

10: d'Orleans--325 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 316, 346, 532, 821

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "When we land on the left bank, we notice a number of people stooping down, with their feet in the water, engaged in washing out the sand; these are gold finders, who earn but a scanty living, though they sometimes come upon an old coin or two which has been washed down stream. A climb of about fifty feet up decrepit steps, which in summer are under water, brings us to the town. Close upon the left is a small pagoda, Ouate Poune Saï, which is only remarkable for the fresco above the entrance gate, this representing Kop, the sun, eating the moon; in other words, the fresco is intended to designate an eclipse."

10: d'Orleans--346 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 782, 796, 821

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.] "April 12th
As we cross the stream, we notice all along the banks tiny rafts conveying presents, notably rice, and these are offerings made by the boatmen in order that they may take plenty of fish, and be favoured by the weather while out with their boats.

In the town the statues are still out in the open, or rather they are placed under a small scaffolding, the sacred water conduit pouring out its contents drop by drop through the dragon's mouth in which it terminates at one end, while the other end is in the pagoda and is being fed by the priests, long tapers with strips of paper bearing the donor's name are burning before the altar."

10: d'Orleans--366 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 821

"Our boatmen are amiable and reply willingly to our questions. In the evening, as the nights are superb, I question them on astronomy, and find that they know most of the constellations. The Great Bear they call the Elephant. The 'bands of Orion' go by the name of the Bow, because of the two small stars at the side which suggest an arrow. Venus is 'the star not loved by pigs' because, as they say, it is so bright that pigs do not eat when they see it."

643* merchandise).
648* His life was also a short one. He died at the age of thirty-three,
175* handing down the crown to an only son born two years after his accession to the throne.

SOM-PHOU (1488-1502), KING 1496-1501.

643* This child, Som-Phou, who gave only his name to his reign, was
175 removed from power by the ministers, for reasons unknown, when he reached the age of thirteen. He then died in the following year.

/71/ VISOUN (1467), KING 1501-1520.

643* His uncle Phé-Sai (1) was summoned to the throne in his place in
175

1. Next to the last son of Tiakaphat.

/821/ 1501. According to the Annals, the sky was streaked with lightning and thundered unceasingly on the coronation day. Struck by this phenomenon, in which they saw a manifestation of divine satisfaction, the Council of Ministers gave him the name of Phaya-Visoun (lightning).
/787/ In 1506 a son was born to him who was named Phothisarath in consequence of a dream which Visoun's mother had a few days before the queen's delivery. "Banyans in flower (Kok-Pho) had appeared to her in which innumerable birds warbled joyfully." When consulted, the priests predicted that the expected child would be a Saint, and in the royal family everyone rejoiced at the thought that the newborn would come into the world under the sign of the sacred tree in whose shade Buddha had attained the triple science and found the secret of the destinies.
346 In order to magnify in anticipation, so to speak, the marvelous
643* events of his reign, King Visoun built many temples around his palace.
175* /72/ The foundations of a pagoda which was erected under his auspices to the memory of a daughter who had died young can still be seen today in Luang-Prabang (1).

1. Another pagoda, "Posot-Luang," which was located on the present site of the ice-house, has completely disappeared. Great celebrations were held there in honor of the birth of Photisarath.

643* PHOTHISARATH (1506), KING 1520-1547.
His son Phothisarath, who succeeded him in 1520, was an extremely

643* Muong-Bo road and took a stand before the latter village. But a
648* disagreement resulting from long-standing rivalry sprang up between
175* the commander of the Xieng-Khouang troops, An-Om, and one of his officers who negotiated with Vientiane and thereby caused a retreat to the capital through the valley of the Nam-Nhiep.

Pressed from all sides, An-Om could not defend /150/ Xieng-Khouang, and Ong-Long's columns entered into it without firing a shot while King Xom-Phou fled along the Muong-Khang road.

In the meantime the king of Annam, who had had word of the dispute, sent his two vassals a message urging them to lay down their arms. The king of Vientiane seemed to be the first to return to peaceful ideas. He had Tran-Ninh evacuated and invited Xom-Phou to come and visit him. The latter doubtless suspected a trap, and spent three years deciding to set out. His fears were not unfounded, for when he reached Som-Di he was suddenly assaulted by a hundred or so of Ong-Long's soldiers, who captured him and took him to Vientiane without any regard for his rank (1).

1. According to the Annals of Tran-Ninh, Xom-Phou was to
/821/ be put to death as they descended the Nam-Lick, but "light-
/787/ ning broke the instrument of punishment in the executioner's hands and they did not dare to execute him."

He had been there for three years when Ong-Long received another message from the king of Annam blaming him for his conduct and ordering him to set Xom-Phou free immediately. He kept this ultimatum to himself, but hastened to begin negotiations for his prisoner's release with every appearance of generosity. The prince /151/ of Tran-Ninh promised tribute, and was finally allowed to return to his own land (1760) (1).

1. Xom-Phou kept his promise, and up until the time of his death came to do homage to the king of Vientiane every three years. The tribute from Xieng-Khouang then consisted of golden flowers weighing twenty ticals each, two horses with silver harness, a thousand swords made of native iron, a thousand brush knives, a thousand shovels, a thousand plowshares and selected foodstuffs. (Cf. de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896. /)

It is, moreover, under the reign of Xom-Phou that the

779 thoughts of your previous life have been good. Thanks to these efforts you will pass successively, in your various incarnations, from the state of man to the state of holy man, then to that of saint and finally to that of Buddha or perfection, from which you will fall back into the mute and calm abyss, the void and eternal rest. Besides the constant effort of the will to raise itself, the good deeds which you accomplish will tend to the same purpose, whether they be deeds of action, of thought, of word or of intention.

"Anyone who, on the other hand, abandons himself to evil actions and makes no effort to raise himself gradually moves away from the state dreamed by Buddha, and his successive reincarnations occur in the opposite direction, descending into the bodies of animals which may be more or less maleficent and despicable.

"The above, however, are speculations to which the Laotian intelligence cannot rise. The Buddhist religion as practiced in Laos demands only a few outer signs of deference towards bonzes and holy places.

771 "Besides Buddhism, the Laotians have retained, or transformed
776 into a cult, certain Spirits or Genii whom they call Phis, the in-
782 numerable deities of the Brahminic Pantheon by which Buddhism was accompanied when it was imported into Laos and which have been reduced to a lesser stature.

"All the forces of nature, all that is capable of bringing disorder into life and every movement or phenomenon which the Laotian cannot explain is personified by a particular Genie or Spirit.

"The cult of these Phis may be summed up as follows: it is an interested exchange of gifts or sacrifices by men, in return for the goodwill, neutrality or help of the Phis. Oftentimes, when the Phi is not greatly dreaded, a bargain will be made with him which will be repaid after he has performed his part of the bargain. The cult of the Phis has a widespread following, and they have their lay priests who bear the title of guardians of the Genii.

"In addition to the cult of the Phis, which is nothing more nor
771 less than a form of polytheism, the Laotians are subject to rather
821 numerous superstitions.

"Thus if an eclipse of the moon occurs Laotians imagine that a tiger is trying to devour it, and everyone at once begins to take turns banging on gongs, firing shots and using every means to make as much noise as possible so as to frighten off the aforesaid tiger and prevent it from swallowing the nocturnal star.

149: Reinach--141 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

346 Pagodas are always built on ground which has been perfectly leveled, is quite extensive and is surrounded by a wooden palisade or brick wall of elbow height.

[485] Within the pagoda enclosures there are bonzeries and dependent structures to serve as quarters for the bonzes, schools for their pupils and hostelries for travelers.

735 The construction and upkeep of pagodas are entirely dependent on the generous liberality of the faithful. Thus these edifices can be used
346 as a criterion for discovering both the state of prosperity of a region and the religious faith of its inhabitants.

[778] As used to be the case for our churches, Laotian pagodas and even their enclosures are, according to the customs of the land, sanctuaries which confer immunity against legal prosecution for certain crimes and misdemeanors.

[527] It is also in the enclosure and sometimes under the cloisters and verandas of the pagodas that the inhabitants gather on the legal holidays, and also private holidays, which are known as "Ngans".

844 Childbirth. Dr. Estrade describes the delivery of a woman of southern Laos as follows. The preliminaries, the operation itself and post-delivery procedure are the same, with only slight differences in detail, in northern Laos, and we may therefore quote Dr. Estrade's description as applicable to all of Laos in general.

"Childbirth never takes place in the house inhabited by the pregnant woman or her direct relatives, but always in the home of a neighbor or distant relative who gives hospitality to the patient until she is up and about again. The duration of pregnancy is counted in moons, as in all calculations of time, the moon being the essential element for the Laotian in the measurement of time and the occurrence
777 of a great many phenomena. When a woman reaches the last moon of her pregnancy she takes certain precautions all tending to delay
• 821 delivery until the first phase of the new moon, since births during the last phases are signs of misfortune [189] such as the death of the child,
[782] deformity, etc. These prejudices have such force that parents are careless in caring for any child born during the last phases of the moon, and in such a case all of their effort goes into prayers, offerings to the bonzes and the making of votive offerings (1)

(1) This assertion should not, however, be taken too literally or in any general sense. This is a prejudice which is kept up by the bonzes in their own self-interest, and is easy to see through. (Author's note.)

323 The potters' methods and equipment do not differ from those which are in widespread use everywhere.

The method of firing depends on the nature of the article, and firing may be done either in kilns dug out of the clay soil, in the banks of watercourses, or under stacks of rice straw. Wood or rice straw is used to fire the kilns.

In some regions articles are given a shiny black patina resembling graphite by firing them for a second time in paddy husks.

326 778 411 415 Brass-founding. One has only to explore the pagodas of Laos in order to realize that brass-founding used to be held in honor. Religious statues can be found which are sometimes of great [458] weight and usually of quite fine workmanship and taste, taking into account, to be sure, the quite special manner in which they conceive esthetics.

Although the crucibles have not been fired for many long years for casting such large pieces, the industry of brass-founding continues to be exercised by a certain number of specialists who are content with producing religious statuettes, necessities for betel, bells for elephants and livestock, various kinds of vases, cuspidors, etc.

This industry is an extremely ancient one in the land. It was certainly practiced during the Bronze Age, as is attested by the spear-heads, daggers, hatchets and halberds which have been found in northern Laos and which can now be seen in the Saint-Germain museum.

[821 172] It is interesting to note that the inhabitants of Laos attribute a meteoric origin to objects of the Bronze Age, as also to those of the Age of Polished Stone. They believe that these objects fall from the sky when it thunders, and that they are produced by lightning.

The following are some of the methods used by Laotian founders. Casting is always done by the lost wax process.

325 532 Casting statues. On an initial rough clay model, the artist applies a layer of fine, soft and well-pugged clay which he shapes in a more careful manner. Then after covering the statue, which is already much more than a rough draft, with a layer of bees-wax of the proper thickness, he finishes modeling the statue on the wax, inserting all the details and all the ornaments which it is to include. Polishing a bit here, engraving there, setting precious stones or simply glass between the eyelids to represent eyes, and inserting gold lips where the mouth is to be located, he gives the

10: d'Orleans--346 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 796, 822

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"In the main street we encounter a cortége which is coming from Ouate Tâte to Ouate Sieng Tong, and this is supposed to be the old year which is being thus escorted. It is curious, in this connection, to note that the old year is fetched from the west, while the new year will come from the east, but I do not know whether this is due to chance or is a matter of tradition."

774 foul-smelling matter; the soul of tears; the soul of liquid fat; the
827 soul of the saliva; the soul of matter secreted by the brain; the soul of the marrow; and the soul of the urine.

774 "The following must be added to the union of these organs for the formation of a man;

828 "Consciousness, name, individuality, image and the faculty of memory.

[822] "The four fundamental elements--earth, air, water and fire.

"And finally the five moral faculties;

"The faculty of distinguishing; the faculty of reflection; the faculty of judgment; the faculty of thought; and the ideal faculty of the soul, which is the source of love of the beautiful.

774 "Man is formed of all these diverse elements.

"Immediately after death all these souls or faculties fly off into
775 the air like a swarm of bees, separate from one another, and each one follows the path indicated by destiny. Of those which have done good on earth, some go directly to heaven and are used in the formation of an angel, while the others are reborn again in our world where they help in the creation of a man who is to lead a happy life full of wealth and honor. Those souls or faculties, on the other hand, which have contributed to evil actions appear before the Phaya-Nhom-Phi-Bane, the king of the nether regions, who judges them immediately and condemns them to tortures which may be more or less cruel depending on their degree of guilt.

"Once dispersed these souls can no longer recognize one another if they should meet again. On their way they meet other souls which are wandering like themselves and come from other parts of the world, and by their union, if God so ordains, they form the elements necessary to the birth of another man.

"The absence of memory and the complete forgetfulness of what has happened before their dispersion prevent the souls which are used in the vital mechanism of new births [160] from having any consciousness of their past existences. On the other hand, physical and moral resemblances between persons of different blood are due to the combining of souls which belonged to various individuals" (1).

(1) Captain Gosselin, op. cit. [Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900.]

436 It will perhaps be of some interest to note here that the peoples of Laos have no respect for European gold coins, [420] because their gold
822 is alloyed with copper! In this country, as in all of the Far East in
439 general, it is thought that gold is the noble metal par excellance, that
177 it is polluted and diminished by alloying it with copper, which is unworthy of it, and that it can endure being made into an alloy only with silver.

The only "gold" coins in use, and still not at all currently in northern Laos, are books of gold leaf the thickness of tinfoil. They come from China and bear the official stamps of the country's banks which put them into circulation as "merchandise" in the same way as bars of silver.

Weighing instruments

405 The weighing instruments used in Laos include the "Ta-Dieng" or "Sing," a Chinese steelyard made of wood which has three rows of graduations. It may have a hook or a single platform, and is used for weights ranging from one "Sang" (1.23849 kilograms) up to several piculs.

For weights of less than a "Sang" the same kind of Chinese steelyard, with a hook or platform, is used, but it is smaller and made of ivory or bone.

A small pair of beam scales with platforms shaped like cupels, which is called "Sing-Dieng," is used mainly for weighing precious metals and gems.

There are several series of weights for balances. They are made of bronze, iron or copper and are most diverse in shape, representing elephants, imaginary birds, hexagons, pentagons, cones, pyramids, etc.

2. TRADE COMMODITIES AND PRODUCTS OF EXCHANGE

438 Since there is no industry to speak of in Laos, the local products
241 which make up the basic commodities of interior trade and exports come mainly from agriculture, livestock raising, scavenging, fishing and hunting. Mention may be made, however, of certain products of local, not to say familial, industry which enter into interior commerce and to some extent into the trade which goes on with neighboring countries.

438 [421] These include cloth goods of pure silk, either plain or
433 spangled with gold, goods of silk blended with cotton, and wholly cotton goods, then articles of jewelry and goldsmithing, and finally metals and ores from the still rudimentary mining industry and pottery goods, edge-tools, basketry, etc.

10: d'Orleans--314-315 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 153, 823

"The truth is that they have not much learning, these Laotians, despite the religious instruction [315] which they have received; but upon the other hand they know their country well, are fairly familiar with geography, possessing a good idea of distances, and also having a good memory for historical occurences, while their annals are in good order and are well kept."

10: d'Orleans--347-348 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 783, 796, 823

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"Women sprinkle water over the chief bonze, and others bolder still, come and pour the contents of their jar over some young student. This custom of sprinkling or pouring water, which is also to be met with at certain festivals in Siam and Burmah, would not be so suprising if it were confined to the priests, but here the girls pick up mud and plaster the faces of the young men, whoever they may be, and our white dresses tempt them so much that we are obliged to assume a very stern look in order to keep them at a distance. The young men, however, are too gallant to resent these attentions, and as for the bonzes, they get something better than water offered them, as presents are made them in the shape of pans full of food, which are handed to two men who accompany the chair.

When the procession reaches Ouate Sieng Tong, it enters the courtyard, and the bonzes, after reciting [348] the usual prayers, enter a sort of shed surrounded by planks and having upon the top the same water conduit which has been used for sprinkling water over the gods. The women pour their water into this conduit, which flows down over the priests, who emerge from the shed purified and washed, but dripping wet, though this they do not seem to mind."

10: d'Orleans--353-354 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 644, 783, 823

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]

"The king comes and greets us after he has taken his tea; he seems to be amiable and intelligent, but, as at all our other interviews, timid and ill at ease, especially with the Siamese Colonel upon the one side and us upon the other. As soon as our audience is over, he ascends the small wooden construction over which the water conduit is placed, and his servitors bring him one after the other several jugs of water which he pours into it and which trickle down, drop by drop, upon a Buddha placed on [354] a gilt chair in an adjoining building."

10: d'Orleans--367 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 183, 823

"The rapids have no special name 'We call them,' say our boatmen, 'what we have heard our fathers call them. The rapids were made by God with the world, like the mountains and the rivers.' "

25: Brodrick--96-97 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-3
116, 776, 769, 782, 823

"Although the people of the Laos are happy-go-lucky and carefree, and their mild and mitigated Little Vehicle Buddhism sits lightly upon them, the spirits are ever-present. Still, to this day, in a country where men are naturally, it seems, hospitable and open-handed, no stranger will be invited until the spirits have given their permission sought by offerings to them of five candles of pure beeswax, five frangipani flowers, five incense-sticks and a bottle of rice-alcohol.

All that happens to hurt man is the work of spirits. For 'primitive' men--and the Laotians, despite their real if rustic civilization, maintain many of the reactions and fundamental beliefs of 'primitives' --disaster, and the greatest of all disasters, death, is not 'normal' or 'natural.' In the Land of the Laos, the p'hi-lok or manes of the ancestors are jealous beings, easy to take offence and these p'hi or spirits and the ho or demons must receive propitiatory sacrifices. There is a similar underlying fear and faith in Cambodia but they are better hid. But in the Laos it may be said that all believe that ghosts come back at night in animal shape to plague the living. In animal shape. The archaic ideas which we tend to label rather too easily as 'totemistic' are all vaguely interwined with feelings rather than definable dogmas, feelings of some close relation between man and other animals.

With the p'hi-lok, who sow terror, and the p'hi phob, or evil spirits, are the numberless demons of the woods and the guardian genii of the wild. The forests are fearsome

places and best avoided. The old travellers told a terrible tale of the Forest of the King of [97] Fire, the Dong-Phaja-Fai, through which you had to climb to reach Korat, (1) and

1. Korat, of course, is in modern Siam, but it is in Laotian land. Mgr. Pellegoix's entertaining Description du Royaume de Siam was published in 1854.

the journey took five whole days. The awful name, alone, of this dread jungle spread terror, and countless wayfarers never came through the deep shades, since as Pellegoix relates, in an effort, doubtless, to rationalize the legends, here and there in this jungle, the earth contains 'mineral arsenic' whose dust the passer-by breathes and with it death.

If the Laotian goes into the jungle, ill may befall him, and surely will if he there spends the night. He may disappear for ever or he may be transported to an enchanted land wherein, for long years he may chase phantoms and illusions and if he manages, at last, to escape from this bewitched realm, when he reaches his hut he will not be recognized by his relations who, having mourned him as dead, have long ceased to think of him and will be most embarrassed and annoyed at his reappearance--or, if he shuns such adventures, he will emerge from the great woods as a sick man, the demons have struck him with malignant fever, dragging him to the grave in a few short days.

25: Brodrick--96-97 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-3
116, 776, 769, 782, 823

Picanon told a curious tale of what he experienced, years ago, when he was living on Khone island, right in the south near the Khong cataracts and the Cambodian frontier. After a day of torrential showers and violent storms, in the evening as he was finishing his dinner in his house, two young women ran in upon him and threw themselves trembling at his feet imploring him for aid and for protection. Thinking that some brigand was after the women, Picanon reached for his gun and made to go out on to the veranda, but the girls sobbed to him not to venture forth alone for a p'hi had called to them and cursed them at the very moment they were passing the house. They tottered with him out of the windows and pointed to a bushy mango-tree in a rice-field nearby. On the tree was a bird, luminiferous in the moonlight. It flew screeching away as Picanon fired a charge of shot in its direction, and the women were reassured."

68: Mouhot--99 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 776, 823, 789

"I am at the gates of the infernal regions, for so the Laotians and Siamese designate this forest, [HD: i.e. Dong Phya Phia, the forest of the 'King of Fire', between Khao-Khoc and Korat in Siam] and I have no spell to terrify the demons which inhabit it, neither tiger's teeth nor stunted stag-horn; nothing but my faith in and love for God. If I must die here, where so many other wanderers have left their bones, I shall be ready when my hour comes."

68: Mouhot--110 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 484, 776, 823, 579

"As for the Laotians, I have found them, although superstitious, very courageous, especially those who traverse this forest [HD: i.e. Dong Phya Phia, the forest of the 'King of Fire', between Khao-Khoc and Korat in Siam] eight or ten times a year. Some of them even venture to awake the 'King of Fire' by bringing down game or shooting at robbers: yet death , even in the best season, carries off one or two out of every ten who travel here. I think the number of those who fall victims to this terrible journey must be considerable in the rainy season, when every torrent overflows its bounds; the whole soil is soaked, the pathways nothing but bogs, and the rice-grounds covered with several feet of water. After five or six days' walking through all this, with feet in the mud, the body in a profuse perspiration, and breathing a fetid atmosphere, hot as a stove and reeking with putrid miasma, what wonder that many sink and die?"

68: Mouhot--112 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 776, 823, 579

"Our guides are all Laotians from the neighbourhood of Korat, and their leader is unremitting in his care and attention towards me. Every evening he prepares my place for the night, levelling the ground and cutting down branches which he covers with leaves, and I am thus raised from the earth and protected from the dew. These guides lead a hard life, tramping in all seasons along these wretched roads, having scarcely time, morning and evening, to swallow a little rice, and having but little sleep at nights, tormented by ants, and exposed to the attacks of robbers, against whom they have constantly to be on their guard."

585 In front of the bride's house, guards make a sham defence of the gate of the house. The husband and his retinue can enter only by making a gift of money or alcohol. When he reaches the stairway of the house, the young man may only climb it after having his feet washed on a piece of stone covered with a banana leaf by the sisters or the women servants of the bride. He must pay for this service, then seat himself in front of the two ritual phakhouan next to his [801] bride, who is already sitting there. The Sou Khouan of the wedding resembles the bassi. However at the wedding there are only two phakhouan and everything in the ceremony must be in even numbers. They are, however, larger and better decorated than the ordinary phakhouan. The marriage is celebrated by two individuals officiating who recite sacramental formulas in duet. Then, after tying a large number of cotton threads around their wrists, the married couple prostrate themselves before each of the aged people and those who are present. They are then led to their room by a lady chosen from among the most virtuous.

Funerals

764 In Laos as in all Buddhist countries, the dead are burned. How-
766 ever, a distinction is made between two kinds of death, normal death and accidental (drowning, suicide or violent death). The dead of the second category must be buried within twenty-four hours. The story is told of a peasant's wife who, having died in childbirth, was quickly cut up in pieces by the villagers who scattered them to the four winds so that she would not become a wandering soul capable of tormenting the living.

[58] When there is a death in a house, the body is bathed with
764 tepid water, then with cold water. It is then perfumed and dressed. Two garments are put on it, one wrong side out, the other right side out. The former symbolizes death, the latter life, for the favorite garment of the dead person while alive was chosen. His hair is then combed and he is shackled with a white cotton thread, for he must not return to the world of the living. The same thread is used to wrap around his neck, to tie his two hands together, and his two feet together. This bond must not be cut, so a knot is made at each place where it is attached. This thread also shows man how illusory are the bonds which tie him to the world. Then the body is wrapped in [823] a shroud. It is laid parallel with the largest dimension of the house, [342] as opposed to the living who always lie in the direction of its width.

342 bedrooms separated from each other by partitions or curtains, the
[178] other is the communal room. In the space between the inner and outer beam, and not limited by the longitudinal partition, is the altar on which there are always one or several buddhas. It is placed on the side of the bedrooms, on the "soung" side of the dwelling, that is on the side opposite the entrance. The dimensions of the dwellings vary between six and twenty-four meters long by four to nine meters wide.

342 The houses are most often open to the east or to the north. They may also overlook what is passing by in the streets or the paths and,
823 as the case may be, the whole length of the river. For there is a superstition which forbids building "across the current," which is considered as unconquerable and invincible, and it would be dangerous to defy it.

343 The outhouses consist of an adjoining kitchen and a granary, a few meters removed from the principal dwelling. Near this granary
[152] is found the picturesque rice pestle (khok khao) which the women work with their feet.

343 [62] All the villagers participate in building the house. When the propitious day and moment have been determined, the owner feeds
476 everybody the whole time the house is being built.

Tattooing

301 Every self-respecting Laotian must be tattooed. The absence of
885 tattooing is a sign of mental and moral, therefore of social, inferiority.
562 As a general rule, however, the Laotian woman is not tattooed. This custom is found only among the women of Youan, Kha or Lu.

The Laotian is tattooed chiefly on his thighs, forearms and chest.
301 The tattooing on the thighs is so close together that from a distance a tattooed man looks as if he were wearing close-fitting blue shorts. The Laotians are called "white bellies" as opposed to those who are tattooed down to the navel and are then called black bellies. The colors used for tattooing are indigo blue, red, and black made from a mixture of lampblack diluted with buffalo gall.

Those who have been tattooed are convinced that the signs they
[751] wear give them certain supernatural powers, particularly making them invulnerable to bullets and snake bites. During the events of 1941 Siamese soldiers were found wearing white cotton vests covered with cabalistic signs closely related to tattooing. These are a kind of removable tattooing intended to protect those who are wearing them.

301 The use of these magic shirts is also known in Cambodia. The designs
262 usually consist of flowers, geometric figures, tools, flowers, vegetable
751 branches, and of animals. Sometimes pictures drawn from Buddhist iconography can be recognized.

[74] Apparently the origin of tattooing is to be found in totemism. By
301 analyzing the Laotian tattooing designs, [63] it has been possible to recognize traces of sun worship, as well as the mythological role of the dog. But at the present time Laotians seem only to value tattooing as an artistic ornament.

The Divining Rod.

787 Among the curios which the tourist looks for in Laos, the most
• 823 easily found is a carved bamboo cane. Immediately below the head, which is often of chased silver, there is a sort of checkered diagram
825 made up of twenty-five little squares. Below this divining diagram are found, in succession from top to bottom, a zebu, a horse, a rakshasha or ogre, a tiger, a buffalo, a deer, an elephant. These animals correspond respectively to the days of the week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

It should be noted that, except for the buffalo and the deer, the others are the symbolical animals of the zodiac and correspond to the different cardinal points.

The Laotians consult these figures at different actions of their lives: choice of a wedding day, the hour for burial, etc. The diagram is used to calculate the hour, and the animals indicate the cardinal point which should be followed.

This cane is also found among the Man.

[64] THE NEW YEAR AND THE FEASTS OF THE FIFTH MONTH

527 The Laotian New Year always takes place between the 6th day
805 of the crescent moon of the 5th month and the 5th day of the crescent moon of the 6th month. The very core of the feast includes three days: the last day of the past year, the intermediate day and the New Year's day, properly so-called. The most picturesque ceremonies are those of Luang Prabang, for there tradition has been best preserved.

527 The programme of the feasts begins with a procession of royal elephants. Their heads ornamented with red and black painted designs, their drivers dressed in red tunics with yellow lapels, on their backs, the fifteen elephants go to the pagodas of Xieng Tong, Vat

149: Reinach--220 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

The trees also support incomparable wild orchids with strange flowers, and climbing or twining plants of every possible shape and color which are as graceful as they are delicate, which cross, intertwine and with their lianas form an inextricable jungle, a curtain of flowers, stems and foliage which moves at the whim of the winds and is so thick in certain spots that it casts an almost perpetual shadow (1). 137

(1) The exact nomenclature of these floral species is almost impossible to establish. We shall content ourselves with noting, among many others which are still unknown: the acacia, and principally the farnèse acacia; various kinds of lilacs; the double and single hibiscus, the African marigold and the zinnias, the lotus, the cockscomb, the marvel of Peru, the sunflower, several kinds of magnolias, syringa, camellias, etc.

Various plants used for food, medicine and dye also grow in the forests, such as yams, taros, ginger, cardamom, annatto, curcuma, catechu (sisèt), Campeachy wood, wild indigo, etc., as well as trees and lianas which produce resins, oil lac, black and red lacquer, damarine (huile de bois), benzoin, wax, gums and rubber. 824

Rice and maize are cultivated on the plateaus, low hills, mountainsides and in the valleys, as well as on the alluvial deposits of the Mekong. These form the basis of the natives' food supply and are essential elements in the manufacture of alcohol. 243 273

The banks of the watercourses, which are covered by inundations every year and constantly fertilized by alluvial deposits, are [305] used for the cultivation of cotton, tobacco, indigo, castor oil plants, batatas, peanuts, manioc and vegetables and fruits such as onions, garlic, tomatoes, squash, melons, fennel, mustard, edible convolvuluses, sensitive d'eau, etc. In the gardens which are cultivated near the banks one also finds sugar cane, coconut palms, sugar palms, betel palms, latania palms, the poivrier bétel, the arborescent mulberry, peppers, coriander, mint, the citronella and [Illustration here] purslane. Here also are a large variety of fruit trees: banana trees (more than twenty-four varieties), cinnamon trees, fig trees, orange trees, tangerine trees, grapefruit trees, lemon trees, lime trees, pineapple trees, pomegranate trees, guava trees, mango trees, papaw trees, ebony trees (Diospyros ebenum), mangosteen trees, jack trees, durian trees, custard-apple trees, avocado trees, litchi trees, sapodilla trees (red balata), fayolliers (légumineuses), silk-cotton trees 241 245

245 (bombax and callotropis), tamarind trees, jujube trees, cucumber trees, water chestnuts, etc.

In the north of Laos grow peach trees, plum trees, almond trees, [306] walnut trees, cherry trees, apple trees, pear trees, strawberry plants and medlar trees, the fruits of which are similar in taste to that of their counterparts in Europe, although they are neither as large nor as succulent as the latter.

On the edges of the forest, and sometimes even in the middle, there are also other wild fruit trees reminiscent of the plum tree, the cherry tree, the apple tree (a rose-apple tree with red or green fruits), the fig tree, the quince tree, etc. Their fruits have remained in a wild state or reverted to one because of a lack of adequate care, and are not edible. Their seeds, pits and stones have developed excessively, to the detriment of the pulp which remains tough, bitter or tasteless.

248 Finally, opium poppies, tea, ramie, hemp, etc. are cultivated
249 on the plateaus and in the high valleys.

Most European vegetables grow in Laos, in the gardens of the
241 Europeans. They are seeded at the end of the rainy season. Early varieties can be harvested and a new crop seeded well into July, but care must be taken to cover the beds during downpours, which occur frequently from May on.

The forests of Laos may have two characteristic forms, depending
134 on whether the soil is mountainous and composed of clay or limestone,
137 or else flat or slightly sloped and sandy, rocky or stony. In the first case the soil has a high percentage of vegetable matter, is moist and rich in humus and consequently covered with thick forests (Dong or Pa). In the second case it has a low percentage of vegetable matter, is hot and poor in humus and is covered with light forestation (Khok or Pa-hang).

A table contained in the Appendices (No. XX) gives the nomenclature of some sixty varieties of trees on which we have information. In addition to the trees which we cite, we should also note the bamboos, rattans and banana trees.

There are some twenty varieties of bamboo, in which the stalks vary from the size of the little finger to as much as thirty or even thirty-five centimeters in diameter. They sometimes reach a height
824 of twenty meters. There are six or seven varieties of rattan of different grades and sizes, but they are used only for local needs. Among the many wild banana trees, a few varieties such as the "Kok-Koue-Kene" yield a sort of fiber rather like abaca.

137 [307] Although we are able today to evaluate the forest wealth of Laos approximately and to compute its immense commercial value,

314 Indeed scavenging, that is to say the gathering of forest products, hunting and fishing, is all that is needed besides rice and maize to supply the day to day needs of the native and even provide him with a comparatively important basis for trade.

Forest Products

1. Benzoin (Khab-Niane).

314 Benzoin is extracted from the tree called Styrax benzoin, by means
824 of incisions made on the trunk. The benzoin trees (Kok-Khab-Niane) are localized in Upper Tran-Ninh, the south of the Hua-Pahn and the north of the province of Luang-Prabang. They are not cultivated in
[563] any way. The resin or gum is harvested at certain times of the year, generally by the Khas, at the foot of the trees and along the trunk, where it coagulates in masses or tears.

Benzoin is collected in its natural state, that is to say in tears of various sizes and in breakages. In the production centers it is separated into three grades: large and medium tears, medium and small tears, and small pieces and breakages. In the transit markets these three grades are sorted and screened and once more divided into six kinds or types, which are: large tears, medium tears, small tears, mixed large, mixed medium, and finally tiny fragments and dust.

[439] A few years ago a chemical process was [329] discovered, it would seem, for extracting certain of the aromatic alkaloids contained in benzoin from coal, and the market value of this product suddenly
[435] dropped by more than sixty percent. At the present time, depending on the grade, the market price in Luang-Prabang is from 90 to 115 francs per hundred kilograms (1), in Nong-Khay from 100 to 135

(1) We have deemed it preferable to give the price in francs and per hundred kilograms, since the reader may not be familiar with Laotian weights and currency.

788 francs, and in Korat from 120 to 160 francs.

314 Part of the benzoin production is consumed locally in the manu-
439 facture of sticks of incense for use in worship. All the rest is exported to Bangkok and from there to Europe. A very small proportion is sent to Tonkin by way of the Black River. Upon its arrival in Bangkok, ben-
824 zoin from Laos is worth twice as much as in Luang-Prabang.

2. Crimson lake or stick-lac (Khang-Deng).

314 This gum is produced by an insect of the "cochineal" type, the

149: Reinach--242 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

824 •

Coccus lacca, which secretes the lac to envelop its larvae.

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In trade it appears in the form of half-cylindrical fragments, in breakage (seed-lac), or else adhering to the branches of the tree on which it formed. The latter is lac on sticks, whence the English name stick-lac by which it is known in Far Eastern trading circles (2).

(2) Lac in its most widespread form--lac in shells (shellac)--is not found in Laos. It can easily be produced by boiling the preceding types in alkaline water.

This product is harvested by scavenging from trees which were seeded long ago and are scattered throughout the brush, and also by regular cultivation from a triennial tree, as will be seen below. The principal varieties of trees on which lac is found are the Ficus, the butées, the Croton, the Mimosa and the Acacia.

314

There are three kinds of lac: bright-colored lac (which colors a moistened finger) in whole pieces, lac on wood and brown cellular lac in more or less broken fragments. Throughout the country, however, it is sold mixed, and only at the transit markets are the three kinds separated.

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[330] The price per hundred kilograms is from 35 to 42 francs at Luang-Prabang, from 45 to 48 francs at Pak-Lay, from 47 to 50 francs at Nong-Khay, 42 francs at Khong and Bassac, 62 francs at Pnom-Penh and Cholen, and from 72 to 85 francs at Korat.

[435]

Crimson lake is used for dyeing as well as in the preparation of certain colors and varnishes with an alcohol base. A small proportion remains in the country, but the greater part is exported.

3. Cardamom (Mak-Neng).

824

Cardamom is the fruit of the plant Ellateria cardamomum which grows in the forests but which may be cultivated, as is the case on the plateau of the Bolovens in Laos and in the region of Pursat in Cambodia. The variety common to all parts of Laos is the great cardamom or bastard cardamom, while that cultivated in Cambodia is the true cardamom or small cardamom, much superior to the first in quality and value.

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[245]

The plant grows best in the humid forests, and is harvested in August or September. The plant has vast numbers of light seeds, and it takes about eighty or a hundred thousand seeds to make up the weight of one "mune" (about twelve kilograms). The price per

[435] The price per hundred kilograms is from 50 to 54 francs in Luang-Prabang, 62 francs in Pak-Lay, from 62 to 70 francs in Nong-Khay, 50 francs in Cammon, from 75 to 83 francs in Song-Khone, from 66 to 87 francs in Saravane, from 70 to 83 francs in Bassac, from 83 to 95 francs in Khong, 58 francs in Attopeu, from 50 to 83 francs in Stung-Treng, 133 francs in Pnom-Penh, 140 francs in Cholen (1) and from 80 to 120 francs in

824 314

(1) At this market cardamom from Pursat brings from 625 to 830 francs per hundred kilograms.

Korat.

4. Cinnamon (Cinnamomum zeylanicum. Kai-Hom in Laotian).

The cinnamon tree must have been cultivated at one time in the territory of Vien-Tiane. Then the inhabitants were driven out as a result of foreign incursions and abandoned their gardens, which were gradually invaded by brush. The harvesting of cinnamon has since become a scavenging operation without any form of cultivation. For several years now, doubtless in consequence of the many requests which were made when the Customs service tried to establish a monopoly of this product in Annam, [331] [Illustration] [332] [Blank page] [333] the inhabitants have once more begun to maintain the cinnamon trees and to give them some attention. Plantations have even been started, and this propitious initiative should be encouraged.

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824 314 [245]

5. Indigo (Kok-Kam and Kok-Hom, depending on whether the Indigofera tinctoria or the Indigofera anil is designated).

These two plants are not always scavenging products, since the greater part of Laotian indigo comes from crops grown on the banks of the Mekong and its chief tributaries.

There is also an indigo-bearing liana which grows wild. The Laotians call this "Bouok-Khua".

386

In Laos the preparation of indigo is extremely simple. The fresh leaves and stalks of the different varieties of indigo plants are put to soak in wooden vats containing water and an acid element, usually the acid of lemons or limes. After a certain time the leaves are removed, then lime is precipitated in the water and the mixture is violently stirred. The lime fixes the dye and is deposited at the bottom of the vats, which are exposed to the air. When the clear water which rises to the surface has been completely evaporated, a hardened mass which is the indigo is left at the bottom of the vat. This product is not exported, but serves only for local consumption. Its price varies between 12 and 15 francs per hundred kilograms.

Its price varies between 12 and 15 francs per hundred kilograms. 000

6. Catechu (Sisiet). 824

Catechu is produced from a decoction of the bark of two varieties of trees, the catechu acacia and the leafy butée. 314

This product, which is used in making the national masticatory together with betel, betel nuts and lime, is consumed, in the large centers of Upper Laos, in the form of a dry residue obtained from a decoction of the bark. Generally, however, it is the bark itself which is consumed after it has been broken up into small pieces. 276

Natural sisiet takes the form of shreds of bark about a cubit (.45 meter) long by four centimeters wide and one centimeter thick. The shreds are tied together in packs of twenty-five or fifty, depending on the region.

The whole production is consumed locally. The natives [334] go into the forest at points where suitable trees are to be found, bundle up the pieces and load thm on great rafts which go down from Pak-Lay and Vien-Tiane to Bassac and even to Khong. [438]

At Pak-Lay sisiet is worth only 7 francs and 50 centimes per hundred pieces, but it naturally costs more the further away one goes from the centers of production. [435]

7. Curcuma (Khi-Mine). 824

This plant, of the Zingiberaceae family, has a rhizome which contains an orange-yellow coloring matter used for dyeing silk and cotton. 314 386

Sometimes the inhabitants (chiefly the women and children) rub their whole body with curcuma scrapings after a bath. The application of curcuma to the wet skin, which acquires a light yellow color, is said by the natives to ward off mosquitoes and keep the skin fresh. 302

Up to the present time this product has not formed the basis of any foreign trade. It is sold in small amounts on the markets of Laos. [438]

8. Ginger. 265

The ginger which is called "Mak-Khing" in Laotian is the Zingiber officinale or gray ginger. Used as a condiment by the entire population, this product does not enter into trade. Its price varies between 12 francs and fifty centimes and 16 francs and fifty centimes per hundred kilograms. 824 314 [435]

9. Roucou. 824

The roucou, or fruit of the Roucouyer Bixia, is called "Kene-Mak-Soum-Phou" in Laotian. Literally, this means Seed of an acidulous mountain fruit. It is used to make red and orange dyes 314 386

824 314 386 when mixed with curcuma. The trees are found in the forest, and sometimes in gardens.

10. Yams.

262 241 The yam is an edible tubercle of the Dioscorea family. It is represented by two varieties, the white and the black, which are called "Mane-Phuek-Khao" and "Mane-Phuek-Dam" in Laotian. These tubercles are the main standby when there is a scarcity of rice and [335] maize, but in ordinary times they are used only to supplement the usual diet.

11. Taro or cush-cush (Mane-Pa).

Taro is also a food plant of the Aroïdées caladiées genus (Caladium esculentum). Like the yam, it is one of the most useful edible tubercles in times of famine.

12. Medicinal plants.

824 278 Designated by the generic name "Ya" in Laotian, these plants are represented by special types of orchids, roots, bark, berries, leaves and even pieces of wood of different kinds, the whole forming an assortment of medicaments.

[438] The Khas are the ones who collect these various products from the depths of the forests, and they trade them either to Chinese or to Laotians for money or other goods.

[435] Certain of these plants and barks are used by the Laotians while others, such as the leaves from orchid plants, for example, are purchased by Chinese merchants at prices which vary between 33 and 62 francs per hundred kilograms.

13. Cloves.

The clove tree (Caryophyllus aromaticus. Kane-Phou in Laotian) is quite scarce in Laos. Cloves are mixed with various ingredients in masticatories or are taken as medicine.

Cultivation of the clove tree ought to be developed in Laos because of the high value of its flowers which, when dried on the tree, constitute the cloves of commerce.

14. Beeswax (Phung).

222 [231] 314 Beeswax is much sought-after in Laos, where a great deal of it is consumed. It is a scavenging product par excellence since, except in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na, the inhabitants do not practice apiculture and are content to go into the forest and look for honeycombs in order to extract the wax. The latter is used for domestic needs and for worship [438] ceremonies. It also forms the basis of quite an important trade.

149: Reinach--248 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM2

313 "There are several kinds of bamboo. The large bamboo which is used to make boxes and floats is called mai-bane. The mai-tot is the male bamboo, [340] strong and slender, with its joints closer together. When provided with an iron point it is used for poling boats along in the rivers. The mai-an is the female bamboo, hollower and lighter, from which raft coverings and partition mats are made. It is the kind used to make kelates" (1).

[113] (1) Revue des Deux Mondes. "A travers l'Indo-Chine. Le Haut Laos et le Mékong," by Mme Isabelle Massieu, August 1, 1900.

314 17. Rubber.

Rubber is called "Niang-Niut" in Laotian, which means, literally, elastic gum.

•824 There are several plant varieties in Laos which supply a latex which becomes elastic after coagulation. Certain types of the ficus family, doubtless of the elastica genus, yield rubber of comparatively good quality. The plants which produce the most latex and that of the best quality, however, are lianas whose scientific nature has not yet been settled.

More than ten different kinds of rubber lianas are known. The Laotians call these "Khua-Mak-Niang, Khua-Hai, Khua-Niut-Niai, Khua-Mak-Som, Khua-Mak-Katong-Katiou, Khua-Khao-Pong, Khua-Lam-Sai, Khua-Tang-Tong, Khua-Som-Lam, Khua-Mak-Ka-Khay, Khua-Mak-Khao-Ngoua," etc.

It is quite certain that these diverse names do not refer to as many species which are dissimilar from the botanical point of view, but are merely different local terms used at widely separated points in order to designate the same lianas. Without any concern for their chief virtue, which is to supply latex rubber, the Laotians have named them for their appearance, the shape or type of their fruit, etc.

It seems likely that the varieties which we have just enumerated may be reduced to seven and perhaps less. We shall not be able to tell for sure until we have examined the stalks, leaves, flowers and fruits of the various species in a laboratory. The liana which is most widespread in Laos is the one bearing the name Khua-Mak-Khao-Ngoua or liana with fruits like buffalo horns. It is also called Khua-Mak-Som or liana with acid fruits. The latex is collected twice [341] each year, once in June or July (rainy season), and again in October or November (dry season). The first harvest yields only second grade rubber which is black and sticky. The second crop, which is less

314 plentiful by half than the first, yields a clear, sinewy, dry and elastic
824 rubber in threads and sheets.

Rubber from the second harvest has been submitted to competent individuals for examination, and it seems that it would bring a price of 8 to 10 francs per kilogram on the European market.

435 In April 1900 the purchase price of this product per hundred kilo-
314 grams was 137 francs in Vien-Tiane, from 166 to 208 francs in Muong-Son, 290 francs in Cho-Bo (Tonkin) and 550 francs in Vinh (Annam). Its resale price was 625 francs in Saigon, 700 francs in Singapore and from 800 to 1000 francs in Europe (1).

(1) This refers only to first grade rubber.

These figures suffice to show that Laotian rubber is a choice product in high demand, and a first-rate trade commodity holding the promise of sizeable profits.

439 The total amount of rubber exported from Laos in 1899 through
314 the ports of Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina is estimated at some fifty tons. For 1900 the figure would appear to be about eight times larger (2). This trade has only developed in Laos in the last two or

(2) See Appendix XXII.

three years, but now that the initial impulse has been given and the people are beginning to harvest the latex which they used to scorn because there were no outlets for it, the traffic will not cease to increase from one year to the next, since rubber finds an increasing demand on the European market.

Although the lianas are extremely plentiful in the Laotian forests, care should now be taken to spare them as they are exploited and to increase the number of plants so as to avoid any shortages in the future.

314 18. Pine resin (Khi-Kok-Phek or Niang-Phek)

Pine resin is used in Laos only when mixed with crimson lake. It is used for making a varnish and certain mastic compounds. It has a very low value, never more than 20 francs per hundred kilograms and [342] sometimes as low as 6 francs. None of this product is exported. It would be easy to introduce the regular cultivation of pines and the harvesting of their resin into the land, if sufficiently remunerative outlets were opened up.

149: Reinach--400 G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AMS

138
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APPENDIX XX TABLE OF TREES

Laotian Name	Other names	Height in meters	Size (diameter) in meters	Uses	Subject to attack by insects	Habitat	Provinces	Observations
				A. RESINOUS TREES				
Mai-niang	Cai-dau-nuoc (Annamite) Dom-teal (Cambodian) Dipterocarpus alata	30 to 35	.6 to 1	Furniture, boards, framing; yields an oleoresin used to make torches and a mastic for caulking pirogues. Can yield about 20 liters of essential oil per year.	Yes	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Soft wood, yellowish in color, easily worked. Very common and well known to all Laotians. Lasts about 6 to 10 years, but can be preserved in dry, well-aired places.
Mai-sat	Dipterocarpus (?)	20 to 30	.6 to .8	Boards and ordinary traverse beams. Its oil is used in making torches.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Soft wood, reddish-gray in color, of inferior quality. Very plentiful and well-grown; lasts 5 to 6 years, rots in earth.
Mai-sang	Cai-sao (Annamite) Dom-papel (Cambodian) Hopea odorata	20 to 25	1 to 1.5	Boards and timbers. Could yield about 20 kilograms of a good resin per year.	No	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Softwood, brown, easy to work; very plentiful; average lasting qualities; resembles the ash; well-grown tree.

[Table continued over]

137
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Mai-khoun		20 to 25	.8 to 1	Useless for cabinet work. The Laotians cut it into small pieces like the Mai-seng-kham for chewing with betel. Its oil is used for caulking pirogues and making torches.	No	Forest glades	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Very hard wood, dark red in color. Has often been mistaken for teak. Very plentiful, together with the Mai-tabeng it makes up the greater part of varieties in forest glades; unlimited life.
Mai-chik	Cai-chai (Annamite)	15	.4 to .5	Widely used for house columns. It yields 20 kilograms per year of a resin used by the Laotians for caulking.	No	Forest glades	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Hardwood, veined yellow in color, fine grain. Very plentiful. Unlimited life.

(1) It is essential to note that these trees can be used only if the sapwood is removed and only the heartwood used.

[112-113] Mai-tabeng	Cai-dau-taben (?) (Annamite) Dom-trac (?) (Cambodian) Dipterocarpus species (?)	30	.5	Little used in building. Passable boards and columns. Can yield some 20 liters of oil annually which is used for making torches and caulking pirogues.	No	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Fairly hard and resistant wood, reddish in color. Very plentiful. Long life. Resembles the Mai-niang, keeps better.
Mai-phak	Cai-thong (Annamite) Dom-sral (Cambodian) Pinaster	30 to 35	1 to 1.5	Various uses. Yields a whitish odorous resin which, when mixed with sticklac, produces varnish and certain mastics.	No	Plateaus and clear parts of forests	Upper Laos	Reddish wood with coarse fiber. Floats. Said to be inferior to other resinous varieties.

[table continued over]

137
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Mai-nam-kieng	Cai-gon (Annamite) Dom-crul (Cambodian) Melanorrhea laccifera (varnish-tree)			Yields a fine black varnish similar to lacquer. Would be suitable for cabinet work.			Lower Laos	Red wood, reminiscent of Brazilian rosewood. Very rare. Does not last under moist conditions.

B. TREES WITH WOOD SUITABLE FOR CABINET WORK

Mai-Mioupha	Mock mahogany	30	.6 to .7	Furniture, boards. Resembles the mahogany of Florida or Texas, used for cigar boxes.	Yes	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Very beautiful soft-wood, pink in color. Fairly plentiful. Floats.
Mai-pousi or Mai-pousi-kien	Cai-bang-lang (Annamite) Lagerstroemia (?)	30	.6 to 1	Furniture, fine boards.	Yes	Thick forest	Lower Laos	White wood with slight gray tinge, not very resistant, fine grain. Very plentiful. Lasts about ten years, does not withstand rain.
Mai-thon	Cai-lim (Annamite) Mock walnut	30	.5 to .6	Boards, fine cabinet work.	Yes	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Very beautiful brown wood, veined like the walnut which it resembles although darker. Very long life. Very plentiful. Very well-grown tree.

[Table continued over]

137
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Mai-kha-niom	Cai-trat (Annamite)	15 to 25	.5 to .6	Furniture, boards, pirogues.	No	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Resistant wood, slightly yellowish, fine grain, quite light, well-grown. Rather scarce. The tree bears very odoriferous yellow flowers.
Mai-lang-dam	Cai-mun (Annamite) Don-hayman (Cambodian) Diospyros ebenum Ebony	10 to 15	.3 to .4	Good for cabinet work. House traverse beams. Its fruit is used to make a black dye.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Hardwood, black, heavy, non-floating, small, resembles ebony. Lasts about seven years. Plentiful.
[114-115] Mai-deng	Cai-buong (Annamite)	25	.6 to .7	Columns and posts for houses and pagodas. Furniture.	No	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Resistant, red, very well-veined wood. Highly esteemed, hard, difficult to work. Resembles rosewood somewhat. Very well-grown tree, well-known to the Laotians, plentiful.
Mai-te	Cai-go (Annamite) Grandifera cochinchinensis	30 to 50	.6 to .7	Columns for houses and pagodas. Boards.	No	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Very hard wood, mahogany yellow, fine grain. Unlimited life. Plentiful. Edible fruit.

[table continued over]

137
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Mai-dou or Mai-dou-khao	Cai-hoi-moc (Annamite)	30	.7 to .8	House columns, furniture, chests, cart axles.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Beautiful, very hard wood, slightly reddish, very well-veined; reminiscent of the thuja. Quite hard to work. Unlimited life. Plentiful.
Mai-pan-sat		20 to 35	.8	Very fine planks and columns.	No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Very hard wood, difficult to work.
Mai-khen-hin	Cai-sac-da (Annamite) Nonea (?)	30	.4	Very fine columns and traverse beams.	No	Thick Forest	Lower Laos	Very beautiful, very hard wood, highly resistant, yellowish in color, very heavy. Life would be unlimited. Plentiful.
Mai-ed	Don-kinor-prey (Cambodian) Nauclea orientalis (?) Jack-tree	10	.4	Columns, furniture and boxes. The bark is used for dyeing bonzes' clothing yellow.	No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Very pretty light wood, yellowish in color. Quite easy to work. Floats when dry. Noted especially for its fruit.
Mai-bok-khai			.9 to 1	Not used by the Laotians, the grain being too hard for their tools. Ought to make fine boards.		Forest glades	Lower Laos	Hardwood, whitish-yellow in color. Very well-grown. Plentiful.

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137
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Mai-khe-nioung	Cai-trac (Annamite) Dom-cranhung (Cambodian) Dalbergia (?)	15 to 20	.5 to .6	Used for cart axles and in the wheel-wright's trade. Would be a good wood for cabinet work.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Very hard wood, dark red veined with black, like the Brasilian rosewood. Unlimited life. Rather scarce. Respected by the Laotians because almost impossible to work with their tools.
Mai-pouai-lai	Cai-bang-lang (Annamite) Lagerstroemia (?)	30 to 40	1.5	Interior woodwork, furniture.	No	Low mountains, valleys	Upper Laos	Beautiful hardwood, gray with wavy veins like the maple. Medium in color between the ash and the beech. Difficult to work, gives a striking effect under varnish.
Mai-kan-laong		17 to 18	.6	Furniture and framing. Very good for woodworking.	No	Beside water	Upper Laos	Hardwood, yellow, good grain, easy to work.
Mai-eom		16 to 17	.3 to .4	Furniture and framing.	No	Beside water	Upper Laos	White wood, straight grain, easy to work, quite plentiful.
[116-117] Mai-khe		24 to 25	.4 to .5	Furniture, framing, posts.	No	Large forests	Upper Laos	Hardwood, red heart-wood; difficult to work; plentiful.
Mai-ka-bok	Dom-kakn (?) (Cambodian) Sindora sumatrana (?)	18 to 19	.3 to .4	Used for turned pieces and long-lasting items.	No	Same	Upper Laos	Hardwood, brown with reddish reflections, fairly easy to work; very beautiful when polished.

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137
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Mai-sak	Dom-mayrac (?) (Cambodian) Tectona grandis Teak	30 to 40	.8 to 1.2	Framing, woodworking, cabinet work, boatbuilding.	No	Mountainsides and valleys	Upper Laos	Easy to work, reddish beautiful close grain, very well-grown, rot-proof, floating. Edible fruit; sometimes replaces the betel nut in the betel masticatory.
Mai-khao-khvai				Excellent posts	No	Hillsides and valleys. Thick forests.	Upper Laos	Hardwood, fine grain, unlimited life.
Mai-tchoumg or Mai-kioumeng				Cabinet work.	No	Hillsides and valleys	Upper Laos	Wood which has the perfume of sandalwood. Used to make statues of Buddha.
Mai-dou-deng	Service tree (?)	30 to 35	1.5 to 1.8	Posts, pirogues, tools.	No	Mountainsides and valleys. Thick forest	Upper Laos	Excellent hardwood, with the look and qualities of the service tree, that is to say reddish brown with fine grain. Very well-grown, plentiful, fairly easy to work. Unlimited life.
Mai-sakhan		20 to 25	.5	Posts, framing, boards.	No	Low slopes and valleys	Upper Laos	Good red wood, straight grain, quite scarce, easy to work.

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137
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362

Mai-fene		25 to 30	1.2	Posts	No	Valleys	Upper Laos	Good wood, fairly difficult to work, much sought-after, rather scarce, long life.
Mai-kha-bioung		18 to 20	.25 to .35	Posts, framing.	No	Large Forests	Upper Laos	Hardwood, white, quite difficult to work, quite plentiful.
				C. MISCELLANEOUS TREES				
Mai-khan-hok		30 to 35		Boards, traverse beams, laths.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Hardwood, white with black heartwood, plentiful on the plateau of the Bolovens; edible fruit.
Mai-khen	Cai-sao (Annamite) Dom-kaki (Cambodian) Hopea spuria (?)	.3 to .4	1 to 1.5	Used mainly in the construction of pirogues.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Semi-hard wood, with beautiful fibers of a yellow color, very well-grown. Water-resistant. Lasts 12 to 15 years.
Mai-hang	Cai-sen (Annamite) Vatica (?)			Columns and mediocre traverse beams.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Greatly resembles the Mai-khen-hin, but is neither as resistant nor as highly esteemed; unlimited life.
[118-119] Mai-tab-tao		10	.4 to .6	Mediocre traverse beams, very little used in building.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Soft wood, yellowish in color, quite well-grown, little used, quite light; plentiful.

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137
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Mai-tiou		12	.5 to .6	Same as above.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Very soft wood, white, slightly grayish, of inferior quality, cannot withstand rain; fine grain; well-grown tree. Lasts about 7 years.
Mai-kmung		15	.6 to .8	Boards and traverse beams. The dried leaves are used to make pirogue roofs and partitions for Laotian houses.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Fairly hard wood, slightly reddish, well-grown; plentiful.
Mai-kha-thang		25 to 30	.25 to .3	Beams	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Hardwood, slightly yellowish, plentiful, quite well-grown.
Mai-tong		35	.5	Coffin planks.	Yes	Forest glades	Lower Laos	Softwood, white, acid fruit; plentiful.
Mai-keng-seng		15	.6	Planks, studs for partition walls and doors.	Yes	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Softwood, heartwood dark red; plentiful in the valleys.
Mai-man-pa		15	.25	House columns.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Hard and resistant wood, grayish-yellow, fairly easy to work; plentiful, unlimited life.
Mai-hat	Cai-xoai (Annamite)	25	.4	Wooden bells, mediocre traverse beams and columns; little used in building.	No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Rather unresistant, yellowish-white wood; plentiful, unlimited life.

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137
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26

Mai-mok		.2 to .25			Forest glades	Lower Laos	Slightly yellowish wood, light, with fine grain; dwarf tree, bears large yellow flowers which are very odoriferous.
Mai-seng-kham		.5 to .6	Bark used by the Laotians for chewing with betel.		Forest glades	Upper Laos Lower Laos	Yellowish wood with quite fine grain; well-grown tree; not very plentiful.
Mai-si		.3 to .4			Forest glades	Lower Laos	Slightly grayish wood, quite close-fibered; well-grown tree; not very plentiful.
Mai-lieng		.6 to .7	Used only for making plowshares.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos Upper Laos	Hard, knotty, red, rather dark wood; difficult to work with an ax, does not grow straight; not very plentiful; unlimited life.
Mai-souek		.6 to .7		No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Very hard wood, very dark reddish-gray in color, well-veined, difficult to work; very well-grown tree.
[120-121]							
Mai-lam-sing		1 to 1.2		No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Hardwood, dark red, close-grained, difficult to work; well-grown tree; quite plentiful.

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137
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Mai-seng	Dom-khleng-cong (Cambodian) Strychnos nux-vomica		.5 to .6	Its wood, roots and leaves, with the exception of the pulp of its fruit, are used as a remedy against fever and snake bite.	No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Very hard wood, slightly whitish, difficult to work; well-grown tree, its seed is the nux vomica; not very plentiful.
Mai-som-hong		20 to 25	.9 to 1		No	Valleys and banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Slightly grayish wood, difficult to work, cannot withstand rain; well-grown tree; not very plentiful.
Mai-lak	Van (Annamite) Mesua ferrea (?)	20 to 25	.6 to .9	Railway ties. Piles for wharfs.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Ironwood, very hard, mahogany in color.
Mai-tham-da		20 to 25	.6 to .8		No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Very tall tree with blond heartwood. It is sought-after by the bonzes, who use it to make statues.
Mai-khao		18 to 20	.5 to .6	Boards, framing.	Yes	Thick forest	Lower Laos	White wood of inferior quality; lasts about five years.
Mai-sipu	Cai-gon (Annamite) Dom-cor (Cambodian) Bombax and Calletrosis Mock cotton	15 to 20	.6 to .8	Not used as wood.	Yes	Banks of water-courses	Lower Laos	Quite unresistant wood. The tree yields cotton of excellent quality. It grows rapidly, and is very common.

[table continued over]

137
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Mai-padoung		20 to 25	.8 to 1	Paneling.	No	Thick forest	Lower Laos	Beautiful wood, purplish-red heartwood, blackens upon exposure to air.
Mai-ka-sau		25	1	Building wood.	No		Lower Laos	Hard and resistant wood, resembles the Mai-tabeng; plentiful; unlimited life.
Mai-bi-sui		18 to 20	.6 to .8	Framing.	Yes		Lower Laos	Wood of inferior quality, hard but not very resistant, red in color; lasts from 6 to 10 years.
Mai-khai-so		18 to 20	.6 to .8	Framing.	Yes		Lower Laos	Wood of inferior quality, hard but not very resistant, red in color; lasts for seven years.
Mai-nga-loi		15 to 18	.5 to .6	Interior woodwork.	Yes		Lower Laos	White wood, of inferior quality; lasts for 5 to 6 years.
Mai-sisiet	Catechu Acacia catechu	30	1.3	The bark alone, which forms catechu, is used for chewing with betel.	Yes	Valleys and low slopes	Upper Laos	The wood is good only for burning.
[122-123] Mai-kuk-sa		8	.25 to .35	The bark alone is used in making a very resistant paper.	Yes	Valleys	Upper Laos	
Mai-so		30	1.5	Framing and mediocre woodwork.	No	Low mountains and valleys	Upper Laos	Hard wood, fairly good, very light; not very plentiful.

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137
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Mai-hiene		30	.8	Framing, posts, mediocre woodwork.	Only after ten years	Low slopes and valleys	Upper Laos	Good wood, straight grain; not very plentiful; very straight tree.
Mai-ka-kalang		25 to 30	.5 to .6	Posts and framing.	Yes	Low slopes and valleys	Upper Laos	Soft, reddish wood, easy to work; plentiful.
Mai-ea-ke		14 to 15	25 to 30	Used to make charcoal. Also used for short-lived projects.	Yes	Low slopes and valleys	Upper Laos	Softwood, white, good grain; plentiful.
Mai-li				Posts and columns			Upper Laos	Very hard wood, difficult to work.

10: d'Orleans--262-263 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 513, 563, 825 Ethnic subgroups

"Our men [LSS: Kha from Laos] lie down upon mats and this evinces a more advanced stage of civilisation than we have found amongst the Thaïs; in the middle of the night they suddenly jump up, [263] light a lamp and start in search of an animal, that has taken flight, to judge from their movements, though I do not see it. They afterwards explain their manœuvres; one of them had seen a long myriapod, which they were anxious to destroy, as it is a dangerous insect. They say, that when it crawls over the skin it leaves traces of its passage, in long red painful and unhealthy streaks. I do not know whether this assertion is true, but at all events, they seem much afraid of the insect."

10: d'Orleans--282-283 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 136, 825

"In the middle of the night we are suddenly awakened by a loud voice, which sounds from a corner of the room, from the ceiling, or from a neighbouring tree: Tako, tako... ken, ken, ken... oh, oh, followed by a kind of hoarse laugh. The first time it is heard, we are astonished, and find some difficulty in sleeping again; we look about but cannot discover anything. After a little while, we become accustomed to the songs of the hidden guest, who speaks at night in every Laotian house. The natives know it well; sometimes they see it and point it out during the day, but they respect it as a sacred being, a household friend. An idea of protection, a veneration that is even a little superstitious, is attached to its presence in a house.... I see that in speaking of the singer I am acquainted with, I have forgotten the important point of introducing it to the reader. The takou (so called by onomatopœia) is simply a [283] large green jecko (cordylus), about a cubit long and three fingers wide, ocellated with beautiful spots of azure blue; a great insect destroyer, but quite harmless to man, by whom it is regarded as a friend."

10: d'Orleans--345 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 415, 825

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang]
"As in Tonkin and Japan, at the boys' fête, many people carry paper bags made to imitate fish, while streamers with designs of animals upon them are used for certain games."

68: Mouhot--91-92 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 136, 825

"Beetles of the longicorn tribe abound here; [HD: at Khao-Khoc, Siam, inhabited mainly by Laotians] and to-day I have filled a box with more than a thousand new or rare insects. I have even been [92] fortunate enoguh [sic] to replace some of the more valuable kinds which were destroyed or injured by sea-water on board the 'Sir James Brooke.' The villagers come every day to bring me 'beasts,' as they call them, grasshoppers, scorpions, serpents, tortoises, &c., all presented to me at the end of a stick."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

slaughterers are obliged to work by flares, which is responsible, the 253
French think, for an unusually picturesque effect. It is 'not done' to 825
go along while the actual killing is in progress, but shortly after, when the carcasses are suspended from hooks to be cut up, and the workers, stripped to their loincloths, and garishly splashed, paddle about in a vermilion sea. Cars are stationed just beyond the reach of the steaming odours, and one is recommended to see the thing as one views a nude in a picture gallery – that is, divorced from all but a disinterested abstraction, in this case the colour.

The possibilities of Vientiane, it was clear, would be quickly 292
exhausted. Thao Nhouy, the Laotian Minister of Education, lent 301
me his jeep to see some of the surrounding villages, but the roads 535
were so appalling that it broke down after being driven for about five miles. He then suggested that I might like to see the local schoolgirls dancing, and when I said that I would be delighted, and asked for permission to take photographs, the girls were sent off home, on their bicycles, to get their best clothes. An hour or two later they began to trickle back, wearing their mothers' jewellery as well as their own and with their silk finery done up in paper parcels. When they had dressed and were ready they made a glittering sight. One girl wore a scarf ornamented with real gold thread said to be worth about £50 in English money. They danced under the supervision of a teacher whom I recognized as a professional actor, from the *boun*,[1] and who occasionally intervened when a girl failed in some minor feat, such as bending her fingers back at an expressive ninety degrees from the palm.

All these girls, dressed as they were like princesses, came from 493
shacks in the forest. Each one had a bicycle – infallibly fitted with 511
dynamo lighting, and sometimes 3-speed gears. It seems that a bicycle for his daughter is one of the essentials for which a Laotian will work. It is considered ill-bred and irreligious in Laos to work 241
more than is necessary. The father of a family cultivates an amount 461
of land, estimated, by a bonze who is expert in such matters, to be 511
792

[1] [i.e., Laotian religious 255
festival. -- Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

000 eventually to the Buddhas to solicit their curative powers; and if so what we should learn from it about the prevalence of disease among Europeans.

217 The museum of Vientiane, which I visited in the hope of learning
532 something of the living art of the country, has also little more to
771 show than a collection of Buddhas. There is a tranquillity, a lack of compulsion in the Hinayanist Buddhism of Cambodia and Laos — so different from the neurotic deformation practised by the later Khmer kings — which is not propitious to the development of religious art. There was no violence or drama in the life of Buddha comparable to that of Christ, and the Indian Epics have been eschewed in Laos as improperly secular. It has been enough to carve Buddhas, and more Buddhas *ad infinitum*, seeking perhaps to multiply in this way the magic virtues which each image contains. The curator takes you round, explaining the characteristic postures — there are seven or eight — all of which can be appreciated in five minutes. After that there are minute differences of physique and physiognomy to be noted that reflect the influences of India, of Java, of Thibet or of Ceylon. That is all.

177 By the time the museums turn to the art of the people, the
532 grotesque animals in bamboo, the carved movable figures which
782 are obscene to European eyes — all of which become a pagan burnt-offering at the end of each *boun*[1] — it will be too late. The microphone is an infallible sign of what is to come. Nothing of this kind will survive the era of materialism, under whatever form it arrives.

253 These are the sights of Vientiane, but in addition there is a
825 spectacle which is popular with Europeans, who, remote, isolated, and living under difficulties, tend to shut themselves up within the protective social rituals of people in exile.

This spectacle is the slaughterhouse at work. I do not know whether or not it is illegal in Laotian law to kill animals, but certainly it is thought shameful, and the killing for Europeans is done at the dead of night on the outskirts of the town. The

[1] [Laotian religious festival. -- Analyst]

149: Reinach--229 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[313]

Crustaceans

136 The crayfish, the shrimp and the crab.

Mollusks

Mollusks are very numerous, and a few types are even peculiar to Laos. They include acephalans, lamellibranchiates, gastropods, etc., several of which are edible (1).

[114]

(1) A complete study of the mollusks of Laos was made by M. Pavie and Commander Morlet (their collections are to be seen in the Paris Museum).

Insects

Because of their great numbers and infinite variety, insects have a very interesting, or at least important, place in the fauna of Laos. Despite their small size and weak vocal organs as individuals, when evening comes their collective cries produce a noise which covers all others.

There is still a fine harvest for the entomologist to reap, even after Mouhot, who was the first to make studies of this type in Laos. Lepidoptera, coleoptera, hemiptera, diptera, arachnida--all the types are represented, in the form of many-colored butterflies, brilliant fireflies, hideous, foul-smelling bugs, hardy beetles, dangerous scorpions, scolopendra with a thousand feet, repulsive spiders which are huge and hairy, and finally indefatigable suctoria such as mosquitos, flies, gnats, etc.

825 There are only two types of useful insects. These are the coccus which produces crimson lake or stick-lac, and several kinds of bees which supply honey and wax.

The greater part of all this animal life which we have passed in review is used by the inhabitants of Laos for food and other needs. It also provides certain products in the form of animal remains which are the basis for either local or export trade. A list of these follows:

149; Reinach—239 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

825
136

Elephant.....Ivory, teeth, toenails, bones, hide.
Tiger.....Pelts, talons, fangs, bones.
[314] Rhinoceros.....Hide, horns.
Bear.....Skins, gall (used in medicines).
Goat, otter, cayman.....Hides and skins.
Scaly anteater.....Scales and skin.
Buffalo, ox, stag, deer.....Hides, horns and antlers.
Peacock, marabou stork
and other birds.....Feathers.
Snakes.....Skins and venom.
Coccus (insect).....Crimson lake.
Bees.....Honey and wax.

3. MINERALOGY

a) Mineral Wealth

135

As we said above, the geological formations of Laos are similar in nature, rate of change and transformations undergone to those in the neighboring countries on the west, northwest and south. Everywhere there is the same original substratum, and this, together with the sediments which have formed in its folds, has been traversed, lifted and dislocated by volcanic thrusts which are less and less apparent as one moves away from the two eruptive nuclei located in the northwest and south, that is to say in Tibet and Malaysia. To be sure, the orographic nucleus which has had the greatest influence on the relief of the country and the formation of the various regions of Laos is the one which, in Tibet, has produced the long ridges of mountains between which the valleys of the great rivers of China, Burma and the Indo-Chinese peninsula have cut their paths.

In the basin of the Mekong, the only one with which we need be concerned here, there are secondary ridges brought about by partial upheavals or folds, which form a series of stepped plateaus and chains of valleys eminently suited to catching the sediment carried down from the peaks and to furthering its distribution in accordance with the laws of gravity. It is to this peculiar disposition that Laos owes its mineral wealth. During the course of centuries the partial dislocations, atmospheric agents, moving waters, etc. disaggregated, split and reduced [315] to stones, and then into gravel and soil, the mountain crests of eruptive rocks which contained gold, precious stones, silver-bearing galena, tin, copper, iron, etc. Once set free

149: Reinach--251 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Hunting

224 Hunting, for the inhabitants of Laos, is another form of scavenging, since it procures them either live animals or the remains of the same without any great labor or expense.

411 For the Laotian, time does not count. He makes his powder himself, and with the exception of firearms his hunting devices are also
224 of his own fabrication. With the help of this far from perfect equipment he is nevertheless able to capture live elephants and to procure the ivory and remains of those which he kills, as well as the hide, [438] talons, bones and horns of a multitude of other animals. All these [262] products are so many trade commodities for him. The flesh of all these animals, moreover, makes a sizeable contribution to the diet of the Laotian hunter. It is a feast for him, for his family and for his entourage.

• [825] [344] The natives have a perfect knowledge of the habits and customs of all the representatives of the local fauna. Patient, adroit, 224 endowed with excellent powers of hearing and sight which are further developed and sharpened by practice, they are not afraid to attack the tiger and other large animals despite their rudimentary weapons.

Lying hidden for hours at a time, motionless and silent and abstaining from smoking, the hunter waits for his victim without losing his self-control. When it approaches within a few meters of him, his sure eye and untrembling arm enable him to strike it dead with a bullet or with a poisoned arrow shot from a powerful crossbow.

One is astounded at the results achieved with weapons which are so imperfect, as much by their rudimentary construction as by their age, and which often lead one to fear more for the hunter's life than for the beast's. We must admire these men who, although reputed to be cowardly, brave danger with such primitive weapons and go in search of wild animals in their very lairs, killing them at almost point-blank range so that oftentimes the wad from the gun singes the animal's fur or the arrow goes in one side and out the other.

411 The firearms used by the Laotians are flintlock or muzzle-loading rifles, some of which are of Siamese or Burmese manufacture. Others
439 are imported from Europe through trade or in private cargoes. There are also old regulation rifles, British and others, chiefly those which bear the image of a cock and the word "Tower" stamped on the lock or breech.

231 It is much to be desired that the work of our physiologists may
654 finally be successful and place at the disposal of everyone serums which will be capable of fighting the epizootic diseases which are decimating horned animals. In the meantime our administrators can only recommend to the natives a few rules of veterinary hygiene, a feeble protective measure against the epidemic. They should be particularly careful to see that dead carcasses are not thrown into watercourses.

231 Oxen. In Laos, oxen are raised mainly for use in transport or
492 for export as animals for slaughtering. In the far north they are also harnessed to carts.

262 The Laotians have an instinctive repugnance for beef meat, and
825 eat it only when an animal dies by accident or has to be killed as the result of a wound or broken bone. There are even certain prejudices and certain customs in this matter, which are doubtless vestiges of another age when the ancestors of the present-day inhabitants were pastoral people among whom slaughtering [404] oxen for food was prohibited under penalty of a fine.

231 Whereas the buffalo in Laos are sturdy and of a fine height, the oxen often leave much to be desired. This is due to the fact that the natives raise oxen as they do buffalo, that is to say by leaving it to forage for itself. Although the buffalo, a hardy and autochthonous animal, requires almost no care in breeding, the ox, which is a cross-bred animal, imported and not so tough, requires a great deal of care and management. But when ox raising is treated like buffalo raising, the result is an inferior product and thence a progressive degeneration of the breed.

The Youns, the Lus and the Burmese are the only ones who have a complete mastery of raising oxen as draft and pack animals, and who produce individuals of comparatively tall stature which are sturdy, courageous and resistant to fatigue. They are even able, thanks to suitable treatment and care, to condition and train the often puny specimens which they sometimes go great distances to buy, even into southern Laos.

231 The oxen of Song-Khone (1) and of the Kham-Thong-Niai-Saravane
439

(1) In 1898 the presence of about 1,500 oxen and cattle was reported in this province.

region are destined mainly to be sold for meat in Cambodia and in Cochinchina, and this is quite a lucrative trade.

734 friend take one's place.

Laotians when they pay a visit to a sick person, prattle noisily,
574 ask the sick person a great number of unnecessary questions, and
576 sometimes tell him stories to cheer him up. This custom must stop. The patient, who is tired, needs rest. The visit one pays him should not last longer than ten minutes.

574 Condolence visit. --The Laotian ceremony connected with
576 the condolence visit is the opposite of the Western ceremony. The
764 The visitor, instead of appearing sad before the family of the deceased, is gay and smiling.

In order to give you an idea of what goes on in a house in which a death has taken place among the Laotians, I shall content myself by citing here certain passages from my article, "The custom
764 of funeral ceremonies in the land of Laos" (1): "Those who believe
574
576 1. In Kinnary, No. 4, November, 1946.

in the existence of the phi place a tray of food intended for the deceased near the coffin. Furthermore they place, at the head of the coffin, a sword marked with a cross with chalk, together with a superstitious formula in order to prevent the phi from stealing the coffin away from the deceased. The coffin has to be watched over day and night. The watchers talk, play certain games, or engage in any other diversion. /274/

/825/ "In the course of this watch cats are also prevented from prowling around the coffin. A cat which were to jump across would provoke the resurrection of the dead person, according to what certain people say.

"The house in which the person has died is called heuan di (happy house). There one works, sings, dances, and plays. From it can be heard the sound of orchestras and shouts of joy. Such spectacles have something disconcerting about them to the eyes of strangers. Nevertheless, one should not regard this behavior as a sign of irreverence towards the deceased person. Despite its smiling appearance, the family of the deceased suffers profoundly. It abstains from violent shedding of tears and from public lamentations because it considers a discreet grief more dignified and the sense one has of death in this way a nobler one."

/779/ It would be difficult not to respect this tradition which stems

301 The use of these magic shirts is also known in Cambodia. The designs
262 usually consist of flowers, geometric figures, tools, flowers, vegetable
751 branches, and of animals. Sometimes pictures drawn from Buddhist iconography can be recognized.

[174] Apparently the origin of tattooing is to be found in totemism. By
analyzing the Laotian tattooing designs, [63] it has been possible to
301 recognize traces of sun worship, as well as the mythological role of the dog. But at the present time Laotians seem only to value tattooing as an artistic ornament.

The Divining Rod.

787 Among the curios which the tourist looks for in Laos, the most
823 easily found is a carved bamboo cane. Immediately below the head, which is often of chased silver, there is a sort of checkered diagram
825 made up of twenty-five little squares. Below this divining diagram are found, in succession from top to bottom, a zebu, a horse, a rakshasha or ogre, a tiger, a buffalo, a deer, an elephant. These animals correspond respectively to the days of the week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

It should be noted that, except for the buffalo and the deer, the others are the symbolical animals of the zodiac and correspond to the different cardinal points.

The Laotians consult these figures at different actions of their lives: choice of a wedding day, the hour for burial, etc. The diagram is used to calculate the hour, and the animals indicate the cardinal point which should be followed.

This cane is also found among the Man.

[64] THE NEW YEAR AND THE FEASTS OF THE FIFTH MONTH

527 The Laotian New Year always takes place between the 6th day
805 of the crescent moon of the 5th month and the 5th day of the crescent moon of the 6th month. The very core of the feast includes three days: the last day of the past year, the intermediate day and the New Year's day, properly so-called. The most picturesque ceremonies are those of Luang Prabang, for there tradition has been best preserved.

The programme of the feasts begins with a procession of royal
527 elephants. Their heads ornamented with red and black painted designs, their drivers dressed in red tunics with yellow lapels, on their backs, the fifteen elephants go to the pagodas of Xieng Tong, Vat

173: Deydier--42 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

May, and Vat Visun to render homage to the protecting genii of the village and chase away the evil spirits. 527

During three days the Laotians do no cooking. Fish, turtles, birds, etc., are bought in the big market and then set free as a sign of penitence and redemption of sins committed either voluntarily or not against living beings during the past year. 782

Possibly there is here a survival of the origin of the cycle of animals. According to Finot, at a very remote period, the custom of curing sick children by letting an animal go free had arisen. When a child was saved in this manner, he was said to have been born from this animal because he owed it life. He was forbidden to kill it, and the year of the child's birth was given the same [65] name as the animal. It is thus that the cycle of twelve years was established. 825 771

In the dry beds of the Mekong and of the Nam Khan, small that made of sand are built. Each one wishes the other a long life, whose number of years will equal the number of grains of sand forming the that, and great prosperity, for ill-luck has fled with the last day of the past year, and the New Year should bring as many riches as there are grains of sand in the that. Often around the principal that, other much smaller ones are erected, their number corresponding to the age of the builder. They express the wish of the one who has built them that he will see many more years added to those he has already lived. Actually these little that around the central mound are a reproduction of Mount Merou surrounded by different worlds (Cf. the symbolism of the That Luang). 527 805

In the pagodas the statues of Buddha are taken down from the altars and placed in little wooden prasat. They are sprinkled with perfumed water which flows in the hang-lin (a kind of gutter of gilded wood whose extremities represent the head of an aquatic monster), for the year now ending must be completely exhausted, and a minute cleansing, both material and spiritual, must leave a strictly clear way for the New Year. In the streets the young girls sprinkle not only the bonzes whom they honor, but all the young men, to compensate for all the minor vexations they have endured from the men during the past year. The high dignitaries are not exempt from these showers of more or less clean water. Sometimes their faces are rubbed with lampblack or mud, when they have the ill luck of meeting a group of young girls. Do we have a survival of the theme of the svayamvara here (free choice of the man by the young girl)? [562]

[66] The day in between, the day before New Year's day, is one of complete rest. All the events which occur during this day will determine

527 the course of the year for good or for bad. On the day of the New
805 Year, a bassi is offered to His Majesty the King by the ministers and high dignitaries. Then a delegation of bonzes is admitted to the palace where, after receiving the ritual offerings, they are sprinkled in a cabin by His Majesty the King and members of the royal family.

Outside in the town the aspersions continue more than ever during
[643] the whole week. During these feasts the King goes in a dugout to the grottoes of Xieng Men, opposite Luang Prabang, and to those of Pak Ou where he sprinkles the statues there. Then he comes to make the ritual aspersion of the Phra Bang, palladium of the kingdom, at the pagoda of Vat May.

527 During these feasts of the New Year, the dance of the Phou
773 Gneu Gna Gneu takes place. These are legendary individuals considered the ancestors of the Laotians, whose story is as follows:

When Phou Lan Xong had pierced the gourd, the king of heaven sent his son Khoum Bolom to organize the country. While he was performing the mission entrusted to him by his father, a vine was seen to rise from the earth. It grew rapidly and soon covered the whole world with its shadow. Men ceased to see the sky and were deprived of light and heat. The king ordered this monstrous vine to be cut down, but nobody dared to risk doing this. Finally an aged couple [deux vieux époux] Phou Thao Gneu and Me Ngam, armed with a hatchet and preceding the son of heaven, come down to earth, announced that they were willing to undertake this perilous task. But they stipulated that after their death they would receive offerings and would be invoked at the beginning of meals and other business. Everybody [67] agreed to this. Then they attacked the vine with blows of the hatchet. At the end of three months and three days, the vine fell and crushed them in its fall, but the sun shone again on the world.

The agreement has been kept. Since that day the dance of the Phou Gneu Gna Gneu is one of the principal elements of the Laotian feast of the New Year.

527 The two dancers wear enormous cardboard masks. They listen
825 on their knees to prayers read aloud to them, while alongside of them a lion waves its paws nonchalantly. This lion has rather a peculiar role. Apparently it is another survival of the legend of the cycle of animals. Not having any toys to give their children, the first ancestors had the idea of modeling one year a rat, another year an ox, then a tiger, a hare, a dragon, etc. The name of each animal designated the year during which it was used as a toy. Finally these little figures became alive and became the ancestors of the present day species. At

the present time only the lion is kept, for apparently its role is no longer very well known. 527 825

[68] THE HARVEST FESTIVAL

This takes place after the harvest, during the first and second months, and is held in the open countryside. Its purpose is to glorify "the soul of rice." 527 243

It is not until the threshing has been completed and the rice piled up in heaps that the master of the harvest consults his neighbors and chooses with them the day of celebration. Light shelters must then be built on his field around the threshing area to accommodate the guests. On the top of the pile of paddy a sort of pulpit is erected from which the bonzes will recite their prayers.

On the morning of the feast day, the master of the house slaughte an ox from which is made the traditional lap, a dish consisting of raw meat and chopped up peppers mixed with various chopped up green vegetables the whole held together with a soup of pa dek. In the evening a court of love is held and the mo lam (professional singers) are also invited. At the end of this first night, the bonzes climb into the pulpit before daybreak to read the legend of Nang Kho Sop. 527 773

"In the olden days a grain of rice was as big as a gourd. It was cut down with an axe. Then Nang Kho Sop (the soul of rice) became angry at this barbarous treatment and flew away. Since then this feast has been celebrated so that the soul will return."

The reading closes as day breaks, and offerings are made to the bonzes. At the close of the prayer, each one of the faithful, before rising, sprinkles a few drops of water on the ground so that Nang Thorani may bear witness to their alms and so that the goddess may not forget to count it among the merits he has acquired for his future lives.

[69] The owner takes a basket filled with boiled chicken, alcohol, sweet potatoes, and all kinds of tuberous roots. He goes by himself into his rice field and walks over it in every direction, at the same time calling the soul of rice to thank it for having made his fields bear fruit and to beg it to continue being equally generous to him in future years. He offers it all the food in the basket saying: Soul of Rice, here are tuberous roots for thee, here are buds of cabbage palm, and good alcohol made from thy grain. Soul of Rice, descend on us and preside over the feast I am giving in thy honor! 243 527

10: d'Orleans--332-333 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 776, 826

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "We collect some bivalve fossils as we come down, half-way from the summit, being a covered terrace with a building, inside which is a bath-shaped cavity with five marks supposed to have been made [333] by the foot of Buddha when he traversed the Mekong. This is why it is called Pra bate (1) (foot of God).

1. Bate is the word used for the feet of deities or kings; tine for those of ordinary mortals."

68: Mouhot--134 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 291, 302, 164, 826

"The Laotians [HD: in the territory between Loeui and Pak Lai] much resemble the Siamese: a different pronunciation and slow manner of speech being all that distinguishes their language. The women wear petticoats, and keep their hair long, which, when combed, gives the younger ones a more interesting appearance than those have who live on the banks of the Menam; but, at an advanced age, with their unkempt locks thrown negligently over one temple, and their immense goîtres, which they admire, they are repulsively ugly."

to get something which is above the head of someone else. A polite 576
person realizes that it is very impolite to touch the head of another /826/
person, even that of his closest friend. To hit someone over the head with the mak kok is a very grave offense. The mak kok, which signifies olive, is a fist formed in such a manner that the middle finger sticks out beyond the other fingers. To point out an object with one's foot is the gesture of a very crude person. A polite person always avails himself of the index finger of his right hand to point out something to someone.

On a visit.--When one arrives at the house of a Laotian 574
one walks very softly and greets in the Laotian manner. If the owner 576
of the house /973/ extends his hand, one should greet him in the European manner. Once in the living room one must wait till one is told "Sit down" before sitting down. The polite person asks his guest to sit down immediately after the exchange of greetings.

When you enter the house of a European, never walk in stealthily the way you do with a Laotian. The European would think that you had come to stab him. You should walk in such a way that he can hear you, without, at the same time, stamping on the floor with all your strength because you would, in so doing, frighten the master of the house. Before entering, you must knock on the door quite forcefully; then you must wait till you are told: "Come in!" or till someone comes to open the door for you. The Laotian visitor does not dare knock on the door for fear of committing an impoliteness, but he coughs outside the door.

In the living room the master of the house has arranged all the furniture in a certain way. When you are invited to sit down, /353/
you should do so without moving the chair that is designated to you. If you are offered a cigarette, you may refuse politely if you do not not smoke. If you do smoke, you should accept it. You will notice that there are ash-trays in the room. Use them. Do not drop the ashes from your cigarette on the table, the chair or on the floor.

To receive something from a superior, the polite Laotian extends his right hand supported by his left hand.

Visiting the sick.--When one of our acquaintances has fallen 734
sick, we must inquire about him by paying him a visit. If one is prevented from doing so by something important, one can have a

149; Reinach--118 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Death is produced by a lack of harmony and equilibrium among the elements.
Sympathy of the spirits produces a man.
Antipathy of the spirits produces a saint.
He who understands this can transform his nature and reach a point where he knows neither birth nor suffering nor death.
He will not know desire or grief!
He who, as he draws his last breath, repents of all his faults in deed, intention and thought regains his original purity. His soul goes to paradise so that, after "time" has passed, it may again be incarnated at the epoch of "rebirth" in the body of a good, just and happy man.

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2. We shall now give an extract from the work of Captain Gosselin, who gives a good definition of the spirits or souls in Laotian beliefs which are particular to each human organ and faculty. His description will be found to agree with what we have said at the beginning of this chapter.

[159] "The existence of man consists in the union of several organs, the cooperation of which helps to regularize the mechanism of vital formation. Over each of these organs presides an immortal personality which is called the soul of the organ. These souls, which are thirty-two in number, are as follows:

"The soul of hair on the head; the soul of body hair; the soul of the fingernails; the soul of the teeth; the soul of the skin; the soul of the flesh; the soul of the nerves; the soul of the bones; the soul of the cartilages; the soul of the glands; the soul of the heart; the soul of the spleen; the soul of the peritoneum; the soul of the liver; the soul of the lungs; the soul of the large intestine; the soul of the small intestine; the soul of digested food; the soul of food to be digested; and the soul of the brain.

"These twenty organs are produced by the male substances, that is to say by the father. The twelve others originate from female substances, or the mother. They are:

"The soul of the bile; the soul of glutinous matter; the soul of the synovia; the soul of the blood; the soul of the sweat; the soul of

774 foul-smelling matter; the soul of tears; the soul of liquid fat; the
827 soul of the saliva; the soul of matter secreted by the brain; the soul of the marrow; and the soul of the urine.

774 "The following must be added to the union of these organs for the formation of a man;

828 "Consciousness, name, individuality, image and the faculty of memory.

[822] "The four fundamental elements--earth, air, water and fire.

"And finally the five moral faculties;

"The faculty of distinguishing; the faculty of reflection; the faculty of judgment; the faculty of thought; and the ideal faculty of the soul, which is the source of love of the beautiful.

774 "Man is formed of all these diverse elements.

"Immediately after death all these souls or faculties fly off into
775 the air like a swarm of bees, separate from one another, and each one follows the path indicated by destiny. Of those which have done good on earth, some go directly to heaven and are used in the formation of an angel, while the others are reborn again in our world where they help in the creation of a man who is to lead a happy life full of wealth and honor. Those souls or faculties, on the other hand, which have contributed to evil actions appear before the Phaya-Nhom-Phi-Bane, the king of the nether regions, who judges them immediately and condemns them to tortures which may be more or less cruel depending on their degree of guilt.

"Once dispersed these souls can no longer recognize one another if they should meet again. On their way they meet other souls which are wandering like themselves and come from other parts of the world, and by their union, if God so ordains, they form the elements necessary to the birth of another man.

"The absence of memory and the complete forgetfulness of what has happened before their dispersion prevent the souls which are used in the vital mechanism of new births [160] from having any consciousness of their past existences. On the other hand, physical and moral resemblances between persons of different blood are due to the combining of souls which belonged to various individuals" (1).

(1) Captain Gosselin, op. cit. [Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900.]

10: d'Orleans--314 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 753, 771, 787, 828

"The great development of the Buddhist creed does not prevent superstitions of another order from being prevalent among the multitude, superstitions the trace of which is easily followed at the great festivals that always appertain to ancient traditions or to the dread of evil spirits. Diseases are regarded in the light of persons, and when the cholera made its appearance here last year, one of the mandarins went round the town at the head of a squad of soldiers who executed discharges of musketry at the gates to drive away the enemy. But the native chief was not rewarded for his zeal, as two days after, as the story goes, the cholera appeared to him in a dream and reproached him for trying to drive it away, saying that in coming to Luang Prabang it was simply doing its duty. As a punishment for his conduct, the cholera announced to him his approaching death, and when the mandarin woke up he was so terrified by the dream that he fell ill and died three days afterwards."

774 foul-smelling matter; the soul of tears; the soul of liquid fat; the
827 soul of the saliva; the soul of matter secreted by the brain; the soul of the marrow; and the soul of the urine.

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"The faculty of distinguishing; the faculty of reflection; the faculty of judgment; the faculty of thought; and the ideal faculty of the soul, which is the source of love of the beautiful.

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775 the air like a swarm of bees, separate from one another, and each one follows the path indicated by destiny. Of those which have done good on earth, some go directly to heaven and are used in the formation of an angel, while the others are reborn again in our world where they help in the creation of a man who is to lead a happy life full of wealth and honor. Those souls or faculties, on the other hand, which have contributed to evil actions appear before the Phaya-Nhom-Phi-Bane, the king of the nether regions, who judges them immediately and condemns them to tortures which may be more or less cruel depending on their degree of guilt.

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"The absence of memory and the complete forgetfulness of what has happened before their dispersion prevent the souls which are used in the vital mechanism of new births [160] from having any consciousness of their past existences. On the other hand, physical and moral resemblances between persons of different blood are due to the combining of souls which belonged to various individuals" (1).

(1) Captain Gosselin, op. cit. [Le Laos et le Protectorat français, 1900.]

10: d'Orleans--308 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 183, 512, 641, 831

"It may be asked how do the Laotians spend their time if they are lazy and have scarcely any occupation? The answer is easy--the greater part of their days and nights being employed in paying court to the young ladies and in services at the pagoda.

Formerly there was a law dispensing the young men from military service and taxation upon the ground that their first duty was towards the young women and although this law is repealed de jure, it still serves as a rule of conduct and reveals the spirit of this people."

10: d'Orleans--321 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 438, 777, 831, 842

[LSS: in the market of Luang Prabang] "There are amulets, wild boar tusks, pyrites, and fossils rolled up in thin silver thread, some of these latter being supposed to possess the power of fecundation, while others are obscene."

149: Reinach--156 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

764
538
831

Ever since the death, singers and improvisers of both sexes accompanied by volunteer musicians had recounted the merits, qualities and exploits of the deceased at great length and with emphasis before a numerous audience which remained attentive and never grew tired. They boasted of his good deeds, listed his particular habits and tastes and enumerated his many children and grandchildren.

They dwelled with great satisfaction on the intimacies which he had taken with the fair sex up to quite an advanced age, and in support of their remarks showed brightly illuminated drawings painted on long streamers of glazed calico. These drawings, as much by the truth of the attitudes shown as by their outrageous realism, were the joy of the spectators. Both children and adults roared with laughter as they listened to the highly spicy commentary of the improvisers.

A curious fact was that this exhibition did not occasion any obscene or even suggestive gesture on the part of the audience.

[532]
[792]

The bonzes, who are the only art students in this country, are the ones who color these pictures. If published in our own land, the latter would certainly call down all the rigor of the law on their author.

764

The day of cremation finally came, and the funeral proper began.

One of the sons of the deceased first set free two pairs of partridges and turtledoves, pet birds which he had had. The poor creatures were unaccustomed to flight and refused to leave their cage, but then beat their wings and clumsily escaped to a perch a few meters above ground on one of the trees [207] in the garden. A trail of ashes was spread all around the fence surrounding the house of the deceased in order, as popular belief has it, to prevent his spirit from escaping into the nearby region and tormenting the living.

[175]

A solid bamboo stretcher which twelve hardy men would carry on their shoulders was placed on the ground to await the catafalque. Attendance was heavy, and people of all ages came from a distance. They wore their holiday clothes with vivid, light and iridescent colors. They wore flowers in their ears and hair and carried multicolored streamers, wax candles and sticks of incense in their hands.

[292]

The members of the family, the officials of the Muong and the bonzes were also there in force.

The catafalque was carried from the house by hand and put down on the stretcher, which the porters then raised to their shoulders. At its base, near the feet of the deceased, was fastened a strip of calico

satisfaction and finds a pleasant test of his abilities in setting words to refrains whose meaning is unknown and in stimulating laughter or pleasant and amusing ideas in his audience, either by vaunting the joys of love and the plastic perfections of the human body, or by recalling [217] useful or pleasant memories, or by honoring justice and goodness. The morals of these folk, who are indolent because they are content with very little and are happy and healthy, and to whom all our subtleties are unknown, permit the greatest license in songs and improvisations and the greatest realism and crudity in the expression of thoughts. 538 538 831

In spite of this, there is not the least unhealthy intention in either the poet or his audience. As we have seen above in connection with burials, children of both sexes attend all these festivities accompanied by their parents. They all take pleasure in the same refrains and laugh at the same funny sayings, not because they are vicious but because they are pure pagans for whom enjoyment and pleasure are like gods. The songs are animated by graceful gestures, and together with the music form a whole which is poetic according to their particular esthetic canons and which is simply a manifestation of art and not an indication of loose morals. [535

Theater. The Laotians also have a dramatic repertory consisting of longwinded plays, epics, religious and warlike stories, romantic tales, ancient legends, etc. These poems are played by several actors, with an orchestra and supernumeraries, and require many very ornate costumes which have not varied in form since the earliest times. Usually, however, the costumes are mere tinsel. 536

Like the Cambodian and Siamese theater from which it comes, the Laotian theater interprets age-old works taken from the Védas, the Ramayana or the Mahabharata. To this repertory are added purely Kmer plays and various adaptations of Burmese origin which are performed in the classical costumes and in which a strong tinge of comedy and modernism and a bit of satire are mingled with the ancient traditions. [171 178]

Women are excluded from the theater, and the female roles are played by young men. As in the case of songs and improvisations, dramatic knowledge, the repertory of plays and the art of acting are handed down from father to son. The actors are called Lakhone and plays are called Kam-Kong-Lakhone or Kam-Kong [218] Fone-Lakhone if they include dances or ballets. Finally, one last dramatic genre [462]

inside is lacquered red. 526 501

The pirogues are manned by forty or fifty oarsmen who half [225] [Illustration] [226] [Blank page] [227] crouch and half sit in pairs on what amount to thwarts made of bamboo and joined to a framework. The oarsmen face forward as they paddle, holding their blade in both hands and not supporting it on any point of the boat. A pirogue chief, usually a mandarin, is in the prow, and in the stern is the pilot, who jumps about and stimulates the whole crew with his shouts and gestures. Amidships there are sometimes musicians, with kene, gong and tom-tom, and two or three trained men who, their belts [Illustration here] adorned with enormous jointed "lingams," dance the "Phallic" standing up with their feet on the edges of the pirogue and declaim occasional odes and improvisations the terms of which are extremely crude.(1). In their songs they invite beings, 831 535

(1) In southern Laos the men who perform these dances hold grotesque masks in front of their faces with their hands.

plants and elements to unite, combine and fertilize one another so as to maintain "Life" in all its forms on the surface of the earth.

The crews of the different racing pirogues are clothed in different colors, like the jackets of our jockeys, and they vie ardently with one another, making the water fly to surpass their own efforts. The crew which reaches the finish line first manifests its enthusiasm by [228] standing up in the pirogue, uttering shouts of triumph and brandishing the oars. Oftentimes all these uncoordinated movements result in throwing everybody into the water, but the pirogue is soon righted and emptied to the accompaniment of roars of laughter and the crew members take up their posts again, ready for a new race.

Racing pirogues are not launched until the time when they are to be used. Ordinarily they are stored on sawhorses and under sheds on the grounds of certain pagodas whose bonzes are responsible for their upkeep, and for storing the oars and accessories and clothing of the oarsmen.

Certain pirogues are held in common by the inhabitants of a village, while others are the property of particular rich men, muong chiefs or high mandarins who have had them built at their own expense and pay for their upkeep and for that of their crew of oarsmen. In Laos a man will become the owner of a racing pirogue as in France one might become the owner of a racing stable. The racehorse 422. 501 526

796 It is not necessary to delay here over the licentious scenes, the songs
83 with words defying decency, the action of special marionettes, all
789 the allusions to the relationship between men and women intended to stimulate the fertility of the earth by sympathetic magic, all of which are well-known rites from classic antiquity up to ancient China. We will refer the reader to the authoritative study on the cycle of The Golden Bough by Sir James Frazer.

796 But what is the exact origin of this feast? Some claim that it is peculiar to Vientiane and has been celebrated in other towns of Laos only within the last twenty years. This comment is of capital interest. For, after the pillaging of Vientiane in 1827 by the Siamese General Phya Bodin, the majority of the population of Vientiane was deported to the right bank of the Mekong. Gradually the town was re-peopled by people coming from Tran-Ninh. Now it is a curious fact that on all the rocket shafts there is a strange decorative design whic is similar to those seen on bracelets and necklaces in the region of Xieng Khouang. Some [40] reliable authors having put out the hypothesis that the designs on these necklaces were the survival of an ancient solar cult, should one conclude that the rockets are the last misunderstood vestiges of an ancient fire worship, formerly practised by the populations of Tran Ninh? But then, at what time and under the influence of what rite, did this fire worship become transformed into a ceremony to obtain rain? The question remains open and perhaps future research and discoveries will give an explanation of this feast which is one of the most original and least known of Laos.

The Sacrifice of the Buffalo.

796 The sacrifice of the buffalo takes place at about the same time
782 as the feast of the rockets. This ceremony is known to all the Indonesian people of southeastern Asia, and its survival in Laos is of the greatest interest in the study of the antecedents of this country.

This ceremony is spread out through the months of May and June when the rainy season begins. It is found in western Laos where, according to a Pali chronicle, a Laotian king of Xieng Mai, who had no faith, adored demons and sacrificed buffaloes to the genii of the woods, the trees, the mountains, etc....

At Vientiane, near the Jules Bosc Avenue, can be seen a large stone which the Laotians worship as being a grain of rice. The buffalo is killed near this stone. A Nang Thyem woman, "inspired or possessed, after a series of invocations and ritual dances, pours water from a teapot onto the stone, while the by-standers flood the same stone with

10: d'Orleans--264 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
!16, 302, 832

"The women are not so shy here as in Upper Tonkin. They bathe in the river without troubling themselves about us. One young girl is coloured yellow with saffron, and we are told that this is done from coquetry. Most of them wear a small chignon, in which they often place flowers."

10: d'Orleans--279 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 522, 533, 563, 832 Ethnic subgroups

"They [LSS: Kha boatmen in the service of a Laotian] are in good spirits, and chat from one pirogue to the other, or sing in answer to the women, who are bathing at the water's edge. The men inquire if they are married, and invite them to follow them, in case their hearts are free. The songs, often improvised, are upon subjects referring to love. They also try to frighten the buffaloes that, half hidden in the water, only show their back and the head which they hold horizontally; but the great stupid animals pay no attention to the shouts, they let us pass, contemplating us with an air of fatalistic resignation; but they do not move. In the evening our boatmen ask permission to go to the village. We grant it and follow them, however a few are left behind to keep watch over the pirogues."

10: d'Orleans--279-280 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 517, 584, 832 Ethnic subgroups

"Here we shall have a first glimpse of the customs of Laos; this strange country where love is held in such great respect, that it might be called the kingdom of the flirt. We walk up to the town, and find in the centre a square platform raised upon four posts; from [280] a fireplace formed of stones held in position by woven mats a few logs are throwing a feeble light over the scene. A young girl is seated, a scarf of orange silk knotted upon one shoulder, cleaning cotton by separating it from the seed by hand. Near her stands one of our boatmen, in a small white cloth jacket ornamented with European copper buttons, he is paying compliments to her. Holding one of her hands, he takes out the flowers she has placed in her hair, and passes them through the lobe of his ear. Further on, upon the terrace of a house, another young girl is talking to her lover; a small lamp gives them light, and they are playing at dinner or preparing betel for each other. They will, perhaps, chat together every night, in this way, for several months, simply exchanging ideas before coming to a definite understanding --a marriage generally follows."

10: d'Orleans--308 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 533, 562, 832

"The men gossip with the girls, give them flowers, play to them, recite verses, sing them songs and play at cards with them, but never dance with them. Men and women walk through the streets singing, in groups where the two sexes are apart, or sit opposite the one to the other at the entrance to the pagodas. I shall have an opportunity of recurring to these peculiar love-makings, and I have noticed that, in contradistinction to what generally takes place in the East, here it is the young women who dominate the men, who go through the form of beating them, if necessary, and who condescend to cast an amorous glance at them or to respond to their compliments."

10: d'Orleans--351-352 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 521, 527, 534, 832

[LSS: during the Ngones ceremonies which are part of the Laotian New Year celebration.] "Facing the girls were seated one or two groups of young men playing upon the guitar, the tam-tam and a sort of Laotian organ made of bamboo. Several of them are singing, but when they do so they put a corner of their scarf over their head so as not to be seen, while others take up the chorus. While the singing is in progress, conversation is allowed to go on between the young men and the girls, each of [352] the former taking up his place opposite the girl of his fancy. This goes on until two in the morning, being much like the flirtation of other countries, with this difference that there is no dancing and that conversation with the unmarried girls is more free than with married women."

10: d'Orleans--352 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 527, 539, 832

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]
"In one of the pagodas we visit, I can hear the prayers of the bonzes mingling with the soft whisperings of the love-stricken swain, one of whom delivers himself thus:--
'Oh! my love, you who are my very own heart, I love none but you. It is you only whom I love. You are white and green like the eggs of a crow. I implore of you to be my life.' "

23: Franck--298-299 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 832

"The gay garments, especially of the female branch of the population, make doubly picturesque the market and the long lanes of greenery that represent streets. The women of Luang Prabang capital, unlike their country sisters in the rest of the kingdom, usually wear a thin silk or cotton scarf of bright color over their bare breasts, half covering them, and slipping coquettishly off when they wish to make an impression on one of the opposite sex. The Laosian women of the bush think no more of their uncovered breasts than they do of their bare feet; these sophisticated girls of the silken scarf in the capital recognize them as an asset. There was something about their every gesture that recalled our own flappers--with betel-nut taking the place of gum and of lip-stick. Yet their coquetry may be largely innocent, for the French assured me, in some cases rather regretfully, I [299] thought, that in Laos there are few of the congaie facilities so common in Annam."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 A M1 Indochina
Moi AM9
M'nong

and we were down to the nursing-mothers, who, removing their 273
babies from the breast and passing them to onlookers, tripped lightly 574
towards us. Although the rice-alcohol, with its queer burnt-cereal taste, was weaker than usual, my friends said, it was beginning to take effect. The Moïs had slipped into an easy-going joviality and the [832] ●
nursing-mothers received some mild familiarities, for which they exchanged good-natured slaps. Their capacity for alcohol, though, was greater than that of the elder ladies, and they were not to be deceived by a mere pretence of drinking on our part. Calling for beakers they sucked up the alcohol, spat libations, syphoned off liquor until the beakers were filled, and presented them to us. Taking stock of the situation we saw that we had drunk our way to within two nursing-mothers of those perfect young representatives of the Polynesian race, the chief's daughters, who flung us occasional glances from between sweeping lashes. But we were all flagging, dizzy with the alcohol and the stunning reverberation of the gongs. And the morning was wearing on. It would have been difficult to imagine our condition by the time we had drunk our way down to an interesting social level. The Moïs encouraged us with smiles and gestures, but we could do no more.

It was at a village in the vicinity of Buon Dieo, where two years 683
previously an extraordinary affair had taken place. A family of 695
eight persons were suspected of magic practices to the detriment of 754
the village. According to local custom a representative was chosen 755
as accuser and a trial by ordeal arranged. This consisted of the 776
villagers' champion and the head of the accused family plunging 787
their heads under water, the first to withdraw his head, in this case the accused, being held to have lost the day. According to the rulings of customary law governing this rather unusual case the charged persons were found to be possessed by certain minor demons, located in each case in a bodily organ. The general attitude thus was a sympathetic one. The prisoners were regarded

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595 in each center who will represent him, handle business in his absence,
485 collect at leisure the stock of trading merchandise needed for the next [195] trip, and also provide a home for him where he is sure to find a smiling face and a warm welcome in the course of his wanderings.

554 Among the nobility and the so-called princely families polygamy
595 is the rule and is almost obligatory for the sake of prestige, which demands a greater or lesser number of concubines depending on the husband's rank. It may sometimes happen, for various reasons, that there are two wives whose progeniture enjoy a higher rank and inherit the titles and duties of the father. It also happens, in this social milieu, that the first wife or wives will see that their husband is growing old, worn out and morose, and will seek to distract him during his last years by making him marry quite young girls for whom he is more of a father than a husband but who give him the illusion of rejuvenation and bring joy and gaiety into the house with the light of their youth (1).

(1) Thanks to the docile character of Laotian women in general, and also to the atavistic imprint of custom which makes them regard polygamy as an entirely natural status, peace and harmony are rarely troubled in such households. A hierarchy naturally arises among the various wives and concubines. Each of them remains in the place assigned to her by the date of her entry into the household and enjoys any special favors which may be conferred on her by their common husband without arousing any jealousy.

Quarrels between wives are so rare that when one does by chance occur the corporal punishments decreed by ancient custom are unhesitatingly applied. The situation is of such a nature as to preserve among Laotian wives a spirit of conciliation and amiability which is not the least of their charms.

832 Kissing. Punishment for amatory offenses. Like most of the
834 peoples of the Far East, the Laotians do not indulge in kissing, at least not in the European manner. They rub their noses against the skin of their children or wives and sniff more or less noisily.

Although the morals of the Laotians seem excessively free to us and their remarks, songs and gestures often border on what we would describe as obscenity, we should not conclude that the Laotians are deliberately lewd or cynical. They are instinctively careful to be

decently covered at all times, [196] especially in public. There is nothing to shock one's modesty, then, if their clothing is by some chance disordered or even if they take it off completely, as when bathing. It may be said that Laotians of both sexes feel the utmost repugnance to disrobing when they sense that they are observed. 832 834

Although it is true that during festivals and certain public celebrations the men parade "phalli" and make suggestive gestures, and that extremely licentious remarks are exchanged on such occasions, we should remember that all these actions are a vestige of the paganism under which the male organ was glorified as an emblem of generation. The acts are much rather the traces of a rite surviving from a religion of the earliest times than an obscene provocation made before an audience in which there are a large number of children.

The sentiment of pudicity is so very real in Laos, despite appearances to the contrary, that the laws specify comparatively heavy punishments for contact in public between individuals of opposite sexes. These penalties vary with the acts committed, which are classified in three categories: 684

1. Clasping the waist, kissing;
2. Touching the breasts, fondling;
3. Rape.

Prison, corporal punishments and fines are the penalties applied to offenders. They vary in severity depending on the rank of the girl or wife, that is to say depending on whether she is of common, noble or royal blood. Sentence may be pronounced by the court on the basis merely of a statement by the plaintiff, or on the basis of a statement by a third party, whether an eyewitness, relative, friend or simple passerby.

The fines paid by gallants who are too enterprising and not sufficiently discreet are used as offerings accompanied by propitiatory sacrifices either to the protective "Phis" of the victims or to the Spirits or Genii of their region or house. It is customary, finally, to offer a feast to nearby relatives and friends whom one may suppose to have been offended by the reprehensible acts of the guilty parties. [197] [Illustration] [198] [Blank page] [199]

Adultery. Divorce. "Since natural inclinations are rarely opposed in Laos, and since divorce is an extremely simple matter through mere mutual consent, cases of adultery are very rare.

"Divorces, on the other hand, are numerous.

10: d'Orleans--266 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
563, 834 Ethnic subgroups

"... amongst the Thaï's of the Black River, the men never hesitate to strip themselves, and enter the water; but the women appear more reserved."

10: d'Orleans--266 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 396, 462, 697, 834

[LSS: at Muong Ngoi] "As I walk down by the side of the river I find a very animated scene; prisoners are going to and fro with manacles on their legs, which do not seem to inconvenience them at all. Elsewhere, men are making rafts and cutting planks; some of them are sawing a tree; they work horizontally, in pairs, putting in wedges as they advance. Women are fetching water in buckets made of bamboo tubes; they take the opportunity of bathing, and do not seem hindered by any bashful feelings. There is a curious remark to make on this point: amongst the Thai's of the Black River, the men never hesitate to strip themselves, and enter the water; but the women appear more reserved; here, on the contrary, they are the ones that feel no shame, whilst their husbands seem to avoid undressing in our presence."

23: Franck--257-258 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 684, 834

"The conversation hovered chiefly about the women of Laos. The lieutenant [EJ: an officer in the Foreign Legion stationed in Laos] asserted, and was borne out by his wilderness companion of the sex under discussion, that to touch the [258] hair or breasts of a Laosian woman is a more serious crime than actual violation. In fact Laosian law prescribes a much more serious penalty for the former than for the latter indiscretion, and the lieutenant in his judicial capacity had often been called upon to try cases under this strange code. Naturally, he explained, again abetted by his lady-love, what the Western world considers the lesser of the two crimes might be committed entirely against the will of the victim, while the other...In brief, here was an example of Oriental wisdom to which the other side of the earth has not yet attained.

In a case of what, in the language we were then using, is called tromper le mari, the Laosians again outdid us in their sense of justice. By their law the lover is punished for the first offense, the woman for the second, and the husband for the third! For, as the lieutenant said, and his domestic partner again agreed, the woman who is party to such an act a second time must have some of the guilt; and the husband who is so inattentive as to be trompé three times is either a fool or is knowingly permitting it, and deserves punishment in either case."

68: Mouhot--272 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 155, 834, 515

"The men of this nation [HD: i.e. Luang Prabang] are dull and apathetic and full of small vices. The women are generally better, and some of them are even pretty in spite of their yellow skins, but they have little idea of modesty. The men and women all bathe together without any clothing. But for the people, Louang Prabang would be one of the most charming places in the world: the lake of Geneva does not present scenes more beautiful than many here by the river."

438
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10: d'Orleans--308-311 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 582, 684, 836, 848

"Some flirtations are durable, for a young man who has paid court for a long time to a girl generally ends by making her his mistress, but this is not looked upon as at all dishonourable, for there are a great many unmarried women mothers, and some of them are held in as much respect as those [pages 309 and 310 contain illustration] [311] that are married, while marriage often follows the birth of a child. Moreover, if the girl informs her parents and reveals the name of her lover, the latter is bound to pay a fine of about fifteen rupees, or to marry her. All assaults upon women are taxed at varying rates, there being different fines for a kiss upon the mouth or upon the arm, and for rape."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

403 electricians hugged each other, and, enchanted by the din, the
527 audience began to drift away from the theatre and make for the dancing floor.

527 The second attraction in order of popularity was a love-court. A
584 quadrangular arrangement of tables had been formed, covered by a
782 thatched roof raised on posts decorated with woven bamboo
793 representations of animals, weapons and phallic emblems. Seated round the tables in the interior of the square were the girls, and their suitors sat facing them. Between the couples had been placed offerings of food, brought by the girls. Originally a tribute to some ancient, forgotten fertility god, a primeval Thai Venus, the offerings would be given, next day, to the bonzes. All through the night the bantering of witticisms, the singing and the exchange of improvised verse would go on, accompanied by the accordion-like
[534] wheezings of the Kène, the Stone Age gourd pipes of Laos. Sometimes through a happy fault in the circuit the splutter and bellow of the loud-speakers would suddenly lapse, and you heard the beehive dronings of the communal love-making, the kènes, and the voice of the presiding bonze, preaching continually in an archaic, incomprehensible language from the wicker cage into which he had been fastened. The cage symbolized the protection of his religion from these earthly distractions. As soon as inspiration failed he would be relieved by the next on the rota of preachers, waiting now to take his place.

584 Love-courts are the accepted preliminary to the consummation of
[533] affairs of the heart, which — despite European conviction that
576 romantic love is a Western invention — are accompanied in Laos by much versifying and mild, self-imposed frustrations. When, for instance, a well-known beauty is wooed by a number of suitors, a serenading match may be arranged on the veranda of her house to permit her to test under competitive conditions the poetic and musical capabilities of each of them. Complete pre-marital freedom
[836] is recognized, but much outward reserve is maintained. There is a time and place for everything. It is incorrect, for example, to

moreover, the object of the utmost scorn on the part of the whole 548
population, and their houses are relegated to points outside the muong, that is to say outside the city.

No such practice exists in rural areas, and if a few girls grant 836
their lovers great intimacies it is in the hope--a hope which is almost always realized--that marriage will be the result.

Death, burial, cremation. In principle, Laotians are supposed 764
to cremate their dead. In this they are obedient to the ancient traditions which specified this ceremony, but since cremation is a 766
costly practice poor people are simply buried.

In certain cases, as in deaths resulting from dysentery epidemics, from childbirth, from suicide, etc., the bodies are thrown into the river or its tributaries.

Laotians have no cemeteries enclosed by walls or barriers. A corner of the forest near the muong or village is reserved for this use and serves as a last resting place for those of the inhabitants who cannot be cremated or should not be thrown into the water. There, at the foot of the trees and in their shade, repose those adults and adolescents whose families did not even have means to buy the ritual cremation firewood, and also the children who never underwent the operation of "cutting the forelock" (1).

(1) This operation takes place at the age of thirteen and marks the transition from childhood to adolescence. It is the sign of [881]
nubility.

When it is to be buried, the body of the dead person is placed in 764
a sort of coffin made of ax-hewn planks which are usually poorly joined and covered with colored paper burdened with ornamentation. 792
Sometimes a mat is used, in simpler fashion, or else lattices made of split and crushed bamboo stalks like those which form the floors of houses. The whole is tied together with rattan or with bamboo bark.

This is the lot of destiny's outcasts. After a few family ceremonies and a feast given in the dead person's home [201]--the magnitude of which ceremonies and feast vary depending on the dead person's station in life and his family's resources--the bonzes, accompanied by a few pupils, come and recite the funeral orisons.

The bonzes are not supposed to look at the body during their prayers, and they hold up a screen called Talapat to hide their faces.

149: Reinach--166 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Since there is not, so to speak, any class of salaried workers in Laos except in certain types of work and in transport by pirogues and rafts, the inhabitants of any given center lend one another their help in farming, harvesting, building houses or pirogues, etc. Taking turns, the one who has asked help of his neighbors will put on a celebration for them when the work is over, and will himself receive an invitation from someone else in return for help which he has given.

[192]

Laotian celebrations, in which the bonzes are never forgotten, are usually given under the verandas of the pagodas or in their dependencies, unless they take place in the host's own home or under sheds specially constructed for the purpose on one side. The latter is always the case in a "Ngan" given for those who have helped in building a house, and the same is true for a birth or marriage.

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Celebrations generally begin towards four or five in the afternoon when the heat is beginning to wane. They last all night and sometimes resume on the following day after the guests have relaxed for a few hours. Some "Ngans" go on in this way for nearly a week and are interrupted only by the coming of the Laotian sabbath, a day of absolute rest when only the preparation of food is permitted, and no work or pleasure. By the light of kerosene lamps borrowed here and there, or of resinous torches, the girls, who are decked out in all their finery, are stationed in a line squatting down against a wall or partition. Before them there are [221] vases made of copper, silver or porcelain. They all pretend to be busy with minor tasks and may imitate, for example, the preparation of food. But in reality this is only their way of keeping some kind of countenance.

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The adults and children of both sexes are massed at each end of the row of girls. Then the young men, their heads covered with scarves, come and squat down opposite the girls and with their heads still covered begin an animated conversation which soon turns into regular flirting. If there is enough space the orchestra takes up its position nearby and in the center, between the young people, are the singers, improvisers and "Kene" players. Cakes, fruit, quids of betel, cigarettes, rice brandy and various condiments are passed around.

Spectators who have not been specially invited come and stand behind the young people, as do passersby who drop in for a quid, a cigarette, a cup of brandy or a bowl of rice, or to listen to the songs and music for a little while.

527 From time to time a girl will get up and leave the celebration.
836 She is soon followed by a young man, and both disappear into the
584 shadows, escorted for form's sake by a little boy or girl. This is the beginning of a liaison and will doubtless end in marriage, unless the young gallant is in too much of a hurry, clumsy or flighty and finds himself faced with paying one of the special fines if he compromises the girl and refuses to make up for it.

782 Offerings to the pagodas. There are other "Ngans" which have a
527 half profane and half religious purpose. That is to say, they are established either to thank heaven for a lucky event or to solicit its
531 clemency. They may occur, for example, either to celebrate a return to health after a long illness, or the success of a trading season or hunting or fishing expedition, or to call down blessings from on high on a trip which is being made or planned, etc. These types of "Ngans" then involve offerings to the pagodas and to the bonzes, offerings which bear the name of "Tone-Pheung" (literally, wax cut in pieces). They are so named because of the wax imitation flowers which decorate [222] a kind of pyramid or small pagoda supporting them, called "Pha-Sate" (in French, Faithful to God).

These little edifices are built and decorated by the friends or guests with a rapidity, a taste and an elegance which would be astounding if we did not know the degree to which artistic feeling is innate in the Laotian, and if we were not aware of the prodigious skill with which he is endowed.

Built on a bamboo framework covered with pieces of banana wood, carved with festoons and ornamental moldings, and arranged in tiers of roofs, in minarets and in columns, these "Pha-Sate," which are always between one and two meters in height, seem to be made of ivory and affect an extraordinary variety of forms each of which is more graceful than the last and which seem to be inspired by the architecture of the pagodas of India, Cambodia and Burma.

It will not be in vain to note that the only purpose of these ephemeral edicules, which will keep their new look for only a short while, is merely to present the wax offering in a less banal and more artistic manner than if it had been given in the form of thick, heavy, massive blocks.

The "Pha-Sate" are mounted on stretchers which are carried by men. Besides their wax flowers, they are decorated with natural

10: d'Orleans--311 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 586, 593, 627, 684, 837

"Adultery with a married woman, which is of very rare occurrence, entails a fine of 200 rupees; but, after having been very gay in their youth, husband and wife generally settle down quietly, the former often taking it out of his wife for her unceremonious treatment of him beforehand. I happened, while walking about the town one morning, to witness one of these little family scenes. A woman was shrieking and crying because her husband had been beating her, and when I came to question the pair, the man complained that his wife, who had been out to market, had not returned by nine o'clock to get his breakfast ready, so she must have stopped to gossip on the way. Her answer was that she had not heard the gong strike the hour, that she had not stopped on the way home, and that there was no reason why she should have had a beating. The quarrel was eventually made up without having recourse to a divorce, which, though legally recognised, is rarely resorted to."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

and to produce an occasional tranquil canvas, but Luang Prabang has 000 not yet found a Gauguin.

On the day after our arrival I was invited home by Dupont to meet his wife, whose bicycle was still in pieces when he got back. They lived in a charming Mediterranean sort of house that had nestled down well among the pagodas. It was full of animals, including a large, handsome, domesticated goat that delighted to lurk behind furniture and charge unsuspecting guests.

Madame Dupont was pretty and gay, tall for a Laotian and 837 evidently as nearly European in type as Dupont had been able to 588 find. They seemed very attached to each other. Dupont assured me that jealousy was quite unknown in Laos, and that his wife not only expected him to have adulterous adventures while away from home, but actually advised him in the precautions to take. He did not know whether she allowed herself similar liberties, but thought it likely that she did. At all events he didn't see how he could very well show himself less civilized about it than was she. I was sorry not to be able to understand anything his wife said, except the inevitable *bo pen nhang* which was repeated several times. In a polite effort to make me feel at home, Madame Dupont brought out the family snapshot album and we turned the pages together. There were one or two photographs, evidently taken by her husband, of not fully dressed ladies who were also not Madame. She drew my attention to these, giggling slightly.

After supper, an army officer came in with another Laotian lady. Speaking in an extraordinary whisper, he told me that she was a Princess – a member of the royal family – and entitled to a parasol of five tiers. He admitted, quite frankly, that there was no shortage of princesses in Luang Prabang, and all genuine. They had been friends for fifteen years now, he whispered, although they had never troubled to marry . . . why, he couldn't think. It was easy enough. Dupont agreed with him here, mentioning the case of a subordinate of his who had recently arrived. 'At six o'clock,' Dupont said, 'he expressed the wish to get married. My wife went out to look for a

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

837 suitable girl, and was back with one by six-thirty. At seven the
588 bonzès came and performed a marriage ceremony which took half an hour. At seven-thirty we opened a bottle of champagne and drank to the health of the bride and bridegroom, and by eight they were already in bed.'

548 The evening was rounded off by a routine visit to the local opium den, which, probably by design, was as decrepit and sinister as a waxworks exhibit. We stayed only a few minutes in this green-lit, melodramatic establishment, but it was clear that the unprofitable puff at the pipe was not to be avoided. One had to make some show of going to the devil.

000 I was lodged in the minor palace of the *Conseiller de la République*, the senior French official in Northern Laos, a Monsieur Leveau. The *Conseiller* was a man whose shyness and slight reserve of manner failed to mask a quite extraordinary hospitality. He never, for instance, issued a formal invitation to a meal, preferring with an air of casual assumption to say something like: 'Of course, you'll be dining at home tonight.' Monsieur Leveau was married to a Laotian wife, to whom I was not presented, and the huge official building always seemed strangely empty. We dined facing each other across a darkly gleaming wasteland of ambassadorial table. Sometimes a Laotian servant stole into the room carrying dishes; trailing behind him the distant sounds of a domestic interior. These were immediately sealed off by the closing of the door, leaving us to the vault-like silences of the huge room. As we sat there the light bulbs gave out in various parts of the room and were swiftly re-
365 placed. In Luang Prabang the electric current was switched on at the same time as the water was turned off – at seven-thirty. But the result was no more than a feeble striving of the filament, and the lamp in my bedroom produced a light considerably less than that of one candle. Monsieur Leveau partly got over this difficulty by enormously over-running lamps intended for a much lower voltage, but they did not last long.

[at Luang Prabang. 286
--Analyst]

10: d'Orleans--321 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 438, 777, 831, 842

[LSS: in the market of Luang Prabang] "There are amulets, wild boar tusks, pyrites, and fossils rolled up in thin silver thread, some of these latter being supposed to possess the power of fecundation, while others are obscene."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

acknowledge in the street a lady with whom one happens to be on 584
particularly good terms. These things in Laos are fraught with an 576
etiquette which is the legacy of a highly organized society not too
far gone in decay.

The charm of Vientiane lies in the life and the customs of the 346
people. Unless one is an amateur of pagoda architecture there is 531
little else to be seen. The Laotians have preferred to work in wood,
rather than stone, and their art, confined chiefly to the decoration by
religious artists of the doors, pillars and interiors of pagodas,
quickly perishes in such a climate.

Outside the town there is a great, grey, half-decayed *stupa*, built 771
as a tomb for a hair of the Buddha. It is surrounded by a cloister, 755
containing perhaps a thousand Buddha images; a collection of 778
which the people of Vientiane are very proud. But even here,
where the religion is practised in its purest form, there is a little
degeneration, a little backsliding from the lofty philosophic conception; and the taint of magic practices shows itself. Selecting one of
the numerous images as a personal tutelary divinity, the devotee
subjects it to a kind of bribery similar to that sometimes practised
in Southern Europe with images of the saints. In this case the image's
chief function is healing, and when the sufferer recovers from any
complaint he hastens to the pagoda to apply gold-leaf to the part of
the Buddha corresponding to that where he has felt the pain in his
own body. I was interested to deduce from this practice that the
people of Vientiane are much plagued by headaches – perhaps [164]
those which accompany malaria.

Standing in a corner of the sanctuary was an ancient ithyphallic 778
statue, an old Hindu divinity, no doubt, which had been worn 789
smooth in the appropriate parts by the feminine adoration of a 892
thousand years. I was told that the women of the French colony
who wish for a child frequently emulate, their husbands' pose of
Laos-ization by coming here secretly to pay their respects. I 000
wondered whether this clandestine tribute might not be extended

173; Deydier--33 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

The Bassi

782 This is the noble form of the Sou Khouan. It is not necessary to choose a day or a moment for its celebration. The Bassi greets the passing traveler to wish him welcome or a good journey on his departure. This is the typical Laotian ceremony.

Birth

843 Rites de passage. Van Gennep has defined under this name all the prohibitions and ceremonies which the pregnant woman, and one who has given birth, must observe in order to protect herself and her child from harmful influences. In Laos these prohibitions are strictly observed.

During Pregnancy. The woman must follow a certain number of observances in order to avoid the death of the [52] fetus. She must not eat partially hatched eggs, nor larvae of bees for she would make the child wicked like insects. She must not drink hot drinks for the child would be bald, etc. She must not step over a hollow oven for the child would have a harelip, nor over a horse's tether for the child would be a glutton; she must not paint her face for she would make the child frivolous, etc.

Before Delivery. These practices become stricter before her confinement, and others are added to them. The woman about to give birth must not eat round, hard-skinned eggplants, nor sugar cane, for the water bag would break with difficulty. The disorders of taste are due to the desires of the fetus, so these must be satisfied unless the desired dishes are forbidden. She must wear her skirt in such a way that the belt is always at the same height, for otherwise the child would not present itself well. She must not stand in the opening of a doorway, nor sit on a mortar for pounding rice, nor eat rice directly from the pot, for the progression of the fetus would be hindered at the time of birth.

There are also other beliefs. Wearing red garments would bring on hemorrhages, lying on one's back would risk making the placenta adhere, and it would become loose at the time of delivery only with great difficulty. Finally, to visit a woman in childbed might bring on a miscarriage, for the fetus might get the fancy to escape too soon.

When she awakes, the pregnant woman must strike her loins three times with her closed fists wishing at the same time that the placenta detach itself, and that the water bag break easily. In the evening, at the time of her daily bath, she should rub her belly with sand as she faces the setting sun in order to remove the layer of

sebaceous scum of the fetus and so make the birth easier. She should 843
wash her hair from time to time with water in which she has soaked
an eel's tail [53] and some rice. She takes hold of the eel's tail to
tie her hair. This will result in the head of the fetus becoming
more slippery, and the birth will become easier.

If the pregnant woman has to protect herself from spirits, it must 843
not be forgotten that certain of her actions may be disastrous to those 777
around her. She must not enter a new house for fear of attracting ill
fortune to its owner. She must not attend a wedding for she would
bring ill luck to the new couple. The husband of the pregnant woman
loses a part of his khouan (see above). He also becomes unfortunate
in hunting and in games of chance.

The Delivery. This cannot take place in the house of the 844
woman brought to bed, otherwise the greatest misfortune would
descend on the owner of the building. Sometimes the parents have
a cabin built where the woman giving birth will spend the whole time
of her delivery.

When the woman feels the first pains, all objects that are fastened
or hooked on, such as earrings, are removed. She keeps only her
skirt on and remains sitting during the whole time of her labor.
Opposite her hangs a cord to which she holds on at the moment of
birth, for this position will facilitate the descent of the fetus. If
the birth is prolonged, decoctions and liniments are used to help the
operation.

At the time of expulsion, the newly born is left between the
legs of its mother until the delivery. It is only when the placenta
has emerged, that the cord is cut with a bamboo blade. If it were
cut with a steel blade, the child would run the risk of meeting a
violent death. The thread used for tying the cord on girls is taken
from a spinning wheel, so that later she will become a good spinner.
The placenta is usually buried under one of the stairways of the house
[54] otherwise the fertility of the parents would run the risk of drying
up.

After the Delivery. After the delivery, the woman who 846
has given birth sits on a bed of finely pulverized kitchen salt, so that
the after effects may be normal. Than she takes a hot bath and
changes her clothes. After that begins for her the You Kam "to sub-
mit to penitence."

She lies down on a low bed placed against a large clay hearth
of the same size as the bed, on which is a large caldron used to pre-
pare a decoction of aromatic or medicinal plants to be put into the
sitz baths and hot body affusions which she must have frequently.

346 Pagodas are always built on ground which has been perfectly leveled, is quite extensive and is surrounded by a wooden palisade or brick wall of elbow height.

[485] Within the pagoda enclosures there are bonzeries and dependent structures to serve as quarters for the bonzes, schools for their pupils and hostelries for travelers.

735 The construction and upkeep of pagodas are entirely dependent on the generous liberality of the faithful. Thus these edifices can be used
346 as a criterion for discovering both the state of prosperity of a region and the religious faith of its inhabitants.

[778] As used to be the case for our churches, Laotian pagodas and even their enclosures are, according to the customs of the land, sanctuaries which confer immunity against legal prosecution for certain crimes and misdemeanors.

[527] It is also in the enclosure and sometimes under the cloisters and verandas of the pagodas that the inhabitants gather on the legal holidays, and also private holidays, which are known as "Ngans".

844 Childbirth. Dr. Estrade describes the delivery of a woman of southern Laos as follows. The preliminaries, the operation itself and post-delivery procedure are the same, with only slight differences in detail, in northern Laos, and we may therefore quote Dr. Estrade's description as applicable to all of Laos in general.

"Childbirth never takes place in the house inhabited by the pregnant woman or her direct relatives, but always in the home of a neighbor or distant relative who gives hospitality to the patient until she is up and about again. The duration of pregnancy is counted in moons, as in all calculations of time, the moon being the essential element for the Laotian in the measurement of time and the occurrence
777 of a great many phenomena. When a woman reaches the last moon of her pregnancy she takes certain precautions all tending to delay
821 delivery until the first phase of the new moon, since births during the last phases are signs of misfortune [189] such as the death of the child, deformity, etc. These prejudices have such force that parents are
[782] careless in caring for any child born during the last phases of the moon, and in such a case all of their effort goes into prayers, offerings to the bonzes and the making of votive offerings (1)

(1) This assertion should not, however, be taken too literally or in any general sense. This is a prejudice which is kept up by the bonzes in their own self-interest, and is easy to see through. (Author's note.)

149: Reinach--142 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[151] 844

"When a woman feels her first pains she abstains from taking baths and swallows quantities of salt and spiced drinks. She summo a midwife and fastens a cotton thread from the bonzery around the latter's wrists. This precaution might be called the 'sanctification of hands.'

"The midwife comes to stay in the house of her client until after delivery. She is given the choicest food and commands the utmost respect. She may wash her hands only with water which has been perfumed (by means of a variety of mint). Finally, when labor pains begin, the woman sits down with her legs folded and spread wide apart. Her underskirt must be pulled down over her legs and taken in sharply at the waist by a belt. This last precaution is taken so that during the mother's efforts to deliver the child it will not go upwards towards her thorax. The midwife remains in front of the parturient woman, while relatives, friends or, more often, young men hold the woman up and try to divert her with extremely licentious remarks. Some of the young men bring musical instruments, and others bring phalli to which they address such witty reproaches that the patient, despite her pain, responds with an outburst of laughter. There is gambling, drinking and singing, and during all this time the work goes on and the woman gives birth in the midst of the gaiety.

[522]

"No one sees the actual delivery, not even relatives. Only the midwife passes her hands under the skirt and watches attentively so as to intervene if necessary. The child is taken from the mother on a mat, the midwife draws it gently towards her and makes ready to cut the umbilical cord. The latter is cut between two ligatures made with cotton threads, and the actual section made on a weaver's shuttle with a knife which may be more or less ornate depending on the state of the family's fortune (2). The foetal part (about eight

(2) In northern Laos the cord is cut on a cylinder of green bamboo, closed at one end by a joint. The knife is a strip of bamboo cut at a sharp angle so that the siliceous bark forms the cutting edge. All iron or steel instruments are strictly forbidden. (Author's note.)

[412]

centimeters in length) is rolled in leaves of an astringent variety and folded back on the abdomen. The child is then rubbed with slightly spiced oil.

844
846 "In delivery of the afterbirth, which takes place just after the cord has been severed, the midwife pulls on the cord with her right hand while with her left hand she presses [190] on the patient's abdomen so as to force out the placenta (1). When the latter offers

(1) The midwives of Upper Laos do not take any steps to free the placenta. This organ comes out by itself, although the time it takes may vary. After its expulsion it is placed (together with the strip of bamboo used as a knife to cut the cord and with the clots of blood) in the bamboo cylinder mentioned above. Then the whole is immediately buried under the threshold of the house or at the foot of one of the stringers of the ladder or staircase giving access to the house. (Author's note.)

too much resistance the parturient woman lies down on her stomach and presses heavily on the ground, while the midwife continues to pull on the cord and assists the patient's efforts with one hand.

"If a uterine hemorrhage does not ensue the vagina is bathed
846 with spiced water, the patient's legs are placed together and she is then laid in front of a fire of live coals where she must remain for nine days, her abdomen facing the heat (2). During these nine days

(2) Thirty days for primiparous women and from seventeen to twenty days for pluriparous women, in northern Laos. (Author's note.)

she must abstain from eating certain foods, and particularly from chewing betel because of this plant's astringent qualities. She swallows a certain amount of salt every day and drinks laxative tisanes which are often made with grapefruit rinds. The genitalia are bathed for the first five days after delivery, always with slightly spiced water.

"If a uterine hemorrhage occurs after delivery the parturient woman is made to swallow about fifty grams of urine to which a heavy dose of spiced oil has been added. The vagina is bathed with a decoction of highly astringent plants, among which the dried bark of the areca palm may be mentioned.

846 "At the end of confinement the midwife extinguishes the fire
431 herself and receives a few gifts (3) which vary with the condition of

(3) These gifts generally consist of a skirt, a scarf, small jewels,

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wax candles decorated with flowers, cigarettes and a sum of money. (Author's note)

the family from the hands of her patient.

"Two or three days after her confinement ends the mother must go to the pagoda and give a few presents to the bonzes, who give her in return a few cotton threads which she fastens to her wrists " (4). [751] [792]

(4) Dr. Estrade, 1895. Dictionnaire et Guide franco-laotien. [113]

844

Cases of dystocia and other childbearing difficulties are very rare in Laos, thanks to the physiological law which decrees that childbirth shall occur all the more naturally insofar as one comes closer to the primitive type and as one's body has not been deformed either by certain professional attitudes or by artifices of dress. [191] But when any difficulty of this type does occur the Laotian midwives are extremely skilful. Their hands take the place of the steel instruments in our gynecological and surgical arsenal, and their results are usually successful both for mother and child.

When the newly delivered mother is allowed to get up there occur traditional feasts and celebrations, the brilliance of which varies with the status of the young mother's parents. It is generally during these happy gatherings that the bonzes or sorcerers choose the name which the newborn child is to bear. They usually base their choice on some peculiarity of the coloring or eyes, or on a phase of the moon. The name will be replaced by another if the child falls sick, for in this case, as they say, the old name was unpleasing to his "Phis," that is to say to his personal tutelary spirits. [554] 846 527 551

Infanticide. Scarcely any cases of infanticide can be cited in Laos, and abortions are extremely rare or at least very well hidden. For when cases do occur it is among members of a class which, because of the rank it holds, is anxious to conceal its faults from the mass of the people. 847 [554]

In popular belief abortion, whether voluntary or natural, is regarded as a punishment of heaven or as a case of aberration which cannot fail to draw down the utmost scorn on the guilty parties and their accomplices.

Marriage. Marriage in Laos is made ready for long in advance, thanks to the liberty which young people of both sexes enjoy. The latter meet one another at every celebration and can communicate 584

149: Reinach--175 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Tribal Tai 341

Building materials, interior arrangement and furniture in Thai houses do not differ in any significant way from what we have described in connection with the Laotians.

Births. Like the Laotian women, Thai women generally give birth to children with the greatest ease, and the ceremonies accompanying births are identical. 844

Marriages. Betrothals generally take place among the Thais after the farming work is over, in December or January, during the cold season. Sheds are built in the villages. Fires are laid there and the marriageable girls install themselves there with a spinning wheel, reel or cotton gin to keep them busy and prevent them from losing countenance. The young men come and join them and exchange declarations, compliments, betel quids and cigarettes with them. There it is that promises of marriage are made, which are followed by a request to the girl's parents when she gives her lover permission to do so. 584

A few days later, during a banquet which takes place in the girl's house, the engagement is announced and the young [236] people are then free to see one another and come and go together at all hours and in all places.

The marriage is not celebrated until several months after the betrothal unless traces of pregnancy are evident in the engaged girl, in which case the marriage takes place at once.

The ceremony is much simpler than among the Laotians, but it is followed by a series of banquets which succeed one another for several days and at which great quantities of rice brandy and rice beer are consumed. 585

The groom comes to live in his wife's room on his wedding day. He is supposed to stay in the home of his in-laws for eight years (only three years in some regions) and share in their work. 591

Adultery. Divorce. "Cases of adultery are extremely rare. When such an eventuality does occur, the man is condemned to a fine of seven bars of silver (about 260 francs) and the woman to a fine of six bars of the same metal (about 225 francs). Half of these sums is awarded to the judges and the other half to the husband, who may then either take back or repudiate his unfaithful wife. 586 684

"In the latter case, the unfaithful wife generally marries her accomplice.

"Divorce is rarer, but just as easy among the Thais as among 586

sebaceous scum of the fetus and so make the birth easier. She should 843
wash her hair from time to time with water in which she has soaked
an eel's tail [53] and some rice. She takes hold of the eel's tail to
tie her hair. This will result in the head of the fetus becoming
more slippery, and the birth will become easier.

If the pregnant woman has to protect herself from spirits, it must 843
not be forgotten that certain of her actions may be disastrous to those 777
around her. She must not enter a new house for fear of attracting ill
fortune to its owner. She must not attend a wedding for she would
bring ill luck to the new couple. The husband of the pregnant woman
loses a part of his khouan (see above). He also becomes unfortunate
in hunting and in games of chance.

The Delivery. This cannot take place in the house of the 844
woman brought to bed, otherwise the greatest misfortune would
descend on the owner of the building. Sometimes the parents have
a cabin built where the woman giving birth will spend the whole time
of her delivery.

When the woman feels the first pains, all objects that are fastened
or hooked on, such as earrings, are removed. She keeps only her
skirt on and remains sitting during the whole time of her labor.
Opposite her hangs a cord to which she holds on at the moment of
birth, for this position will facilitate the descent of the fetus. If
the birth is prolonged, decoctions and liniments are used to help the
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At the time of expulsion, the newly born is left between the
legs of its mother until the delivery. It is only when the placenta
has emerged, that the cord is cut with a bamboo blade. If it were
cut with a steel blade, the child would run the risk of meeting a
violent death. The thread used for tying the cord on girls is taken
from a spinning wheel, so that later she will become a good spinner.
The placenta is usually buried under one of the stairways of the house
[54] otherwise the fertility of the parents would run the risk of drying
up.

After the Delivery. After the delivery, the woman who 846
has given birth sits on a bed of finely pulverized kitchen salt, so that
the after effects may be normal. Than she takes a hot bath and
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She lies down on a low bed placed against a large clay hearth
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173: Deydier--35 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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[844] The accoucheur, who is also a sorcerer, hangs on the roof a fishnet which reaches the ground and must completely cover the bed of the woman and the kadong of the newborn child. An incantation is recited intended to protect the mother and child from the Phi Phai, the souls of women who have died in childbirth or while pregnant, and which take the form of a night bird. The sorcerer stretches a white cotton thread around the bed and the hearth which will act as a barrier to the Phi Phai, and which also has the property of preventing the mother and child from having attacks of nausea [les bourbouilles].

846 In addition to the very frequent affusions and sitz baths, the woman takes every day two or three aromatic vapor baths. Her meals taken 262 inside the fishnet consist of rice, grilled chicken or pork seasoned with grilled salt and mixed with houa kha (a kind of gingerbread). She may drink only [55] hot decoctions of the root of a wild vine which has diuretic properties.

846 During the You Kam people take turns day and night helping the family watch over the mother and child. In order to keep awake they read aloud, make music, sing or play. This is the custom of [52] the vigil, the ngan which takes place whenever there is a feast or any other event.

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844 "In delivery of the afterbirth, which takes place just after the
846 cord has been severed, the midwife pulls on the cord with her right hand while with her left hand she presses [190] on the patient's abdomen so as to force out the placenta (1). When the latter offers

(1) The midwives of Upper Laos do not take any steps to free the placenta. This organ comes out by itself, although the time it takes may vary. After its expulsion it is placed (together with the strip of bamboo used as a knife to cut the cord and with the clots of blood) in the bamboo cylinder mentioned above. Then the whole is immediately buried under the threshold of the house or at the foot of one of the stringers of the ladder or staircase giving access to the house. (Author's note.)

too much resistance the parturient woman lies down on her stomach and presses heavily on the ground, while the midwife continues to pull on the cord and assists the patient's efforts with one hand.

"If a uterine hemorrhage does not ensue the vagina is bathed
846 with spiced water, the patient's legs are placed together and she is then laid in front of a fire of live coals where she must remain for nine days, her abdomen facing the heat (2). During these nine days

(2) Thirty days for primiparous women and from seventeen to twenty days for pluriparous women, in northern Laos. (Author's note.)

she must abstain from eating certain foods, and particularly from chewing betel because of this plant's astringent qualities. She swallows a certain amount of salt every day and drinks laxative tisanes which are often made with grapefruit rinds. The genitalia are bathed for the first five days after delivery, always with slightly spiced water.

"If a uterine hemorrhage occurs after delivery the parturient woman is made to swallow about fifty grams of urine to which a heavy dose of spiced oil has been added. The vagina is bathed with a decoction of highly astringent plants, among which the dried bark of the areca palm may be mentioned.

846 "At the end of confinement the midwife extinguishes the fire
431 herself and receives a few gifts (3) which vary with the condition of

(3) These gifts generally consist of a skirt, a scarf, small jewels,

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wax candles decorated with flowers, cigarettes and a sum of money. (Author's note)

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the family from the hands of her patient.

"Two or three days after her confinement ends the mother must go to the pagoda and give a few presents to the bonzes, who give her in return a few cotton threads which she fastens to her wrists " (4).

[751] [792]

(4) Dr. Estrade, 1895. Dictionnaire et Guide franco-laotien. [113]

844

Cases of dystocia and other childbearing difficulties are very rare in Laos, thanks to the physiological law which decrees that childbirth shall occur all the more naturally insofar as one comes closer to the primitive type and as one's body has not been deformed either by certain professional attitudes or by artifices of dress. [191] But when any difficulty of this type does occur the Laotian midwives are extremely skilful. Their hands take the place of the steel instruments in our gynecological and surgical arsenal, and their results are usually successful both for mother and child.

When the newly delivered mother is allowed to get up there occur traditional feasts and celebrations, the brilliance of which varies with the status of the young mother's parents. It is generally during these happy gatherings that the bonzes or sorcerers choose the name which the newborn child is to bear. They usually base their choice on some peculiarity of the coloring or eyes, or on a phase of the moon. The name will be replaced by another if the child falls sick, for in this case, as they say, the old name was unpleasing to his "Phis," that is to say to his personal tutelary spirits.

[554] 846 527 551

Infanticide. Scarcely any cases of infanticide can be cited in Laos, and abortions are extremely rare or at least very well hidden. For when cases do occur it is among members of a class which, because of the rank it holds, is anxious to conceal its faults from the mass of the people.

847 [554]

In popular belief abortion, whether voluntary or natural, is regarded as a punishment of heaven or as a case of aberration which cannot fail to draw down the utmost scorn on the guilty parties and their accomplices.

Marriage. Marriage in Laos is made ready for long in advance, thanks to the liberty which young people of both sexes enjoy. The latter meet one another at every celebration and can communicate

584

sebaceous scum of the fetus and so make the birth easier. She should 843
wash her hair from time to time with water in which she has soaked
an eel's tail [53] and some rice. She takes hold of the eel's tail to
tie her hair. This will result in the head of the fetus becoming
more slippery, and the birth will become easier.

If the pregnant woman has to protect herself from spirits, it must 843
not be forgotten that certain of her actions may be disastrous to those 777
around her. She must not enter a new house for fear of attracting ill
fortune to its owner. She must not attend a wedding for she would
bring ill luck to the new couple. The husband of the pregnant woman
loses a part of his khouan (see above). He also becomes unfortunate
in hunting and in games of chance.

The Delivery. This cannot take place in the house of the 844
woman brought to bed, otherwise the greatest misfortune would
descend on the owner of the building. Sometimes the parents have
a cabin built where the woman giving birth will spend the whole time
of her delivery.

When the woman feels the first pains, all objects that are fastened
or hooked on, such as earrings, are removed. She keeps only her
skirt on and remains sitting during the whole time of her labor.
Opposite her hangs a cord to which she holds on at the moment of
birth, for this position will facilitate the descent of the fetus. If
the birth is prolonged, decoctions and liniments are used to help the
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846 262 In addition to the very frequent affusions and sitz baths, the woman takes every day two or three aromatic vapor baths. Her meals taken inside the fishnet consist of rice, grilled chicken or pork seasoned with grilled salt and mixed with houa kha (a kind of gingerbread). She may drink only [55] hot decoctions of the root of a wild vine which has diuretic properties.

846 During the You Kam people take turns day and night helping the family watch over the mother and child. In order to keep awake they read aloud, make music, sing or play. This is the custom of [57] the vigil, the ngan which takes place whenever there is a feast or any other event.

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10: d'Orleans--308-311 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 582, 684, 836, 848

"Some flirtations are durable, for a young man who has paid court for a long time to a girl generally ends by making her his mistress, but this is not looked upon as at all dishonourable, for there are a great many unmarried women mothers, and some of them are held in as much respect as those [pages 309 and 310 contain illustration] [311] that are married, while marriage often follows the birth of a child. Moreover, if the girl informs her parents and reveals the name of her lover, the latter is bound to pay a fine of about fifteen rupees, or to marry her. All assaults upon women are taxed at varying rates, there being different fines for a kiss upon the mouth or upon the arm, and for rape."

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(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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10: d'Orleans--272 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 304, 437, 855

[LSS: in the village of Ban Sop Huan] "The children often wear a silver collar round the neck, and sometimes a bracelet on the ankles. Some of them are tattooed yellow, and a horse is represented upon the leg of one child. Men, women and children come to visit us whilst we eat; they bring us some rather pretty stuff for sale, and prefer money to payments in kind. The women consider our stock very attractive, but they could not sell it again. They accept some pictures as a present (these are easily carried and very well received in these regions), but their husbands take most of them away again."

10: d'Orleans--311 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 855

"The code of morals, it will be seen, is a rather loose one, but this does not prevent the affection of the parents for their children from being very strongly developed. I have rarely seen children made so much of or so closely looked after as they are here."

23: Franck--332-333 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 304, 342, 855 Ethnic subgroup

"In most of the [EJ: Kha] huts grandmother and even skinnier grandfather were tending the third generation while the intermediate one was out in the hills in quest of a livelihood. Some of the villages had their basket-like thatched-top huts raised above the ground, like those of the other people of Laos; the commoner custom was to squat on the ground itself in a thatch structure like a flat wigwam. The women, and for that matter the men, were all naked to the waist, a disgusting custom [333] in the case of the old women, whose breasts were as shrunken as if they were about to dry up and drop off. They gave one an unhappy reminder of how brief is the span of human existence. Old men and women alike had holes in their ears large enough to hold a cigar."

68: Mouhot--95 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 855, 276

"[HD: Among the Laotians at Khao-Khoc, Siam. See category 116, p. 90] All the children of the neighbourhood, most of whom are still kept at the breast, come frequently to bring me insects, in exchange for a button or cigarette, for it is a common thing for them to leave their mother's breast to smoke. Were they not so dirty, they would be nice-looking; but I am afraid of touching them, lest I should again catch the itch."

boxers pummeled one another with their fists. Their hands were smeared with a mixture of oil and soot so that they would leave a mark wherever they hit. The tilters were hot and eager, but did not greatly hurt one another, for their chief effort was to attract attention by means of gestures and plastic attitudes which would impress the girls and women with their supple, nervous and muscular bodies, shining like bronze under the sun because of the sweat which the effort of fighting brought on. 764 526 527

Combats between buffaloes followed these amusements, then cocks were brought on and the whole audience crowded around. Passions rose to a fever pitch in the whole mass of spectators, who had been imbibing brandy freely. Ironic clamors rained down on the men who had let themselves be beaten and whose faces were smeared with black on their return, while enthusiastic shouts greeted the victors. In spite of all the excitement, the sun, the heat and the brandy, the whole mass of people remained quite moderate and the festivities [209] [Illustration] [210] [Blank page] [211] always kept a gay and gracious air. The enthusiasm for the fighters, the shouts and the bravos only lasted for a moment, and all of them, both lucky and unlucky, were sponged, given drink and cherished with equal solicitude so that they soon forgot their momentary rivalry. 764 527 273

Children of both sexes then approached the pyre. They had all fastened their sampots and skirts in view of what was to happen next. Sacks were brought which were full of copper coins, to which a few silver coins had been added. Members of the family of the deceased then climbed up on the pyre and threw this small change broadcast into the horde of children. An indescribable tumult followed, accompanied by sharp cries. There was quarreling and fighting, and many little pairs of hands could be seen grabbing for the same copper coins. All of them would have liked to get the few white coins. 764 857

The parents and older people watched the coin hunt, which reminded them of the time when they were children and at the same time reminded them of the name of a dead man whose family had been generous to them once in similar circumstances.

Now all the ritual ceremonies had been accomplished and it remained only to proceed to the last one; setting fire to the pyre. 764

Stiff lengths of rattan were attached to the four corners of the catafalque and fastened to the ground with stakes. Rockets slid along the lengths of rattan, and when the time came they would shoot up and supposedly light the pyre. In reality this is only a

536 of Burmese origin is called I-Ke or Lakhone-I-Ke.

There are also animated Shadow theaters in Laos, like the Chinese or Javanese shadow theaters. The figurines in them are quite large, completely articulated and strikingly lifelike in all their attitudes and in their gestures, which correspond perfectly to the words of their manipulators. Some of these shadow figures are so well articulated that they scrupulously reproduce the movements of the mouth, nose, eyes, etc. Finally, so that they need envy no one, the Laotians also have a puppet theater [Guignol] like our French puppet theater of Lyons. The puppets represent local types and costumes, banter certain social classes with their sarcasm and ridicule certain personages who lend themselves easily to criticism. The artists who make these little wooden knaves function have as much verve, malice and wit as their colleagues in Europe, and although their wit is usually somewhat coarse it is perfectly adapted to the milieu. The puppets enjoy great public favor, and so their performances, which last far into the night, are among those most enjoyed by an audience which is always numerous and attentive. Old men, adults and children come and stay for hours at a time, gasping and lifting their faces towards the opening out of which the puppets' heads and shoulders protrude. The witty sayings, jokes of all kinds and even the gestures of these puppets often shake the whole audience with a fit of uncontrollable laughter.

535 Dancing. The dance (fone in Laotian) finds little favor with the
462 Laotians. Scarcely any but men engage in this pastime, and they dance a kind of Pyrrhic during the feast of rockets and a Phallic at
857 the time of the pirogue regattas. During festivals singers and song-stresses often mix dancing with their songs, but it is limited to a few rhythmic gestures of the hands and upper part of the body, without any movement of the feet.

There are no professional women dancers in Laos as there are in Siam or Cambodia. I know of only one ballet corps, [219] that of Luang-Prabang, which is composed exclusively of children and very young people. This group, which is nicely costumed, is developing under the direction of one master and several supervisors. It executes figures and a few steps which are always very graceful, while carrying multicolored lanterns in the shape of balloons or flowers. The dances are accompanied by songs and form a most harmonious and pleasant ensemble.

462 Tilling the ricefields, hunting, fishing and managing rafts and
241 pirogues take up about six months of the year. The rest of the time they rest and enjoy themselves. The status of women in Laos, although not as low and painful as that of other women of Asiatic races, is nevertheless not as pleasant as that of their husbands. In fact, all the petty farming tasks fall on them. They perform all the household labors, care for the poultry yard and the livestock, etc. They do the cooking, decorticate the paddy, go and fetch wood and water, spin, weave and dye cotton and silk, take care of the children, etc. Less [182] fortunate than her husband, the Laotian woman has no leisure except on holidays, and even then she has to make all the preparations without letting her daily occupations suffer.

Of ordinary height, generally well made and even elegant of
142 figure, the Laotian woman has a friendly face and is not without
562 either grace or coquetry before her marriage. This does not mean that there are no homely girls, but these are rather an exception. As she grows older and worn from bearing children the Laotian woman loses much of her early grace, but in spite of everything she retains her joyousness, her high spirits and her very pronounced taste for celebrations when there is singing and feasting.

862 Laotian mothers worship their children. They take great care of them and often push their weakness for their children to such a
858 point as to prolong the period of breast-feeding, often beyond the child's fourth year.

342 Dwellings. Like all the representatives of the Thai family, the Laotians inhabit houses which are rectangular in shape and are always
574 raised one or two meters above the GROUND on piles. Wood and bamboo, in the form of beams, framing members, rafters, door and window casings, partitions, doors, windows, floors and shingles, are used to build houses, without the use of any nails, all joints and assemblies being fastened together with rattan.

The dimensions of the houses vary greatly and depend on the number of families that they are designed to shelter. Verandas with roofs which are sharply inclined and come down quite low are placed around the house, mainly on the south and west, to temper the heat of the sun and serve as a vestibule, a reception hall or a workshop. The family stays there during the day, as on a sort of neutral ground where people who are coming and going can be received without transgressing custom, which decrees that no one except members of the family and close friends shall have access to the inner apartments, which form the private home of the house's inhabitants.

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7: Thompson--377 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 871, 177.87 France
636.87

"Much too small a sum has been allotted to education in the Laotian budget. Even elementary instruction is confined to the chief towns of the country and to the inadequate pagoda schools. Following the success of utilizing the Khmer bonzes as intermediaries, the French tried a similar policy in Laos with much less good fortune. To begin with, it gave the monopoly of education to the bonzes in a country not by any means wholly Buddhistic. The result has been that the mountain peoples remain quite illiterate. The French, in their love of simplification and uniformity, enjoy giving to a formula, which happened to succeed under one set of circumstances, an unjustifiably universal significance. As elsewhere in Indo-China, Laos has suffered from the assimilationist tendency to train natives for menial government service, as clerks and interpreters, by means of a French programme of studies that uproots its Asiatic victims spiritually from their setting. Only in Laos, through negligence or indifference on the part of both French and Laotians, this occurred much later. In 1928, however, Pasquier, on a tour in Laos, was horrified to hear a teacher expounding to his youthful pupils such irrelevant material as the French Wars of Religion."

10: d'Orleans--321-322 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 153, 609, 793, 871

"At first, we received several visits from an aged bonze, also occupying an important position, who had been for many years friendly to the French. 'They are fathers and brothers to me,' he would say. During the second half of our visit, he had been [322] seized with a wasting illness, and we frequently went to see him. One of the interpreters of the Consulate was teaching his pupils French, and they struck me as being very intelligent, while their lessons were well done."

149: Reinach--120 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

In résumé, Buddhist morality is based on the five following commandments, which are obligatory for all men without distinction: 779

1. Do not take the life of any living being;
2. Do not steal the property of others;
3. Do not commit adultery;
4. Never lie;
5. Do not get drunk on fermented beverages.

It should be noted that these five commandments give rise only to prohibitions, a fact which would seem to indicate that man is mainly inclined toward evil. This is the characteristic feature of Buddhist law: it forbids evil without indicating the means of doing good; it does not uplift the individual morally, but limits itself to preventing him from falling still lower. It acts to preserve a certain moral and social status in which the greater part of humanity is to be kept, under the domination of the bonzes who alone are capable of rising to a knowledge of good and evil.

Despite the purity of its morality and the elevation of its precepts, this religion, which denies progress but from which Christianity has nevertheless borrowed more than one dogma, has not yet been able, after twenty-five centuries of existence, to make civilization penetrate to its faithful.

The Laotian clergy. The Buddhist clergy is composed of three categories of holy men, whom we call bonzes in Laos and talapoins (2) 792 871

(2) From the Siamese word Talapat, a bonze's fan made of palm leaves.

in Siam. These categories are:

1. Boys from ten to fifteen years of age who have entered a bonzery only to learn to read and write the Thai language, and who are called Xieng or Nèn;

2. Student bonzes, called Hatit, who complete their religious education until they reach the age of twenty-two or twenty-five by the study of Youn characters and of Pali, as well as by reading the sacred books;

[161] 3. Last the ordained bonzes or Phra (Phâ, in the current pronunciation) who have pronounced their temporary vows.

There is a well-defined hierarchy among the bonzes which, in terms equivalent to our own, goes from the archbishop to the simple 792

149: Reinach--124 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Although less pure than in Cambodia, the bonzes' morals in Laos are generally fairly good. They are, moreover, greatly loved, highly regarded and fondly cherished. When there is a celebration or a great feast in a family, part of the choicest dishes is always reserved for the bonzes. 792 785 554

On the next to the last day of every phase of the moon, the bonzes must make public confession of their faults and be prepared, should the need arise, to undergo the punishments which the code stipulates. 792

Bonzeries are schools and at the same time workshops where all trades are taught. All knowledge is concentrated in them, as our knowledge was during the Middle Ages in monasteries. 871 874

Together with the pagodas, they are also spots of inviolable asylum in accordance with certain rights, and hostelries where travelers are lodged and fed with the produce of the bonzes' alms-seeking. 485 778

Newly ordained bonzes must stay in the pagoda at least three months, and may quit their habit at the end of this period. If a bonze desires to return to the pagoda after he has reentered lay life, his reassumption of the habit gives rise to the same formalities and ceremonies as the first time. It is a new ordination. 792

The liturgical litanies of the Buddhist religion, which the bonzes psalmodize, may not be translated into Laotian. The bonzes and the [165] [Illustration] [166] [Blank page] [167] Laotian faithful, as well as the cantors and the French adepts, chant prayers whose meaning they do not understand (1). 198 788

(1) In reality the Laotian, Lu and Youn bonzes form a sort of caste as the Druids used to in Gaul. More particularly, they are the ministers of worship, the repositories of moral authority, of scientific traditions, of secrets and of artistic and industrial methods. They transmit by word of mouth the precepts of Buddhist dogma, which were long ago explained by those who introduced the religion into the land. But the writings in "Pali" which contained these, although they can still be read mechanically by a few scholars, are no longer understood. Thence arises the necessity of handing down their meaning by word alone. Thence also, without doubt, arises the increasingly greater attenuation of the purity and force of these principles as they 792 779 178

149: Reinach--197 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Service of Posts and Telegraphs. Before 1900, 205
Upper Laos paid Tonkin a yearly sum of 157,500 francs for the service of posts and telegraphs. 206

Lower Laos had an appropriation in its budget for wages, personnel housing, new construction, maintenance of lines, etc., and this rose to 165,295 francs in 1898.

Since 1900 the general budget has covered the service of posts and telegraphs in unified Laos. [279] [Illustration] [280] [Blank page]

[281] Public education. An appropriation of 13,750 658
francs is written into the 1900 budget for public education. This is a 871
negligible expense, yet the results achieved in the Franco-Laotian schools are satisfactory. The Superior Resident writes as follows:

"Primary schools in which the elements of the French language are taught to the natives are in operation at Luang-Prabang, Vien-Tiane, Khong and in all the province capitals. There students are given basic training by an interpreter who is appointed for the purpose and for whom a salary is appropriated. As soon as they can read and write fluently the most intelligent pupils are sent to the Collège Chasseloup-Laubat in Saigon, where they continue their studies for two or three years to perfect their knowledge. Under this system we shall shortly have a good body of interpreters for the administration and for private enterprise" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

Some students from the Laotian primary schools have even been sent to the Colonial School in Paris.

Apostolic missions. 797

"The missionaries who endeavor to evangelize the peoples of Laos all belong to the French Foreign Missions Society [Missions Étrangères de France]. Some are attached to the bishop of Bangkok (2).

(2) Since 1900 the missions of Laos have been under the direction of a bishop of Laos, Msgr. Cuaz, whose temporary residence is at Nong-Sene, two kilometers to the north of Lakhone.

and these are the ones whom one meets on the banks of the Mekong.

173; Deydier--14 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

The Laotian Bonze--The Monastic Rules. 792

As in Ceylon, Cambodia and the other Buddhist countries, the 785
Laotian who enters religious life does not make a perpetual vow. To become a bonze, all that is necessary is to be twenty years old, not to have killed, nor stolen, nor have any skin disease. When he is ordained, the young man agrees to observe the Buddhist rules which are: not to take life, not to steal, not to sin against virtue, not to lie, not to drink intoxicating liquors, not to eat outside of the prescribed hours, not to attend entertainments which excite the senses, not to touch gold, nor silver, etc.

The bonze's head, chin and eyebrows are completely shaved. 301
In principle he must shave twice a month. The garments of the bonze must not be made of one piece and their color must be yellow ochre 292
or yellow. These two traditions have their origin in the history of the life of the Buddha. When he left the palace of his father, the Buddha cut his hair and exchanged his princely garments for those of a hunter. Now, the hunter was a poor man dressed in rags covered with the yellow ochre dust of the fields. Therefore, since that day, in memory of the first religious garments of the Buddha, tradition demands that all bonzes wear this costume. Texts are not agreed as [795]
to the color, the Saddharma-smrtyupasthana sutra giving a whole list of colors for the dyeing of religious garments. We will not delay over the discussions which have arisen amongst the various Buddhist schools over [25] this problem. We will limit ourselves to stating that in central Asia and in Tibet the bonzes wear brownish-red garments instead of the beautiful yellow color of the Laotian and Cambodian togas.

Bonzes get up very early in the morning. Having made their toilet and said their prayers, they leave about seven o'clock in single file to beg for their food. To be precise, we should add that the containers for the alms are usually carried by student bonzes [bonzillons]. After returning to the pagoda they have a brief meal, then they teach [871]
the student bonzes [bonzillons] to read and write, while others perform the manual tasks necessary to the upkeep of the monastery. About noon, the bonze has another meal which is the last of the day. He does not eat any food till the following morning. After the meal he [264]
must wash his fingers (he eats only with his right hand), and rinse out his mouth. Then he has a siesta, and at the close of the afternoon he works at his tasks as in the morning. In principle he must never go out alone; he is always accompanied by a brother monk to protect him from any temptation.

7: Thompson--378 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 872, 874, 177.87 France
636.87

"In 1931 the government reluctantly pulled itself together to remedy an admittedly bad situation. Certain provinces and certain bonzes were selected as fields for experimentation. An itinerant teacher was sent around to the pagoda schools to conduct model classes with a very simple programme, as a practical demonstration before the bonzes. Blackboards, textbooks, and chalk were doled out to these schools, which had heretofore lacked even such elementary equipment. Bonzes were asked to report semi-annually on the number and progress of their pupils. Slowly an examination was organized with a certificate, so as to set up some standard and to stimulate the sluggish Laotian zeal for knowledge. The problem of further training for bonzes is delicate. The idea of a small scale Normal School was again revived in 1932, and attempts were made to avoid some of the pitfalls which had doomed earlier experiments. The majority of bonzes still could not teach either reading or writing. They were less than half-hearted in falling in with the government's ideas, and would break training at the slightest provocation, thus automatically condemning their schools. The new courses are more modern in method, more prudent in application, and more successful in their results than the old, but it is too soon as yet to draw any conclusions about that elusive and infinitesimal effort known as Laotian education. Less than 300 schools teach fewer than 7,000 pupils in French Laos."

25: Brodrick--98-99 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 779, 782, 792, 872

"...the framework of Little Vehicle Buddhism looks much the same as in the land of the Khmers. There are the saffron-robes, but the bonzes are sturdier and less composed than in Cambodia. When the monks do their rounds with their begging-bowls, the holy men do not hesitate to look women in the face, to speak with them and even to touch their hands. The Laotian bonzes are not the less Laotian for being bonzes, and by no means all of them observe strictly the precepts of their Order. In fact, some of them are [99] a little loose of conduct. Again, the Buddhist hierarchy in the Laos is almost more sacerdotal than monastic, and, in the public estimation, the bonze is more or less of a priest, that is, a man performing efficacious and quasi-magical ceremonies. There are temple-schools, as in Cambodia, Siam and Burma. In these schools the male population learns to read and write in the complicated Laotian script that is rather derived from Siamese than from Cambodian. The same moral obligations are supposed to constrain the monks. The offerings at the pagoda services are just fragrant frangipani flowers, candles and incense. There is no such divergence from Little Vehicle practice as would make of Laotian Buddhism a new religion such as is the Lamaism of Tibet. But everything is a little distorted, vague, misty, if we will. The alien religion is subjected to a strong push from beneath and is transmuted by an all-pervading atmosphere of nonchalance and good humour."

6: Goudal--180-181 S-3 (1934) 1938 Cambodians
116, 177, 463, 874

"Between 1900 and 1920 this artistic decline, especially in Cambodia, progressed so rapidly as to be a complete catastrophe. A circular of the Senior Resident in Cambodia of 13 July 1917 instructed all the Residencies to make a census of all known craftsmen engaged in any of the artistic industries. The replies showed that in all the provinces there were only 130 craftsmen, most of whom were obliged to engage in agriculture in order to earn a livelihood. In 1917 there were only 32 craftsmen making a meagre living from their art in Phom-Penh, the capital of the Khmer Kingdom. When the school of Cambodian Arts was established, it was impossible to find in Pnom-Penh a single Cambodian who knew how to make the traditional dyes and could teach others to do so; an old woman of sixty-five had to be brought from the interior to teach this craft. Only a single lacquer worker could be found and it was impossible to revive the art of niello [181] work, which had been common at the end of last century, because there was not a single craftsman acquainted with this branch. Indigenous art had almost died out because it could find no customers."

7: Thompson--377-378 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 874

"In 1909, and again in 1912, efforts were made to renovate Laos's pagoda schools. The bonzes did respond to the government's appeal to come to its training schools, but they left as soon as they had received a little instruction, and took positions in the administration. The programmes proposed to them had been too advanced for both teachers and students. They lacked textbooks and equipment in general: control and supervision were entirely missing. The quality and prestige [378] of Laotian bonzes was well below Cambodian standards, so it was impractical to count on the same degree of co-operation from them."

149: Reinach--124 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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25: Brodrick--95 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 304, 881

"The professing Buddhists of the Laos are tattooed, and, moreover, they are tattooed when they are between thirteen and seventeen years of age, just as are South Sea Islanders. The rite is therefore, clearly a rite de passage, as the French call it, or a puberty ceremony, performed as initiation and as protection, and partly, no doubt, originally as a form of social distinction. The rich man and the powerful man could get more magic protection than his less fortunate fellows, so that, as in ancient New Zealand, some tattooing was confined to chiefs."

moreover, the object of the utmost scorn on the part of the whole 548
population, and their houses are relegated to points outside the muong, that is to say outside the city.

No such practice exists in rural areas, and if a few girls grant 836
their lovers great intimacies it is in the hope--a hope which is almost always realized--that marriage will be the result.

Death, burial, cremation. In principle, Laotians are supposed 764
to cremate their dead. In this they are obedient to the ancient traditions which specified this ceremony, but since cremation is a 766
costly practice poor people are simply buried.

In certain cases, as in deaths resulting from dysentery epidemics, from childbirth, from suicide, etc., the bodies are thrown into the river or its tributaries.

Laotians have no cemeteries enclosed by walls or barriers. A corner of the forest near the muong or village is reserved for this use and serves as a last resting place for those of the inhabitants who cannot be cremated or should not be thrown into the water. There, at the foot of the trees and in their shade, repose those adults and adolescents whose families did not even have means to buy the ritual cremation firewood, and also the children who never underwent the operation of "cutting the forelock" (1).

(1) This operation takes place at the age of thirteen and marks the transition from childhood to adolescence. It is the sign of nubility. [881]

When it is to be buried, the body of the dead person is placed in 764
a sort of coffin made of ax-hewn planks which are usually poorly joined and covered with colored paper burdened with ornamentation. 792
Sometimes a mat is used, in simpler fashion, or else lattices made of split and crushed bamboo stalks like those which form the floors of houses. The whole is tied together with rattan or with bamboo bark.

This is the lot of destiny's outcasts. After a few family ceremonies and a feast given in the dead person's home [201]--the magnitude of which ceremonies and feast vary depending on the dead person's station in life and his family's resources--the bonzes, accompanied by a few pupils, come and recite the funeral orisons.

The bonzes are not supposed to look at the body during their prayers, and they hold up a screen called Talapat to hide their faces.

23: Franck--300-301 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 793, 779, 883

"Some of the old priests of Luang Prabang are honored as demigods by the people of the kingdom. They step forth from their holy dwellings only with a ceremonial parasol held over them, by one of the surrounding group of youngster attendants in the same bright yellow; and the French commissaire himself was almost servile in the respectful politeness with which he treated the most holy of them all, whose attitude sometimes suggested that it was he who had the upper hand. These bonzes may not even kill a flea, though the provocation must often be almost too strong to be borne; but they may eat beef and the flesh of other animals killed by some one else. Even the cynical French residents say they are real celibates, that they would be expelled from the order if they were caught breaking this particular vow. It might be harder to keep were not all young men expected to be priests for a year or two, as those of European lands become soldiers, only the ones to whom the monastic life appeals retaining the yellow robe, which the great majority soon discard for marriage. Little less sacred than the priests are the dogs that all but overrun the capital, eating the food laid out for gods and bonzes, much as the sacred oxen of India take their toll from pious shopkeepers. Held in a kind of Buddhist reverence by the people and more or less [301] protected by the priests, these mongrels are not even subjected to muzzle or license, though the French would like to improve their rules of sanitation to the extent of exterminating the harmless but self-confident curs."

25: Brodrick--106 [3] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 562, 586, 883

"Laotian women seem never to have been parked and compressed into any sort of seclusion. Divorce is easy and a manner of seeking it was most charmingly civilized. If a husband had reason to think that his wife did not like him, he placed flowers upon her pillow. If she could still tolerate him, or if she had not any new plans, then she left the flowers untouched for three days. If she desired to get rid of her man, she threw the flowers away, whereupon he walked out and got a divorce.

And at the Love Courts, the phousao and the phoubao, the girls and the boys are free and equal, at least as far as the conventions rule."

149; Reinach--187 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Kha

caught even on the other side of the watershed and then delivered as 567
slaves to the Burmese, Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian merchants of the low country. The barbarity of their mores has been greatly lessened since our arrival in Laos, but traces of it still exist and manifest themselves in rivalries and attacks between tribes. The police force which [260] we have organized in the land in the form of a native militia, the influence of the missionaries who have settled among the turbulent Khas, and also the help and example of the tribes which have submitted to our tutelary authority will soon cause this abnormal state of things to disappear. Finally, our increasingly effective occupation of the land, which has been completed by the organization of the province of Darlac, and the strict protectorate which we exercise over Cambodia, the chief purchaser of slaves, have begun to bring order in an effective fashion to this shameful traffic in human flesh (1).

(1) See § I of Chapter XI.

It should be noted that the Djarais and the Rades are the only 197
Khas who speak Cham, that is to say a greatly corrupted Malay tongue which they have preserved for centuries.

The men's clothing consists of a loin-cloth, and that of the 291
women consists only of a short skirt knotted around the waist or under the armpits, the torso left bare.

Both men and women have long hair wound in a coil. Both 301
sexes, but mainly the men, wear jewels of a crude shape, made of tin or brass, in the form of bracelets, neckbands, ear pendants or cylinders and hairpins. They are also very fond of glass bead necklaces.

These Khas smoke tobacco, either dried or green as well as 276
bamboo shavings impregnated with nicotine. They make terra cotta pipes with highly worked bowls and also use imported brass pipes. They do not blacken their teeth.

From the point of view of diet and housing, practically the same 511
conditions obtain as we have seen above except that the houses are built with greater care and arranged in the form of a circular camp.

In the middle of Cedang and Rognao villages there is a large 342
house some twenty to thirty meters long by twelve to fifteen meters 883
wide, with a high pointed roof. This is the common house where all the boys of the locality live from the age of nine or ten until the day of their marriage.

538 inscriptions, some of which go back to the fourteenth century and are
[172] in the Laotian language. For the earlier period we have seen above that these inscriptions were either in Sanskrit or in Khmer (Cf. Stele of Sayfong, appendix: Vientiane).

Music

533 Laotian songs belong to the field of poetry and are of two kinds:
538 the one consists of poems celebrating the exploits of legendary heroes,
883 transmitted from father to child, from master to pupil, and often expanded by imaginary improvisations; the others embroider the love theme.

[86] Alternate chants are used, particularly in the courts of love. A young girl sings, a boy answers. These songs have become a traditional game whose social function has been forgotten. They consist of a series of questions and answers. Often the questions are even real puzzles or simple guessing questions. By asking each other questions, the young people try to get to know each other.

It seems as if the origin could be found here of what the Indians call the svayamvara which is the choice of the husband by the woman. This custom is very persistent among the white Thai of the Phongtho region.

534 While vocal music is very prevalent in Laos, there exists also instrumental music which should not be neglected. We summarize here the excellent account given by his Highness Tiao Souvanna Phouma on Laotian music.

"There are three kinds of instruments: a) wind (the khouy and the khene), b) string (the So I and the So O), c) percussion (the Nang Nat and the Khong Vong).

The khene consists of a series of thin bamboos of various and decreasing lengths placed side by side in pairs like the flutes of Pan. Usually these are in seven consecutive rows. These bamboos are joined together by two half gourds attached with wax which form the blowing chamber and have a small circular opening to serve as mouthpiece. On the inside, the bamboos are pierced with holes. The most curious thing about the way the khene functions is that several notes are simultaneous and are absolutely continuous.

The khouy is a flute without any keys, generally made of bamboo and giving very clear tones.

The so, violins with two strings, consist of a long carved wooden handle and a sounding box. [87] The latter is a half coconut closed by

304 produced with an implement bearing several fine points which are dipped in India ink or diluted cinnabar. Depending on the coloring matter used, the tattoos are dark blue or brick red in color. The tattoo artists give their taste and fancy free rein and produce the most varied designs which, for example, represent intertwined snakes, dragons, lions, tigers and imaginary animals. Oftentimes there is only one overall color which makes the tattooed person look like a man wearing a close-fitting blue bathing suit.

304 885 The practice of tattooing is a very old one and its origin is lost in [186] dark antiquity. It is at once a kind of coquetry and a proof of courage because of the suffering which the operation causes and the dangers it involves in a land where antisepsis is unknown to the natives and where the tools used are as dirty as the operators. [Illustration here]

In some localities a man who is not tattooed is regarded as lacking in virility, and as a sign of his inferiority he may not bathe upstream from women.

562 304 Laotian women are not tattooed. This custom is practiced only by the Youn and Kha women, where tattoos are usually limited to lines, stars or reptiles on the hands, imitations of rings on the fingers, etc.

301 [187] Personal adornment. In all seasons both men and women wear flowers on their ears or in a string around their coil of hair. This gracious custom, which flatters both the eye and the sense of smell, must be extremely ancient in origin. It is to be found in many parts of the globe which have no relation to Laos, and particularly in Polynesia. [Illustration here]

346 531 Pagodas. Laotian pagodas are as numerous as they are varied in respect to type of construction, architecture, dimensions and ornamentation. In sparsely populated villages and poor muongs the pagodas are built like the houses, either of wood, thatch or bamboo lattice, although with greater care and a few slight additional decorations. Elsewhere, in the larger centers, the pagodas are built of brick, roofed with tile, enhanced by many-colored and gilded ornaments of carved wood and embellished with pseudo-sculptured motifs made of staff. On the inside, the walls are covered with brightly colored frescoes [188] which often picture, against a gold background, religious or warlike scenes taken from the Ramayâna and other more realistic ones which often border on obscenity.

342 bedrooms separated from each other by partitions or curtains, the
[178] other is the communal room. In the space between the inner and outer beam, and not limited by the longitudinal partition, is the altar on which there are always one or several buddhas. It is placed on the side of the bedrooms, on the "soung" side of the dwelling, that is on the side opposite the entrance. The dimensions of the dwellings vary between six and twenty-four meters long by four to nine meters wide.

342 The houses are most often open to the east or to the north. They
823 may also overlook what is passing by in the streets or the paths and, as the case may be, the whole length of the river. For there is a superstition which forbids building "across the current," which is considered as unconquerable and invincible, and it would be dangerous to defy it.

343 The outhouses consist of an adjoining kitchen and a granary, a
[252] few meters removed from the principal dwelling. Near this granary is found the picturesque rice pestle (khok khao) which the women work with their feet.

343 [62] All the villagers participate in building the house. When the
476 propitious day and moment have been determined, the owner feeds everybody the whole time the house is being built.

Tattooing

301 Every self-respecting Laotian must be tattooed. The absence of
885 tattooing is a sign of mental and moral, therefore of social, inferiority.
562 As a general rule, however, the Laotian woman is not tattooed. This custom is found only among the women of Youan, Kha or Lu.

The Laotian is tattooed chiefly on his thighs, forearms and chest.
301 The tattooing on the thighs is so close together that from a distance a tattooed man looks as if he were wearing close-fitting blue shorts. The Laotians are called "white bellies" as opposed to those who are tattooed down to the navel and are then called black bellies. The colors used for tattooing are indigo blue, red, and black made from a mixture of lampblack diluted with buffalo gall.

[751] Those who have been tattooed are convinced that the signs they wear give them certain supernatural powers, particularly making them invulnerable to bullets and snake bites. During the events of 1941 Siamese soldiers were found wearing white cotton vests covered with cabalistic signs closely related to tattooing. These are a kind of removable tattooing intended to protect those who are wearing them.